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5 **Old and new challenges in the wine business: what lies ahead for Wine**
6 **Economics and Policy**

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8 Nicola Marinelli¹
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12 ¹ Dipartimento di Scienze e Tecnologie Agrarie, Alimentari, Ambientali e Forestali, University of
13 Florence, P.le delle Cascine, 18, 50144 Firenze, Italy, Email: nicola.marinelli@unifi.it

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21 Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Nicola Marinelli, Dipartimento di
22 Scienze e Tecnologie Agrarie, Alimentari, Ambientali e Forestali, University of Florence, P.le delle
23 Cascine, 18, 50144 Firenze, Italy, Email: nicola.marinelli@unifi.it

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38 **Abstract:**

39 The wine sector, as all the other businesses, is facing the effects of the recent global pandemic and of
40 the energy price crisis, but at the same time the research has not finished dealing with old/new
41 challenges in the field of sustainability and innovation. And probably never will, as these issues
42 represent an underlying constant in the debate.

43 As the wine world continues to change, our Journal changes: eleven years after the publication of the
44 first Issue, it is time to take stock of the situation and discuss what lies ahead.

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46 **Key words:** Wine, business, research, innovation, sustainability

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72 Dear readers,
73 when this Journal came to life with the publication of its first issue in 2012, it is no secret that there
74 was some sort of scepticism about it. Some said that there was no need for another wine journal and
75 that the topic was so specialised that a market for it would be very narrow. Now, after eleven years
76 and twenty-two Issues, that scepticism seems to be vanished. Wine Economics and Policy (WEP)
77 proved to be successful, in spite of the hardships that any new publication needs to face at first, and
78 the reasons for this success are very simple:

- 79 - a solid backbone: WEP is an emanation of the University of Florence, that has a long and
80 layered history of wine research and education. UniCeSV, the University Centre for the
81 Development of the Wine Sector, pools the best resources internally and connects them with
82 the rest of the Wine Academia and the business;
- 83 - a prestigious and active editorial board: in particular, the idea to have Editors for specific
84 geographical areas eased the appeal of the Journal worldwide and facilitated the submissions
85 from very different and very specific realities of the wine world;
- 86 - a fruitful cooperation with the publishers: Elsevier at first and now Firenze University Press
87 (FUP) gave the Journal all the means necessary for establishing a visible presence in the
88 competitive world of academic journals;
- 89 - the idea behind it: from the start, WEP was never intended to be “just another journal about
90 wine”. The topics we tried to cover ranged from the traditional ones like consumer behaviour
91 and business analysis to newer ones, with a particular attention on interdisciplinary aspects.
92 Moreover, the Journal was never intended to be addressed only to Academia and has always
93 maintained a space for policy analysis and discussion and for the direct voice of the business
94 sector.

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96 When I was asked to take over the role of Editor in chief from Prof. Silvio Menghini, I admit I had
97 some doubts, and these doubts came from the fact that I thought it would be impossible to continue
98 to achieve all that was achieved under Prof. Menghini’s guidance. Silvio started the Journal and led
99 it where it is now with the help of the rest of the Editorial Board and the referees who contributed
100 with their availability and expertise: I will not mention the numbers related to the Journal’s
101 performance, because they are visible on our cover and our website, but we can affirm that WEP is
102 recognised as a prestigious publication for its reach and for the standards that researchers require
103 when deciding where to direct their work.

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105 So, first of all, I would like to thank Prof. Silvio Menghini and promise that I will do my best to keep
106 up the excellent work. It is a challenge, though, because we move through a world that is constantly
107 changing and compels us to rethink, reassess and redirect our work all the time.

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109 Where to now, then? We just came out (maybe) of a pandemic that hit hard, not only in terms of
110 health and social welfare, but also in economic and behavioural terms. The wine world has been
111 affected by it as all the other sectors and many studies have already been published addressing the
112 effects of the pandemic for the business. New behavioural and purchasing patterns emerge and need
113 to be further analysed to assess their relevance and their persistence in the wine market and to supply
114 producers with clearer indications. These new patterns stem from the reshaping of our social life
115 during lockdowns but also from the economic impact this period had on society, and this leads us to
116 face the other issues that affect the post-pandemic world economy, i.e. the energy crisis we are going
117 through now in many parts of the world.

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119 But the challenges for the future do not stop here. There are some “old” challenges that still need to
120 be addressed completely or, better, we need to continue addressing: the climate crisis calls for a
121 renewed look at sustainable production and consumption with a particular attention to circular
122 economy models that many governments seem to be aiming at with the support of new, changing
123 policies.

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125 Another “old” challenge regards the wide spectrum of *digitalisation*. The term is so broad that it does
126 not implicitly determine its object, so it can be applied to pretty much everything: from online new
127 media for the communication and distribution of wineries to the use of blockchain, the creation of
128 new accounting software and more. A lot of work was done on many aspects of it but we are certainly
129 not done with it, considering that, generally, technology is progressing at a faster pace than economic
130 and market research.

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132 One last thing, that is directly linked to the mission of the Journal: we should never forget about the
133 dynamic between Academia and business. The research world is often biased towards a self-
134 referencing approach that sometimes springs up in research... for the sake of research. This is
135 something that I, as new Editor in chief of this Journal, will try to avoid at all costs. I am well aware
136 of the needs and demands of academic research, but there is no need for it unless it has a concrete
137 impact in the *real* world.

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139 Here's to another eleven years (and beyond) of Wine Economics and Policy.

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