Press Release

**44th MASI PRIZE:**

**THE SIGNING OF THE HISTORIC AMARONE BARREL**

**“Progress and conflict: paradoxes of the present”**

**the theme chosen by the Masi Foundation to celebrate personalities whose careers show valuable insights on present times**

*Gargagnago di Valpolicella (VR), October 24, 2025* – Today, thefive winners of the 44th edition of the Masi Prize autographed the historic Amarone barrel in the Masi winery in the heart of Valpolicella, in the presence of members of the Masi Foundation, including Isabella Bossi Fedrigotti (President), Sandro Boscaini (Vice President and President of Masi Agricola) and Marco Vigevani (Secretary), together with dignitaries and the press.

The winners of the **Masi Civiltà Veneta Prize** are: **Alberto Bombassei**, an entrepreneur from Vicenza; **Fabrizio Plessi**, an international artist who is Venetian by adoption; and **Federica Manzon**, the author from Trieste. The **Masi International Civiltà del Vino Prize** goes to bySwiss ampelographer and geneticist **José Vouillamoz**; and the **Grosso D'Oro Veneziano** is awarded toFrench political scientist **Gilles Kepel.**

Each Prize winner spoke about their own experiences and work on the theme of this year's edition: **'Progress and conflict: paradoxes of the present'**, offering insights on a present that, on the one hand, is marked by exponential technological advancement—fueled above all by artificial intelligence—and, on the other, is challenged by the intensification of conflicts at all levels. This situation threatens not only peace, but also many of the civil, cultural, social, and economic achievements painstakingly reached over the last century.

During the ceremony, the winners gave us their thoughts on the significance of the Masi Prize for them.

**Alberto Bombassei (Masi Civiltà Veneta Prize)**: *"My family is of Venetian origin. My paternal grandfather worked in Venice, in the Arsenale, the first factory in Europe. Like many Venetians, in the post-war period my father moved west, where the industrialization of the country promised a better future. Fate decreed that the journey would end in Bergamo, for almost four centuries the western edge of the Venetian Republic's domains on the Terraferma. I am sincerely grateful to the Foundation for awarding me this prestigious prize, which clearly recognises my strong ties to the Veneto and my solid roots in this land*."

**Fabrizio Plessi (Masi Civiltà Veneta Prize)**: *"Receiving the Masi Prize is a great privilege and is very important for me. As an emigrant from Emilia, it is recognition of my belonging to a land that has shaped the structure of my artistic language. So thank you to the Masi Foundation, to Masi and its Amarone, which is not only an excellent wine but a true mindset in liquid form."*

**Francesca Manzon (Masi Civiltà Veneta Prize)**: *“Receiving a prize from* *the Masi Foundation is an honor for me, not only because of its history and the illustrious nature of previous winners, but also because geography plays a central role in my work. The landscape and the region are never just a backdrop, they are the character of the its participants, the root of the stories, the driving force behind questions that interrogate history and the present, the needle of a seismograph that records changes yet to come—and for me, it is always a base camp to return to. For these reasons, receiving this Prize is particularly exciting for me."*

**José Vouillamoz** (**Masi Civiltà del Vino International Prize)**: *"Having lived for a year and a half close to the Veneto, it is a real honor for me to receive the Civiltà del Vino Prize. Part of my research has been dedicated to uncovering the genetic roots and origins of extraordinary native Italian grape varieties, a heritage that is unique in the world. This Prize celebrates not only science, but also the living culture of Italian wine, a legacy that I feel privileged to be able to help protect and pass on."*

**Gilles Kepel (International Grosso D'Oro Veneziano Prize)**: *"The Prize has a deeply symbolic meaning for me. After more than half a century of academic life dedicated to the Arab and Islamic world, receiving an Prize linked to Venice—the eternal 'Gateway to the East'—takes on a special significance. It was in fact from Venice that I set off in July 1974 on my first trip to Istanbul, continuing on to Damascus, Lebanon, and Egypt. In a sense, I was then taking my first steps in the great East-facing tradition of the city of the Doges. Years later, I had the privilege of working with the Cini Foundation, organizing the Eurogulf Forum for Arab and Europeans on the island of San Giorgio in 2007, and reflecting on the work of Cardinal Bessarion, a constant source of inspiration for those who, like me, believe in intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean. I am therefore particularly honored and happy to receive this prestigious Prize, which symbolically validates a long university career that began under the auspices of the great history of Venice.”*

**President Isabella Bossi Fedrigotti** applauded the winners, reiterating*: "This year's winners perfectly embody the the paradox of our time: ever-advancing progress combined with the need to preserve our roots at the same time. In them, we find the questioning and constructive attitude that has always animated the Masi Prize, capable of uniting tradition and innovation in a fruitful dialogue between past and future."*

**Sandro Boscaini** concluded: *"Each Masi Prize is not only a recognition, but also a celebration of our land, its history, and its culture. The Amarone barrel on which our Prize winners have left their mark today represents the essence of this bond: a symbol of quality, passion and commitment that has always been part of Valpolicella and the entire Veneto region. Each signature we see on these barrels today is testimony to a deep bond with our territory, which continues to tell its story to the world."*

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**The awards ceremony and talk show hosted by journalist Alessandro Milan was held at Monteleone21 in Gargagnago di Valpolicella.**

**The awards ceremony for the 44th Masi Prize was then broadcast on TeleArena on Sunday 26 October, at 9:15 p.m. in prime time.**

**NB:**

**PHOTO NEWS WILL FOLLOW WITH A REPORT ON THE AWARDS CEREMONY AT MONTELEONE21 WITH PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIAL**

**ATTACHED: PHOTO OF THE SIGNING OF THE AMARONE BARREL AT THE MASI WINERIES IN VALPOLICELLA**

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**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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