

# ITALIAN WINE AND ITS INTERNATIONALISATION: BRANDS AND DENOMINATION OF ORIGIN FROM THE END OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TO FASCISM

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**Abstract:** *In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the nascent Italian wine industry found itself obliged to acknowledge the newest oenological technologies and in need of increased sales on foreign markets through advertising and the creation of brands. As part of the modernisation process, it was clear that good Italian wines had to sport elegant labels which could transmit the beauty of their regions of origin. In the Belle Époque, landscapes and old buildings were used on labels and in advertisements, as were other high visual impact elements, such as works of art, industrial plants and folklore, which remained in use during the fascist period, too. In this context, when economic aspects were decisive, advertising was a key factor for new markets and for the creation of a positive image, which was also made up of graphics and captivating texts.*

**Keywords:** *Italian wine; brands and denomination of origin; wine industry; quality of wine; internationalisation of Italian wine.*

**Resumo:** *Na segunda metade do século XIX, a nascente indústria vinícola italiana viu-se obrigada a reconhecer as mais recentes tecnologias enológicas e na necessidade de aumentar as vendas nos mercados estrangeiros através da publicidade e da criação de marcas. Como parte do processo de modernização, tornou-se claro que os bons vinhos italianos tinham de ostentar rótulos elegantes que pudessem transmitir a beleza das suas regiões de origem. Na Belle Époque, paisagens e edifícios antigos eram utilizados nos rótulos e na publicidade, assim como outros elementos de elevado impacto visual, tais como obras de arte, fábricas e folclore, que também se mantiveram em uso durante o período fascista. Neste contexto, quando os aspetos económicos eram decisivos, a publicidade era um fator-chave para novos mercados e para a criação de uma imagem positiva, que era também constituída por gráficos e textos cativantes.*

**Palavras-chave:** *vinho italiano; marcas e denominação de origem; indústria do vinho; qualidade do vinho; internacionalização do vinho italiano.*

## INTRODUCTION: AIM AND TOPIC

The aim of this paper is to show how some Italian winemakers progressively changed the brands and denomination of Italian wine. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the best winemakers — who used the most advanced winemaking techniques — improved the quality of their product and created some wines which were able to compete

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with foreign wines in the international markets. Italian wine was no longer just a quality blending wine<sup>1</sup>. However, to show that the new Italian wine was better than in the past it was also necessary to change the image of Italian wine: new brands, names and the use of advertising had to be employed to attract foreign customers. This phenomenon is not only characteristic of the Italian case, but is also present on an international level, as some important researches showed<sup>2</sup>.

This paper indicates the best winemakers who led the conquest of the international markets, and the strategies they used to make their brands famous and inimitable. Furthermore, it shows that wine had a prominent role in the construction of the political and economic identity of the newborn Kingdom of Italy. The country was not lacking in raw materials and had greater oenological diversity than France. However, on a commercial level, with a few exceptions, sales abroad were low and many Italian wines were completely unknown outside the peninsula: their quality was low because of the backwardness of the production systems used<sup>3</sup>. Italy was therefore a simple exporter of bulk and blended wines. So, a radical change was urgently needed to make sales of quality wine abroad a significant item on the national trade balance. In this context, advertising proved to be a key factor in opening up new markets and creating a positive image, including pictures and appealing texts. The paper analyses the evolution of the wine sector in relation to brands and denomination of origin up to the fascist era, when there were signs of discontinuity compared to the previous decades, and numerous aspects, which were then implemented in the early decades of the republic, emerged, especially as regards denomination.

## **1. SPREADING ITALIAN WINE AROUND THE WORLD: A DIFFICULT STARTING POINT AND RAPID DEVELOPMENT**

The new, high-quality Italian wines needed elegant labels to show the best aesthetic qualities of the regions of origin. In particular, during the Belle Époque, old landscapes and buildings were used for labels and posters, as well as other visually striking elements, such as works of art, industrial plants or folklore<sup>4</sup>.

Despite intense propaganda at the 1862 World's Fair in London, Italian wine enjoyed little fame<sup>5</sup>. According to the members of the commission which was called on to judge the wines displayed, the situation was highly critical. The abundance and quality

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<sup>1</sup> LOUBÈRE, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> GARRIER, PECH, *eds.*, 1991; PAN MONTOJO, 1994; MALDONADO ROSSO, *ed.*, 2002; FERRER ALOS, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> FEDERICO, MARTINELLI, 2018; MAFFI, TEDESCHI, VAQUERO PIÑEIRO, 2021a: 115-130.

<sup>4</sup> FALABRINO, 2007; VAQUERO PIÑEIRO, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> PISANI, 2007.

of the grapes available were undoubtedly a positive aspect; nobody, therefore, questioned the fact that the grapes grown in Italy were of excellent quality, but this was not enough if the aim was to have wines which could be sold abroad. Although the statistics were still unreliable, in 1861, Italy produced 30 million hectolitres of wine, but exported less than 200,000 hectolitres; a tiny quantity compared to the 2 million hectolitres of common and luxury wine exported by France<sup>6</sup>. This was blamed on persisting «old habits».

Leaving aside liqueur wines such as Marsala or fortified and aromatised wine as Vermouth, which had long been appreciated by foreign markets, the London event was a real watershed for the Italian wine industry. The trend reversal came from different directions. Even if the statistical data indicate only minor shifts, the 1860s and 1870s were decisive: a number of important initiatives started up with the aim of encouraging a different approach to winegrowing and wine production<sup>7</sup>.

The material collected at the time of the industrial survey (1870-1874) also paints a fairly negative picture. According to Antonio Carpené from Treviso, the ideal solution for ending the predominance of unnamed and highly perishable wines was the creation of oenological associations aimed at buying wines from individual producers in order to then have specialists making appropriate mixes so as to obtain a few types of wine and provide traders with large quantities of well-aged, uniform wines<sup>8</sup>. Another solution, according to Carpené, was that of setting up large warehouses in port cities so as to sell abroad the products which risked otherwise being sold cheaply on local markets.

Another important innovation was the creation of a ministerial commission to taste and evaluate the quality of the wines to be sent to the Vienna Exhibition of 1873. This commission dealt with questions concerning the relationship between wine and territory for the first time. Its members did not have the idea of terroir, which was developed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, they did have the perception that there were some particular areas which produced high-quality wines in Italy and that it was necessary to enhance them. In fact, they declared:

*Some contrade (districts) have already acquired a reputation for their vines and wines, they are sufficiently important to be known geographically, so that the name given to the wine is equivalent to a brand that accredits it and almost indicates its quality, since when the origin of a wine is known, its distinctive characteristics are also known<sup>9</sup>.*

<sup>6</sup> MAFFI, TEDESCHI, VAQUERO PIÑEIRO, 2021b: 229-246.

<sup>7</sup> *Atti del comitato dell'inchiesta industriale*, 1883 [1870-1874]: 20-23.

<sup>8</sup> *Atti del comitato dell'inchiesta industriale*, 1883 [1870-1874]: 20-23.

<sup>9</sup> *Annali di viticoltura ed enologia italiana*, 1874: 43-48.

