



Vino 2011. 500 000 Enthusiasts for Virtual Vino

Marcello De Marco (February 01, 2011)



Among the various conferences at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel also one about the digitalization of enological marketing

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One of the most appreciated Italian products is definitely wine.

The incredible variety of producers, vineyards and denominations allows the Italian enological production to be able to satisfy even the most discerning wine lover.

The goal of "Vino 2011 - Italian Wine Week", the biggest symposium about Italian wine in the US, is



not only to bring together buyers and producers, but also to offer a series of conferences about the evolution of the enological world and business.

From January 23 to January 27, at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, the Italian wine industry will showcase the best it has to offer at a variety of tasting sessions, conferences, symposiums and lunches.

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Like last year, the exhibition will be present online as well, thanks to the initiative [“Virtual Vino 2011”](#). [Virtual Vino](#) [2] uses social media to push the boundaries of the event beyond the city of New York, making it a truly global experience. In order to make this online presence even more engrossing, the symposiums have been webcasted live and the recordings will remain available online to the community.

Last year, Virtual Vino was able to reach nearly 500 000 enthusiasts. Considered how important the web is for the lives of the Americans, it is likely that last year's results have been repeated, and maybe exceeded.

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The growing attention to the use of social networks to promote the wine industry was also the topic of one of the conferences of Vino 2011 entitled “What Emily Post Can Teach About Social Media, Millennial App-titude and Geo-Marketing”. I-Italy was there.

The moderator was Tom Wark, head of [Wark communications](#) [3] , a PR society specialized in the wine industry . The other panelists were: Gregory Del Piaz, Editor in Chief of [Snooth.com](#) [4]; journalist Talia Baiocchi; Jeff Lefevere, editor in chief of [GoodGrape.com](#) [5]; the social media specialist Amy Cao; and Kent Wilhelm, Senior Manager of New Media Design and Marketing for [Astor Center](#) [6].

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The discussion began with the definition of the target audience of online marketing: the Millennials. This is the curious denomination reserved to the generation of those born between 1977 and 1990. Defining trait of the Millennials is in tune with their futuristic name: according to Wark they are those



who will be the heaviest social network users ever, more than any past or future generation.

Other characteristics make them the ideal target for the enological industry: they often go to bars, buy wine and know about it with much more depth than the past generations, and they are sensible to both the elements of the price/quality ratio.

Proof of the attention reserved to wine by social network users is that more than a Million Americans list wine among their interests on Facebook.

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After this introduction, the panelists focused on how to obtain the attention of this web audience so that from Facebook, Twitter etc. they move to one's company website. The key word is "authenticity". Online news spread around nearly instantaneously. Because of this, it is necessary to be honest and authentic when promoting one's product. If the consumers should notice a difference between the product's actual qualities and the advertised qualities, this information would become widespread on the social network in a matter of days or even hours. This "boomerang effect" is after all a great guarantee for the consumers: the producers should think better than giving misleading information about their products.

The world of social networking is a true goldmine of contacts and potential clients, and the panelists were generous of tips on how to obtain the most out of this sometimes too huge universe.

Jeff Lefevre and Kent Wilhelm shared a similar advice, though differently declined: you need to captivate your audience's attention. Whether you do so thanks to a simple, colloquial language, as Kent suggested, or through an entertaining and stimulating use of the social platform, Jeff's advice, the bottom line is that you need to find a way to stand out among the ocean of products present online.

An example of how to get to such a result was given while answering to a member of the audience, who underlined how time consuming social media advertising can be – a true problem for a wine producer, who is always busy either at the office or in the vineyard. The panel suggested, as an example, to simply take a picture of one's hands every day after work, and post it online with a brief description of what was done that day. A simple and effective way to pass on a message of tradition and passion for one's work and, by extent, for one's product.

Amy Cao insisted on the necessity of quality, not quantity, when advertising on social networks. It is useless to be briefly present on Twitter, Youtube, Facebook and all the other networks. The producer needs to choose one and only one platform and stick to it, developing an articulated, in depth presence on it. As a suggestion, Facebook should be ideal for an already well-known company trying to expand its reach to a different audience; Twitter is better suited instead for a company whose brand isn't likely to have already been heard by the target audience.

Independently from the chosen platform and marketing strategy, both Talia Baiocchi and Lefevre gave a warning: in order to obtain results through social network marketing, one has to stick to one's plan and, especially, has to be very, very patient. Results will come, but they will take their time.

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Links

[1] <http://www.iitaly.org/files/virtualvino1296796803jpg>



[2] <http://vino2010.italianmade.com/blog/italian-trade-commission-invites-bloggers-engage-%E2%80%9Cvirtual-vino-2010%E2%80%9D-experience>

[3] <http://www.warkcommunications.com/>

[4] <http://www.Snooth.com>

[5] <http://www.GoodGrape.com>

[6] <http://www.astorcenternyc.com/>