

# THE HUMANS OF WINE VOICES\*

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Where are you based?

I'm Japanese, born in TOKYO, but based in Florence, Italy since 1998.

What is your job in the wine industry?

I'm a food & wine journalist.

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

In the beginning of the expansion of COVID-19, I came back to Tokyo because I had to organize some Italian wine promotion in Japan. It was 11 February. At that time some Italian wine producers who I was working with, were afraid of coming to Japan, because as you know our country is very close to China. After that the situation quickly changed. Almost all events in Japan were cancelled, also some important wine event as Foodex. And Italy entered to lock down, Japan was not exactly in the same situation, but all restaurants have to close the door and people must "STAY HOME". I worry about the Italian wine production 2020, but at this time in Japan, wine selling is increasing because we must "STAY HOME". This is a positive situation for wine selling. Maybe from June restaurants will be able to open, but of course they must follow a new hygienic regulation.

How do you think this emergency is going to change the world of wine?

For the consumers because of staying home wine selling is increasing. Online party is also quite popular. But for the wine producers because of the reduction of their activities, I'm afraid that this year could have very tragical result.

What has already changed in your job?

I had to go back to Italy on 1 April, but I could not. All the flights were cancelled. I hope I can go back in Italy in June. Now I have much time and requests to write articles, but I cannot move, travel, organize event, this fact hits me.



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

Many wine producers ask me to organize webinar combined with on line shopping. This is not a drastic solution, but on the other hand we must think that now it's a chance to wine education. But what we need is direct contact with producers, consumers, sommeliers, chefs. We miss them.

### What do you think could be done to overcome them?

The way of communicating has certainly changed, for instance I think wine demand is still on the market. So we need to promote and educate more by web. So easily consumers can order wines.

### What are your activities on social media?

Support wine selling and restaurants. Now we have much time for SNS. In fact, I hear very often bad news, but we must try to keep on talking about the future.

### How is the promotion of wine going to change?

Every November I organize several wine and food events in Japan during "Italian Cuisine Week". This is an official event organized by the Italian government. But I still don't know if also this year it will be held. Every year during "Italian Cuisine Week" there is a lot of presence of Italian wine producers, wine promotions, wine paring dinner and so on, but now it's quite difficult to gather people for this kind of events. SNS (social networking service), yes it's quite convenient but some people (me too) say " BASTA! SOCIAL = ENOUGH! SOCIAL" actually we are tired of following SNS. It's becoming almost an obligation. We need to think to create new method to promote wine, because fortunately now we have much time to think about it.

