Press Release

**MASI AWARD 2025**

**The ceremony at Monteleone21: a dialogue between culture and territory to reflect on identity, progress, and challenges in the contemporary world**

*Gargagnago di Valpolicella (VR), 25 October 2025* – Yesterday, Friday 24 October, the **Awards Ceremony** for **the 44th Masi Prize** was held at **Monteleone21**, after the traditional signing of the Amarone barrel in the historic Masi winery in the heart of Valpolicella.

The five winners – **Alberto Bombassei**, the entrepreneur from Vicenza; **Fabrizio Plessi**, the international artist; and **Federica Manzon**, the writer from Trieste **(Masi Civiltà Veneta Prize)**; **José Vouillamoz,** Swiss ampelographer and geneticist **(Masi International Civiltà del Vino Prize)**; and **Gilles Kepel,** French political scientist **(Grosso D'Oro Veneziano)** – took part in a talk show moderated by journalist **Alessandro Milan**.

**Sandro Boscaini, Vice-President of the Foundation and President of Masi**, introduced the ceremony from the *Fruttaio Monumentale* (Monumental Grape-Drying Hall) of Masi's new wine tourism and experiential center: *"Monteleone21 is the new home of Amarone, but also a space where wine is in dialogue with the arts and culture. Today, we are celebrating not only the excellence of the territory, but also the Veneto region's ability to interpret the challenges of the contemporary world."*

Alessandro Milan, inviting the award winners onto the Agorà stage, went straight to the heart of the matter by introducing the theme of this year’s Masi Prize: **"Progress and conflict: paradoxes of the present**." The ensuing round-table discussion explored one of the great contradictions of our time: wars and conflicts are happening because of a need to assert **identity,** but at the same time **rapid social, economic, cultural, climatic, and technological changes**—including those brought about by artificial intelligence—are forcing humans to confront the fear of losing their identity or, conversely, to construct a new one. In this scenario, **technology** emerges as a force to **be actively monitored,** so that it does not escape human control and remains a tool for progress. Similarly, geographical boundaries, which are now more fluid, become fragile spaces open to redefinition, requiring conscious choices to transform conflicts into opportunities for growth, adaptation, and innovation.

The award winners spoke from their own experience:

**Gilles Kepel**, an expert on international dynamics, highlighted the fragility of the Middle East as a mirror of global tensions, and provided reflections on the current geopolitical framework, reminding us of the urgency of finding ways to make technological progress contribute towards an understanding between peoples, rather than towards new imbalances.

**Federica Manzon** reflected on the value of borders, which today have become both a place of meeting and friction, and the relationship between creativity and artificial intelligence as a new forum for the battle between freedom and constraint, highlighting how humans must address the situation honestly or risk a loss of identity.

**Fabrizio Plessi** emphasized the role of art as a universal language capable of reconciling differences, and put forward a view of technology not as a threat but as a tool for restoring feeling and humanity to the contemporary world.

**José Vouillamoz** turned his attention to the world of wine, where the challenges of climate change and global trade tensions require the pairing of scientific innovation with the protection of biodiversity, in a constant dialogue between progress and tradition.

In a video message, **Alberto Bombassei** recalled his Venetian roots and the value of innovation as a bridge between the past and the future, capable of assisting humanity in the work of managing global and local changes.

After the talk show, **Sergio Valente**, Masi's importer in **Taiwan**, was awarded the **Giorgio Boscaini Plaque**, a prize that has been given for over forty years to recognise friendship, professional collaboration, and contribution to the success of the Masi brand and the promotion of the values of the Veneto.

At the end of the event, the winners of the **Civiltà Veneta** and **Civiltà del Vino Prizes** were presented with valuable bottles of **Costasera Amarone**, made by Venetian master glassmakers and screen-printed in gold, while **Gilles Kepel** was awarded the Grosso Veneziano, a gold medallion crafted by master goldsmith **Alberto Zucchetta**.

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**For information:**

**Masi Foundation Press Office**

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

**Close to Media – company founded by Elisabetta Neuhoff**

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

*Finance press office*: Adriana Liguori Tel: +39 3451778974

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

**Masi Foundation:** The Masi Foundation is committed to promoting and enhancing the territory, people, cultural heritage, and great ingenuity and productive capacity of the Veneto. Particular attention is given to culture and wine production, which are distinctive features of the Veneto region. These goals are pursued through national and international activities, also in collaboration with institutions, public and private bodies, foundations, and other Italian and foreign organizations. The Masi Foundation was established in 2001, building on the twenty years of experience provided by the Masi Prize, whose continuity and direction of development it oversees, supporting it with a series of cultural initiatives and broadening its focus internationally to make the values of the Veneto a source of inspiration and stimulus for productive, cultural, and civil progress on a world scale. On 16 April 2007, the Veneto Region granted the Masi Foundation legal status, recognizing its values and statutory purposes. *www.fondazionemasi.com*

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