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Garda DOC wine consortium explores growth and international potential at Peschiera del Garda conference

Industry leaders discuss market trends, brand identity, and export strategies to strengthen Garda DOC’s presence in Italy and abroad

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On June 9, the Garda DOC Consortium hosted a conference in Peschiera del Garda to examine the current state and future prospects of the Garda DOC wine denomination. The event, titled “Garda DOC between HORECA and large-scale retail: figures, perceptions, and prospects,” brought together key players from the hospitality sector

(HORECA), large-scale retail, and the wine industry. The goal was to analyze market data, share insights from buyers, and discuss strategies for strengthening the Garda DOC brand both in Italy and abroad.

The conference featured the presentation of a research project developed by Wine Meridian. This study combined quantitative data—collected with support from Consorzio Distributori Alimentari (CDA)—with qualitative feedback from a panel of experts that included sommeliers, journalists, restaurateurs, and bloggers. The research focused on how Garda DOC wines are performing in strategic areas of Northern Italy and how they are perceived by professionals in the field.

Paolo Fiorini, President of the Garda DOC Consortium, opened the event by highlighting the denomination’s strong growth potential in Italy’s HORECA sector. He explained that the Consortium has been working since 2022 on a multi-year project to provide producers with practical tools and reliable data. The aim is to help them navigate distribution challenges and build a recognizable identity tied to Lake Garda’s unique landscape.

Speakers at the conference included Christoph Mack, CEO of Mack & Schühle AG; Fabio Piccoli, Editor-in-Chief of Wine Meridian; Lucio Roncoroni, General Director of CDA; Daniele Colombo, Wine and Spirits Category Manager at Esselunga; Helena Mariscal, Purchasing Director for Private Labels at Mack & Schühle AG; and Nicholas Moschi, Purchasing Director at Liberty Wines. Each offered perspectives on domestic and international markets, as well as on traditional and modern distribution channels.

Christoph Mack emphasized that Garda DOC wines have the qualities needed to become a reference point in international markets. He pointed out their modern style and accessibility, as well as their deep connection to Lake Garda—a region known for its mild climate and hospitality. Mack noted that German consumers are especially drawn to this area and its wines.

Daniele Colombo from Esselunga discussed his company’s commitment to promoting Italian products. He said that Esselunga dedicates significant shelf space to wine in its stores and has developed an e-commerce platform to reach more customers. Colombo believes that Garda DOC’s international reputation gives it strong growth potential.

Fabio Piccoli described Garda DOC as a contemporary territorial system that is directly engaging with end consumers for the first time. He said this approach goes beyond simple promotion by involving buyers in shaping the denomination’s development.

Lucio Roncoroni of CDA called Garda DOC an “identity platform” that represents an evolved idea of Italian style—elegant yet accessible. He stressed the importance of building a consistent narrative across the entire supply chain to make Garda DOC more recognizable.

Nicholas Moschi from Liberty Wines said that Garda DOC appeals to young, international consumers who value quality and authenticity. He praised local producers for maintaining winemaking traditions while adapting to new trends.

Helena Mariscal highlighted Garda DOC’s appeal in Germany, where it is seen as an authentic expression of Italian lifestyle. She noted that wine tourism around Lake Garda helps promote the brand internationally. Mariscal also pointed out that export-oriented distribution allows Garda DOC to reach key markets such as Germany, Switzerland, and France.

The research presented at the conference showed that trade professionals appreciate Garda DOC wines for their versatility, freshness, and connection to a region known for its high quality of life and tourism appeal. The event facilitated dialogue among distributors, retailers, HORECA operators, and Consortium members about future promotional strategies.

The Garda DOC Consortium continues to invest in research and communication efforts aimed at supporting growth through targeted actions based on market analysis. The denomination covers a hilly region between Lombardy and Veneto along Lake Garda’s shores. It benefits from special climatic conditions that shape its grape varieties’ characteristics.

Garda DOC was first recognized in 1996 to promote varietal wines from ten historic winemaking zones around Lake Garda. Official recognition by Italy’s Ministry came in 2015, with full operation since 2016. Today, the Consortium represents 250 producers committed to upholding one of Italy’s leading food and wine traditions while adapting to changing consumer demands.