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Italian Wine Consortiums With €660 Million Turnover Revive Master of Wine Training After Pandemic Pause

Prestigious course returns to Italy in 2026, aiming to boost global expertise and international recognition for Italian wine professionals

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The Istituto Grandi Marchi, a group of 18 leading Italian wine producers, has announced it will resume its investment in the education of future Masters of Wine. This initiative, which was paused in 2020 due to the pandemic, will restart in 2026 with the

organization once again sponsoring the Institute of Masters of Wine. The group includes well-known names such as Antinori, Argiolas, Ca’ del Bosco, Carpenè Malvolti, Col d’Orcia, Donnafugata, Jermann, Lungarotti, Masi, Mastroberardino, Michele Chiarlo, Pio Cesare, Rivera, Tasca d’Almerita, Tenuta San Guido, Tenuta San Leonardo, Tenute Folonari and Umani Ronchi. Together, these wineries reported a combined turnover of 660 million euros in 2024, with 55 percent coming from exports.

The renewed partnership will be marked by the return of the introductory course for aspiring Masters of Wine to Italy in March 2026. The event will take place at the Rivera winery in Puglia and is open to students and professionals from around the world who are interested in pursuing the prestigious Master of Wine program. The course will offer participants an introduction to the methodologies and standards required for one of the most respected qualifications in the wine industry.

From 2012 to 2019, Istituto Grandi Marchi supported similar educational initiatives by hosting courses at various member wineries. These efforts provided early exposure to the rigorous training needed to become a Master of Wine. The program was interrupted in 2020 due to global health concerns but is now being relaunched with renewed commitment from the group.

According to an official statement from Istituto Grandi Marchi, this renewed effort reflects their ongoing dedication to supporting the development of new professionals who can represent Italian wine on an international stage. The group emphasizes the need for solid expertise and a contemporary approach in a sector that is increasingly demanding. Their support has already contributed to Italy’s current roster of three Masters of Wine: Gabriele Gorelli, Andrea Lonardi and Pietro Russo.

Piero Mastroberardino, president of Istituto Grandi Marchi, said that resuming this collaboration is important for both Italian wine and international wine education. He highlighted that opening the course to participants from around the world encourages international dialogue and strengthens Italy’s reputation as a center for wine education. Mastroberardino also noted that as ambassadors for Italian wine, the group is committed to supporting those who promote wine as a language and shared heritage.

The upcoming course at Rivera will run from March 26 to March 29, 2026. It will feature instruction from Gabriele Gorelli and Demetri Walters. The program will include theoretical lessons and tastings of wines from around the world. Participants will also benefit from the instructors’ professional experiences.

The return of this educational initiative signals a renewed focus on high-level training within Italy’s wine sector. By investing in future professionals and supporting internationally recognized programs like the Master of Wine, Istituto Grandi Marchi aims to ensure that Italian wine continues to be represented by knowledgeable experts on a global scale.