

Frykter fulle vinkjellere etter covid-19

SKRIV EN KOMMENTAR



Vinprodusenter verden over frykter å sitte med kjellere fulle av usolgt vin når korona-krisen er over. Salget har for mange stoppet helt opp, og rammer ekstra hardt vinhus som har sitt hovedmarked blant restauranter og vinbarer. VinPuls har innhentet statusrapport fra kjente produsenter i Østerrike, Spania og Italia. De har store utfordringer nå. Kun ute i vinmarkene går arbeidet noenlunde normalt.

Vinhusenes butikker og besøksentre er stengt, tapping er utsatt, ansatte er permittert, ordreinngangen er sterkt redusert eller har stoppet helt opp og salget er halvert eller har gått ned enda mer.

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Frykten fremover er at faste kunder underveis går konkurs, slik at viktig salg til restauranter og hoteller ikke kommer opp på samme nivå som før når situasjonen blir mer normal igjen.

Vinprodusentene som har svart på spørsmålene fra VinPuls er: Weingut Sattlerhof og Weingut Wieninger fra Østerrike, Bodegas Roda og Celler Mas Doix fra Spania og de italienske vinhusene Ferrari/Gruppo Lunelli, Speri Viticoltore og Cantine Giacomo Montresor.

NB! Les alle utdypende svarene – på engelsk – fra de forskjellige vinhusene som VinPuls har vært i kontakt med lenger ned i denne artikkelen.

Stengt, mer enn halvert salg, utsatt tapping

-Vi har stengt vinhuset og har utsatt planlagt tapping. Kun en person er igjen for å passe på, melder Valenti Llagostera i kvalitetshuset **Mas Doix i Priorat, Spania**.

-Salget i mars er ned 50 prosent. I april forventer vi ytterligere nedgang. De fleste av de ansatte er permittert, svarer Fritz Wieninger ved **Weingut Wieninger i Wien, Østerrike**.

-Vi har stengt butikken og tar ikke imot besøk. Jeg har tatt kontakt med mine importører rundt om for å diskutere situasjonen og finne ut hvordan vi kan hjelpe hverandre, sier Luca Speri hos **Speri Viticoltori i Veneto, Italia**.

-Ordreinngangen, med noen få unntak, har stoppet helt. Kommunikasjonen med våre distributører går nå på betalingsbetingelser, opplyser Victor Charcan hos **Bodegas Roda i Rioja, Spania**.

-Akkurat nå er vi mest opptatt av å beskytte folk rundt oss, noe som betyr at aktiviteten i vinhusene er på et minimum. Vi har redusert antall ansatte på jobb drastisk, er rapporten fra Camilla Lunelli i **Gruppo Lunelli med vinhus i Trentino, Umbria og Toscana**.

-Vi prøver å opprettholde normal drift, men det er store problemer med logistikken, transport inn og ut, sier Edoardo Montresor ved **Cantine Giacomo Montresor i Veneto, Italia**.

Høyere eller lavere priser etter Covid 19?

Mange i Norge frykter at virusepidemien og svak kronekurs vil føre til at prisene på vin vil øke sterkt i løpet av året. Men ikke alle vinfolkene vi har intervjuet vil være med på at det vil være noen automatikk i det.

Fuller lagre hos mange produsenter like før en ny årgang skal inn i kjelleren kommende høst, kan faktisk føre til at noen vil dumpe prisene. Det kan spesielt gjelde for store, kommersielle aktører, blant dem mange som

leverer vin til Vinmonopolet og andre monopolmarkeder.

-Alltid når det er mye vin på markedet, så har det effekt på prisene. Det mange nå frykter er at de ikke får tilbake normal omsetning, og som følge av det ikke vil være i stand til å betale ansatte og de regninger som kommer til forfall. Kjellerne er fulle nå, etter to gode årganger på rad i 2018 og 2019, så krisen trenger ikke være over når vi går i gang med den neste årgangen, sier Fritz Wieninger.

