Press Release

**MASI PRIZE 2024**

**THE ‘VIRTUOUS CIRCLE OF BEAUTY’ CELEBRATED AT MONTELEONE21**

*Gargagnago di Valpolicella (VR), 26 October 2024* - Yesterday, Friday 25 October, the awards ceremony for the **43rd Masi Prize** was held at **Monteleone21**, Masi's new and innovative multi-purpose centre in the heart of Valpolicella. After the traditional Amarone barrel-signing held in the historic cellars, the five prize-winners - **Riccardo Illy,** the entrepreneur from Trieste**; Arcangelo Sassolino,** the sculptor from Vicenza**; Sara Segantin,** the environmental activist and writer (**Masi** **Civiltà Veneta Prize)**; **Donatella Cinelli Colombini**, the Tuscan wine producer (**Masi International Civiltà del Vino Prize);** and **Brother Gedovar Nazzari**, General Treasurer of the **Opera Don Calabria (Grosso D'Oro Veneziano Prize)** - were the stars of the talk-show moderated by Radio24 journalist **Alessandro Milan**.

**Sandro Boscaini, Vice-President of the Foundation and President of Masi**, presented Monteleone21 at the opening of the ceremony: ‘*this is* *a project that shows Masi's vision and deep bond with the territory, and which aspires to become a reference point for wine tourism, a cultural hub dedicated to the world of wine and a stage to increase the interest in the Venetian regions and in Valpolicella.’* A video presentation was used to display the characteristics of Monteleone21, which were further explored by **Raffaele Boscaini, Marketing Director and the seventh generation of the family, and Managing Director Federico Girotto**, who explained the strategic importance of the location as an entry gate into the land of Amarone in front of a globally growing demand for wine tourism.

Alessandro Milan introduced the main theme of this edition: **‘The Virtuous Circle of Beauty’**, inviting the **President of the Masi Foundation, Isabella Bossi Fedrigotti**, on stage to say: ‘*In a complex historical period such as the current one, beauty can generate a virtuous circle, becoming a beacon of inspiration and improvement for all generations*.’

The presenter then read out greetings from **Luca Zaia, President of the Veneto Region,** addressed to the President to underline the cultural value of the Prize and appreciation for its theme: ‘*Beauty is part of our life.* *We are surrounded by it, and it is not only an aesthetic fact, but it has an ethical value, an expression of solidarity and good deeds.’*

The Prize-winners were called on stage to discuss the value of beauty; they all shared their thoughts on the significance of the Prize and the meaning their work gave it.

Invited by the moderator to comment on the meaning of beauty in the world of business, **Riccardo Illy** spoke about the Polo del Gusto and Incantalia, two initiatives that have at their heart the region, sustainability and ethics, expressed through products of excellence that nourish the body and the soul: *‘We see beauty with our eyes, but we also feel it with our tastebuds, and wine is nectar for the soul.’*

Milan then asked **Arcangelo Sassolino** whether beauty could be defined as continuous experimentation. His answer was*: ‘Sculpture must contain conflict, contradiction and contrast.* *It must somehow be a metaphor for life with all its conflicts and in all its aspects.’*

When asked about the most beautiful place she had ever visited, **Sara Segantin** replied: *"Just imagine: a sparkling river, a climb up to the highest peaks, then caves, deserts and finally a sea full of life and colour. This is what’s called the Earth. And it’s worth learning about it, loving it, and defending it. We have knowledge, technology and teamwork at our disposal: in a hundred years‘ time, the only thing that will make a difference will be everyone's willingness to use these tools.’*

Pressed gently on the point with the question**:** *‘It is generally said of a glass of wine that it is good and it has an aroma.* *But where do you find beauty yourself?*’ **Donatella Cinelli Colombini** replied: *’Wine is beautiful.* *Because of the place where it comes from and the people who make.* *This makes me feel lucky in my profession, which I consider the most beautiful in the world.’*

Following this, the moderator quoted Socrates as saying that beauty does not come from wealth, but from virtue, as Brother Gedovar Nazzari’s spoke: *'The most beautiful virtue is knowledge, because he who knows good, chooses to act for the good.* *And beauty is lasting knowledge.’* Milan recalled one of Don Calabria's principles: *‘Let us do what good we can, and even if it’s only a little, let’s try to do it well.’* Brother Gedovar concluded: *‘Beauty is in acting together, and in today's world that can make a difference.’*

Before the awards ceremony, a special prize was presented - Giorgio Boscaini Plaque - which, for the last forty years, the Boscaini family has given to long-time business partners who have a particular dedication to their work and to the distribution of Masi products around the world. This year the prize went to **George Hadjikyriacos, Managing Director of SPECTUS Wine and Spirits Merchants**, for his decades-long contribution to building the success of the Masi brand in Cyprus, promoting the values of the Veneto and its wines, particularly Amarone, with passionate conviction.

