

**Merano WineFestival, back to the roots: The WineHunter Helmuth Köcher is confronting COVID-19 with courage and enterprise, confirming that the 29th edition will be held from 6th to 10th November without radical changes to the traditional format. Indeed, he will be returning to the origins of the Festival, back in 1992, when the world's most glamorous food & wine event was first staged.**

**Helmuth Köcher is therefore presenting a special edition, and showing that live events are still possible if very carefully arranged. The format remains traditional with regard to the health and safety of producers and visitors, but with the addition of some new digital content. However, with respect to the traditional ethos of the event, it still remains the epitome of style and excellence. So, the theme of the 2020 edition is focused on the Festival's origins and entitled "Merano WineFestival, Back to the Roots".**

**Merano (BZ), 19th May 2020** - Merano is sending a positive signal to everyone, and in particular to producers, sector operators and the wine-loving public. Helmuth Köcher announced the good news, confirming that the **29th edition of Merano WineFestival will be taking place from 6th to 10th November**. To comply with the **social distancing and hygiene regulations** currently in force, both producers and visitors will be given more space at the 2020 event. Times will also be organised in a different way, with entry in **two different shifts, the first from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and the second from 2:30 to 7:00 p.m.**

#### **HEALTH RULES AND ORGANISATION**

The space will be carefully divided and visitor flow precisely managed. In addition, to **comply with health regulations**, those attending will be required to wear a mask and have their temperature measured, with disinfectant facilities and a registration service at the entrance to the event. These are some of the new ways of organising the Merano WineFestival. In addition, all the producers and staff taking part **will need to show a negative test result for Covid-19, issued in the four days prior to their attendance at the event**, thereby ensuring a safe environment for the visiting public. There will also be a medical centre on site, and the option of having a **Sanitary Gate** at the entrance for sanitising purposes. In addition to announcements in relation to the emergency, the patron has confirmed the festival programme and guaranteed that the price of tickets will not be increased despite the extra costs to ensure health security.

#### **PROGRAMME: 6-10 NOVEMBER 2020**

As every year, the event will include **Naturae et Purae - the bio&dynamica section** dedicated to sustainable production and natural, organic, biodynamic, orange and PIWI wines. However, this year it will take place over four days, with the producers exhibiting in shifts and two time slots for visitors. There will be something new at the heart of the event: **Wine - The Official Selection** will take place in the Kurhaus and will feature 122 Italian and international producers on 6th and 7th of November and as many again on the 8th and 9th. There will not be a link between the exhibition spaces in the Kurhaus and those in the GourmetArena, where **Foods Spirits Beer - The Official Selection** will involve the same system of dividing producers between different days, with shifts of 100 at a time. **The WineHunter Area** will also change and, other than the presence of the Kursaal on the podium, it will relinquish its usual display spaces and transfer to the lounges of Merano hotels. A **digital lounge** will also be created in this area, which will allow visitors to interact with the producers. **Catwalk Champagne** is also confirmed for November 10th, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with the world's most famous bubbles accompanied by stylish culinary creations.

## THE WINEHUNTER AWARD GUIDE AND MWF NEWS FOR 2020

The first item of news concerns **The WineHunter Award** Guide: the official Merano WineFestival award will be turned into a magnificent book this year. Added to this are digital innovations such as **The WineHunter e-commerce initiative**, developed in collaboration with Gruppo Volta, where you can buy the various products awarded by The WineHunter; and there is also a **digital platform for conducting Masterclasses, designed together with Milano Wine Week**. The **Gala Event** on November 5th will also change, with the screening of the **Wine Odyssey** teaser at the Teatro Puccini: a preview of the Wine Odyssey film project, the story of wine from its origins and into the future. And then there are such initiatives as **Book Your Own Sommelier** in live audio and video, with tastings for those who follow the event from home, and **show cooking** on-site and in digital form.

## SIDE EVENTS

There will be various Side Events: like **Catwalk Bollicine** organised together with Milan Wine Week in the shops of Merano; a **Gourmet Tour in and around Merano**, of the restaurants where you can find the wines in The WineHunter Award guide; the presentation of Georgia: **the Origin of Wine and the Symposium** dedicated to the CAP, Common Agricultural Policy; and once again, the programme of **The WineHunter Hotel Safari** and **WineHunter Merano&Innovation**. Lastly, a platform is being developed for the Merano WineFestival 2020 to increase visibility, with a digital meeting space for producers and visitors where a 100% **Digital Festival** could take place, and complete digitalisation of the event **in case the lockdown is re-imposed**.

We must also mention the **Live Talk** held by Helmuth Köcher, publicly presenting the 29th edition of "Merano WineFestival back to the roots" on **Thursday 21 May at 5.00 pm** live on the website [meranowinefestival.com/mwf2020-backtotheroots](https://meranowinefestival.com/mwf2020-backtotheroots). Important guests will join the moderator **Costantino Gabardi** in the virtual lounge of The WineHunter to discuss events and the fight against COVID-19. People attending will include **Teresa Bellanova**, Minister of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies, **Levan Davitashvili**, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, **Paolo De Castro**, vice president of the EU Agriculture and Rural Development Commission, **Tommaso De Simone**, vice president of Unioncamere Nazionale and president of the Caserta Chamber of Commerce, **Luigi Moio**, the president of OIV, **Paul Rösch**, mayor of the city of Merano, **Dante Stefano Del Vecchio**, journalist and wine communicator, **Gennaro Esposito**, a chef with 2 Michelin stars, **Federico Gordini**, the president of Milan Wine Week, **Franco Pepe**, voted best pizza chef in the world, **Guido Invernizzi**, a wine communicator, **Marco Cappelletti**, creator of The WineHunter's e-commerce initiative, **Maurizio Gigola**, the director of Wine Odyssey, **Daniela Zadra**, director of the Merano tourist company, and **Riccardo Cicolini**, president of Forteam WH&Innovation.

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