-Konsumet vil garantert være lavere enn vanlig i 2020, spesielt i horeca-markedet (hotell- og restaurant) og for premium viner. I monopol- og dagligvarebutikker vil det sannsynligvis være et stabilt volum, ja, kanskje til og med høyere volum for de billigste vinene. For de mer kostbare vinene vil det bli mer problematisk, mener Luca Speri.

-Desperate tider kan føre til desperate handlinger, så forbigående kan det absolutt bli muligheter i markedet. Vi må vente og se hvordan dette utvikler seg, svarer Victor Charcan.

Arbeider for fullt i vinmarkene



Naturen går sin gang, upåvirket av covid 19-viruset. Så arbeidet ute i vinmarkene kan ikke stoppe opp, melder vinprodusentene. Foto: Mas Doix

Ingen av vinprodusentene som VinPuls har vært i kontakt med har ansatte som har testet positivt på covid 19-viruset, heldigvis! Og med nedbemanning og ekstra sikkerhetstiltak, forsøker man også å unngå smittespredning. Men ettersom arbeidet i vinmarkene er svært viktig på denne tiden av året, like før plantene begynner å knoppe seg for fullt, er man avhengig av at like mange som vanlig jobber der.

-Det er trygt å arbeide i vinmarkene, for der kan alle være ganske langt fra hverandre, sier Luca Speri.

-Vi trenger folk i vinmarkene mer enn noen annet sted nå. Naturen har ikke stoppet opp, fremholder Victor Charcan.

-Vi har delt arbeiderne inn i grupper på to, maksimalt tre personer, og lar dem jobbe på forskjellige steder, helt avskilt fra hverandre. Arbeiderne skal være minst ti meter fra hverandre, altså rundt tre rader med pergola eller guyot-system, forteller Camilla Lunelli.

Restauranter stenges, bransjen vil bli forandret

Hjemlevering av vin på døra, riktig temperert, kan være en ny trend i fremtiden i endel markeder (ikke Norge!). Corona-krisen vil lære folk til å handle mer on-line, og å sette pris på det, tror flere vi har snakket med. Privatkjøp direkte fra vinhusene kan altså øke. Vinprodusentene tror også at bransjen må endre seg, innføre nye strukturer og tenke annerledes. Samtidig forventer flere at mange restauranter kan få problemer, og kanskje gå konkurs, slik vi allerede har fått rapport om er tilfellet med de to Michelin-restaurantene Kadeau i Danmark.

-Vi har allerede fått beskjed om at noen av våre restaurantkunder i Milano ikke vil være i stand til å åpne igjen etter viruskrisen, røper Camilla Ferrari.

-Vi forventer store problemer langt inn i neste år. For når krisen er over vil ikke folk ha like mye penger å bruke som før krisen, mener Fritz Wieninger.

Se de komplette intervjuene her

Her er mailintervjuene gjort med de forskjellige vinfolkene rundt om i Europa. Intervjuene – på engelsk – ble gjort mandag og tirsdag i denne uken:

Har utsatt å flasketappe vin

Valenti Llagostera, eier og winemaker ved Mas Doix, Priorat, Spania



Valenti Llagostera, Celler Mas Doix, Priorat, Spania

How is the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus affecting the work in the winery at the moment?

-We have closed the winery. Just one person keeping the basics, moving some wines from tanks to barrels. We have postponed a bottling for one month. Will see what will be the situation in one month.

Have any of the employees tested positive?

-Not for the moment.

What about the work in the vineyards right now?

-We have kept all our field team. Each person is working on its own in different places to avoid any contact.

What will, in the near future, be the main challenges for your winery and the wine industry in general?

-The main challenge will be to keep the activity going on. Nature does not stop! No bottles are being sold at this moment. Our wines are not in the supermarkets. The customers are mainly restaurants and wine shops, both closed now. We have no tradition in selling direct to customers...