These *contrade* and the relative wines which the commission indicated were: Barolo, Nebbiolo, Grignolino, Barbera, Bonarda, Caluso, Chianti, Montepulciano, Pomino, Lambrusco from Modena, Valpolicella from Mantua, Vernaccia from Sardinia, Moscato and Marsala from Sicily, Lacrima from Calabria, and Capri.

The commission's intuition was not acted on. So, while French authorities had already understood the economic importance of protecting the designation of origin as it offered the purchaser certainty as to the quality and origin of the product, the Italian authorities promulgated no rules protecting the names of the districts. In 1891, this difference was reinforced by the signing in Madrid of the international agreement on the rules concerning the registration of trademarks: Italy did not adhere to the convention because of the use of the name cognac, which had become commonplace in Italy<sup>10</sup>. So, even if the issue of the denomination of origin had clear economic implications, in Italy this did not immediately translate into concrete measures<sup>11</sup>.

In general, the exhibitions of the second half of the 1800s were a chance to create new markets and to make one's wine known nationally and internationally<sup>12</sup>. On the other hand, from the 1870s-1880s, labels highlighted the fact that the winery (or the wine itself) had won, or participated in, national and international exhibitions.



Fig. 1. Sciampagnino 1887 by  
Francesco Albertici  
Source: Orsi Mazzucchelli  
Archive (Varese)

The labels often bore an emblem or symbol at top-centre, with a festoon of medals won at exhibitions, the name of the wine in the centre, then the name of the winery or producer and the place of production<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> GERARDO, 1929.

<sup>11</sup> CIUFFOLETTI, 2007: 103.

<sup>12</sup> MAGAGNOLI, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> MAFFI, 2012.

Thus, through medals and honours, exhibitions became part of the brand, being displayed on labels, in price lists, on headed paper and in companies' general advertising. Exhibitions were the guarantee of a product's quality, competitiveness and seriousness. So, it can be said that the exhibitions of the second half of the 1800s played a founding role in the development of the reputation which was made visible on labels, etc.

**PREMIATO STABILIMENTO VINICOLO**

**ENRICO SERAFINO**  
CANALE (ITALIA)

Telegrammi: ENRICO - Canale  
Telefono con Asti N. 4

SPECIALITÀ DELLA DITTA:  
**GRAN PASSITO ERBALUCE (Tipo Caluso)**  
**BARBARESCO CHINATO**

**QUALITÀ DEI VINI**

- Asti spumante
- Moscato spumante
- Moscato Champagne Regina
- Gattinara
- Bianco secco
- Barolo
- Barolino
- Barbaresco
- Nebbiolo fino spumante
- Nebbiolo fino secco
- Nebbiolo fino da pasto
- Brachetto fino spumante
- Grignolino fino extra
- Grignolino fino da pasto
- Freisa extra spumante
- Freisa fina da pasto
- Bonarda fina
- Barbera amara extra
- Barbera amabile extra
- Barberato
- Dolcetto
- Vermouth finiss. di Moscato
- Amaro Serafino
- Grappa fina di Moscato
- Bianco Chinato

**PRODUZIONE — ESPORTAZIONE**

Merce franca Stazione S. Damiano d'Asti

Fusti e damigiane a rendersi franchi di porto

Le casse, bottiglie 6, 12, 18, 24, 36, 50 ciascuna

Campioni gratis a richiesta - Etichette gratis

Si richiedono referenze dai signori acquirenti non ancora conosciuti dalla Casa.

Fig. 2. Enrico Serafino – winery for production of Passito di Caluso, Asti spumante, Gattinara, Barolo  
Source: *Annuario generale per la viticoltura e la enologia*, 1892-1893

It is useful to underline that this practice could be called «collective» and was consolidated in the post-unity decades not only for wine, but also for other food and drink products, such as liquors, tea, chocolate, etc. Alongside medals and prizes, it was a mark of great prestige to be able to place on a label, or other material of one's company, the words «official suppliers to the Royal House», or directly «to the Queen», or to princes of the royal family, with the use of the relative heraldic achievement.

As regards wines, an evident example of this behaviour by entrepreneurs is that of the Neapolitan company of Giuseppe Scala, which, in 1892, declares itself «supplier of the Royal house» with the coat of arms.



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**GIUSEPPE SCALA**  
NAPOLI - N. 42, Via P. E. Imbriani, N. 42 - NAPOLI  
CASA FONDATA NEL 1830

**FORNITORE DELLA REAL CASA**

**Grande Stabilimento Enologico**  
in RESINA (alle falde del Vesuvio)  
Esportazione in Vini fini, di lusso e da pasto  
CASE FILIALI A LONDRA e BUENOS-AYRES  
AGENZIA A PARIGI, N. 62, RUA D'ORFÈVE - BOULEVARD DES FILLES DU CALVAIRE

**LACHRYMA CHRISTI SPUMANTE**  
Mante - Specialità della Casa; vero fabbricato Vesuviano, fatto con uve dei VITIGNI VESUVIANI, trattato a perfetto sistema NATURALE e razionale, come praticato nella fabbricazione dei rinomati Vini della Champagne. - IL COMIZIO AGRARIO DI NAPOLI nel 1880 conferì alla Ditta la MEDAGLIA D'ORO per la fabbricazione di detto Spumante.  
CAPRI, FALERNO, LACHRYMA CHRISTI, bianco rosso; Vini da 3 a 4 anni che, per semplicità e buon gusto, pareggiano con quelli delle MIGLIORI CASE ESTERE.

Vino da pasto per famiglia - fusto da litri 20, L. 125 - Mezzo fusto, L. 75

**RICOMPENSE - MEDAGLIE D'ORO**  
all'Esposizione Universale Parigi 1889 all'Esposizione Universale Londra 1891  
all'Esposizione Universale Lione 1892 all'Esposizione Universale Parigi 1893  
all'Esposizione Internazionale d'Igiene Londra 1894

Premi ed onorificenze di più classi in altre Esposizioni Estere e Nazionali  
Grande Medaglia d'oro del Ministero, concorso nel 1884 fra Produttori Italiani

**DEPOSITO**  
presso i primari STABILIMENTI e NEGOZIANZI ESTERI e NAZIONALI

Per le ordinazioni e schiarimenti rivolgersi al Sig. V. ADORNI  
ROMA - Via Carlettoni, 6 (Piazza Indipendenza) - ROMA

Fig. 3. Giuseppe Scala – Stabilimento Enologico in Napoli  
Source: *Annuario generale per la viticoltura e la enologia*, 1892-1893

**FRATELLI SINDICI**  
CECCANO (ROMA)

**Grande Produzione**  
di vini da pasto scelti e comuni, bianchi e rossi  
prodotti con vitigni Cabernet, Franch, Malbek, Sangiovese, Freisa, Sauvignon, Tokai, Reising, Trebbiano, Moscato, per i bianchi.

Estesi vivaie e vendita di barbatelle e maglioli a L. 35 % le barbatelle e L. 12,50 % i maglioli di Cabernet, Franch, Malbek, Sangiovese, Freisa, Sauvignon, Tokai, Reising, Trebbiano franco stazione Ceccano, Linea Roma-Napoli esenti da qualunque malattia.

