

THE HUMANS OF WINE VOICES*

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Wine Producer
(Alba, Piedmont, Italy)



Where are you based?

Alba, in the only fraction that can produce Barbaresco: it is called San Rocco Seno d'Elvio. In Langhe area in Piedmont.

What is your job in the wine business?

I work with my family in their winery *Adriano Marco e Vittorio* in Piedmont. I'm more in the sales and PR part of the business, but being a family company you end up doing everything is needed.

What is your perception of the wine business during the Covid-19 emergency?

Nature doesn't stop, springtime is just arrived and everything is following the natural cycle. Even during lockdown, we are working with our normal rhythms in the vineyards. In this terms, we are lucky because we can enjoy the first sunshines breathing fresh air staying outside. However everything changed in the commercial part: the sales are slower, almost exclusively deliveries to private customers. We were already used to handle with private consumers and now we understand how important it is because it is the only way to make some money.

How do you think this emergency will change the wine world?

The consumption of wine has already been changed: people drink less. Most of the consumers drink at home but they choose to drink "daily" wines like table white or red wines (as Dolcetto d'Alba, Barbera d'Alba, dry Moscato, Langhe Nebbiolo). They are not drinking "important" bottles (as Barbaresco), in fact normally you share that bottles with friends or you open them for special occasions. Our customers are changing their consumption, so of course even the selling and the production will change. We figure out that our presence online - website, social media, online shop - is being so important. We start to work more on them since I started to work full time in the winery: July 2014. With this emergency even older generations see the result of a good social media marketing plan.

What has already changed in your job?

I'm the one who does most of the traveling part: wine fairs, wine tastings, wine dinners, events, visiting customers. I'm always moving. When I'm at the winery I do most of the tours and wine tastings. So you can understand that this emergency really changed my work routine. I'm stuck in the office, in the winery and in the vineyards. Although, I miss my traveling, meeting people and wine tastings so far, I'm enjoying and appreciating again working in the wine production. I forgot how much could be satisfying. In the meanwhile, I'm keeping in touch with my customers and with someone I do "smart-tastings": video calls on Skype, Zoom or Messenger.

What do you think are the main challenges for the wine business in this moment?

The main challenge is to find monetary liquidity: we have to pay our workers at the end of the months (because we are still working a lot in the vineyards) and every normal cost we have to pay without receiving any payments. We will not have enough place to stock all the bottle of the nex vintage we are going to bottle next two months: the cellar is full right now. We are trying to find a new temporary place for them until the business will be back as normal and we will sell more again.

What do you think can be done to overcome them?

This is something we are trying to figure it out. It is important to keep our relationship with our customers and be ready to start again when this emergency is finished.

What are your activities on social media?

It always important to explain what's behind a glass of wine. So the storytelling will not change his content, of course it will change the way we do it. We will exploit always more digital channels. When we will host people again at winery, we will promote outdoor activities making them understand what we do breathing our air in the vineyard to understand our philosophy in the best way.

What are the initiatives you are carrying out to reach your clients and your potential clients at the moment?

I'm keeping in touch with them with the same tools we used in the past: emails, Whatsapp messages. But during this period, we are doing lots of video calls that I call "Smart - tastings" (because in Italy people say "Smart - working" meaning "working from home").

What has changed in the work at the winery right now?

It didn't changed a lot expect from the fact that we are not receiving any people for visits and tastings.

Have your sales changed?

More wholesale than retail/restaurants/private?

Sales changed because the restaurants and most of the wine shops and retail stores are closed. We are still selling to our customers who renovate their own web site creating an online shop or the ones they were already selling online. We also have a good net with our private customers and so we are shipping our wines directly to their houses, even if we don't have an e-commerce website.

How do you imagine wine tourism in the time of social distancing?

We will not have any more big groups, only small ones, but I prefer working with small amounts of people at a time: it easier to connect with them and you can easily adapt your explanations on their preferences and their knowledge about the wine, the area. I think we will promote more outdoor activities in the vineyards or in our hazelnuts fields and woods. This area is one of the World Heritage Site and so it is beautiful even for outdoors sports.

