Global Trends - Wine Industry Key Elements

Southern Hemisphere 2018 Wine Grape Harvest Update

Argentina
Summer weather has been good with January was not quite as hot as normal. February is expected to be hotter, increasing the risk of hailstorms. The authorities are yet to release a harvest forecast figure for 2018, but the industry is currently thinking in the region of 2.3 million tons – down slightly from the average of 2.5 million tons, but significantly better than the sub-2 million tons 2016 and 2017 harvests.

Australia
Warm inland regions across South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales are reporting yields close to long term average, with cool nights leading to good fruit quality. Following earlier hot spells the recent cool weather has seen ripening slow somewhat, leading to a delay in harvest for some varieties. Reports of yields for the temperate and coastal regions in SA and Victoria vary, with some saying that they are slightly lower than the long-term average, but quality is very good. Grape maturity seems to be progressing well in these regions. Western Australia has reported excellent quality fruit due to cool and dry periods in the build up to harvest. The white varieties being harvested at the moment look exceptional. The predicted warmer weather over the next few weeks comes at the perfect time to finish ripening of red varieties. Tasmania is reporting strong yields with good fruit set, and while there were some earlier concerns about the heat around Australia Day, the vines and fruit still look good. The generally dry conditions has meant a good progress in ripening and very low disease pressure during harvest.

Chile
Summer in Chile’s growing areas has brought very hot days and cooler nights. Harvest is now getting underway and there are expectations of a crush around 1.1 billion litres, slightly below the long-term average but better-sized than the 2016 and 2017 yields. Quality looks good, with more aroma intensity on the whites and more colour on the reds.

New Zealand
Warmer weather conditions than in the past five years and a significant contrast to the wet and cool vintage of 2017. Significant rainfall in Marlborough with some concerns regarding disease pressure now evident. Many are confident the outlook for their grapes will be fine, but any additional rains in the next few weeks will be closely monitored as they have the potential to cause issues. Predictions
remain that the crop will still come in early. Vine yield estimates look positive with new plantings beginning to come on-line and many foreseeing an outcome close to the long-term average. Sources: Australian Vignerons, Ciatti.

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In France, is wine still a national treasure? Or is it a health risk?

In France, wine is not a drink; wine is a way of life. A crisp sauvignon blanc. A light pinot noir. A mature Bordeaux, deep and dark and wise with age. These are all pillars of national identity at least as much as they are beverages. With the tannins comes a trace of the terroir, and with the terroir comes the taste of tradition.

But wine also poses a significant health risk — or so say the country’s health minister, Agnès Buzyn, and a host of doctors who have rallied behind her. They have launched a bitter debate that has shocked a multibillion-dollar industry and divided ranks even within the French government. Her goal is to raise public consciousness about a type of alcohol that can have, in excessive quantities, the same deleterious effects as any other.

"The wine industry today claims wine is different from other types of alcohol,” she said on French television last month. "In terms of public health, it is exactly the same thing to drink wine, beer, vodka, whiskey. There is zero difference.” President Emmanuel Macron, Buzyn’s boss, begs to differ. Click here to read more

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Nuusbrokkies / News Snippets

Coca-Cola to produce its first-ever alcoholic drink

Coca-Cola is aiming to launch an alcoholic drink for the first time in its 125-year history with an alcopop-style product in Japan. The company is reportedly experimenting with the creation of a type of Japanese alcopop called Chu-Hi, containing distilled shochu alcohol mixed with flavoured carbonate water. As consumers shift away from sugary sweetened beverages, companies such as Coke have sought to refresh their portfolios with new products and by purchasing water and tea brands. Click here to read more

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Political / Regulatory Environment

USA: New Poll Shows Broad Support For Laws To Protect Against Misleading Wine Labels

A new poll that finds 94 percent of American wine drinkers support laws that would protect consumers from misleading wine labels. The results underscore the importance location plays in wine. The Wine Origins Alliance also called on U.S. lawmakers to heed consumers' demand for accurate and clear wine labels, and outlined plans to meet with members of Congress. The poll also found that 70 percent of American wine drinkers believe that allowing American producers to misuse foreign wine region names on their labels is deceptive to American consumers, and 70 percent believe that allowing American wine producers to misuse region names makes it harder for U.S. wine regions to protect the misuse of their name on foreign labels. It also found widespread consumer reliance on information about where a wine is from: 79 percent of consumers consider the region an important factor when buying a bottle.
of wine.

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