

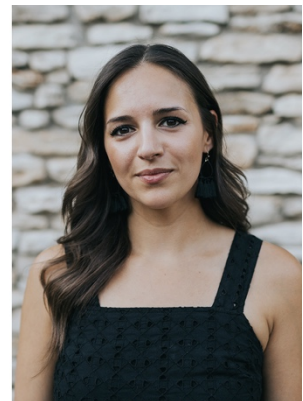
Press Release
For Immediate Release

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Wednesday, November 25, 2020

Italy brings diversity and inclusion to the forefront of wine business.

On November 23 and 24, 2020, the wine2wine Business Forum took place for the first time as a 100% digital event. Over the two days more than 140 speakers joined with thousands of participants to discuss everything from allyship, to hacking the wine culture in Africa, to social media in China, to building a sophisticated wine culture through hip hop. Topics at the forefront of this year's edition were diversity and inclusion, with Veronafiere and Vinitaly giving women and black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) speakers the spotlight.



From left to right: Liz Thach MW, Tinashe Nyamdoko, Yang Lu MS, Rania Zayyat

The wine2wine Business Forum has traditionally gathered international wine professionals together in Verona for two intense days of seminars, panel discussions, and networking. This seventh edition of the event was carried out in an entirely online format - a move that provided for the largest, most international, and most diverse audience yet.

More than just the audience was diverse. The team behind wine2wine utilised an online platform and scheduled sessions in such a way as to allow speakers to come together from all over the globe, expanding the reach of the sessions, while boosting their relevance across more markets than ever. In addition to exploring changes in the US and Chinese Markets, wine2wine 2020 delved deeper into markets that represent real opportunities, though possibly overlooked by the wine industry on occasion. The session, "Hacking the wine culture in Africa," presented by Tinashe Nyamdoko and

moderated Temitope Akintola, explored opportunities for Italian Wine in various African markets. Meanwhile, the Italian Trade Agency (ITA) sponsored a session titled “The Wine Market In India.”

Of course, in a year where much of the wine industry has been forced to adopt digital solutions, there was no lack of sessions on how the wine industry has adapted (or should adapt) to working in a more digital environment, and how we can learn from a year characterised by the COVID crisis. Indeed, as Stephanie Gallo (Chief Marketing Officer of Gallo Wines), commented: “a key silver lining of COVID is that data show 4m new consumers have entered the market.” The industry must adapt to meet these consumers, innovate, and capitalise on new opportunities.



But perhaps the strongest theme to come out of this year’s edition of wine2wine is that of **female leadership**, and how women can support each other to enact change across the industry at all levels, for the entire community. One session that encompassed this approach was “Wine and Allyship: Why Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are Good for the Wine Business,” led by Julia Coney and Elaine Chukan Brown. An overarching message that emerged from the discussion was that “you have to think of constructing a strategy for long term change. You have to look for business partnerships that expand the conversation, expand the market, and who the market is connecting to.” This comment, from Chukan Brown, demonstrates that diversity, inclusion, and the support of women in the industry is fundamental not simply as an ethical requirement, but as an astute commercial position.

If there is one main takeaway from wine2wine Business Forum 2020 it's that, while the topics affecting the wine business are more complex than ever, there are really opportunities to be had by bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and having different voices in leadership and decision-making roles. This certainly proved invaluable for the forum itself which enjoyed unprecedented diversity among speakers and participants alike.

Finally, as a corollary to the move to a digital forum format, attendees need not prioritise certain sessions over others: participants of wine2wine Business Forum 2020 may continue to view every session on demand through November 30, 2020. Such advances in delivery allowed this year's forum to reach a global audience like never before.

About: *wine2wine* is a dynamic international wine industry forum organized by Veronafiere and held annually in Verona, Italy, since 2014. *wine2wine* 2020 took place on November 23 and 24, 2020. The event is a key reference point for wine producers and wine professionals eager to develop and grow their wine business worldwide. *wine2wine Business Forum* 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 usually 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 or by emailing info@wine2wine.net.