Not in a happy mood

And what can be the situation/problems on a longterm basis?

-It will depend on the length of the isolation. Restaurants are mainly about small family businesses which are having lot of troubles now. On the other hand, I feel the mood of people may change in the short-medium term, while we feel the virus is not completely gone. So wine will be drunk, but not in an happy mood.
-Concerning visits, I guess it will take some time to have people moving around again.

Do you think what is happening around the world now will have any effect on the prices of the wines to be launched when all this is over?

-For sure this will have an effect in prices, but in what sense? I don't know! It will depend on how people will feel when we get out of this situation.

Mistet 50% av salget i mars

Fritz Wieninger, eier og winemaker ved Weingut Wieninger, Wien, Østerrike



Fritz Wieninger, Weingut Wieninger, Wien, Østerrike. Foto: UD

How is the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus affecting the work in the winery at the moment?

-Turnover in March was at 50%. I expect it to be even less in April. My office is almost empty, usually three ladies are working there, now there is only one, for a half day. My sales director and my chef are unemployed right now and my cellar and warehouse staff is on „short work“, a system installed because of corona, where the government pays a part of the wages for the employees. Cellar work is at 50% of normal, vineyard work is at 100%, the vines don't make a break.

Have any of the employees tested positive?

-No!

What about the work in the vineyards right now?

-We are in front of budbreak, the winterwork is just to be finished this week. Some of my tractor drivers are bringing compost to the vineyards, others take care of weed control between the vines. However, the vineyard work will continue very regular, also with the costs!

What will be the main challenges for your winery and the wine industry in general in the near future?

People will not stop drinking wine, but they will drink more at home and they will source the wine at different places. We have to find out how we can reach them, without becoming slaves of the supermarkets. The restaurants are closed and will remain closed for at least another six weeks and even after that. Business will not come back to normal immediately.

And what can be the situation/problems on a long term basis?

-We will see how strong this effects the economy, not just in Austria, actually in the whole world. First we have to dive through this crisis that will last at least over the summer. Life will slowly come back to normal until fall, but then people will not have the same amount of money as before the crisis. So we expect a serious problem on a longer term basis, for sure even into the next year.

Do you think what is happening around the world now will have any effect on the prices of the wines to be launched when all this is over?

-Always when there is a lot of wine on the market, it effects the prices. Everybody is afraid of two things right now. First: At the moment we do not have any turnover, and because of this we are getting problems paying employees and other regular costs. Second: The fact that the winecellars are full. After a strong vintage 2018, we had another good quantity in 2019. And the next harvest is already in half a year. The crisis might not be over when we harvest the next vintage!

Er rede til å hjelpe importørene

Luca Speri, winemaker og eier ved Speri Viticoltori, Veneto, Italia



Luca Speri, Speri Viticoltori, Veneto, Italia

How is the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus affecting the work in the winery at the moment?

-Life is still going on. The winery is working because we also are an 100% agricultural company. We work with our own vineyards (60 hectares). We can't stop, nature has a rhythm that can't be stopped and we need to follow it... Of course we are following all the safety measures requested. Security distances, masks, etc. We asked all the employees who could to stay home (we're lucky to be a big family working: Eight members now). And to do smart working for those who can do it. For three weeks now we have not been open for visits and we have closed the wine shop. I'm personally in close contact with all our importers in order to understand how the situation evolve and to be ready to assist them how we can.

-Our business worldwide is about 95% fine dining/hotels, and this is the category that is closed or limited in all the countries effected by the virus. One positive thing is that we're receiving some orders now from our importers in Korea, Singapore, Japan and China. It seems that they are reopening and life is slowly re-starting. You can imagine that this is a «ray of light» for us. Seeing that somebody is coming back to normality after all this make us believe that it will be gone soon.

Have any of the employees tested positive?

-No, thank God.

