

Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## Italy's wine business forum wine2wine 2019 presented the wine industry of the future

**On November 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, over 1500 wine professionals gathered in Verona, Italy, to look into the latest wine trends in the industry during Veronafiere and Vinitaly's annual business forum wine2wine. The forum's 67 sessions delivered by 110 Italian and international experts ranged from social sustainability to consumer behavior and are now publicly available on the wine2wine Facebook page thanks to the live-stream which took place during the event.**

Thirst for knowledge among wine professionals has no limits. With the latest industry insights, strategic networking opportunities, and a cohort of more than 110 Italian and international speakers, the wine2wine 2019 business forum sought to quench this thirst. This year, over 1500 wine producers, trade professionals, and international journalists travelled to Verona, Italy, on November 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, to attend wine2wine's 67 engaging seminars and workshops. The main focus of the sixth edition of wine2wine was "social sustainability in the wine industry". In choosing this overarching theme, wine2wine aimed to draw attention to the impact of wine businesses and industry players in the wine value chain, to shift thinking to consider the principles of social sustainability as complimentary to economic viability, and to analyze business practices that promote human wellbeing and inclusivity.



Yannick Benjamin, Keynote Speaker at wine2wine2019

Yannick Benjamin, the event's Keynote Speaker and a sommelier and disability rights activist, was first up to discuss this point. Benjamin shared his personal story and how he managed to work in the hospitality industry overcoming significant obstacles after a car accident left him paralyzed from the waist down at the age of 25 and finally opening NYC's first fully accessible restaurant "Contento". Benjamin commented on what social sustainability means to him: *"For me, social sustainability is taking your resources and sharing them with your community. We all acquired wealth because of the resources that someone else previously shared with us and that is exactly what we should keep doing: take and give back in a never-ending circle. You are only being truly socially sustainable when you use your resources to help the rest of the society. For example, I am a person living with a disability who works in the hospitality industry and it is up to me to try and open the doors for other disabled people so they have the opportunity to come and work in this sector."*

wine2wine 2019 explored all the various nuances of social sustainability: Kristina Kelley, Senior Director of Corporate Public Relations at E. & J. Gallo Winery shared with attendees her expertise about corporate social responsibility. Julia Coney, wine writer and educator gave insight into responsibility in wine communication with reference to the culturally and ethnically diverse community of wine consumers in the U.S. market. Wine producer Gaia Gaja recounted stories from her winery illustrating the effects of climate change in the vineyard. In addition to these informative presenters, many others took the stage over the two-day event to give us a multifaceted understanding of this complex issue.

The two-day conference covered additional useful topics and industry trends including market insights, the latest winemaking techniques, and consumers' behavior. Among the event's most popular sessions were Sonal Holland MW's lecture "India Wine Insider: the consumer outlook and how to sell Italian wines in India", Miss Vicky Wine's (Anne-Victoire Monrozier) "Branding and Social Media", and the B2B meeting where Italian wineries met international buyers. Several sessions also included digital transformations in the industry, with valuable testimonies such as Tom Cochran's four-year experience as a presidential appointee and digital leader in the Obama administration. Cochran spoke about the challenges of applying modern digital technologies to traditional institutions such as governmental administrations or the wine industry.

In line with the event's tagline "Sharing Business Ideas", this past edition of wine2wine was characterized by a massive digital sharing of content. This was achieved first and foremost by live-streaming all sessions and making them available on the wine2wine Facebook page. Secondly, participants were able to interact and connect through the wine2wine App, where business contacts could also be saved and exchanged.

About: wine2wine is a dynamic international wine industry forum organized by Veronafiere and held annually in Verona, Italy, since 2014. wine2wine 2019 will take place on November 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. The event is a key reference point for wine producers and wine professionals eager to develop and grow their wine business worldwide. wine2wine provides unique opportunities to share ideas on the most important issues facing the rapidly evolving wine industry and to connect with wine professionals and experts. The forum takes place over two days and features keynote sessions, seminars, and interactive workshops which aim to equip participants with practical tools to improve their business. Speakers are renowned experts in their field and among the brightest minds in the wine world from Italy and abroad. Additional information is available at [www.wine2wine.net](http://www.wine2wine.net) or by emailing [info@wine2wine.net](mailto:info@wine2wine.net).