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Forbes Italia Unveils 100 Iconic Wineries Shaping the Future of Italian Wine

Exclusive Milan event spotlights innovation, sustainability and diversity as key drivers in Italy’s evolving wine industry

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Forbes Italia has announced its list of the 100 “Iconic Wineries” for 2026, highlighting Italian wine producers that are shaping the future of the country’s enology. The announcement took place at an exclusive event at the Hotel Principe di Savoia in Milan. The selection was curated by Cristina Mercuri, a wine educator and founder of Mercuri Wine Club, who recently became the first Italian woman to earn the title of Master of Wine from the Institute of Masters of Wine.

The wineries chosen represent a broad spectrum of Italy’s wine landscape, from historic estates to innovative newcomers. Notable names include Allegrini, Argiano, Argiolas, Avignonesi, Banfi, Barone Pizzini, Bellavista, Berlucchi, Lungarotti, Ca’ del Bosco, Ceretto, Donnafugata, Ferrari Lunelli, Frescobaldi, Marchesi di Barolo, Planeta and Zenato. The list also features smaller producers such as Burato and Col di Lamo.

In addition to the main list, Forbes Italia awarded 11 special prizes to wineries and individuals who have demonstrated excellence in specific areas. Baglio di Pianetto received the Contemporary Award for its modern interpretation of Sicilian wine. Bellavista’s brand manager Alessandro Massano was recognized with the Iconic Man Award for his leadership in Franciacorta. Chiara Lungarotti of Lungarotti won the Iconic Woman Award for her role in guiding one of Umbria’s most important wineries.

Other special awards included Emerging Winery for Burato, Research and Development for Ca’ del Bosco, Diversity for Castello di Vicarello, Niche for Col di Lamo, Quality Price Ratio for Lini 910, Terroir Driven for Tenuta San Leonardo and Sustainability for Tenuta di Valgiano. Roberto Di Meo was honored with the Pioneer Award as Cantina Di Meo celebrates its 40th anniversary this summer. He was recognized for his work in redefining the perception of native white grape varieties from Irpinia through research and refinement.

The event also highlighted professionals known as “Maestri del Calice,” experts in hospitality who excel in wine selection at top Italian restaurants. This recognition was overseen by Alberto Cauzzi, a well-known food critic focused on high-end Italian dining.

Forbes Italia’s initiative aims to celebrate not only established excellence but also innovation and diversity within Italy’s wine sector. The awards reflect a growing emphasis on sustainability and brand reputation among Italian wineries. Many

recipients have been recognized for their commitment to environmental practices and their ability to adapt to changing consumer preferences.

Special mentions were given in several categories. The New Classic – Etna category honored producers contributing to Etna’s emergence as a world-class wine region. Innovators of the Year recognized those developing dealcoholized wines to meet evolving consumption trends without sacrificing quality or identity. Beyond the Appellation acknowledged projects redefining territorial identity and creating new models within Italian wine.

The selection process considered factors such as environmental sustainability, technological innovation and international market presence. The event brought together industry leaders to share stories and strategies that are influencing both Italian wine culture and global perceptions of Italian wines.

Italy remains one of the world’s leading wine producers, with exports accounting for more than 20% of global trade in recent years. The recognition by Forbes Italia underscores the dynamic nature of the sector and its importance to both national culture and economy. The focus on sustainability and innovation reflects broader trends in global gastronomy and beverage industries.

The celebration at Milan’s Hotel Principe di Savoia served as both a recognition of achievement and a platform for discussing future challenges facing Italian winemakers. Attendees included winery owners, managers, sommeliers and industry experts from across Italy. The event reinforced Italy’s reputation as a center of excellence in wine production while highlighting new directions driven by creativity and responsible practices.