The many languages of terroir

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Although there are several keys to interpret wine quality, the most important one is almost always the pleasure you get, a good food and wine pairing, a chance to share happy moments. In order to understand what a wine is able to narrate beyond a first shallow nose-palate impression, we should never overlook the concept of terroir, which for many wine enthusiasts is truly a focus. Terroir is a French term with no precise translation, which summarizes a combination of values and characteristics of a wine: soil, climate, grape variety, man's contribution and winemaking. To judge a wine, it is therefore essential to have the whole picture and consider all these variables. Is that a forced choice? Absolutely not. The great thing about tasting a wine is that you can decide the aspects which are worth exploring in depth: the grape variety as the source of a wine, or the winemaker with his history and style.

Through our column we aim to provide some keys to understanding Italy's major varieties and wines, offering different points of view and trying to help avoid most of the clichés associated with wine business. One of these is that Italian Moscato is an easy-to-drink wine, that Soave is just a fresh white wine, that Lambrusco is a simple and light wine and that Amarone of Valpolicella is always a noble one.

Hence, if our goal is to provide helpful and simple tools to better understand Italian wines, we cannot leave out the concept of terroir and all its meanings. Without claiming to fully treat all diverse Italy's terroirs and their characteristics – as it would really be a challenge – we are going to highlight what we consider the most interesting aspects and some curiosities, to help wine lovers around the world become not only passionate about but also expert in the multi-faceted Italian wine industry.