



Taormina and Radicepura host the 19th edition of Sicilia en Primeur

Assovini Sicilia promotes the island as a wine destination par excellence

The international showcase of Sicilian wines closed with the conference *Sicilia: Top Wine, Film, Tourism Destination*.

The wineries, as *Ambassadors and guardians of culture and territories*, confirm the strategic and economic value of wine tourism.

Laurent Bernard de la Gatinais, the President of Assovini Sicilia: *Sicily has all the credentials to become a wine destination of excellence, because of the varieties and quality of wines, a distinctive historical and archaeological heritage. The cultural value of wine is increasingly appealing and fascinating, and it is becoming a symbol of excellence of the "Made in Sicily."*

Palermo, 13 May 2023- Assovini Sicilia members are increasingly investing in wine tourism and successfully helping to boost the Sicilia brand by promoting their territory.

According to the survey of members, 90% of wineries have a facility designated for wine tourism for tasting at the winery. Of these, 32% have an accommodation structure with beds and 30% offer a catering option. The services offered by Assovini wineries are increasingly cared for and diversified, turning into wine experiences: more than 51% offer from cooking classes to wellness tours, from wine trekking to tours that increasingly interact with the landscape and culture of the places. These are the data released during the conference *Sicilia: Top Wine, Film, Tourism Destination* at the closing of Sicilia en Primeur, the international showcase of Sicilian wine organized by Assovini Sicilia.

The wine association has emphasized the vocation and role of its member companies as Ambassadors and guardians of culture and territories and laid out the path for the future of Sicilian wine production, increasingly in the name of wine tourism as a *wine experience*.

The speech by Mr **Laurent de la Gatinais**, the President of Assovini Sicilia, opened the Sicilia en Primeur conference in the stunning setting of the Radicepura botanical park at the foot of Mount Etna, where the Biennale del Paesaggio Mediterraneo had been inaugurated just a few days before.



"By combining the successful hospitality marketing strategies used in California, with the uniqueness, the richness of Sicily's historical, cultural, and archaeological heritage and the authenticity of Sicilian sites and winemakers, Sicily has all the credentials to become a wine destination of excellence, the Sicily Valley of the Mediterranean."

"Wine tourism is proving to be of economic and strategic importance in Sicily because of the ability of wineries to be a place where art, history, nature, gastronomic culture, territory, and genius loci can be combined, and because of the ability of wine producers having been able to readily intercept this potential by skillfully and professionally developing it" - comments the President of Assovini Sicilia.

In parallel to the central role of wine as a tasting experience, the wine tourism of our member wineries combines a diversified and quality range of services, from simple tastings to more sophisticated in-vineyard experiences such as concerts, a reading or an artistic journey through the vineyards.

With the wine experience we want to transfer emotions from the vineyard to the wine all the way to the end consumer, through the personal insight and background of the wine producers. And this is meant to be done in a unique setting: that of the territory, of the winery. A holistic vision where the cultural value held by wine, represented by a unique blend of product, terroir and people, fascinates and attracts more and more and becomes a symbol of excellence of the Made in Sicily. Assovini Sicilia intends to develop the wine tourism of our members as a strategy to promote the diversity and quality of Sicilian territories, their gastronomic riches and culture, and landscape-cultural heritage"- concludes Mr. de la Gatinais.

Well aware of the growing trend in Sicilian wine tourism, the members of Assovini Sicilia have bet on the combination of tourism and wine and are successfully helping to boost the Sicily brand by valorizing its territory. Expertise, determination, and professionalism, together with marketing, planning and communication strategies, have led the companies of Assovini Sicilia to invest more and more in wine tourism. Also instrumental in this achievement is the role of the Next Generation, the new generation of Sicilian winemakers who are preparing for the generational change. Many of the young people under 40 are involved in hospitality with the goal of the diversification of wine tourism offers by turning them into wine experiences.



Roberta Garibaldi, professor at the University of Bergamo and president of the Italian Wine & Food Tourism Association, in her speech on *Wine & Food Tourism Trends and Tendencies* pointed out that *"Sicily confirms its supremacy as the best wine & food destination for Italian tourists because of the appeal that food & wine provide. Wine tourism is one of the highlights of the offer, and in the future it will have to evolve and grow richer. Looking at the desires of Italians who plan to make a food & wine trip to Sicily-* continues Roberta Garibaldi- *strong is the desire to experience the open spaces and immerse oneself in rurality. Among these wine experiences, sunset tastings prevail (indicated by 66%), dinners in the vineyard (60%), tourist grape harvest (46%), wine trekking (42%) passing through the new trend of foraging (46%). The key word is "diversify", but according to the target audience, without forgetting programs for families and children"*.

