

Questions of Davide Bortone (chief editor WineMag.it) to Monika Reule (Managing Director of Deutsches Weininstitut DWI)

1) What is the aim of DWI?

The Deutsches Weininstitut (DWI), or German Wine Institute, is the German wine industry's communication and marketing organization responsible for the generic promotion of the quality and sales of German wine domestically and abroad.

Primarily, this consists of press work and public relations; implementation of informational campaigns, including appropriate events; participation in national and international trade fairs, as well as organization of wine presentations and events throughout the world in cooperation with German wine producers.

In addition, the German Wine Institute regularly provides information services and publishes informative brochures, publications and promotional materials; conducts training programs and seminars, particularly for the wine trade and hospitality industry, as well as market research; and advises the wine industry on questions related to domestic and international sales promotion.

In addition to the institute's headquarters in Bodenheim, there are "Wines of Germany" bureaus in 14 important foreign markets for German wine exports.

2) Some numbers about German wine sector

Germany has 13 wine growing regions with a total vineyard surface of 103.079 hectares (2019). Two third of the vineyards are planted with white wine varieties (68.911 ha). Riesling is the most important German white wine variety (24000 ha).

About 40 percent of all Riesling in the world comes from Germany. In terms of red wine Pinot Noir aka Spätburgunder is the most important variety. With the acreage of 11.700 hectares, Germany is the third biggest Pinot Noir producer in the world. The ten-year average of the grape harvest in Germany is 8.8 million hectoliters.

All 13 German wine growing regions are classified as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO). An average of 88 percent of all German wines fulfill the PDO quality standard. Last year PDO wines corresponded to a production of 7.6 million hectoliters in total. They are generally labelled as "Qualitätswein" (quality wine) or "Prädikatswein" (Wine with a predicate like "Spätlese" or "Auslese").

All PDO wines have undergone an annual quality control testing. The remaining share is marketed as wine from a Protected Geographical Indication (PDI) also labelled as "Landwein" or as "German Wine" without any geographical indication.

In average one million hectolitres of German wines have been exported the last five years. In 2019 the total value of exports was 305 million €. The USA is Germany's most important wine export market. With 65 million € it was the target of 22 percent of German wine export revenue in 2019. Number two is Norway (26 million €) followed by the UK and Netherlands (25 million € each). The value of wine exports to Germany's fifth most important wine export market China was 17 million €.

3) What is the value of "wine business" in Germany?

The German wine market has a total volume of 19.5 million hectolitres, divided in 16.7 million hectolitres and 2.8 million hl sparkling wine. The per capita consumption of wine is 20.1 litres plus 3.3 litres sparkling wine. Germany is the biggest sparkling wine consuming market in the world.

Regarding the German wine production and consumption, Germany cannot produce enough wine for the domestic market. Last year German wines had a market share of 45 percent of total wine purchases.

Of the international suppliers, the wines from Italy were in greatest demand with a market share of 16 percent, followed by those from France with twelve percent and Spain with nine percent.

Due to that market situation, Germany is the biggest wine importing country in the world and the German wine market is very competitive. Last year 14.6 million hl have been imported at a value of 2.5 billion €. Wines from Italy had the biggest share with 5.55 million hl at a value of 925 million €.

4) What do you think about ProWein postponed to 2021, under an economic point of view?

Today, it is still too early to estimate the economical consequences of the ProWein postponement for the German wine business in general. With the postponement of the fair on 2021 an important national and international platform for the German wine business on the domestic and export markets is missing this year.

Alternatively, many producers send samples of their new wines to their clients by post or present their wines by video conferences. Several visitors especially from Europe also made appointments with our wine producers in the wineries, because the flights to Germany have been booked anyway.

5) What does ProWein mean for DWI?

The German Wine Institute is the conceptual sponsor of ProWein fair and we fully back up the decision of the postponement.

The ProWein fair is the most important wine fair in the world. We view the ProWein as an ideal platform to inform international retailers, buyers and sommeliers about current trends and innovations from Germany's wine regions.

This year for example we wanted to attract the attention of the German and international trade audience to rosés and organic wines from Germany's wine regions.

6) Do you think we can compare the German "wine business" to the Italian?

No, I think the differences are too big. Italy produces far more wine than Germany and it is the biggest wine producer in the world. Germany only contributes 1.4 % to the world wine production.

7) What do you think about the decision of Vinitaly (Veronafiere) to postpone the fair to June?

I don't believe the postponement will maintain in the light of the most recent development in Italy. But it is up to the Vinitaly organisers to decide on this. During the discussion about a possible postponement of the ProWein fair, the German wine business did not support that option at all.

8) What do you think about the "answer" of German buyer?

We do not have any information about that. I would recommend to talk to German wine importers directly.

9) What are the "key points" for German wine producers, in 2020 and in the next years?

Due to the climate change and rising temperatures, it is important for the German wine producers to keep the lightness and freshness as characteristic features in their white wines because consumers prefer this type of wine. Furthermore, the weather extremes are challenging the German wine business.

German wine exporters expect increased competition this year on the international wine markets, especially in view of the US trade tariffs of 25 % on German wines, the impact of Brexit and the uncertainties presented by the corona virus.

10) Is there any new "style" or relevant "new trend" in the German wine production?

Wines from the German regions are being increasingly offered in dry styles. The share of dry Qualitätswein and Prädikat wines came to 48 percent in 2018. In the year 2000, only a third of wines were bottled in this style.

By contrast, the proportion of medium-dry wines at 21 percent has remained largely unchanged for almost 20 years. The style and image of German rosé wine has changed significantly in recent years.

Today, the current generation of our rosés convince with much more fruit and character. They are also increasingly positioned in the premium segment.

Beyond this, they are no longer simply perceived as pure summer wines. They are instead being enjoyed throughout the year across all consumer demographics. In the last years 10 % of all wines purchased in Germany were rosé.

German Sekt production has experienced a significant boost in quality in the last few years. Our Sekts are often underestimated although they can compete with international sparkling wines.

A specialty is our Winzersekt ("Winegrower's Sekt" made from estate-grown grapes by the traditional method). At 9 million litres, they have a 3 per cent share of the total German Sekt consumption of approx. 275 million litres.