Per barbatelle e maglioli di uso da tavola e per il prezzo dei vini chiedere il listino

**CECCANO**

Fig. 4. Fratelli Sindici, Ceccano (Roma)  
Source: *Annuario generale per la viticoltura e la enologia*, anno I, 1892

**A. BERNER - NAPOLI**  
CASA FONDATA NEL 1852

**STABILIMENTO VINICOLO**  
CASALNUOVO DI NAPOLI

Esportazione per tutti i Paesi  
di Vini da pasto e da taglio

**SPECIALITÀ:**  
Vini da Pasto per Esportazione nelle Americhe  
**TIPI UNIFORMI**

**IN NAPOLI**  
Ricordate Speciali del Vinomato Cino  
**Tauraso Vecchio**  
Tipo unico e costante

**DEPOSITO PRINCIPALE:**  
Rione Amedeo, N. 36 (Telefono)  
**SUCCURSALE:**  
Corso Vittorio Emanuele (S. Nicola da Tolentino) N. 251

Fig. 5. A. Berner, Napoli  
Source: *Annuario generale per la viticoltura e la enologia*, anno I, 1892

The advertisement was published in the 1892 *Annuario generale per la viticoltura e la enologia* (General annual report on viticulture and oenology) and also displayed other elements of interest which clearly show the progress of the oenological sector at the end of the 1800s compared to its situation at national Unification (1861)<sup>14</sup>.

In fact, the company was capable of exporting luxury and table wines to various global destinations and has branches in London and Buenos Aires, as well as an agency in Paris.

Besides the role of the exhibitions, another route for the development of brands can be identified. At the same time, some winemakers understood that it was necessary to create new brands for high-quality wines. As early as 1872, one of the most famous Italian beverage brands was registered, Martini of Turin: ten years later it used the label it still has today, representing a very successful brand worldwide.

A similar choice was made by baron Bettino Ricasoli who tried to produce the «perfect Italian wine». He turned his castle in Brolio into a real wine laboratory, where Chianti became the «true red wine for meals» suited to consumers' tastes and the demands of the wine trade<sup>15</sup>. Ricasoli's achievements confirmed that it was possible to obtain very good table wines in Italy, putting an end to the custom of selling off poor quality wines<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, his Chianti became an important wine with a brand that distinguished it from other Tuscan wines.



Fig. 6. Casa Vinicola Barone Ricasoli – winery for the production of Chianti

Source: *Le vie d'Italia*. «Rivista mensile della consociazione turistica italiana». XLVIII:1 (gennaio, 1941)

<sup>14</sup> *Annuario generale per la viticoltura e la enologia*, 1892-1893.

<sup>15</sup> BIAGIOLI, 2000; CIUFFOLETTI, 2009: 52; MELONI, SWINNEN, 2013: 244-284; MOCARELLI, VAQUERO PIÑEIRO, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> VANNUCCINI, 1884: 70-73.

In Piedmont, too, wine producers dedicated a great deal of attention to the creation of brands to better sell their new wines<sup>17</sup>. They were motivated by economic and political reasons, and national prestige. At the end of the 1870s, large wineries such as Gancia and Martini separated the agricultural part of production from the industrial part and required farmers to grow particular varieties of grapes. In 1878, the «E. di Mirafiore winery for the production of Barolo» was the first company specifically set up to produce and promote Barolo wine, even using bottles with the name of Barolo on the label.



Fig. 7. Mirafiore – winery for the production of Barolo  
Source: *Le vie d'Italia*. «Rivista mensile della consociazione turistica italiana» XLVIII:6 (giugno, 1943)

It was the beginning of a small revolution with concrete effects on marketing and advertising techniques. Gancia also created its brand to advertise and diffuse its new wines: in this case the name of the producer was more important than the terroirs where vines were cultivated.

A further element which supported brand development was technical and business education and training. At the beginning of the 1870s, the foundation of a number of oenological schools began. The schools were spread around the country and, depending on the particular conditions of each area, were to contribute to definitively making vine growing and wine production practical and rational<sup>18</sup>. The job of training specialist staff was entrusted to the *stazioni di enologia* (centres of oenological and vine-growing research) in Asti, Avellino, Alba, Gattinara and Conegliano Veneto which were founded

<sup>17</sup> ROSSO, 2009: 29; BERTA, MAINARDI, 1997.

<sup>18</sup> *Annali di viticoltura ed enologia italiana*, 1874: 24-28.



between 1872 and 1881<sup>19</sup>. Thus, in the context of growing attention towards the technical and scientific aspects of wine production, that which imposed a new way of grape growing and wine production was the arrival of phylloxera, mildew, grapevine downy mildew, and the other deadly plagues that started to seriously threaten continental vineyards from the mid-1800s they in fact demanded a quick change in mentality. In the face of the losses suffered, it was clear that the sector was still significantly backwards and holding onto practices which were inadequate for its modernisation, so it was necessary to embrace the advances made in agronomic science, industrial technology and commerce in order to meet growing international demand.

## 2. CREATING THE IMAGE OF THE NEW ITALIAN WINE

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in a context of a wider process of innovation, the old peasant and manor cellars, unsuitable for the production of quality wines, began to be replaced by more advanced establishments<sup>20</sup>. The new buildings were often depicted on posters, playbills and postcards as a symbol of the modernity achieved by winemakers. The new generation of wine cellars, in many cases built with the help of engineers, represented a major innovation that visually marked the transition from the artisan to the industrial sector<sup>21</sup>.

So, the new Italian wine industry became a real tool of commercial communication: it indicated the improvement of Italian agriculture (as well as of Italian economy developed by the local industrial revolution) and it also showed the new business spirit of a modern and active wine entrepreneurship. As postcards, letterheads, posters, newspapers, almanacs and tourist guides attest, the architectural choices related to new buildings reflected the strong difference between the Italian wine industry and the other winemakers who continued to produce low quality wines (and who accounted for most of the owners of Italian vines).

Having the characteristics of «large industrial plants»<sup>22</sup>, built according to the dictates of «modern science», the cellars of the new wine industry, in addition to elegance and order, had to be practical, with rationally planned spaces. So, advertising like that of the Dietz company in Naples incorporated the main aspects of a different, modern way of doing business. Posters formed a communicational universe of extraordinary historical value and a wealth of information because they incisively recorded moments, situations and moods of the modern social and economic reality<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> BERTA, MAINARDI, 1997: 307.

<sup>20</sup> MAFFI, TEDESCHI, VAQUERO PIÑEIRO, 2021a: 115-130; MAFFI, VAQUERO PIÑEIRO, TEDESCHI, 2019; PEDROCCO, 1993.

<sup>21</sup> FASCE, 2012: 26-27.

<sup>22</sup> *Annuario generale per la viticoltura e la enologia*, 1892-1893.

<sup>23</sup> ROVERSI, 2012.



Fig. 8. Camillo Dietz winery – Naples  
Source: *Annuario generale per la viticoltura e la enologia*, anno I, 1892

Advertising favoured the best wine producers who understood that wine represented a very profitable commercial product. However, it was necessary to make the best use of new advertising techniques because in order to sell Italian wines it was not enough for them to be good and reasonably priced; in fact, they had to have well-known names and be associated with the landscape and artistic characteristics of the Italian districts. The latter were considered an excellent tool for promoting both wine and the country: the aim to export more wine was associated with an increase in rich tourists visiting Italy.

