

Press release VINEA Annual General Assembly March 14th 2019

2018: a year of contrasts for VINEA Association

For VINEA members, 2018 was marked by the tragic death of director Elisabeth Pasquier. The skills and outstanding commitment of the Association's team members and committee ensured that all scheduled events were held to the satisfaction of the producers and their clients, and the financial year was closed with a positive balance, despite the challenging context. The Association starts 2019 with renewed ambition, under the auspices of new director Raphaël Gross.

A year of upheaval

The start of 2018 was marked by great sadness for VINEA Association, with the accidental death in April of its distinctive director Elisabeth Pasquier. The VINEA teams worked together to overcome the emotional shock and with the help of a supportive committee, they met the year's challenges with skill and professionalism, ensuring that all scheduled events were held as planned. Raphaël Gross took up his new position as director in mid-October.

25th edition of VINEA Swiss Wine Fair: bringing people together

For its Jubilee celebrations, VINEA Swiss Wine Fair spared no expense. Thanks to the event management skills of the FVS Group, this was an impressive edition with 65 exhibitors (wine producers or grower-associations), food stands, clear signage, a wide choice of tasting workshops that proved very popular, and tasting guides.

Free admission for visitors under-25 was also a welcome initiative. During the two days of the show no less than 6000 visitors from across Switzerland came to Sierre to discover the wines being poured there. The official opening ceremony held at midday on Friday was an opportunity to look back at the 24 previous editions and thank the event's founders. All the different VINEA presidents were in attendance and were warmly thanked. The assembled guests enjoyed a selection of dishes created by the Taste of Zermatt association's chefs, paired with award-winning Grand Prix du Vin Suisse wines.

Competitions going from strength to strength

The 11th edition of the Mondial du Merlot & Assemblages was truly international, featuring more than 430 wines made by 230 producers from 20 different countries. The awards ceremony was held in May in Zurich in conjunction with the Festival of Award-Winning Merlots where no less than 25 producers poured their wines.

The Mondial des Pinots was held in Sierre from August 5th -7th during a heatwave. The 21st edition featured 1100 wines from 23 countries, judged by 58 tasters of which 60% were foreigners (ie. non-Swiss), as required by the rules of the Office International de la Vigne et du Vin. The awards ceremony was held before the official opening of the VINEA Wine Fair.

The Grand Prix du Vin Suisse competition demonstrated its popularity once again, with 2867 wines entered (an increase of 32 compared to the previous year), and this, despite a very small 2017 harvest as a result of spring frost. 158 tasters from across the country judged the wines from June 25th – 30th, and the short-listed

wines were presented at the Gala du Vin Suisse, co-organised with VINUM magazine in Bern on October 18th in front of 440 guests.

Last but not least, the competition organised in partnership with Taste of Zermatt to create a selection of their wines was a great success with no less than 177 Pinot and Fendant wines entered by Valais producers (twice as many as in the previous year). The outcome was 12 wines chosen blind, and the opportunity for their creators to present them at the famous Kitchen Party - the highlight of the Zermatt summer season - which was held on August 17th.

Know-how which crosses borders

The VINEATech software programme is being fully implemented in VINEA's own competitions and the 80 networked tablets have been travelling across Europe. The Association has been chosen to handle the logistics for the Citadelles du Vin competition in Bordeaux, the Grands Vins Blancs du Monde in Strasbourg, the Vins Extrêmes competition in Aosta, Expovina (Zurich) and Les Etoiles du Valais (Sierre).

The "On Tour" concept spreads its wings

After three years in Zurich, the VINEA On Tour mini-trade show concept was successfully held in Geneva in February 2018 with around 30 producers and an excellent visitor turn out. With Zurich and Geneva now firmly established, a brand new "On Tour" event is scheduled for Lucerne in April 2019.

2019 dates for your diary:

2019 will see a great many events happening across the length and breadth of Switzerland:

- February 13th, Geneva, VINEA On Tour
- April 16th, Lucerne, VINEA On Tour
- April 26th – 28th, Sierre, 12^{ème} edition of the Mondial du Merlot et Assemblages
- May 21st, Zurich, awards ceremony - Festival of Award-Winning Merlots
- June 24th – 29th, Sierre, Grand Prix du Vin Suisse
- August 16th – 18th, Sierre, 22^{ème} edition of the Mondial des Pinots
- September 6th, Sierre, awards ceremony, Mondial des Pinots
- September 6th – 7th, VINEA Wine Fair
- October 24th, Bern, Gala des Vins Suisses, co-organised with VINUM magazine
- November 27th, Zurich, VINEA On Tour

For further information:

VINEA Association
David Genolet, President
Tel. + 41 (0) 79 337 83 18
david.genolet@fvsgroup.ch

VINEA Association
Raphaël Gross, director
Tel. + 41 (0) 79 342 57 24
raphael.gross@vinea.ch