

Abstract Weinakademiker Thesis (D7)

PIWIs in Friuli Venezia Giulia: breakthrough or rearguard battle. Analysis of diffusion, market penetration, and interest among sommeliers and producers.

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The goal of the study is to present what Fungal Resistant Grapes (universally known as PIWI, short for the German word short for “pilzwiderstandsfähig”, German word for “fungus resistant”) can represent for viticulture and their potential in the wine market.

The first section describes what Fungal Resistant Grapes (FRG) are, how they are obtained and what are their main features.

Then pros and cons of their use is analyzed and discussed, especially for what concerns economical savings and sustainability from one side, and difficulties from the other, defining acceptance among producers and customers.

After that I described FRG diffusion in the world, and especially in Europe, focusing subsequently on Italy and Friuli Venezia Giulia.

The overview ends with the description of two local wineries that focus only on FRG.

As an addendum there is first a survey conducted among members of the Italian Sommelier Association to test their knowledge about the existence of FRG wines and their inclination to buy them in the future.

And secondly the results of a blind tasting of FRG\ Vinifera varieties again conducted among members of the Italian Sommelier Association in order to evaluate the quality criteria of the FRG samples versus their Vinifera parent.

Contents

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 General overview of *Vitis Vinifera* ssp *sativa*

1.2 Pests and diseases from North America

1.3 First use of hybrids to control “the American plagues”

Chapter 2 - global warming and the revival of resistant grape varieties

2.1 Global warming and its influence on the diffusion of fungal diseases

2.2 New types of fungal resistant varieties (PIWI) and their way of production

2.3 Viticulture characteristics of these varieties and their advantages in the climate-changing wine world

2.4 Disadvantages and misconceptions

Chapter 3 - commercial acceptance and marketing strategies

3.1 - acceptance among Producers

3.2 - acceptance among Consumers

Chapter 4 - general view of PIWI production in the world

4.1 - PIWI around the world

Chapter 5 - general view of PIWI production in the Italy

5.1 - PIWI in Italy

Chapter 6 - PIWI production in Friuli - Venezia Giulia

6.1 PIWI in Friuli- Venezia Giulia

Chapter 7 - case history of two local wineries only focused on PIWI varieties

7.1 Cantina 837

7.2 Catina Tre Zero

Chapter 8 - Survey conducted among Italian Sommelier Association members

8.1 Questions

8.2 Results

Chapter 9 - Blind tasting of PIWI\Vinifera

9.1 Questions

9.2 Results

Chapter 10 - Conclusions

10.1 Conclusions

Conclusions:FRG varieties (often known as PIWI) represent a crossing between Vitis Vinifera varieties and non Vinifera Varieties.

Modern breeding techniques allowed to reduce the percentage of non Vinifera genes (carriers of unpleasant flavors) selecting the individuals with the Fungus resistance gene (or genes, if the pyramiding resistance technique is used).

Less costs, due to the less need of spraying, and sustainability are two most important drivers in the decision of planting FRG.

Recent authorization by the EU allowed the use of FRG inside PDO wines, making easier and more profitable the choice of planting them.

Hectares and production of FRG in Friuli Venezia giulia are quite anecdotal.

In spite of the high quality reached, FRG are still a neglected topic, even among professionals.

In Friuli Venezia Giulia, the number of wineries producing FRG and number of hectares planted with FRG is still very low if compared with non Vinifera varieties.

On the marketing side, surely the use inside the PDO, especially when used inside the blend, can be a strategy to market them, as happened in the past here and in other countries, when unknown grape varieties were initially blended with international varieties to increase their appeal.

The world of wine saw in the past several changes not only in terms of taste and style but at multiple levels. Probably FRG indeed represent the future and change will eventually become permanent.