

# The wine sector like the Italian national soccer team

scritto da Fabio Piccoli | 8 Luglio 2024



What have the challenges of our national soccer team against **Albania** and **Spain** during this edition of the European Championship taught us, at least to those millions of people who watched them? That winning against a weaker **team**(Albania) should not make you believe that with the same means and strategies you can beat a stronger team (Spain).

What our beloved **Italy** did, probably pushed by their **coach** but also by all the **players**, was, in a nutshell, an act of **presumption** or, at best, a dangerous **illusion**.

By pushing a bit, but not too much, I think this mistake of presumption or illusion is very similar to how our **wine sector** has been moving in recent years.

A sector that believes that since it has won for many years an

“easy” **championship**, characterized by a demand for high-quality wines exceeding the supply, with the same strategy and approach, it could be competitive even in a current market context.

And the shocking thing is that while coach **Spalletti** is desperately trying to adapt to the level of our current **competitors**, many of whom are decidedly stronger than our national team (unfortunately), our wine sector shows no sign of change.

It even does worse: on one hand, it declares that the market conditions have totally changed compared to the past but then, in the end, does not change anything in its strategies.

And this is the aspect that worries me the most. I am much more concerned about the staticity, the immobility of our wine system compared to the current revolutions in the markets and, in particular, the dynamics of **consumption**.

It saddens me greatly to observe this paralysis of our system because I believe that in reality, we have all the ingredients to be successful even today and in the near future.

In fact, while Spalletti can count on a small handful of players with medium-low **talent**, we could take advantage of the greatest, richest, and most extraordinary **biodiversity** in viticulture on this planet, and I challenge anyone to say otherwise.

The reality, in front of everyone, is that we use less than 10% of this great **heritage**, and I am optimistic. I don't want to resort to metaphors far more significant than trivial soccer, but if we were to use the beautiful parable of the **talents**, our wine sector would go straight to **hell** for having poorly used its own.

How many talents, in fact, continue to be buried by our wine companies, our **denominations**, our

professional **organizations** in the sector, the specialized **media** (that is, even us to be clear and transparent), but also the so-called **trade**, in short, the entire wine supply chain, in the illusory hope that they will bear fruit?

Everything that we fail to bring to light, to **enhance** and to make known cannot and will never succeed.

But if this is obvious, we must then ask ourselves why we cannot capitalize better on a heritage of such great value.

I think for two main reasons that might seem contradictory to each other:

The first: a lack of awareness of our values; The second: a lack of awareness of our limits. And here we return to our national soccer team, which is certainly not among the best but since it is not fully aware of its values and its limits, it risks going onto the field with the wrong men and strategies.

Since, as Darwinian theories have well explained to us, it is not the strongest who survive but those who can best adapt to changing conditions, I do not have particular optimism about our **Azzurri** (I obviously hope to be proved wrong), but unfortunately, I lose confidence day after day also in the ability of our wine sector to react, to respond adequately to current challenges.

But if in soccer it is enough to replace one player with another who scores a goal at the last second and lets you pass the round (Saint Zaccagni), in the real world of wine, the processes of change must be planned over time with daily and constant investments.

However, if I observe, in this regard, the exhausting slowness in the renewal of the leadership class of Italian wine both within private companies (where generational change appears

more complex than quantum theories) and in institutions, then it unfortunately becomes easy for me to think that the “enemy” is not outside in the market, but “inside”.