

VINEA press release: THE WINE FAIR.

VINEA, more than a wine fair for tasting: a wine experience in all its facets will take place 31 August to 2 September 2017 in Sierre.

VINEA, one of the first wine tasting fairs created in Switzerland that has now become a veritable institution, is introducing several new features for the 2017 fair. The event will no longer be limited to a wine tasting fair but will create a full wine experience in the town of Sierre. Visit the Rilke Foundation or the Valais Wine Museum, enjoy cinema centred around wine, themed workshops and tastings of high-prestige wines – all part of this 24th VINEA Wine Fair.

The fair: 1 and 2 September, explore more than 800 wines from throughout Switzerland

The VINEA Wine Fair, as part of its mission to serve as the showcase of Swiss wines, will take up quarters in the heart of Sierre next 1 and 2 September, with more than 130 wine producers taking part, bringing more than 800 wines from throughout Switzerland for visitors to discover. The producers, who will be grouped around Sierre's Hôtel de Ville, will present their finest wines directly to visitors, advising them in many ways – and sharing their love for their work.

Among the producers taking part are several Swiss wine associations, including: the Mondial du Chasselas, Mondial des Pinots, Mondial du Merlot, Clos, Domaines et Châteaux, Ticinowine, Swiss PDO-PGI (AOP-IGP suisses), and the Association des encaveurs de Sion.

Eating: visitors will also have several options in connection with the wine fair: Château de Villa will move to the centre of town to offer a cheese tasting of various raclettes, and the shady terraces of Sierre's restaurants that are nearby will welcome wine-lovers with menus created specially for the fair.

The visual identity for the VINEA Wine Fair is also getting a makeover this year to reflect its new dynamic. The new graphic line, visually very strong, suggests motion, Sierre's sun reflected in wine glasses and visitors' emotions at the fair.

VINEA Workshops: learn to understand Swiss wines through themed wine tastings, commented on by renowned professionals

VINEA is creating themed workshops for this year's fair to help visitors learn more about and better understand the wines presented by producers taking part in the fair. These workshops will be run by well-known personalities, oenologists and sommeliers, making it an option to explore the wines through a theme rather than tasting wines producer by producer.

The 6 themes, open to the public:

- *Passione* Ticino, Friday 1 September
- Valais in white, Friday 1 September
- Dive into the heart of Lake Geneva wines, Friday 1 September
- Meet Petite Arvine wines from Valais, Saturday 2 September

- Round the world: 2017 award-winning Pinots, Saturday 2 September
- Valais in red, Saturday 2 September

VINEA also offers the option to explore, under the expert guidance of Paolo Basso, iconic Swiss wines selected by the Best Sommelier of the World 2013. This prestige-wines tasting, to take place Saturday 2 September in the magnificent setting of Château Mercier, will feature a dozen of the rarest Swiss wines. The number of places is extremely limited for this exceptional wine tasting; the wines to be presented will be announced and tickets will go on sale 1 August 2017.

VINEA Wine Angels: a service for visitors during the wine fair

Visitors to the VINEA Wine Fair can avail themselves of the services of Wine Angels, who will help guide them on their wine tasting path. The Wine Angels' good counsel will be available to neophytes as well as the most experienced wine-lovers – from letting them know about guided parts of the programmes to taking questions from people keen to know more about the wines.

Festival of award-winning Pinots: explore them, 31 August, in the Hôtel de Ville gardens

Innovative and dynamic – in this spirit, the wine fair for the first time will welcome, alongside the tasting workshops listed above, the Festival of award-winning Pinots. Visitors who are keen on quality and discovering new wines will find a wonderful showcase/tasting of award-winning wines from the Mondial des Pinots 2017, in the presence of the producers. This tasting session takes place in the beautiful garden area of Sierre's Hôtel de Ville. Tickets are now on sale for this event at salonvinea.ch.

Exchange, learn: a conference centred on Swiss PDO-PGI wines

The wine fair will kick off, as in previous years, with a conference held shortly beforehand at the HES-SO in Sierre, Friday 1 September from 09:00-11:00. The conference will focus on Swiss PDO-PGI wines (AOP/IGP in French). Entry to the conference is free, but participants must register in advance at salonvinea.ch. The detailed programme and names of those on the panel will be made available 1 August 2017.

