A beloved Italy of wine by American consumers, but a better communication strategy is needed

scritto da Roxana Zeca | 6 Maggio 2021



Made in Italy has always had a strong appeal on the US market; it recalls the traditions, culture and biodiversity of our country.

The strong bond with the territory and with Italian wines was also witnessed by Patrick Farell, Master of Wine and Wine Consultant of BevWizard Co. Patrick is a medical physician who has been successfully combining his profession with his passion for wine since a long time.

We met him during **Michèle Shah**'s **Speedtasting**, a digital tasting and presentation event between Italian wineries and American importers, and he gave us a direct testimony about the trend of Italian wines in the US market.

1. Patrick, what changes have you perceived in the US wine market and what contribution can the figure of MW make to encourage the recovery of the sector?

As you know, each state is a separate market, so there are at least 50 markets in the US, some of which have experienced severe losses while others have suffered less.

However, alcohol consumption seems to have increased in the US during the Covid-19 pandemic, in fact the off-premise channel and liquor stores saw an increase in sales, even though more expensive wines suffered. Restaurant sales have suffered, as it is known, serious blows and they are recovering thanks to the increase of vaccinations and the consequent decrease of infections. At this early stage of reopening, the majority of restaurants are relying on last year's inventory, so I believe the restaurant industry will not fully recover until 2022.

In terms of Masters of wines, they have been active with a series of seminars and other online activities. Many of us are ready to enthusiastically promote wine and regions through educational activities, guided tastings and seminars. However, we all need to encourage people to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

2. We know you have visited Italy before and in particular Sicily with Michele Shah on a previous MW trip to Sicily. What is your relationship with our country and Italian wines?

Yes, I have been to Sicily, Alto Adige, Umbria and Tuscany. I love Italian people, wines and food, in fact at home we often cook traditional dishes and enjoy Made in Italy wines.

My fiancée, Bernadette, is ethnically of Italian descent, as her mother grew up outside of Rome, also, she is in the process of applying for Italian citizenship, so our ties are both deeply rooted and strong.

3. Italy has a great plethora of wines. Is this 'diversity' in Italian wine production perceived by US customers? Or should wineries improve their communication strategy and how should they communicate the incredible variety and diversity of their wines?

The diversity is fantastic and commercially speaking the work is progressing. For many American consumers, Italian wine is primarily characterized by the regions of Tuscany and Piedmont. That said, Sicily, Alto Adige and Umbria are making progress, especially in terms of new varieties and quality improvements. Wineries, however, should take steps to improve educational and marketing efforts.

4. In your experience, what should Italian wineries focus on in order to have a stronger market and positioning in the post-covid market?

Patience, which is easy to state and more difficult to accomplish. There will be a lag between the economic recovery and the recovery, in particular, of the horeca channel. That said, the next few years should present manufacturers with some good opportunities.

5. Was this the first Speedtasting you have attended? Can you tell us what you appreciated about the format?

Yes, it was my first time. I liked the range of regions and styles, as well as the diversity in presentation formats. It was also very intense, which was good. I also had the opportunity to receive wines from Italian producers at home, which allowed me to taste and revisit them several times over

the next two days and was very interesting.