Trygt å jobbe i vinmarkene



What about the work in the vineyards right now?

-The work in the vineyards can't be stopped. We have finished all the pruning works and we are ready for the budding. Working in the vineyard is also safe as everybody can stay quite far each other. For sure, we're the luckiest in these days: Working in the vineyard now gives us a sense of freedom...really...in a moment in which everybody needs to stay home, we can be outside in the nature.

What will be the main challenges for your winery and the wine industry in general in the near future?

-I have to say that for the moment the big first impact was in the Chinese/Asian market for Jan/Feb and only March for the domestic market. In March we sold 5% of the usual total in Italy. These are the markets in which we saw the big gap so far. We believe the big fall will come soon....slowly all the countries will be facing the problem, unfortunately, and restaurants, hotels, etc. will be closed soon, if they're not already closed. I think that we will have a very slow (probably close to zero) April and May in terms of orders and shipments. Historically we have a minimal presence in the on-line platforms, and also little presence in the monopolies (Canada, Finland, Sweden, Norway). They probably will continue to work with decent volumes. We've always invested in the horeca.

On-line shopping kan bli mer aktuelt

-Investing in the on-line? A lot of people are talking about that, and probably it's right for some kind of products, volumes and prices. I think we need to evaluate with our partner this strategy. We work in more than 50 countries in the world, I think we will act in different ways depending by the market. If I have to bet 1€ of a new way of business, I will for sure invest in the *delivery* of wine like the "pizza delivery" (not the classic on-line shop): Order now and receive the bottle at home at the right temperature in max 30 minutes. I think that in some countries this will be a great business also for premium wines.

-For the wine industry in general, things will change. We need to be ready to a new scenario where the on-line will be more and more important and powerful and the horeca will be probably more and more specialized, trying to find more niche wines.

Kina vil nå plutselig ha BIO-viner

-The attention on the organic work and sustainability will probably boost positive trends! These "natural disasters" are for sure moving the soul of the people in this direction. My personal experience from last week: Our Chinese importer wants to make a restart of the business, founding his communication on our BIO-certification. This is quite strange as they never wanted any BIO certification from us. They always said that it was not important for their market (it was true, actually).

And what can be the situation/problems on a longterm basis?

-There will for sure be problems in the wine industry, as in every business. Consumptions will be low in 2020, I'm pretty sure. Especially in the horeca and for the premium wines. In the monopolies/supermarkets etc. there will probably be a stable consumption or even higher of low priced wines. But I think that the higher section of price will be damaged in terms of numbers. Restaurants, hotels, wine bars will be the last to reopen and they will need time to get back to the normal rhythm. These are the businesses that drives the sales and consumption of premium wines. In the long term, as always happen in the big crisis, we will see who in the business (both wineries, importers, horeca) has the strongest roots and who will have the most innovative strategies for the future. The biggest players are already investing and opening all the doors possible in order to be ready to use the right one when the time will come.

Blir et problem hvis kjellerne er stappfulle

Do you think what is happening around the world now will have any effect on the prices of the wines to be launched when all this is over?

-Too early to say. The huge risk is that there will be a big volume of unsold wine stocked in the cellars around the world. That will be a problem if there will be a normal vintage coming in 2020. The risk is that, especially the big mass producers, will lowprice the wines in order to empty their cellars to fill it with the new vintages. That for sure will bring problems for years to the wine business.

-On our personal side we have the room to keep extra wine, and for the kind of wines we make, keeping them some months more to refine is not bad at all. We produce red wines only (DOC/DOCG reds: Ripasso, Amarone, Valpo Superiore) and they all are good for aging, so this doesn't scares me. It will be very dangerous for all of us if the prices will go down, I personally prefer to sell less for a while, focusing on keeping prestige and quality. The mass market will be more mass market, and the top market will be more top market, I think we will not reduce the costs in the production because of the crisis. We will for sure invest even more in order to not loose presence and to make even better quality. Now is the time when you need to have a very clear view of the direction you want to take. Invest and grow, or cut the costs and try to sell the wines.