Wine advertising in Italy became more and more relevant due to the progressive increase in exports of bottled wine, which, compared to blended or bulk wine, needed to be differentiated by a name and a brand<sup>24</sup>. So, advertising favoured sales on the international markets but it also required new brands to consolidate the excellent results achieved. Far from the American canons of brand recognition, Italian wines progressively improved their quality through dealing with the changing tastes of customers and geographically distant markets<sup>25</sup>.

At the end of the 1800s and beginning of the 1900s, thanks to the above-described aspects, the new transoceanic markets opened up to Italy. Brands and product recognition were fundamental for this process<sup>26</sup>. Concerning this point, the case of Argentina is emblematic. With the beginning of the activity of the *Regia stazione enotecnica* in Buenos Aires, first managed by Bruno Trentin — an oenologist — and later by Tommaso Chiaramonte, the statistics become clearer and more reliable. Thanks to periodic information

<sup>24</sup> FRENZA, 2015.

<sup>25</sup> GRAZIA, 2005: 198-218.

<sup>26</sup> SIMPSON, 2011.

bulletins, we know that in the 20 years from 1885 to 1904, 720,000 hectolitres of wine were imported into Argentina annually, for a total value of almost six million gold pesos. The best year was 1887, with 1,073,456 hectolitres. Wine was sent to Argentina in casks, especially Barolo, Barbera and Gattinara. While Italian sparkling wines were not a threat to French champagne, it was another matter for sweet and liqueur-type wines. Marsala was not even appreciated by the numerous Italian immigrants who lived in Argentina, while vermouth «of Turin» turned out to be a highly-favoured drink in the Argentine market, in particular Cinzano, which exported over 200,000 cases to Argentina in 1905. Other brands were Cora, Carpano, Gancia, Calissano, Ballor and Isobella. Significant amounts of these liqueurs were consumed as they had quickly become commonly used drinks and symbols of modernity and sociability among the bourgeois of Argentinian cities. Thus, thanks to Argentina's decisive contribution, vermouth became a global product<sup>27</sup>.

Entering international markets stimulated the development of product recognition. In fact, product identity was one of the most discussed issues in oenological environments at the time: in order to strengthen Italian wine exports, it was necessary to reduce the variety of names and types as this heterogeneity prevented consumers from being presented with wines with specific, recognisable identities.

In this regard, the experience of «Francesco Cinzano & C.» is highly significant as there were competent agencies in Buenos Aires with specialised personnel and specific warehouses. Thus, it appeared to be urgent to employ specialists with precise abilities — competent workers who knew the goods and the tastes of the public, who had understood that transoceanic wine imports could be a profitable sector.



Fig. 9. Cinzano  
Source: *Le vie d'Italia*. «Rivista mensile della  
consociazione turistica italiana». XLVIII:6 (giugno, 1943)

<sup>27</sup> VAQUERO PIÑEIRO, 2019.

Pompeo Trentin's *Manuale del negoziante di vini italiani nell'Argentina* (Manual for vendors of Italian wines in Argentina)<sup>28</sup>, a handbook of news and practical advice for organising import-export between the two countries, was aimed at this type of person. In light of these tendencies, shipping wine to the other side of the Atlantic had to be exclusive to large, well-organised companies who had the means to manage deals with clients with the necessary professionalism and competence. These companies were the so-called *Casas Introdutoras* or *Introdutores*, which closed deals in Genoa or Buenos Aires and then managed the distribution of the imported goods among wholesalers (*Almaceneros por mayor*) and retailers (*Almaceneros por menor*). It was necessary to entrust wine sales in Argentina to import companies or to representatives of the Italian companies operating in Buenos Aires, taking care to choose companies of good reputation and solid finances. Another aspect to command was the new advertising techniques, in order to spread the product's name and area of origin via continuous efficient propaganda. While foreign markets had been heralded as a means to stimulate the modernisation of Italian wine production, they had their own particular requirements to understand and adapt to. It was clear that a widening of business horizons allowed the growth of high levels of professionalism and of companies which were able to keep up to date with national legislations, prices, currency exchanges, transport companies and commerce information offices. In Buenos Aires in 1889 there were 18 companies dedicated to importing Italian wine. «P. and E. Matthey» and «Gandolfi Moss & Co.» dealt with the highest volumes, with 14,500 and 10,500 hectolitres respectively. Several import companies dealt with all Italian wines, while others, such as «Martini & Rossi», specialised in Piedmont wines with an annual total of 1,200 hectolitres; another such example is «L. Lanerato & Co.», which focused on the import of Cinzano vermouth. Considering the importance of southern Italian blending wines, it is not surprising to note a significant presence of importers working with wines from Apulia and Sicily<sup>29</sup>.

The Argentine case is not just the touchstone of the numerous problems that slowed the development of the Italian wine industry, which was involved in a difficult process of modernisation around the turn of the twentieth century. It is almost paradoxical that in the same years in which Pompeo Trentin's handbooks encouraged those who worked in the sector to learn the most advanced techniques of wine production, Italian experience was fundamental to starting the Argentinian wine industry. With fewer obstacles, in an environment of greater entrepreneurial freedom, Italian immigrants managed to put into practice their solid background of knowledge and experience. Exchange between the two countries touched all aspects.

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<sup>28</sup> TRENTIN, 1895.

<sup>29</sup> VAQUERO PIÑEIRO, 2019.

An equally important and emblematic case of the diffusion of brands of Italian wines is that of their entrance in the United States of America. At the beginning of the twentieth century the wine trade in Italy still appeared to be dominated by local intermediaries, while buyers would not renounce the practice of tasting wine before agreeing on a price. It was obvious that overseas markets required other commercial practices, less tied to personal relationships and more based on product reputation.

Very few companies were concerned exclusively with the distribution of wine. That being said, the picture was not entirely negative since, as shown by newspaper advertisements in major foreign cities (Buenos Aires, New York, London), producers began to work with agencies with specialised staff that kept their deposits in proper conditions. Cella Bros in New York, Charles Ciceri in Montréal, Fratelli Romeo in New York, and Vincent Bosco in New York were just a few of the Italo-American companies founded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that came to command a commercial area that was still being defined. For Italian observers it was clear that the American market was a test case, as the growing production of ordinary wine in California indicated that Italy could gain an advantage by concentrating on the export of high-quality typical wines, which were the only product able to compensate for the high cost of transport and customs duties<sup>30</sup>. As the consumption of alcoholic beverages of a certain social standard appeared to be closely tied to the level of disposable income, the US market would not be conquered by concentrating on quantity, but rather on quality and the adaptation of new marketing and advertising techniques capable of orientating the consumption of the sectors of society with greater spending power, which naturally included wealthy Italians.

This was the case, for example, of Pontin's Restaurant, a well-known New York establishment that advertised Italian cuisine served in an authentic Italian-style garden in the pages of the Italian chamber of commerce magazine in New York, just a few metres from the courts and trading companies. Along with a wide range of French and German bottles, the wine list also included a selection of Italian wines, above all Chianti, but also Muscat, Nebbiolo, Lacryma Christi, and other wines from the south of Italy. For the observers sent to the United States by the Italian government, it was not enough to merely learn the entrepreneurial techniques implemented by Californian wineries. It appeared equally fundamental that Italian wines find a place on the menu of luxury restaurants, aimed at a wealthy clientele that represented the yardstick of Italian wine's market penetration in the cities of the United States.

