

HARPERS WINE & SPIRIT

Raffaele Boscaini, seventh-generation coordinator of the Masi Technical Group and marketing director of Masi Agricola, explains to **Andrew Catchpole** what makes this leading Italian family producer tick

What inspired you to stay within the family fold?

Living and growing up in a family of winegrowers, the beauty of the area and the people with whom relationships are intertwined every day, and the opportunities to meet and interact with different people, even at an international level, that wine offers. These aspects certainly fascinated and then made me ever more passionate about my job.

What philosophy do you bring to Masi?

I experienced and learnt a lot throughout the years from my grandfather Guido, my father Sandro and my uncle Sergio. I have identified and absorbed a sort of 'family recipe' which now, in my role, I have the opportunity to bring up to date and consequently realise in our wines.

How would you describe the essence of the character of Masi wines?

Modern and contemporary wines but with an ancient heart.

What was behind the launch of Fresco di Masi, the new organic range?

We decided to launch them during the pandemic as this is the moment many paradigms are questioned and there is a decisive return to simple things. Before being organic, these are wines that express the essence of the vineyard itself, bringing their close relationship with nature to the fore, characterised by a production method 'by subtraction', in which all that is not necessary is put aside to leave room for the naturalness of the wine. No drying, no ageing or filtration. The result is therefore as simple as the farmer's wine but as good as one would expect a wine to be today.

How important is sustainability to Masi generally?

It is a principle that has allowed us to develop our company over 250 years through seven generations. Social sustainability, made up of supply chain relationships lasting because they are balanced and correct; environmental sustainability, which is necessary so that subsequent generations can continue this magnificent activity; and economic sustainability, that allows a company to thrive by reinvesting in its assets, guaranteeing the possibility of always being efficient and profitable.

How has global warming impacted on the viticulture and winemaking?

The most evident effects can be found in the anticipation of the phenological phases and in sometimes extreme atmospheric events. There are many viticultural activities, including changes that incorporate the management of the foliage or forms of cultivation to protect the grapes from burns, the positioning of the vineyards and the process of the drying of the grapes [for Ripasso].

Are there learnings from your Tupungato winery in Argentina that flow into Masi in Veneto?

From Tupungato we learned [about] systems to deal with high temperatures as well as how to manage water.



Does the UK market remain important?

The UK is a very relevant market, not only in quantitative terms but above all for the opportunities it offers and the stimuli that gives. In the UK there is a lot of competition and attention among products of many kinds and origins – the comparison represents a strong stimulus to creativity.

What would you still like to achieve with the Masi range?

I believe it is essential for any product in the Masi range to be capable of generating a feeling of wellbeing and satisfaction in the consumer. Not only in terms of taste but of discovery, belonging to a fascinating world like that of wine, to its people and its territories. All this can pass from a deep knowledge of techniques, vines and territories, or simply from the observation that, in certain moments, places and contexts, one feels good in the company of Masi.

We're now in the 250th year of Masi. What's next?

Even if 250 years can mark a milestone, I believe that the cyclical nature has accustomed us to never identifying a beginning and an end, rather it is a continuous growth. And I'm not talking about turnover or size, [but] an evolution, which means we can be a reliable, coherent, contemporary brand that transmits emotions through time and space.

If you had to describe your character as a grape variety, what would that be and why?

I consider myself a balanced person, I like being able to express myself and compare myself with everyone, knowing how to adapt but also having a character that, without imposing itself, remains consistent. I like to think that, depending on the situation, I can be lively and cheerful, but also attentive and thoughtful. Finally, I want to keep improving over time. For these reasons I believe I could resemble Pinot Noir. ■

CONTENTS January 2022

ANALYSIS

6 Profile
Fine Wines Direct has a new agency business and plans for expansion and diversification

8 Christmas sales
How the Omicron variant hit the on-trade at a critical time

9 Pricing
Wine prices are set to rise thanks to more red tape and potential duty hikes

10 Loire valley
The French region is fading up to climate issues while maintaining its popular styles

12 Tequila
The Mexican spirit is establishing a reputation in the UK as a premium sipper

MULTIPLES

13 Multiplying out
The first in a regular series focusing on multiples looks at the general health of the sector

COMMENT & OPINION

14 Soapbox
Liberty Wines' Alex Linsley on the government's alcohol duty review

15 Guy Woodward
On being a drinks anti-trender



INSIGHTS

16 Christmas 2021
A look at how the festive season panned out across hospitality

TECH & INNOVATION

18 Smart wine
Discoveries from the OIV's inaugural digital symposium set out the future of connected technology in wine

FEATURES

22 Australian wine
The country is reassessing its place in the wine world in the wake of China's trade tariffs



26 Headline heroes
Wakefield Wines is a leading light in Australia's sustainability movement

28 Portugal
The pandemic has provided an opportunity for Portuguese wine to shift to a more modern outlook

32 Hard seltzers
The rise of the low-calorie, low-abv propositioned sector

INDEPENDENTS

34 Fighting fit
Independents have proved they are adaptable enough to thrive in difficult times

ON-TRADE

36 Cold Christmas
The festive season brought little comfort to battered businesses

38 New openings
Noci, Cicchetti Knightsbridge, The Ledbury

PRODUCER

40 Q&A: Raffaele Boscaini
The co-ordinator of Masi Technical Group and marketing director of Masi Agricola talks about what makes the family producer tick

Above: Hard seltzers are making their mark in the UK

Above right: Raffaele Boscaini is in the hot seat

Below: new openings include Noci

Bottom: adaptable independents are flourishing