Professor **Benedetto Puglisi**, co-founder and scientific director of BeAcademy's Master THEM in Tourism Hospitality & Event Management, spoke about tourism wine destinations.

"Wine destinations are not only a tourism commodity but a sustainable territorial development model," commented Benedetto Puglisi. *"There has been so much interest in this field in these last few years. Sicily in this framework has shown excellence and a great potential for development. The territorial characteristics of the island, the variety of its vineyards and wineries, and its major tourist, cultural and environmental heritage are the blend of elements at the basis of a successful wine tourism destination"*.

In 'offer diversification' nowadays Sicilian wine tourism also satisfies luxury segment requirements. *"The development of tourism for us, too, is thus increasingly experiential"*, stressed **Lorenzo Maraviglia**- General Manager of San Domenico Palace, a Four Seasons Hotel- in his speech during the conference *Sicily: Top Wine, Film, Tourism Destination*.

Food and wine are accompanying every guest journey, with cellar tours being among the most popular experiences. Our guests are fascinated by family businesses, but above all they consider it important that there is a narrative behind any given experience.

The spotlight is also on the role of Sicilian viticulture and the quality of the **2022 Vintage**.

"The 2022 vintage was one of the most heterogeneous in the recent years, qualitatively very rich and diverse, as seen in the elegance, phenolic maturity and fragrance of the wines produced. The Sicilian viticultural territories, extremely diverse in terms of orographic, ampelographic and microclimatic peculiarities, enjoyed a good productive year, on the average of recent years, with an increase in the



abundance of the different qualitative expressions for the different varieties" comments **Mattia Filippi**, enologist and founder of Uva Sapiens.

Antonio Rallo, President of the **Consorzio di Tutela Vini DOC Sicilia** (Consortium for the Protection of Sicily DOC Wines), retraces the history of the DOC Sicilia Consortium since 2012, the year it was founded, highlighting that *"The island's riches come from an unrivaled climate but also from a territory that has more than 70 native varieties and 42,000 hectares of sustainable viticulture. Among our priority undertakings is that we dedicate ourselves to preserving the biodiversity generated by the 3,000 years of viticulture on the island."*

Sustainability in the future of Assovini Sicilia wineries is guided by the **Fondazione SOStain Sicilia**, created in 2020 by Assovini Sicilia and the Consorzio di tutela Vini DOC Sicilia. Its President, Mr **Alberto Tasca** reported on the new research projects that the SOStain Sicilia Foundation, which now has 39 member wineries and more than 20 million certified bottles, has been developing in the area with the purpose of spreading the culture of sustainability in the Sicilian wine sector.

The itinerant event created by **Assovini Sicilia**, has chosen this year the beauty of Taormina and Radicepura to introduce the wines of the last harvest to the press and to discuss the growth of wine tourism within the conference *Sicilia: Top Wine, Film, Tourism Destination*, moderated by the journalist Nino Amadore, correspondent of the newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore*.

Sicilia en Primeur is not only an important gathering for the Sicilian wine sector but also an opportunity to promote Sicily's viticultural and historic-archaeological heritage through the enotours that welcomed the national and foreign press - reiterating that in Sicily the combination of wine and culture is ever more successful. In addition to premiering wines from the latest vintage, the international showcase of Sicilian wine introduced the Italian and foreign press to the outstanding wine variety with a series of tastings of more than 800 wines from Assovini Sicilia wineries, 20 of them DOC. A total of five **masterclasses were held** by the journalists and authors Fabio Rizzari and Giampaolo Gravina ("It's a matter of style / Sicilian wine icons: 11 labels that made history"); ("Etna according to Assovini Sicilia, slopes, contradas and styles"; ("Declinations of light: 12 wines from Sicily you don't expect") and by the Master of Wine Elizabeth Gabay ("Sparkling and fizzy wines. The new Sicilian frontier"; "Sicilia en Rosé").



Assovini Sicilia is an association bringing together 100 Sicilian wineries of small, medium or large size, sharing mainly three elements: total control of the wine supply chain from vineyard to bottle; production of quality bottled wine; international market vision and sustainability.

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