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**Vinitaly International Academy presents Wines from Ningxia, the so-called Chinese Bordeaux**

On Wednesday, April 12th from 1:30pm during Vinitaly, Vinitaly International Academy (VIA) will hold a tasting seminar on wines from Ningxia, China lead by VIA’s scientific director Dr.Ian D’Agata, and Ms.Zhang Jinglin, a Vinitaly International Academy certified VIA Expert. It will be the first time VIA will present a seminar on Ningxia wines during Vinitaly.

Ningxia wine region, situated 1000km west of Beijing, right beside the Gobi desert in central China, is rapidly gaining an international reputation as the “Bordeaux region of China.” In fact, in recent blind wine-tasting competitions, the Ningxia wines have done even better than Bordeaux Wines in the same price bracket. This tasting will showcase the diversity and potential of this region’s still red, still white and sparkling wines, in addition to its famous Bordeaux Blend style reds.

Zhang Jinglin explains, “Within China, Ningxia has the best terroir for wine production, compared to Xinjiang where the sugar accumulates too fast and Yantai where grapes struggle to ripen. Ningxia offers the climatic condition that helps to achieve the best phenolic ripeness while avoiding the sugar level to go too high. The biggest advantage is the absence of phylloxera, thus there is no need to use American rootstock, which restrains the expression of grape characters. There is the hope of being able to produce the most terroir driven wine here without the pressure from pests and diseases. The western wineries admire us for this condition.”

As a matter of fact, there is an immense amount of investment pouring into Ningxia, both from China and abroad. For example, Domain Chandon Ningxia Moet Hennessy is a joint venture between the giant Moet Hennessy and the local Ningxia Agronomic Group. Starting from scratch, the local group succeeding in making their original sparkling wine with the guidance from the Australian team of Moet Hennessy. Now they own an immense amount of land in Ningxia, foreseeing more wine consumption in the domestic market in the near future.

Ningxia has just entered a phase of rapid development in the past 7 years, and the numbers of wineries have increased from several to 180. It seems that Ningxia never lacks investment at the moment, thanks to the support from the government and talents from abroad. However, “the rapid development was not without challenges”, confirms Jinglin, “The lack of advanced equipment, labour intensive vineyard management and less than perfect infrastructural conditions are some of the challenges we’ve had to face and in doing so Ningxia is embracing a brighter future”.

China has always been regarded as a potential wine market but what can not be missed is that it has also become the 5th largest wine producing country in the world, and Ningxia is undoubtedly the fastest growing and promising area within the country. “That is exactly why we are doing this tasting of Ningxia Wines”, confirms Stevie Kim, Managing Director of Vinitaly International. “China is the future market for Italian wines. It is important to understand the local wines in order to fully embrace the market.”

“One of the most interesting aspects of Ningxia is that they have some of the most enthusiastic and young wine makers, who are open minded, international and love to embrace innovation”, explains Jinglin. For example, “Bona Baifu made the first natural wine in China and all their production is biodynamic. Their wine makers are a young couple graduated from Burgundy. In fact, Ningxia has the ideal condition for biodynamic wine making: dry climate, low humidity and zero pollution because it is a very underdeveloped area.” Facing harsh viticulture conditions, with the support of the local government and inflowing wine talents, Ningxia wine is exploring and defining its unique style.

The presence of Ningxia Wines during the Vinitaly International Academy seminars at Vinitaly confirms, once again, the Academy’s commitment to excellence in wine education. Since 2014, the Academy has certified 6 Italian Wine Experts and 55 Italian Wine Ambassadors from around the world. The Vinitaly International Academy Executive Seminars, including Spurrier’s talk, will take place in the new Vinitaly International headquarters, also the home of Vinitaly International Academy, wine2digital. wine2digital is a multifunctional space for educational initiatives, wine showcases, and office space located in the PalaExpo of Veronafiere. It is also a shared community whose mission is to facilitate the communication and promotion of Italian wine abroad in an innovative and digital way.

About:

Veronafiere is the leading organizer of trade shows in Italy including Vinitaly (www.vinitaly.com), the largest wine and spirits fair in the world. During its 50th edition Vinitaly counted more than 4,100 exhibitors on a 100,000+ square meter area and 130,000 visitors from 140 different countries. The next edition of the fair will take place on 9 - 12 April 2017. The premier event to Vinitaly, OperaWine (www.operawine.it) “Finest Italian Wines: 100 Great Producers,” will unite international wine professionals on April 8th 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 Vinitaly International travels to several countries such as Russia, China, USA and Hong Kong thanks to its strategic arm abroad, Vinitaly International. In February 2014 Vinitaly International launched an educational project, the Vinitaly International Academy (VIA) with the aim of divulging and broadcasting the excellence and diversity of Italian wine around the globe. VIA this year launched the second edition of its Certification Course and today counts 55 Italian Wine Ambassadors and 6 Italian Wine Experts.