It was also necessary to master the nascent techniques of advertising in order to sell wine, as it is a product which is rich in social and cultural values and it was not enough for it to be good quality and well priced. It was also necessary for wine to have

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<sup>30</sup> VAQUERO PIÑEIRO, MAFFI, 2018.



a recognisable name, which associated it with the scenic and artistic characteristics of the Italian regions. This was already regarded as an excellent promotional vehicle for both Italian wine and its country of origin by the end of the nineteenth century. Oenological advertising in Italy became the topic of debate among specialists, with a progressive increase in exports of bottled wine, which needed to be differentiated with a label, featuring the name of the wine and a captivating brand. As was the case with other products in the dawning national food industry, such as pasta, oil, beer, mineral water and tinned tomatoes, wine stimulated the need to adapt to new requirements imposed by the internationalisation of the language of advertising. While still nowhere near the American standards of brand recognition, for Italian wines this was the beginning of a long path of growth in dealing with the changing tastes of customers in geographically distant markets<sup>31</sup>. Wanting to satisfy the lifestyles of the emerging classes of the Belle Époque and to overcome the traditional view of wine as a popular drink, advertising was entrusted with the creation of a stimulating image for quality wine, to give it a distinguished position in restaurants, official lunches and, not least, in the daily life of the family. Back in Italy there was notable attention on consumers' part to bottled wines.

The best Italian winemakers wanted to satisfy the lifestyles of the emerging classes of the Belle Époque: their ambitious new target was to definitively overcome the traditional consideration of Italian wine as a drink aimed primarily at the working classes<sup>32</sup>. Advertising had to come up with an image of quality wine to make it stand out at restaurants, at ceremonial meals and in everyday family life. While the French wines had a wide and proven repertoire of evocative *châteaux* at their disposal, Italian graphic designers combined realistic and allegorical elements<sup>33</sup>.

The bottles had to be elegantly shaped and sported labels reflecting the Italian artistic tradition and drawing inspiration from the country's many natural beauties. Illustrators had to design images influenced by symbolic Italian landscapes to transmit historical and cultural identity and they had at their disposal a wide range of themes from which to draw inspiration: the political symbols of the kingdom, floral decorations, works of art, ancient buildings, mythological scenes, but above all the beauty of the landscape. The advertising of agrifoodstuffs, wine included, incorporated the communicative value of the landscape as an attractive factor. In this way, the «good fruits of the earth» evoked the origin of a product that did not come «from the dark bowels of the earth, not from the smoky, grey working-class districts of the great metropolises, but from free nature, from the plains and hills». Wine advertising became a story where allegorical images presented the products as elements of a mythical and dreamy world transporting the consumer to Eden.

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<sup>31</sup> FASCE, 2012.

<sup>32</sup> CAPUZZO, 2006: 243-251.

<sup>33</sup> GRAPPE, 2013: 119.

In this context, the wines of Naples were identified with a smoking Vesuvius: the same happened with Etna, the symbol of Sicilian wines<sup>34</sup>.

The message for the consumers was that Italian wine was not only the result of Italian winemakers' skills, but also of the unique goodness of the Italian landscape. In addition, advertising used portraits of pretty peasant women as they completed the harvest to transmit abroad the Italian spirit, emanating from a land full of natural beauty, eager to conquer the refined and sometimes exotic tastes of consumers living in other continents with the most authentic Italian products<sup>35</sup>.

## 2.1. Vine and oenological publications

Specialist publications led to ever-greater popularisation of developments in viticulture and oenology, which, in turn, supported the development of Italian wine brands.

The most evident consequence of the state's commitment to education as a stimulus of economic development was the creation of a network of oenological schools scattered from north to south. From the end of the nineteenth century, generations of young specialists and professionals in oenology graduated from these schools and their post-school activities were important in the creation of a solid and widespread oenological culture in the country. These graduates contributed to a rich repertoire of texts, thanks to which, at the turn of the century, awareness increased regarding the fact that wine not only required technical knowledge in the production stage, but also a less obvious sensitivity in spreading the practices and models for the wine companies to adopt. This was part of a complex process through which wine began to abandon its traditional image as a poor-quality product, without the necessary standards to be sold abroad, and started instead to gain a good reputation.

In just a few decades, a series of journals appeared. Besides the «Corriere vinicolo» (Wine Courier) founded in 1927, we can cite the «Giornale vinicolo italiano» (Italian wine Journal), founded by the Ottavi brothers in 1875; the «Rivista di ampelografia» (Ampelography magazine), from 1920; the «Bollettino dei viticoltori» (Grape growers' bulletin), founded in 1918; the «Monitore vinicolo» (Wine gazette), established in 1917; the «Bollettino vinicolo dell'Emilia» (Wine bulletin of the Emilia region), from 1915; «La viticoltura moderna» (Modern viticulture), established in 1893; «La Sicilia vinicola» (Wine producing in Sicily), founded in 1885. Generally speaking, the appearance of specialist viticulture and oenology magazines gave producers ground on which to refine their techniques of communication and image.

The first oenological publications aimed at collecting information on wine producers and the world of wine generally dedicate some pages to advertising. In this regard, it is

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<sup>34</sup> PIAZZA, BELLANDA, 2014: 10.

<sup>35</sup> HARVEY, WHITE, FROST, *eds.*, 2014.

worth recalling the trailblazing role of the Circolo enofilo italiano (Italian oenophile club), founded in 1882, which published «L'Italia enologica: rassegna dell'industria e del commercio del vino» (Oenological Italy: a review of the wine industry and trade) from 1887. Between 1892 and 1894 they published three volumes of the *Annuario generale per la viticoltura e l'enologia* (General annual report on viticulture and oenology), with a specific section gathering companies' advertising. This was probably the first time that Italian wineries systematically realised an image project.

Thus, it is worth briefly remembering some of the main actors who favoured this change of course. They are those who set the pace for the oenological revolution which took its first, still uncertain steps at the beginning of the twentieth century in Italy. Their editorial and propagatory activities clearly contributed to the spreading of knowledge of territories and brands.

Arturo Marescalchi was the undisputed protagonist of the first generation of propagators who favoured long-term oenological change in Italy. After his studies, Marescalchi continued his education in Bordeaux, where he followed Gayon's and Millarder's lectures at the university. In 1891, he created the society of Italian oenologists in Pavia and then moved to Casale Monferrato to work with Edoardo Ottavi, publishing the oldest Italian wine journal, the «Giornale vinicolo italiano». So began his prolific activity as scholar and writer of some of the works which profoundly affected the development of the wine culture and knowledge in Italy. Thanks to Marescalchi, the Italian Association of Oenological Agriculturalists (now Assoenologi) was born, as was the periodical «L'Enotecnico» (today «L'Enologo»). Marescalchi was a member of parliament over four legislatures (from 1919 to 1934), senator (from 1 March 1934) and undersecretary for agriculture from 1929 to 1935. He dedicated his political career to the regulation of the wine production sector.

