vinetur

Piedmont's challenging year

Record temperatures and drought lead to decreased production but high-quality grapes

Monday, January 29, 2024



Langhe vineyards in Barolo village, Piedmont, Italy

The wine industry in Piedmont, a renowned region in Italy known for its high-quality wines, faced significant climatic challenges in 2023. The year was marked by record temperatures and prolonged drought, factors that led to a substantial decrease in grape production. The total output was approximately 2.06 million hectoliters, a 14% reduction from the 2.26 million hectoliters produced in 2022. Despite these adversities,

the quality of the grapes harvested was rated highly, receiving an average quality score of "eight stars" out of ten.

These insights emerged from the comprehensive analysis conducted by oenologists, agronomists, and industry journalists for the annual publication "L'Annata Vitivinicola in Piedmont 2023". This report, curated by Vignaioli Piedmontsi and the Piedmont Region, meticulously examines technical data and evaluations of the most recent harvest and the general economic trends in the viticulture sector. This publication, a tradition since 1992, was presented in Turin at the Palazzo della Regione.

Marco Protopapa, the Regional Councillor for Agriculture in Piedmont, highlighted the epochal changes confronting both viticulture and agriculture in the region. He pointed out the challenges posed by two consecutive years of drought, high summer temperatures, the lack of snowfall, and consequently, diminishing water reserves. These factors have led to a decrease in grape production and uncertainty in international markets, affecting the Italian wine system as a whole. Protopapa emphasized the importance of recognizing and leveraging opportunities in these difficult times. Investing in promoting local excellences, such as high-quality cuisine, fine wines, and UNESCO World Heritage landscapes, could strengthen the region's appeal to tourists, supporting the local economy and creating job opportunities, particularly for the youth.

Giulio Porzio of Vignaioli Piedmontsi commented on the year's challenges, particularly the scarcity of water and diseases like the golden flavescence, which have reduced yields per hectare and viticulturists' incomes. He stressed the need for action and investment in new strategies to ensure a sustainable future for viticulture in the UNESCO hills.

The technical aspects of the report were presented by Federico Spanna from the Piedmont Region and Michele Vigasio from Vignaioli Piedmontsi. Additional insights were provided by Tiziana Sarnari from ISMEA, who discussed the state of geographical indications focusing on Piedmont wines with a Denomination of Origin, and Denis Pantini from NOMISMA, who presented the competitive positioning and market performance of Piedmontse wines.

The event concluded with the presentation of David Way's book "The Wines of Piedmont," which offers an engaging account of the region's grape varieties and their origins. Alessandra Biondi Bartolini, the scientific director of Millevigne, the technical magazine of Vignaioli Piedmontsi, moderated the event.