



# A DECADE of bulk

**In the 10 years since the World Bulk Wine Exhibition was launched, the sector has undergone massive change. Now it is pushing aside its cheap-and-cheerful reputation, instead highlighting its high-end credentials**



Gourmet proposition: bulk wine

**THE WORLD** Bulk Wine Exhibition (WBWE) ended its 10<sup>th</sup> edition on a high, having welcomed a record 250 exhibitors and 6,500 professionals to last year's event.

Taking place in Amsterdam in November, the show marked a milestone for the exhibition, which has spent the past decade helping to facilitate the business of bulk wine with the aim of revolutionising the sector. Over the past 10 years, the exhibition has shifted from being a trade fair to a complex business-and-discussion platform with one aim – to do business. This year's exhibition saw participation from countries including Argentina, Australia, Chile, China, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, New Zealand and the US.

"The 10<sup>th</sup> WBWE has been more diverse than ever, hosting not only large bulk-wine operators but also new producers and medium-sized companies in pursuit of quality wines for their businesses," say the organisers. "This year, new opportunities were provided for private labels, alternative packaging and environmental awareness. Bulk wine is no longer synonymous with large volumes – an increasing number of professionals find quality in the wines presented."

Indeed, while the exhibitors in attendance represented a vast 80% of the

bulk wine industry, the show itself is pleasantly compact, making it easy to meet a lot of producers in a short time.

Highlights of this year's event included the International Bulk Wine Competition – the only international contest that recognises quality bulk wines from all around the world. Almost 200 wines from 11 origins entered, including Argentina, Chile, France, Georgia, Italy and Spain, with some awarded a Grand Gold medal.

The title for this year's conference programme was 'Bulk wine: New Challenges, Great Opportunities', which saw wine professionals debate the future of the bulk wine industry, discussing trends in the Japanese wine market and the US, opportunities for bag-in-box packaging, and the impact of climate

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### The bulk wine market at a glance

- > Following a meagre 2017 harvest, which saw volumes squeezed and prices rise, the abundant 2018 harvest has seen prices soften and supply return to the market.
- > Since the start of 2018, bulk wine prices had been rising. According to Vinex's Global Price Index, prices hit a record peak in February 2018, reflective of reduced supply, but have already dropped by 6% in the past five months.
- > While producers held the power in 2017, buyers are now back in the driving seat, with healthy supply likely to lead to tough negotiations over the next year.

change on global vineyards. Elsewhere, The Art of Blending Wine masterclass hall gathered a host of international experts, including Masters of Wine Jo Ahearne, Elizabeth Gabay and Job de Swart, to share their insights on blending trends and techniques across different markets.

Capping off the event, the governing body of Castile-La Mancha was awarded the Voice of Wine Prize by the WBWE jury of organisers. This prize is aimed at giving credit to the people, institutions or associations that provide consistent and sustained support to the wine, and bulk, industry, in particular. Otilia Romero de Condés, WBWE director general and chairman of the jury, praised the government's firm backing of the implementation of the WBWE, and for its continued advocacy for the work of its wineries and cooperatives.

Next year the WBWE will expand further, taking its concept to Yantai in China for the first time, where an event will take place on 30-31 May with the aim of connecting international wineries with Chinese producers and boosting the ever growing bulk wine industry.

*The next WBWE will be held over 2-3 December 2019 in Amsterdam.*