Another key name in wine publishing is that of the Ottavi family, who specialised in research, scientific news, publishing and politics, with particular reference to vines, wines and wine commerce. The first member of the family to have an important role in the development of the Italian wine sector was Giuseppe Antonio (1818-1885). He was the editor of «Il Coltivatore» (The Cultivator), in print from 1855. His son Ottavio founded the «Giornale vinicolo italiano» in 1875; the journal was among the first Italian periodicals to be exclusively dedicated to oenology and viticulture. Alongside his brother Edoardo, Ottavio took over direction of «Il Coltivatore» and he furthermore ran the «Almanacco Agrario» (Agrarian Almanac) with Gaetano Cantoni from 1887, demonstrating great skills as a journalist and editor. Edoardo Ottavi is an emblematic figure of this attention to the development of Italian regions through viticulture. He graduated from Milan's agricultural high school in agrarian science and specialised at the École nationale d'agriculture in Montpellier. He is credited as being one of the forefathers of Italy's agricultural journalism, having held the role of manager of both «Il Coltivatore» and «Giornale vinicolo italiano». It is also worth highlighting his publication

of the wine guides to Tuscany, Sicily and Piedmont, published in 1902, which show an awareness of the nascent use of automobiles, providing practical tips to drivers such as maps, services, eateries and places to sleep. All of these magazines had the fundamental role of improving Italy's wine production sector and displaying the value of the regions which were represented through the brands of the wine companies.

To get an idea of how important the concept of brand had become and how much it was talked about in magazines of the sector, one can look at the article written by Giovanni Dalmasso in 1921<sup>36</sup>. In *L'arte nell'industria del vino* (Art in the wine industry), he dedicated a paragraph to wine advertising. He highlighted the importance of Italy's moving from a wine industry based on quantity to one based on quality so as to do better on foreign markets too. He believed that two elements in particular were fundamental: the visual presentation of the bottle and advertising. Using examples of excellence, in particular as regards some sparkling wines and luxury red wines, he underlined the numerous essential aspects which still needed to be improved in Italy.

## 2.2. Brands in the fascist period

The fascist period was characterised by important interventions in the wine sector which added to a series of legislative actions from the late 1800s. Looking at these legislative initiatives, it is clear that there was growing interest in the sector and some of the measures echo the growing debate around «typical wines». One of the first measures in the wine sector was the 1890 law on hygiene of food, drinks and items for domestic use, which banned wine doctoring and the addition of harmful substances to wine. In 1900 the first organic law on wine fraud was passed. It was an important legislative initiative which, in regulatory terms, marked a radical move away from the past. At the same time, and following the 1891 Madrid agreement on trademarks, debate began regarding the protection of typical wines and yet again it was the Chianti area which led the change<sup>37</sup>. In 1902, an association was founded whose aim was to spread trade of Chianti. Then, in 1903, a Chianti oenological cooperative trade union was born. Other legislative measures against wine fraud were taken in 1904 and 1909 when the law on distilleries entered into force. At the turn of the twentieth century, Italy took the same path as other countries which were introducing rules to manage a sector with wide-reaching implications on the economy and people's health<sup>38</sup>. The drinks sector was plagued by fraud, falsifications, imitations and adulterations, particularly as regards wine, which made it essential to adopt adequate measures in order to intervene effectively. Other key moments were the laws of 1916 and 1917, and 1924 when the thorny question of having a law on the definition and protection of typical wines was faced, thanks to the initiative of senator Arturo Marescalchi. In order to

<sup>36</sup> DALMASSO, 1921.

<sup>37</sup> MOCARELLI, VAQUERO PIÑEIRO, 2019; MOCARELLI, 2013.

<sup>38</sup> LOPES, LLUCH, PEREIRA, 2020; STANZIANI, 2004, 2005.

avoid the hurdle of the difficult delimitation of the production zones, the law concentrated on protection through the creation of special consortia, each of which was allowed to set specific regulations to ensure the highest quality of each type of wine and affirm its reputation<sup>39</sup>. The royal decree-law no. 497 of 7 March 1924 thus gave producers and industrialists of a specific typical wine the power to form a consortium for the protection of the denomination of their product and to reach the aims of the decree, as well as allowing them to adopt a mark or distinctive feature to make consortium members' products stand out. One of the first consortia to be founded was precisely that of Chianti, but a consortium was of little use in absence of a precise delimitation of the production areas. The law was not fully applied firstly because there was no precise definition of «typical wine» and secondly due to the delicate matter of the delimitation of the production areas and the use of the brand name. These aspects remained unresolved and help to explain why controversy flared up in the following years over the use of the name «Chianti»<sup>40</sup>. Some maintained that it was necessary to reduce the number of denominations of origin from seven to one. It was said that fascism would carry out this simplification as it was contrary to «antiproduktive jealousies of the factions». There were constant charges of falsifications to the detriment of «Chianti». The controversy did not wane and in Siena in 1935 there was a large demonstration of more than a thousand people who were in favour of the creation of a single brand and territory of reference to overcome the division between the consortia of Chianti «Gallo» and «Putto» («Corriere vinicolo», no. 9, 2 March 1935). The dispute started as soon as the 1924 law on consortia and typical wines was passed. In 1925 the Consorzio per la difesa del vino tipico del Chianti (Consortium for the defence of the typical wine of Chianti) registered its trademark bearing a black cockerel and in 1927 the Consorzio del vino Chianti (Consortium for Chianti wine) did the same, using the symbol of a *putto*. This split continued for a long time even after the distinction between Chianti classic DOCG (the label guaranteeing quality and origin) and Chianti DOCG, the first product in the area of Chianti, the second in the wider territory of the provinces of Florence, Prato and Pisa. This long battle explains the tardy arrival of the DOCG label for Chianti in 1985 and for Chianti classico at the end of the twentieth century, in 1996. The controversy around Chianti is a telling case of the difficulties faced in Italy in introducing rules to regulate the varied world of wine, fragmented by territorial, commercial and industrial interests<sup>41</sup>.

The fascist regime's aim to fully regulate every area of the national economy determined the elaboration of a series of legislative measures regarding wine and related matters. In 1925, a new law dealt once more with the matter of repressing fraud in wine and vinegar. For example, an attempt was made to reach a precise definition of wine as

<sup>39</sup> KOVATZ, 2013.

<sup>40</sup> MOCARELLI, 2013.

<sup>41</sup> MOCARELLI, VAQUERO PIÑEIRO, 2019.



the «product of alcoholic fermentation of the must of fresh or slightly dried grapes with or without the presence of pomace». It was a clear attempt at regulating the alcoholic drinks sector, which was all but homogenous. The trade and sale of unadulterated wine was forbidden. The ban included red wines of less than 9% ABV and whites of less than 8% ABV. The trade of the so-called *vinello* (light wine) was authorised<sup>42</sup>.

