USA and Norway: Vitevis' future export opportunities

scritto da Agnese Ceschi | 13 Ottobre 2023

First of all, can you tell us about Cantine Vitevis?

Cantine Vitevis is a relatively young cooperative, born in 2015 but with a hundred year background and history thanks to the heritage of our vine-growers who belong to the four original cooperatives. VITEVIS is the result of two mergers: the first one among the cooperatives of Vicenza when Cantina Colli Vicentini in Montecchio Maggiore (founded in 1955), Cantina di Gambellara in Gambellara (founded in 1947) and Cantina Valleogra in Malo (founded in 1961) decided to start this ambitious project. Then there was an important second merger that happened in 2019 when Cantina di Castelnuovo del Garda, located in Castelnuovo del Garda (founded in 1958) joined the Vitevis family by adding to the group a wide range of Veronese denominations, energy and new opportunities in the

market, both domestic and export.

What are the leading export markets for Vitevis international development?

The main market is the on-trade and the leading export markets are UK, Germany, USA but in total we export into 50 countries where we try to find reliable partners that understand our philosophy and appreciate our wines, service and flexibility in order to grow together. Off-trade is interesting to us when there is space for the promotion of a denomination, better if less famous, or a mutual project.

What is your experience in the USA, a very important market for the Italian brand?

We have more than one importers because working on federal basis is really demanding and probably until now we were even not ready. In the last five years, including the difficult years of the pandemic crisis, we have been very much busy in the internal “growth-on-progress” that we probably did not focus enough on this important market.

Us Market is not only the American dream as everybody knows, but it’s an important source of appealing ideas, trends and market niches where it is still possible to drive consumers to discover new denomination, autochthon varieties that are the treasure of Italian wine world. It takes time, we know, but we feel confident now to start investing more energy in US and evaluating interesting projects there.

What is the most challenging market for you in this moment?

The Norwegian market is a challenging market because like the other Scandinavian countries is ruled by State Monopoly. Despite the few quantity sold in the private ordering category, the main business is still dominated by the brands and the items different that you can find on the shelves of the Monopoly shops.

It’s very important the relationship that you establish with the agent over there. Agents effectively are the people that act as your brand ambassador in Norway.

We started some years ago to introduce in the Norwegian market our Lessini Durello Sparkling both in the Champenois and in the Charmat Method. We tried to attract interest in this denomination by creating **a Xmas Edition** too, because we thought that the wine profile perfectly fits with their cuisine and with people’s taste and curiosity towards new denomination.

All this commercial project is coordinated to the sustainability path that Vitevis took years ago.

Norwegian Christmas campaign

Sustainability is an important key point…

By using the important information that we electronically collect from our vine-growers about all steps in the vineyards (fertilizing, irrigation and treatments, soil mapping, etc..), we started good practises to decrease the impact of our footprint in the environment. For all of us in Vitevis, sustainability is not only a trendy subject but it is an

important concept that needs tangible changes in our everyday life. Our vine-growers are the guardian of our territory, vineyards, biodiversity and Vitevis realized that this heritage must be protected in all production steps, not only in the fields but in the wine-making process, in the bottling dept., etc… everyone is involved in the protection of our new generation's future.

What goals have you got in both markets: USA and Norway?

We know both markets have specific patterns that are somehow opposite: US is relatively more easy to deal with, Norwegian Monopoly is obviously more strict to approach, but they are similar in terms of end-consumers willing to know more about Italy, about our territory, food and wine.

Our aim is to give a genuine approach to these markets, expressing the wide range of wines that we can offer: still, demi-sparkling and sparkling wines. Prosecco and Pinot Grigio can initially help us in US to start discussing with partners but then for us it's important to create curiosity for other denomination, that we can offer there both in quality and in volume.

… and in Norway?

In Norway it's different: the Equalitas certification, the "green way" we are currently following is an essential key point in Norway and in all Scandinavian markets and we know that we can grow step by step with little patience by supporting our partner there in terms of know-how and inspiration.