The event closed with the gift to each Civiltà Veneta and Civiltà del VinoPrize-winner of bottles of Amarone with gold silk-screening created by Venetian master glassmakers, symbolising the ‘shared’ barrel of Amarone barrel which is the original prize. Opera Don Calabria, on the other hand, received a gold reproduction of the Grosso Veneziano coin, legal tender in the Serenissima for centuries, crafted by master goldsmith Alberto Zucchetta, plus a cash contribution to support the Institute's humanitarian works.

**Sandro Boscaini** closed by announcing next year’s event and emphasising the Group's commitment to the promotion of the region with cultural and food and wine initiatives that will have the wonderful Monteleone21 as their location: *‘In the coming months we have planned a series of experiences rich in learning and excitement for lovers of wine and lovers of nature too.* *Monteleone21 will take the stage as a ‘theatre’ of great importance. I like to think of it as our ‘Phoenix’ in Valpolicella, where the protagonist will be Amarone, flanked by the other wines of the Venetian regions.’*

Musical entertainment for the evening was provided by the Unixono ensemble, an octet of players drawn from the Orchestra Sinfonica dei Colli Morenici and conducted by Maestro Ferraresi, who delighted the audience with pieces from the Rondò Veneziano and a tribute to the great Ennio Morricone, whose extraordinary film music is so full of harmony and beauty.

More information:

Masi Foundation Press Office

Elisa Venturini - +39 3357590837 - e-mail: [elisa.venturini@masi.it](mailto:elisa.venturini@masi.it)

Close to Media - a company founded by Elisabetta Neuhoff

*Product Press Office*: Cecilia Isella, Elisa Gioia: +39 3480990515 - +39 3492332555

Email: [cecilia.isella@closetomedia.it](mailto:cecilia.isella@closetomedia.it); [elisa.gioia@closetomedia.it](mailto:elisa.gioia@closetomedia.it)

*Press Office Finance*: Adriana Liguori Tel: +39 3451778974

Email: [adriana.liguori@closetomedia.it](mailto:adriana.liguori@closetomedia.it)

**Masi Foundation:** The Masi Foundation is committed to promoting and strengthening the region, the people, the cultural heritage and the great ingenuity and productive capabilities to be found in the Venetian way of life. Particular attention is paid to culture and wine production, which are distinctive features of the Veneto region. The aims are pursued by operating at a national and international level in collaboration with public and private bodies, foundations and other Italian and foreign organisations. The Masi Foundation was set up in 2001 using 20 years of experience gained with the Masi Prize, whose continuity and direction it intends to ensure, flanking it with a series of initiatives in the cultural sphere and thus extending its attention to the entire world that has made the values of Venetian civilisation an inspiration and stimulus for productive, cultural and civil progress on an international scale. On 16 April 2007 the Veneto Region conferred legal personality on the Masi Foundation, recognising its values and statutory purposes. *www.fondazionemasi.com*

***Board of the Masi Foundation -*** *President*: Isabella Bossi Fedrigotti *Vice-President*: Sandro Boscaini *Secretary*: Marco Vigevani *Auditor:* Giovanni Aspes *Councillors:* Michele Bauli, Francesco Benedetti, Bruno Boscaini, Marzio Breda, Franca Coin, Massimilla di Serego Alighieri, Federico Girotto, Maurizio Marino.

***Civiltà Veneta Commission*:** Sandro Boscaini, Isabella Bossi Fedrigotti, Marzio Breda, Franca Coin, Gabriele Colleoni, Ilvo Diamanti, Massimo Ferro, Andrea Kerbaker, Stefano Lorenzetto, Massimo Mamoli, Paola Marini, Paolo Possamai, Pilade Riello, Massimilla di Serego Alighieri, Giovanni Maria Vian, Marco Vigevani, Stefano Zecchi, Filiberto Zovico.

***Civiltà del Vino Commission*:** Federico Castellucci, Piero Antinori, Sandro Boscaini, Luciano Ferraro, Angelo Gaja, Jens Priewe, Ezio Rivella, Alessandro Torcoli**.** *Spokesperson:* Federico Castellucci.