With the 1925 declaration of the «battle for grain», the fascist regime, which had initially maintained a liberal profile, impressed a radical change to the economic direction of the country. Difficulties increased due to the general reduction in agricultural prices after 1926<sup>43</sup>. No subsidies were provided by government bodies and many smaller farms had to close down, ruined by the weight of debts and the fall in prices. The attempt to rebalance the accounts focused on incentivising the production of cereals, without considering the need to produce alternative crops which could contribute positively to reducing debt with other countries. From 1925-1926, agriculture, like all of the Italian economy, was subordinate to the principle of strengthening and full use of national resources; in the name of food self-sufficiency and the reduction of imports, the central power of the state claimed absolute decisional capacity, leading to the complete zeroing of the rules of the free market and the consequent transformation of economic subjects into simple passive executors with no margin of autonomy<sup>44</sup>.

The producers, big or small, could do nothing but follow the directions of those in power, who, with insistence and profuse propaganda, concentrated exclusively on increasing the production of wheat. Everything else came after, including attention for other plantations, such as vines, which, compared to grain, required greater capital investment, more time, functioning markets and a fair amount of risk. In this general setting, the interest shown by agrarian magazines for grape growing and for the quality of wine faded away to almost nothing. At the end of the 1920s, each farmer's patriotism in fascist Italy was measured by the amount of grain harvested.

At the beginning of the 1930s, the difficult situation caused by the crisis of 1929 imposed the adoption of a wide series of measures in an attempt to ease the sector's plight. At the time, national viticulture covered approximately 4 million hectares of land (in part associated or alternated with other crops), represented approximately 32 billion lira invested in vineyards and wineries, and employed a huge amount of manpower (450 million working days a year). The first measures regarded the reduction of transport costs for wines from southern Italy, the waiver of tax on wine, the creation of wine cooperatives and grape collection points, and a law to defend typical wines. Due to the basic oenological background, at times international marked by falls in prices, by the closure of markets and by the dramatic reduction in purchasing power, talking about or

<sup>42</sup> MARESCALCHI, 1926.

<sup>43</sup> FABIANI, 2015: 139-140.

<sup>44</sup> GRIFFITH, 2020.

simply forecasting the progress necessary for increasing the quality of wine production was an uneasy topic. In the face of ever-increasing problems, it was a matter of, at best, maintaining the positions reached, trying not to lose the patrimony of knowledge and awareness that had been gained through such hard work between the end of the 1800s and the 1920s. In this setting, the authorities were obliged to admit that local wine production was lacking in quality and that the modest quantities of special wine, however much they may have been appreciated oenologically, were of little economic or business interest.

In an attempt to combat the crisis of the wine sector — worsened by the fall in prices — with the full wine cellars and the debasement of the end product, the main changes came from the creation of institutions and authorities to encourage corporate management of the economy. Law no. 1737 of 29 December 1930 and no. 22 of 6 January 1931 aimed to create associations of winemakers and lay the foundations for wine cooperatives and grape collection points in order to rationally use the by-products of wine-making. So as to ease the crisis caused by the excess of wine production and to facilitate the selling off of those wines which were not fit for direct consumption, special fiscal conditions were conceded for wine alcohol destined for the preparation of cognac and vinegar and for the alcohol obtained from the distillation of *vinello*. In applying law no. 987 of 18 June 1931 for the protection of plants, 62 provincial consortia were created. The consortia saw to the training of the workforce, assistance to winemakers, and so on. The consortia were also given the power to found consortium grape collection points by zone of production in order to gather producers' wines and unify characteristic types of each zone. The same decree-law contained other measures for the protection of viticulture, including regulations on production and on consumer protection: a ban on the sale of *vinello* and wines which did not have a minimum ABV percentage (10% for red wines, 9% for whites); a ban on the sale of non-wine vinegars and of must which was not truly from grapes. At the same time, in order to encourage the consumption of fresh fruit, the *festa dell'uva* (grape festival) was proclaimed.

In 1932 the Office international de la vigne e du vin indicated the production of typical wines as a strategy to follow in order to ease the plight of the sector which was familiar with the negative effects of the global economic depression. Following the indications of the international body, and while the governments in France and Spain adopted specific legislation for the protection of wines<sup>45</sup>, in Italy parliamentary discussion was resumed regarding the need to have new legislation (royal decree no. 62 of 11 January 1930) for the protection of typical wines and to promote the development and improvement of their production, as well as their distribution on national and foreign markets. The decree defined typical wines as genuine products of specific localities with particular, constant and clearly defined characteristics of vine variety and vinification method. Producers

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<sup>45</sup> PLANAS, 2016; GRAZIA, 2005.

and traders were encouraged to form consortia to protect their wines. The parliamentary commission advised the government to leave vermouth free from restraints regarding production and commerce, in accordance with the wishes of the largest producers. Marsala was excluded from this as it had to be protected by law. Applying this law, the zones of several typical wines were defined, including Marsala, Orvieto, Moscato d'Asti, Asti spumante, Soave, Castelli Romani, Chianti, Barolo, Barbaresco, Capri, Lambrusco, Sangiovese, Albana, Freisa<sup>46</sup>. A specific intervention was approved to protect the zibibbo grape variety and the moscato of Pantelleria. The Chianti region was divided into seven zones of production, demonstrating the significant difficulty in reaching an agreement which could overcome the strongly rooted territorial peculiarities: Chianti classico, Montalbano, Rufina, Colli fiorentini, Colli senesi, Colli aretini and Colli pisani.

The fascist regime in Italy responded to the fall in sales and prices following the crisis of '29 by intensifying legislation<sup>47</sup>. Through a specific law on the protection and definition of typical wines, the consortia were given the task of defining typical wines by delimiting the areas of production. The legislation on wine was completed by royal decree no. 1443 of 26 October 1933, which extended to wine exportation the national brand for fruit and vegetable products destined for export with law no. 1272 of 23 June 1927; the aim was to give importing countries a guarantee on the authenticity of Italian wines. In 1933 the law regulating the preparation and commerce of vermouth and wine-based aperitifs entered into force.

The first steps revealed various problems which necessitated the passing of law no. 1266 of 10 June 1937 on «measures for viticulture and wine production», including the «regulation of the production and commerce of fine wines of specific origin». «Fine wines» meant those which, for production zone, quality of the grape variety and production method had characteristics of particular organoleptic quality which could be kept constant and in some cases improved through the right oenological practices. At the height of the autarchic regime, this law represented a further step towards full regulation of the sector, aimed at the reconstruction of viticulture in terms of increased quality of the production of wine and eating grapes. From that moment on, anyone who wanted to plant or renew vineyards needed the authorisation of the territorial consortium. In practice, the aim was full management of wine production and commerce in order to constantly improve the production and packaging of fine and high-quality wines in order to eliminate foreign wines from the Italian market and continually increase exports. The law's objectives included the elimination of defective and low alcohol content wines from the national market, the fight against adulteration and fraud, and the protection of brands which guaranteed fine wines.

<sup>46</sup> D'AGATA, 2019.

<sup>47</sup> ROSSI, CORTASSA, 2021.

The law strictly forbade the use of any made-up denomination aimed at confusing it with that of true fine wines. It allowed for the use of by-products of winemaking. It determined the compulsory utilisation of pomace and the complete use of wines destined for distillation. The government's plan was to produce 430,000-450,000 hectolitres of alcohol. The third heading of the law regarded the regulation of production and commerce of fine wines of specific origin, by which it meant «authentic and special wines which, having verified origin of the production zone according to terrain, variety and growing and preparation method, have constant organoleptic characteristics that make them particularly good». The part which refers to brands is especially interesting. The brand had to be a guarantee for the consumer and, besides a symbol, had to bear the indication of the wine it represented.

