**Are the Chinese Millennials any different from others with regards to Wine?**

Only two days to go to wine2wine, the first event in Italy to be entirely dedicated to the wine business organized by Veronafiere in collaboration with Federvini and Unione Italiana Vini: two days of seminars and workshops held by key players of different business sectors who will offer Italian wine producers, journalists and wine professionals useful information and the necessary know-how to face an increasingly complex and ever-changing market.

The opening session of the event will be entirely dedicated to China thus confirming the great importance ascribed to this potential and growing wine market. It is not by chance that the title of the workshop, ”The new faces of the Chinese market”, reflects the young age of the speakers, legitimately to be considered to be part of the Millennial Generation, also called the “Net generation”: the growing interest in wine in China is, in fact, strongly correlated to the circulation of internet lines and smartphones that today represent the main purchasing instrument amongst young Chinese consumers.

Today the Chinese wine market is undergoing an evident slowdown generated by the need for new selling models and the creation of anti-corruption policies that have mostly affected local production. According to Yanni Wu, though, one of the speakers at the session and ex General Manager of WINE100 Challenge, this phenomenon is only to be considered as a moment of transition between two important phases: the “consumer era” of tomorrow and the “old glory days” of the past when both imported wine and local production were undergoing a consistent growth and wine was still regarded almost exclusively as a gift. During the workshop Ms. Wu will be offering and overview of the current Chinese wine market as well as an in-depth analysis of the driving forces behind a generalized optimistic vision of the future, both from a microscopic and a macroscopic perspective.

According to Vinexpo Projections, in fact, between 2013 and 2017, Chinese wine consumption will take off again growing by 33.8% in the course of the next five years to reach 230 million 9-litre cases by 2017. Ms. Wu will go on to highlight some of the barriers that need to be overcome in order to achieve this growth including the difficulty that consumers have when faced by the choice of where and what to buy and the need for a greater communication between professionals and the consumers themselves. Next year’s first edition of the Shanghai Wine and Dine Festival could certainly offer a positive example in this sense: thanks to the coordination amongst wine, food and marketing experts, local consumers will have the opportunity to visit and get to know wines from all over the world, including those from the Italian Pavilion that will be entirely coordinated by [Vinitaly](http://www.vinitalyinternational.com/pressreleases/vinitaly-leads-italian-pavilion-shanghai-wine-dine-festival-2015).

Many of the attendees will no doubt also be coming to listen to **Judy Chan,** president of Grace Vineyard and considered to be the finest wine producer in China. Listed in most of the top-end hotels and restaurants in the country, Grace Vineyard has grown a great deal in recent years and has attracted such worldwide attention to become a Harvard Business School’s case study in 2008, thanks to the managerial talent of this young woman who took over the company from her father’s hands when she was only 24.

The Grace model has evolved throughout the years initially struggling to sell the concept of fine wine to Chinese buyers in a strongly segmented market where living habits greatly change from North to South. Today, Grace makes more than two million bottles a year, with grapes like the Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot in its Chairman’s Reserve.

A greater understanding of wine in general is no doubt also benefitting wine import since consumers area gradually starting to seek for something new and different and finding it outside the country’s boundaries.

The expected 15.6% increase of local wine production over the next five years should not, therefore, be considered a threat, but an opportunity for all Italian wine producers wishing to export to China.

“The formation of this panel is in many ways dedicated to the Millennials of China, not very different from their counterparts in other parts of the world. The main difference, however, is the fact that in China wine knowledge and consumption is still at its early stage but social media will foster bridging this gap. Despite, the recent economic slowdown, Millennials who now lead many corporate structures or entreprenuers will become opinion leaders in lifestyle trends, including wine choices.”

**Yang Lu,** by many considered the best sommelier in China is wine director for Shangri-La Hotels and the only Advanced Sommelier from Greater China will also be speaking at the session offering an overview of consumer trends and what it takes to produce a good wine. He will also underline the difference between Hong Kong and Mainland China with regards to wine consumption patterns.