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VINITALY.USA READY TO MAKE ITS DEBUT: FIRST EDITION OCTOBER 20 & 21 IN CHICAGO WITH 230 COMPANIES AND 1650 LABELS FOR TASTING. INAUGURATION WITH MINISTER LOLLOBRIGIDA AND THE GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS PRITZKER

Chicago (ots) -

UIV-VINITALY OBSERVATORY: 3 OUT OF 10 BOTTLES IN THE USA ARE ITALIAN. MARKET SHARE ROSE IN AUGUST TO 34% WITH A PEAK OF 43% IN THE MIDWEST

The Italian flag will be raised at the Navy Pier in Chicago 20-21 October for the debut of Vinitaly USA. This is the first Italian wine trade fair format in the United States organized by Veronafiere and Fiere Italiane with the support of ITA, the Italian Trade Agency.

The event launches the permanent presence of Vinitaly-Veronafiere on the world's leading outlet market for wine products. It targets US buyers and operators in catering and distribution sectors with more 230 Italian companies, five regional group shows (Calabria, Campania, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Latium and Sardinia, plus institutional attendance by the Veneto and Umbria Regions) in a show area of 13,000 square meters hosting well over 1650 labels for tasting. Thirty b2b events are also scheduled.

"This is a fundamental debut for promoting and positioning Made in Italy wine. This relevance is also emphasized by the presence at the inauguration of the Minister of Agriculture & Food Sovereignty, **Francesco Lollobrigida**, and, on the US side, of the **Governor of Illinois, Jay Robert Pritzker**," said the President of Veronafiere S.p.A., **Federico Bricolo**. "Vinitaly.USA is the outcome of convergence in terms of vision and strategy by all pertinent institutions. Our development plan for Vinitaly.USA aims to make it the landmark exhibition for the growth of companies on the world's top destination market, which closed the second quarter of this year on a positive note."

The UIV-Vinitaly Observatory indicates that approximately 3 out of 10 imported bottles come from Italy, generating a market share in terms of value that in August grew to almost 34%, with a peak of 43% with reference to the Midwest (which embraces 12 states). This is based on the performance in the first 8 months of the year, with orders from Italy growing by 4% to 1.5 billion dollars in terms of value - compared to an overall average for US imports down by 3%, with France posting a setback of -8% (1.6 billion dollars). Yet this undoubtedly encouraging result for Italian wine as regards shipments - according to the Observatory - does not suffice to overcome all the complexities of the current period. The situation remains complicated in terms of sales and effective consumption, albeit supported in part by sparkling wines and equally driven by the continuing success of the trend for cocktails.

And the market is one of the main focal points of Vinitaly USA which on the first day will host ITA, Italian Trade Agency wine business forum "Between tradition and innovation: the future of Italian wine on the US market". The President of the ITA Agency, **Matteo Zoppas**, said: "Italian wine is confirming its status on an international scale, thanks to an identity that equally promotes quality and prestige. Vinitaly USA is a strategic platform for consolidating the role of Italian products on the American market and strengthening Italy's reputation as a leader in the wine sector. Thanks to constructive collaboration between public and private sectors, we are preparing to push the success of Italian wine even higher and reach increasingly ambitious goals."

The official opening of Vinitaly.USA will also be attended by **Federico Bricolo**, President of Veronafiere; **Maurizio Muzzetta**, President of Fiere Italiane; **Damiano Tommasi**, Mayor of Verona; **Francesco Rocca**, President of the Latium Region; **Matteo Zoppas**, President of ITA; **Mario Pozza**, Asscomerestero; **Fulvio Calcinardi**, Secretary General of the Italian-American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest - Chicago; **Robert Allegrini**, President of NIAF (National Italian American Foundation); **Riccardo Guariglia**, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; **J.B. Pritzker**, Governor of Illinois, and **Francesco Lollobrigida**, Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry. Sector organizations Unione Italiana Vini and Federvini will also be present with their respective Presidents **Lamberto Frescobaldi** and **Micaela Pallini**, joined by agricultural representatives **Ettore Prandini**, President of Coldiretti, **Luigi Scordamaglia**, President of Filiera Italia, and **Annamaria Barrile**, CEO of Confagricoltura. The event will also be attended by **Maurizio Danese**, Managing Director of Veronafiere, with Vice-Presidents **Matteo Gelmetti** and **Romano Artoni** and CEO **Adolfo Rebughini**.

Contact:

www.vinitalyusa.com

Media & Institutional Relations

Director Carlo Alberto Delaini T. 045.8298242-427 | M +39 3357367388

Veronafiere Press Service

Francesco Marchi T. 045 8298350 | M. +39 33426560174

E-mail: pressoffice@veronafiere.it

Web: veronafiere.it

Ispropress

Benny Lonardi (393.455.5590 direzione@ispropress.it)

Simone Velasco (327.9131676 simovela@ispropress.it)

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