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**Press Release  
For Immediate Release**



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## **Wine Without Walls: They Say They Want a (Wine) Revolution**

On April 1 in Verona, Vinality held its first ever competition for "natural" wines; though the term carries no legal definition, it generally denotes wines made from organic or biodynamic viticulture, with minimal technological or chemical intervention. The competition broke with convention not only for the wines involved, but for the judging process; instead of receiving points, the wines were evaluated on whether they expressed eight characteristics: liveliness, evolution in the glass, balance, drinkability, emotional impact, savoriness, transparency, and sense of place. Wines that expressed six or more of those qualities were selected for recognition.

The international panel of judges chaired by Alice Feiring - a world-renowned author, journalist, wine consultant and authority on natural wine - included Mike Bennie (Australia), Pietro Vergano (Italy), Diego Sorba (Italy), and Pascaline Lepeltier (USA). Out of 76 samples submitted, the judges selected 17 wines. In the category of wines without sulfites, Emilian winery Ca De' Noci took two awards for their 2014 Emilia IGT Bianco Frizzante "Le Rose" and 2013 Emilia IGT Bianco "Notte di Luna;" German winery Bernhard Völker won for the 2Naturkinder Heimat Silvaner.

Fourteen wines were recognized in the category of wines made with sulfites totaling no more than 40 mg/L. Acclaimed Abruzzese winemaker Emidio Pepe performed well with both their 2007 Trebbiano D'Abruzzo DOC and 2001 Montepulciano D'Abruzzo DOC. A number of Georgian wines were among those selected, including Pheasant's Tears' 2014 Mtsvane, Ramaz Nikoladze and Iago's Wine; the list of winners including producers from Italy, Slovenia, Georgia, France, and Chile can be found at: <http://www.vinality.com/globalassets/pdf/concorsi-enologici/free-wine/standings-wine-without-walls.pdf>.

The competition took place concurrently with 5 Star Wines, Vinality's International wine award, spearheaded by Managing Director of Vinality International Stevie Kim and Scientific Director of the Vinality International Academy Ian D'Agata. "It was time to create a completely different competition, and so we naturally turned to Alice Feiring, because she is such an internationally recognized expert on natural wine," explains Stevie Kim. "There is a growing number of producers of these wines - probably more than we realize, because many of them may be producing wines "naturally" but don't want to be labelled as such. But the market is there now, especially among the younger generation, and it's time we embrace it because we need to create additional means to reach that market."

"The fact that this particular wine award is being given at such a venerable institution like Vinality is a message to all of the other wine festivals all around the world, that this



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movement of natural wine is gaining strength – that it is now a force that's undeniable," explains Alice Feiring. "I called it Wine Without Walls because it does really deconstruct the way we've been drinking wine in the past three decades. The fact that Vinality brought an outsider world inside the walls is just revolutionary."

The panel of judges praised the establishment of this new competition, as well as the innovation in the evaluation criteria. "The new evaluation method we used in this tasting is much more interesting than seeing just numbers or votes or medals," says Pietro Vergano, co-founder of Consorzio Restaurant in Turin. "To evaluate the drinkability, the acidity, the connection to the land – that's much more interesting. For us it's revolutionary, and I hope it catches on for other competitions."

"I think it's very important that finally the world of natural wine is starting to be recognized at an international level, because it's not a category that can be ignored anymore," observes Pascaline Lepeltier, Master Sommelier and Beverage Director for Rouge Tomate in New York. "It was great that Alice offered an alternative way of assessing the quality of this wine – it creates a new way of reading, appreciating, and giving feedback to the winery and to the consumer. Vinality took a risk, and I think it's a great challenge."

"It's an extraordinary opportunity to look at a breadth of esoteric, artisanal wines from around the world that wouldn't make it into most international competitions," agrees Mike Bennie, wine writer and co-founder of Rootstock Sydney wine and food festival. "The fact that there's this diversity of style is a great credit to this organization, and the competition has a loyal following that people are interested in investing in."

The participating producers likewise found the new competition a suitable evaluation of their unconventional wines and production styles. "My family always felt that judging wine with scores was too reductive and did not do justice to natural wines that truly express their terroir," says Chiara De Iulis Pepe of the winning Emidio Pepe winery. "Most classic competitions don't allow enough time for natural wines to express themselves properly. Wine Without Walls was a real revolution in the wine competition world and for Vinality in particular. It's great to have people thinking more about terroir and emotional impact when they judge wines rather than the level of acidity or the color of the wine - all characteristics resulting from winemaking techniques, not from nature."



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### **About:**

Veronafiere is the leading organizer of trade shows in Italy including Vinality ([www.vinality.com](http://www.vinality.com)), the largest wine and spirits fair in the world. During its 49th edition Vinality counted some 4,000 exhibitors on a 100,000 square meter area and 150,000 visitors including 2,600 journalists from 46 different countries. The next edition of the fair will take place on 10 - 13 April 2016. The premier event to Vinality, OperaWine ([www.vinalityinternational.com](http://www.vinalityinternational.com)) "Finest Italian Wines: 100 Great Producers," will unite international wine professionals on April 9th in the heart of Verona, offering them the unique opportunity to discover and taste the wines of the 100 Best Italian Producers, as selected by Wine Spectator. Since 1998 Vinality International travels to several countries such as Russia, China, USA and Hong Kong thanks to its strategic arm abroad, Vinality International. In February 2014 Vinality International launched an educational project, the Vinality International Academy (VIA) with the aim of divulging and broadcasting the excellence and diversity of Italian wine around the globe. VIA has now also organized its very first Certification Course with the aim of creating new Ambassadors of Italian Wine in the World.

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