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Europe Backed Campaign Boosts Sicilian and Alto Adige Wines

Three-year initiative aims to educate consumers on Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) labels

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The promotion of quality labels for European wines has gained prominence through the "Europe for the Senses" campaign, a three-year initiative launched in 2023 aimed at highlighting the importance of Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) certifications. Focused on wines from the Italian regions of Mount Etna and Alto Adige, the campaign is supported by local wine consortia and the European Union. Its primary objective is to

raise awareness among consumers and industry professionals in Europe about the standards that ensure authenticity and quality.

A recent event in London brought together wine trade experts for a tasting masterclass that showcased Sicilian wines. During the session, emphasis was placed on the influence of the unique landscapes of Mount Etna and Alto Adige on the quality of the wines they produce. Both regions, emblematic of the diversity of Italian wine, boast a winemaking heritage rooted in centuries of tradition and techniques tailored to their specific conditions.

Mount Etna, located in Sicily, has been a symbol of viticulture since ancient times, with the Greeks introducing organized winemaking practices in the 8th century BC. Today, wines certified under the Etna DOC designation are distinguished by a distinctive mineral profile shaped by volcanic soils and a climate marked by extreme temperatures. The vineyard terraces, often situated on steep slopes, reflect the labor-intensive effort required to cultivate grapes in this challenging environment.

Alto Adige, in northern Italy, presents a winemaking heritage shaped by Roman, German, and Austrian influences. Its vineyards, located between the Alps and the Mediterranean, benefit from diverse microclimates and high altitudes, resulting in wines known for their balance and precision. Sustainability and biodiversity are key pillars of the winemaking process in this region.

Maurizio Lunetta, director of the Etna DOC Consortium, highlighted the importance of understanding the differences between the four slopes of the Etna region, each with unique climates and conditions that affect the final product. Lunetta noted that this complexity gives Etna wines a distinctive character, making them particularly valued.

The campaign's focus extends beyond established wines, aiming to bring visibility to emerging producers seeking to enter the market. Lunetta mentioned that these efforts have significantly increased recognition of Etna PDO wines through a mix of promotional events and marketing tools designed to appeal to both industry professionals and consumers.

The decision to combine the Etna and Alto Adige regions in this initiative reflects a strategic approach. Both regions represent the diversity and richness of Italian wines while sharing a commitment to quality and sustainability. The campaign has targeted key markets, particularly in the United Kingdom and Switzerland, chosen for their proximity and interest in high-quality, authentic products.

Sustainability plays a crucial role in the campaign, particularly regarding PDO certifications. Lunetta noted that approximately 60% of vineyards in the Etna region are already certified organic, with additional efforts underway to implement sustainable practices that benefit the environment and align with consumers' growing appreciation for eco-responsible products.

The PDO designation is positioned as a guarantee of authenticity, traceability, and quality. Lunetta explained that the label certifies that the wine has been produced under strict regulations, reflecting the unique characteristics of the terroir and craftsmanship of the region. It also protects consumers from imitations, ensuring that each bottle faithfully represents the heritage and standards of its origin.

The "Europe for the Senses" campaign will remain active until 2026, with the goal of consolidating the presence of these wines in strategic markets and reaffirming the value of quality certifications as symbols of authenticity and commitment.