Det vil bli en kamp for å overleve

Victor Charcan, eksportdirektør ved Bodegas Roda, Rioja, Spania



Victor Charcan, Bodegas Roda, Rioja, Spania. Foto: UD

How is the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus affecting the work in the winery at the moment?

-The order flow has almost stopped (with a few exceptions), and that also means we do not need to have so much floorstock. So the communication in our distribution network has moved from sales to discussing payment terms, but also, and that is a light in this darkness, to a genuine and common concern on the others wellbeing.

Have any of the employees tested positive?

-Not that I know now. People close to us, yes.

What about the work in the vineyards right now?

-Nature has not stopped, and we need our people in the vineyard more than in anywhere else now.

Å restrukturere kan være motiverende

What will be the main challenges for your winery and the wine industry in general in the near future?

-To many in the wine world, the challenge will be survival. Making it through this tsunami. Some structures will take it, some will not, so it is a time of changes. But of course, beyond the financial muscle of our business, the health of the rest of the economy will affect demand/consumption. It is a huge blow to our society, but reconstructing can be highly motivational.

And what can be the situation/problems on a long term basis?

-The market will be turbulent in the short term, the long term will mean more work to gain back what we lost, maybe a concentration of players. But people will keep drinking wine. I believe our bottom problems are more linked with global warming.

Do you think what is happening around the world now will have any effect on the prices of the wines to be launched when all this is over?

-Surely. It has been a full stop on some consumption channels that many businesses depended upon. Desperate times bring desperate actions, and there could temporarily be opportunities in the market. We will see how it all unwraps.

Alle vil møte en annen finansiell virkelighet

Camilla Lunelli, eier og markedsdirektør Gruppo Lunelli, Trento, Italia



Camilla Lunelli, Ferrari, Trento, Italia

How is the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus affecting the work in the winery at the moment?

-At the moment our priority is protecting our people, which means making the business run at minimum speed. We drastically reduced the number of people at the winery and adopted very strict internal procedures in order to avoid personal contacts and the probability of contagion. For office personnel we organized smart work. We closed all our hospitality operations and our restaurant, Locanda Margon.

Have any of the employees tested positive?

-Fortunately, none of our employees at Ferrari Trento, but also at the other wineries of the Lunelli Group (Tenute Lunelli and Bisol 1542), tested positive.

What about the work in the vineyards right now?

-The activity in the vineyards is going ahead, respecting some safety measures: As it is an open-air job, the risk is very low, and it is easy to keep the appropriate distances. We divided the workers in groups of two or maximum three people, distributing them in different areas. Each group is completely separated to avoid contagions. Workers need to stay at least 10 meters away from each other, which means around three rows of pergola or guyot. We have asked workers to avoid carpooling and to stay far from each other when they have lunch or a break. We also established protocols for tractors and agricultural vehicles, which are sanitized every evening.

Mange restauranter vil ikke gjenåpne etter krisen

What will be the main challenges for your winery and the wine industry in general in the near future?

-In the short term, wineries, such as all companies, will have to face a very delicate financial situation, due to the lack of revenues and the difficulty in debt recovery. Another issue, more specific to the wine industry, is the need to carry out some activities: Life in the vineyard continues as usual and the wine which is stored in the cellar needs to be taken care of, even if sales are going to slow down dramatically.

And what can be the situation/problems on a long-term basis?

-We will face a general economic crisis, which might affect the tendency of people to go out, celebrate and generally invest on upmarket goods. But we will also suffer specifically from the crisis of the trade: Many restaurants, wine bars and hotels, which are our main clients, will not be able to face months of closing from a financial point of view. We have already been informed by some restaurants in Milan that they will not be able to reopen at the end of the emergency.

