

Red carpet for Venissa

A tribute to the culture and the history of the Lagoon of Venice

While the world's spotlights were all on the 67th edition of the Venice Film Festival, the attention of wine connoisseurs was all for the Venissa Estate and its ancient walled vineyard on the Venetian island of Mazzorbo, where on Sept. 3 the first harvest of the "Golden Grape" took place.

Over the centuries certain ancient varieties of grape vines have been conserved, others unfortunately have been lost. One in particular that was believed to have become extinct has been "resuscitated." This is the case of the Venetian Dorona grape, also known as the "Golden Grape," which was once cultivated throughout the lagoon and has miraculously been conserved up to today in some small local cultivations. After five years of historical research thanks to the passion and dedication of the Bisol family, wine growers and producers in Valdobbiadene, the Dorona grape was brought to new life and its cultivation experimented at the Venissa Estate on the island of Mazzorbo, adjacent to the more famous island of Burano. The structure offers accommodations in its beautifully restored manor house and a top-quality restaurant. And Venissa is also the name that will be given to the

rare labels of the Dorona wine, an absolute market rarity especially for the first vintage, which will be available in 2012, only by reservation.

The Dorona is an exceptional and unique example of what Luca Zaia, president of the Veneto Region, proudly defines as "heroic agriculture." In fact, this is a vine that grows in close contact with the peculiar lagoon environment from which it draws its characteristics but also from which it has to protect itself.

Just like the Dorona, President Zaia is back in his land, ready to face the challenges of his present role as the newly elected president of the Veneto Region. As former minister of agriculture in Silvio Berlusconi's fourth Cabinet, Zaia's mission has always been to put agriculture and the real economy once again at the center of the political agenda, focusing on the promotion and preservation of local agricultural traditions. And from his election in March 2010, this is still his priority as governor of a region that has a strong agricultural tradition and extraordinary wine production, both for quality and quantity. "Veneto is the eighth largest region of Italy with a long-standing agricultural tradition. It has over 90,000



Close up on a bunch of "Golden Grapes," set against a view of Mazzorbo's church steeple

hectares of vineyards, of which more than 35,000 are certified as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO). The region produces about 8 million hectoliters of wine per year, of which nearly 20 percent is PDO, making it the biggest PDO producer in Italy," says President Zaia.

The regional wine industry is a very important sector for the local economy and it plays a key role in attracting tourists from all over the world. "Today the wines of Veneto are a unique and excellent business card for this land. For this reason we do believe in the importance of promoting its image through its agricultural products and its wines. Local exporters sell abroad roughly 60 percent of the total regional production of wine. In terms of quantity and value this means some 30 percent of total Italian wine exports," explains

President Zaia.

"The Venissa Project was a challenge but we believed in it because we think that nowadays consumers appreciate a wine more when it has a history behind it. This is the real meaning of the Venissa Project. In other words, Venissa is the new symbol of our marketing strategy to promote the Veneto Region, a product-territory combination to preserve real agriculture and market our territories through their products and their history," concludes President Zaia.

Above all, this project plays the role of reviving the traditions of the lagoon farmers who were dedicated to the production of wines and vegetables, today a tribute to the history and culture of Venice and of its lagoon.

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