In Sierre, as part of VINEA – wine's cultural side

With the Rilke Foundation

VINEA is proud to announce that it is working with the Rilke Foundation to provide fair-goers with guided visits of the permanent exhibition "Valais as seen by Rilke" – daily, free of charge, in German and French. Exceptionally and for the wine fair, the accent will be put on grapes, wine and vines, themes that were woven throughout his work during the five years that the writer lived in Sierre.

With the film-lovers' association DreamAgo

Film-viewing will be offered daily at 15:00 at Sierre's Cinéma du Bourg, near the entrance to the wine fair. Friday 1 September a documentary about Swiss wines will be shown and Saturday 2 September a foreign fiction film will also be open to wine fair visitors.

With the Valais Wine Museum"

Visit the exhibition "Forain for ever - L'épopée des vigneronns nomades" (the time of winemaking nomads) with anthropologist Mélanie Hugon-Duc who will take you into the daily lives of nomads who made wine, in the past and present. The exhibition's images, recorded witnesses and objects are linked to the many types of transhumance in Valais. Entry is free for visitors to the VINEA wine fair.

Ticket sales are now open

Visitors keen to take advantage of the rich and varied programme can buy their tickets as of today in VINEA's online shop – and benefit from special prices available to those who buy before 20 August. Entry tickets for the wine fair are just CHF23 instead of CHF30 for tickets bought at the door. Workshop reservations can also be made at special rates, but note that the number of places is limited and first come, first served!

VINEA Premium Club, with member privileges

Take advantage of all the special and new offers of the 2017 wine fair by joining VINEA's new Premium Club. For CHF250, visit the wine fair with a guest, improve your knowledge of Swiss wines with the VINEA Workshops, meet the award-winning producers from the 2017 Mondial des Pinots competition and appreciate the food and wine pairings at a "live cooking" by the chefs from the Swiss Food Festival in Zermatt that takes place in Sierre's wonderful Hôtel de Ville gardens. Numerous other special offers are part of the membership; details are regularly updated at vinea.ch/club.

VINEA Wine Fair, the basics:

Thursday 31 August

- Pinot Wines Festival with award-winning wines, Sierre's Hôtel de Ville gardens, 16:00-19:00, CHF20. Online advance registration required, vinea.ch/festivaldespinots

Friday 1 September and Saturday 2 September

VINEA Swiss wines fair, 11:00-19:00

Tickets CHF30, glass and tasting notebook included, as well as

- entry to the Valais Wine Museum in Sierre, and the exhibition "Le Vin Forain"
- with advance registration, free entry and guided visit, the Rilke Foundation
- free tickets for VINEA film showings

Advance online sales, 22 June to 20 August, vinea.ch/billetterie

- reduced ticket price for the wine fair, CHF23 instead of CHF30
- option to make reservations for the themed workshops (note: number of places limited), **entry to the wine fair included in the price**

Combined SMC (funicular, Sierre / Crans-Montana) + VINEA entry: CHF 35 (available for purchase only at SMC ticket counters)

Swiss Iconic Wines by Paolo Basso, 2 September at 11:00, Château Mercier

Reserve your place through the online VINEA ticket shop for CHF400 (number of places limited) starting 1 August.

VINEA After party, 19:00-23:00

After party, in the Hôtel de Ville's gardens, included in the day's entry ticket for the wine fair); 1 and 2 September, 19:00-23:00, with exhibitors' wine bars, Wyssmüller fondues and music.

VINEA Premium Club, CHF250

- 2 tickets for the wine fair, to validate for Friday 1 September or Saturday 2 September
- 2 tickets for a tasting workshop either Friday 1 September or Saturday 2 September
- 2 entries for the VINEA pre-opening evening, along with the Festival des Pinot wines
- 1 gift box with the official VINEA glass and an award-winning wine from one of the wine competitions organized by VINEA
- priority registration for events organized by VINEA
- invitation to the VINEA General Assembly

General information

- free parking, although traveling to the wine fair by train is recommended
- online ticket shop as of today: salonvinea.ch/billetterie