

Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Italian Wine Ambassadors create new partnerships at Vitaly International Academy and Vitaly International Wine and Spirits Exhibition Roadshow events in London and Cardiff

The Vitaly Roadshow moved to two locations across the UK, first at Eataly in London on February 8, followed by the Principality Stadium in Cardiff on February 9. Two enterprising Italian Wine Ambassadors took the opportunity to get down to business and forge new deals.



From left to right: Robert Maggi IWA, Managing Director of Vitaly International Stevie Kim, Michele Longari IWA, Italian Trade Agency Officer Claudio Povero

Roadshows score networking and business collaboration success

Organizer of the Cardiff Roadshow, Italian Wine Ambassador Robert Maggi saw the event as a golden opportunity to invite potential business collaborators to taste Italian wines previously unknown to them. Maggi and fellow Italian Wine Ambassador Michele Longari met as classmates at the VIA Agile Course held in London at the Institute of Masters of Wine in July 2022. Having both passed the course with flying colors, the two newly minted Ambassadors became firm friends over the past year. As an Export Manager for Caiaffa Wines in Puglia and Director of Wines n Vines imports and wine bar in Cardiff,

Maggi teamed up with Longari to create an interactive collaboration with Hay Wines UK, hoping to grow a mutually beneficial supply chain between Hay and Wines n Vines. Maggi's business in Cardiff and Longari's position at Hay Wines provided an obvious opportunity to join forces. Guests Chris and Jane Salt, Directors at Hay Wines, attended the Roadshow specifically to taste 48 Italian wines covering all 20 regions of the country and to explore the possibility of developing a collaboration. This is exactly the kind of business networking and promotion that Italian Wine Ambassadors are tasked with, demonstrating the power of Roadshow events and VIA Ambassadors to create important industry links for the promotion of Italian wines.

Despite the challenges of Brexit, Italian wines continue to hold a significant place in the British wine market, evidenced by the high number of Italian wine importers and retailers who attended the Roadshow events. Particularly in Cardiff, the interest level was intense, showing that the British thirst for Italian wine is thriving well outside the confines of London.

The Venues

Selecting the venues was a crucial component to the success of the Roadshows. Launching the events at Eataly in London and The Principality Stadium in Cardiff gave the initiative a 2 pronged scope, as well as a sense of variety and flexibility for all those who wished to attend. The bustling Mercato at Eataly in London's Bishopsgate was a perfect showcase for a list of 36 wines, paired with delicious Italian food prepared in house with authentic Italian products. Moving away from London to Cardiff gave Vinitaly a new audience, many of whom had no prior knowledge of the Vinitaly Wine and Spirits Exhibition. The excitement, curiosity and engagement of this audience, combined with the unique location in a private hospitality suite overlooking the stadium's famous playing field, created a jovial atmosphere with guests tasting 48 wines and asking questions about how to get more involved with Italian wine, courses and events.



Director of ITA London Giovanni Sacchi and Stevie Kim

The Purpose



The Vinitaly Roadshow events were aimed at trade buyers, sommeliers, wine educators and the wine press. The Roadshows provided a welcoming open house environment for presenting the details of the Vinitaly Marathon 2023 and showing guests how to qualify for the Buyers' Program, which gives selected wine merchants exclusive opportunities to meet and interact with the best Italian wine producers at the Exhibition. Among the events discussed were 5StarWines & Wine Without Walls, Vinitaly International Academy Italian Wine Ambassador Course, OperaWine and the full details of the 55th edition of the Vinitaly International Wines and Spirits Exhibition.

Institutional representatives from ITA, and Vinitaly International Managing Director Stevie Kim were in attendance at each event and guests enjoyed a light lunch and tasting total of 84 Italian wines across the two venues. The Roadshows also served to shine a light on the Vinitaly International Academy, the wine education it provides and the authoritative Ambassadors it certifies.

Addressing the motivation to hold events in the UK, Giovanni Sacchi, Director of ITA London remarked, "The British stage of the Vinitaly 2023 Road Show confirms the good success of Italian wine in this country. According to the latest available data referring to the first 11 months of 2022, Italy has confirmed itself as the second biggest wine supplier to the United Kingdom with exports of almost £700 million and a growing market share of 18.7%, with an increase of 13.7% compared to the same period of 2021."

Developed in collaboration with ITA – Italian Trade Agency – and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, these Roadshow events brought together professionals from across the wine industry to taste Italian wine, network, form new partnerships and hear about the 2023 Vinitaly Marathon events and opportunities.

About: [Vinitaly International Academy](#) (VIA) aims to be the gold standard of Italian wine education. It offers a complete educational path with standardized courses that will teach professionals and educators to master the diversity of Italian wine in a rigorous, organized manner. VIA's main objective is to foster a global network of highly qualified professionals such as Italian Wine Ambassadors and Italian Wine Experts: in turn, they will support and promote Italian wine throughout the world. VIA was founded by Stevie Kim, Managing Director of Vinitaly International. The new VIA ecosystem avails of the guidance of Italian trade associations Federdoc, Federvini, Vignaioli Indipendenti FIVI, and Unione Italiana Vini as members of the Institutional Advisory Board. Italian vine genetics scholar, Prof. Attilio Scienza, oversees VIA's scientific and educational direction as the Chief Scientist. VIA Faculty Sarah Heller MW and Henry Davar teach the flagship Italian Wine Ambassador course. To date, there are 307 Certified Italian Wine Ambassadors of which 16 are also Italian Wine Experts.