-This said, I am confident that on the long term, the wine industry, in Italy, but not only here, is strong and based on solid pillars, and thus able to regain its position and probably consolidate new trends. Part of the sales lost on the on premise channel, for instance, can be counterbalanced by online sales: I think that consumers who have just started now to buy wine from e-commerce platforms will appreciate this system and keep using it even at the end of the emergency.

Do you think what is happening around the world now will have any effect on the prices of the wines to be launched when all this is over?

-I think the current emergency is likely to put some pressure on prices on the short term, when restaurants and bars reopen, but I am confident that on the long term prices will be aligned to the pre-crisis situation.

Nå må vi motivere alle rundt oss

Edoardo Montresor, eier og direktør ved Cantine Giacomo Montresor, Veneto, Italia



Edoardo Montresor, Giacomo Montresor, Veneto, Italia

How is the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus affecting the work in the winery at the moment?

-To be honest with you, we must say that we are trying our best to keep the winery open and in full functions among thousands difficulties. The first one is the level of panic and fear that's spreading among the workers that has to operate inside the winery together with other colleagues. As you may understand not all our staff can work remotely. Therefore, our first task is to create, on a daily base, encouragement to all our people. But most important, to make this possible, we have undertaken extremely severe rules and procedures to manage the risk for the amazing people that are working at Montresor. The other problem we are facing is the logistic system in our area (in and out), which seems to implode more and more. In spite of the horrible scenario, our goal is to try keeping our service alive for all our customers.

Have any of the employees tested positive?

-No.

What about the work in the vineyards right now?

-The work in the vineyards proceeds regularly, the cycles of nature cannot be paused.

What will be the main challenges for your winery and the wine industry in general in the near future?

-See above. But mainly panic and logistic problem.

And what can be the situation/problems on a long term basis?

-Managing the credit exposure with importers, especially for those with less financial stability. Trying to keep a safe level of stock at our importer's warehouse to be ready for the restart.

Do you think what is happening around the world now will have any effect on the prices of the wines to be launched when all this is over?

-For Norway we expect that retail prices will increase, because for the Norwegian Krone the exchange rate is going crazy, leaving importers with no margins or in some cases with a negative one.

Økonomisk utfordrende å lagre vinene lenger



Alex Sattler, familiemedlem ved Weingut Sattlerhof, Steiermark (Styria), Südsteiermark , Østerrike

How is the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus affecting the work in the winery at the moment?

-We have the same work in the vineyards as without the virus, but of course we need to work differently in order to distance our employees. Borders are closed, so a part of our team has to wait at the border, or can't even pass. Fortunately, we have family and friends helping out to finish the work.

Have any of the employees tested positive?

-Fortunately no

What about the work in the vineyards right now?

-We are tying the shoots into our wire frame, afterwards some compost-spreading and rolling down our

hail-protection nets.

What will be the main challenges for your winery and the wine industry in general in the near future?

-We need to figure out different ways to get into contact with our customers. People still want to enjoy a good glass of wine, but the usual way of doing so doesn't work anymore. Nowadays for instance, we opened up a "Zoom-Tasting Room" (ID 562-550-860) Monday-Friday 15-17:00, where people can join to taste wines they bought already, or get advice on which wines to choose. Our new Online-shop is helping a lot right now, and we try to feed it with as much information and content as possible to give wine-fans the possibility of informing themselves.

And what can be the situation/problems on a long term basis?

On long term we have to fight a much lower sales, with the same production costs. That's not a situation you can stand forever. We are open to new ways and solutions right now, and still believe that people want to enjoy artisan high quality wines.

The good thing is, that we like our wines better with aging, so we will try to "wait through" the crisis, and come out with aged wines, but that's of course a big financial pushback.

Do you think what is happening around the world now will have any effect on the prices of the wines to be launched when all this is over?

-I think aggressively priced wines, will be priced even cheaper, but we don't plan to do so, because we are following a long term high quality idea.

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