Through the 1937 law and the general intervention of government inspection bodies, fascism's economic policy in the wine sector aimed to confirm the economic and cultural dimension of wine production. From an economic point of view, the action of the public bodies intended to regulate the grape and wine market to guarantee the producers fair remuneration, meaning they were no longer subject to the frightening variations determined by changing productivity. The use of excess wine in distillation for alcohol production was important in bringing about balance. In order to control market prices, both the grape collection points and the wine cooperatives played an important role. They both aimed to placate producers' worries about selling their grapes by distributing the sale of wine over the whole wine-producing year.

The 1937 law never actually came completely into force, but it created numerous problems from the moment the 1930 law was revoked, creating a legislative vacuum. In practice, the sector went back to square one and Italy was left without legislation which protected typical fine wines until the end of the 1930s. This lack of legislation caused widespread discussion which led to numerous proposals. The idea that the concept of «typical wine» was outdated became popular; many doubts were put forward regarding the definition of «fine wine» too, as it was considered to be too ambiguous and not connected to the production zone. The idea of favouring the territorial origin of a wine — in other words its connection to the place, culture and history — developed. These issues would be revisited from the 1950s.

On 20 September 1938, the decree introducing the obligation to declare the quantity of wine produced came into force, dictating that ten per cent of the declared amount be put aside to protect the interests of the huge number of farmers. Continuing on the path of absolute regulation, further legislative interventions were issued. Some tried to limit production in areas which could not produce fine wines; others encouraged greater quantities, promoting the establishment of wine cooperatives in which oenological regulations were applied «carefully and seriously». 1939 saw the creation of the technical commission for the examination of documents produced for the declaration of fine wines

of specific origin. The aims were to avoid the flow of large quantities of wine onto the market in order to stabilise prices, and to encourage the use of pomaces, which, in the logic of fully using national resources, were needed for the production of spirits, alcohol, fats, dyes and cream of tartar. At the eve of the beginning of the Second World War, in the principle of «no price rise for any reason and under no form», the wine-production corporate regulation was approved, intensifying checks, the formation of local investigative commissions and continued checks so that everybody — consumers, vendors and producers — would diligently adapt to the regulations on maximum prices. Following the idea that the corporate price was the right one as it met everybody's needs, the price-fixing was handed over to committees of representatives of the grape growers, wine industrialists, wine traders and other groups related to the world of wine.

This intense season of legislation on oenology took place at the same time as a significant stagnation of the sector. After all, fascism's agrarian policy hardly favoured the development of specialised wine production. The regime's extreme pressure to destine work and resources to increased cereal production notably contributed to shaping vine growing, which was further penalised by the drop in exports and prices, without forgetting that the autarchic policy limited access to chemical products which were essential for fighting phylloxera and other diseases of the plants. For all of these reasons there was a significant impoverishment of the wine production patrimony in the 1930s, and many of the achievements of the previous decades were lost. The stricter contractual conditions of agrarian agreements, which led farmers to neglect making good wine with «the master's grapes», certainly did not favour the development of quality winemaking.

During the 1920s and 1930s, many of the tendencies developed over the previous decades slowed down due to the imposition of fascism's autarchic policies regarding food consumption too. Furthermore, commercial relations with other countries became less intense and thus the role previously entrusted to advertising became less important. Italian wine companies had to mainly work nationally and therefore adopted language which was less rich and suggestive and had fewer images; at most they took up elements which were clearly identifiable with evocative episodes from Italian history. It was not by chance that advertising widely resorted to using emblems, castles and calligraphy which established an ideal connection with the most evocative pages of the country's medieval and renaissance past. In its attempt to build a visual identity, the history of the brand of Italian wine in the fascist decades mirrored the more general tendency of the regime's culture that paid great attention to the forms of visual culture which contributed to binding Mussolini's Italy to the most glorious pages of the country's history<sup>48</sup>. In exalting a drink which was a typical expression of Mediterranean culture, the wine

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<sup>48</sup> LASANSKY, 2004; LAZZARO, CRUM, 2005.



companies made an important contribution to the construction of a collective image which was attracted to the wine of imperial Rome or the court of the seigneur<sup>49</sup>.

Before the Second World War, the changes also regarded the nascent connection between wine and tourism. In 1931, Touring Club Italiano published the first edition of the *Guida enogastronomica d'Italia* (Food and wine guide to Italy), which contained a list of the most renowned national wines. At the same time, the practice of sport and the propaganda on holidays in the mountains or at the seaside, immersed in nature and folkloristic local traditions, meant that, like in Germany and Austria, in Italy the creation of wine routes began to be discussed<sup>50</sup>. From the pages of «Le vie d'Italia» (Roads of Italy) of the Touring Club and other free-time magazines aimed at the wealthier classes — the only ones in a position to travel for pleasure and spend on holidays — big hotels or alpine chalets were advised to set up specific rooms to allow the public to taste the best national and international wines. Obviously, this affected only a small section of society, but we can see the beginnings of an attempt to mix wine, tourism and territories.

In the fascist period, attention was paid to giving wine an image at exhibitions too. An example of this was with the «futurist» stands of the first «Mostra Mercato dei Vini Tipici d'Italia» (Show market of Italy's typical wines) in Siena in 1939. Aspects of a new image, of change, but it was — as happened with fascism — a façade reserved for the minority because society as a whole had reduced the consumption of wine, while exports paid the price of the closure of trade routes. In this recessive economic context, energy was focused on operations of propaganda (magazines) and high public impact (grape festival).

The issues which began to timidly emerge as regards the construction of a more suggestive image of wine were put aside with the Second World War and the years of economic recovery. A rich patrimony had been formed and did not fully disappear, it stayed dormant, ready to re-emerge and gain visibility as soon as general conditions would allow it to. The starting points were fairly well defined, as were the strategies to put in place.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some winemakers started to produce for and sell in international markets, so their wines had to be characterised by clear recognisable features, attracting customers' interest but also reassuring them about quality and hygiene<sup>51</sup>.

The issues related to the creation of specific advertising for wine include all aspects of the wine chain, from vine cultivation to consumption via winemaking, marketing and

<sup>49</sup> MONTANARI, 1995.

<sup>50</sup> BERRINO, 2011.

<sup>51</sup> ANDERSON, PINILLA, eds., 2018; ANDERSON, NELGEN, PINILLA, eds., 2017; CAMPBELL, GUIBERT, eds., 2007.

the new communication agencies<sup>52</sup>. The billboards, posters and advertisements reveal the paths taken by an entrepreneurship which, having to distance itself from the past, took the path of modernisation, even as regards the presentation of a very traditional product. The necessary changes were not easy because the most traditional of Italian beverages had to adapt to new consumers' tastes and overcome a multiplicity of socio-cultural resistances. The first advertisements represented a moment of rupture with tradition and found their strong point in the use of the landscape and the natural environment. The progressive consolidation of a modern wine sector was linked to the use of the territory as a tool to give an identity to the product and attract consumers.

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<sup>52</sup> MAZZA, 2010: 63.

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