

MAURIZIO ZANELLA

FOUNDER OF CA' DEL BOSCO
THE HISTORY OF QUALITY
ITALIAN WINES IN THE
WORLD

Column author: Debora Scalzo

Franciacorta is synonymous with quality Italian sparkling wine, and credit goes to the great Maurizio Zanella, Mr. Founder of Ca' del Bosco, who has been telling the world about Italian wine excellence for more than 50 years. It all began in the 1960s, when his mother, Annamaria Clementi, left Milan to buy a country house in Erbusco, where the soul of Franciacorta reigns today. It was a house in the woods, with 10 rows of red grapes grown and turned into an unlikely wine. Maurizio, a rebellious but dreamy and courageous student, decided to leave Milan after a trip to France to live in the house in the woods and produce "his" wine. Meetings with legends such as Piero Antinori, Mario Incisa della Rocchetta, Angelo Gaja and friendship with Luigi Veronelli helped him realize his dream. Ca' del Bosco is now one of Italy's most prestigious wineries, loved all over the world.

An important trip to France would change his life forever. How and when did your passion for wines and for the company of Italian excellence in the world, "Ca' Del Bosco" come about?

Ca' del Bosco began as my family's country house in the 1960s.



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Initially we planted a vineyard almost for fun, then - after a trip I made to France to visit the most important caves - came the idea to do something bigger, to deepen the oenological subject and to attempt - for the time - the impossible: to create a winery of excellence in Franciacorta. I was little more than a teenager. Traveling, studying, getting informed, being curious: this is what drove me to where I am today. The secret, if you can call it that, are the values that have always distinguished us: the passion for the land and the vineyard, respect for the territory, work and toil, the people who have made Ca' del Bosco what it is today. To date, Ca' del Bosco has achieved very important, as has Franciacorta. But there is still much to be done; we are practically at the beginning of our history.

How did the name "Ca' Del Bosco" come about, and what does it mean to you?

Ca' del Bosco originates from the name by which the farm bought by my mother from the people of Erbusco, in Brescian dialect the "cà del bosc." A small cottage, which later became a farm, without water and electricity that could only be reached by a mule track. A magical, historical name, linked to the rurality of the area and its farming tradition.

A name in my opinion perfect for the winery.



For me, it is an important name that takes me back to childhood, to the first summers spent in the countryside with the family: the animals, the orchards and then the first vineyard.

His father was not in the wine business; he did a completely different job. A memory of his youth?

Yes, my father was an entrepreneur in the transportation industry, in Milan. I remember as it was yesterday his amazement when he realized that I had become interested in the world of wine, which for him was impossible to understand, since he thought it was too risky a job and that it would lead me to talk "only" to cooks and waiters. However, in addition to this, he was for me a fundamental support, thanks to his advice and great experience.

He dedicated the wine "Annamaria Clementi" to his mother.

The most prestigious wine is dedicated to my mother, my inspiration and guide, the first to believe in me and my dreams.

What do you feel like telling young people who would like to take the same path as you employment?

To young people, I feel I would recommend this profession because it gives many satisfactions, real and tangible satisfactions in a magical field that always fascinates. However, one must be prepared to make great sacrifices since farming has to deal with so many unforeseen events, related first of all to weather conditions, and then to the market, which is not always easy to manage. Then not to forget the time factor: it takes a lot of patience and foresight, that is, thinking and creating a wine today that will then be tasted years later. It is a constant challenge; you never get bored.

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Upcoming projects of Ca' Del Bosco?

At Ca' del Bosco we are never standing still, we are always thinking about how to improve and put ourselves in play. We recently reached a very important milestone, namely the completion of the pre-established vineyard area and work in the cellar. This for us represents a new beginning, we have managed to fulfill a dream born over 50 years ago and that will now allow us to dedicate ourselves to a new phase of our winery. Stay tuned to find out what's new!

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How important is the value of our "Made in Italy" to you?

The value of Made in Italy is undoubtedly extremely important. Our country boasts of the products that are the result of unique craftsmanship that it is right to protect and enhance. But, again, there is still much work to be done to safeguard the value of Made in Italy and spread it around the world.

How important is it to believe in your dreams, to fall, to get back up and then to achieve them? Has there ever been in your life a time of falling? How do you recommend dealing with it?

Falling down is part of the game; what matters is getting back up, always. I do not believe it is possible improve oneself without first making mistakes, and in my work, difficulties and unpredictability are constant. I do not have a specific episode of "falling down" to mention, rather phases of the work that have been more arduous than others, such as years in which the weather has challenged the harvest.

They say that traveling leaves you speechless and turns you into a great storyteller.

What can you tell us about your incredible travels?



Travel is part of my life and my work; in fact, I devote a lot of time to traveling abroad to make Franciacorta and Ca' del Bosco known. When I return from my travels I am always rich in emotions and experiences: the confrontation with other cultures, lifestyles, foods and traditions are a unique enrichment that I advise everyone to experience to the fullest without prejudice.

What does Franciacorta represent for you?

My home, my past, my present and my future. An extraordinary territory to which I will never cease to show my gratitude and appreciation for all that it has given me. I was very lucky to grow up here.

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