

IN 1977 IT WAS RUNNING THE RISK OF DYING OUT

Schioppettino saved thanks to the Risit d'Aur

Forty years and few days. In 2018 Friuli Venezia Giulia has reached an aim that has passed undercover but which has changed the story of the regional winegrowing. Exactly 40 years ago, Prepotto and its surroundings harvested for the first time Schioppettino. Autochthonous red wine that today is among the most celebrated in Fvg, but which until 1977 – when its replanting was authorized – was outlaw. «Grown but with no name» remembers Giannola Nonino who, together with her husband Benito and with the support of Luigi Veronelli, fought to save the vine variety from a sure oblivion. She was moved also by personal reasons, of entrepreneurial nature, but not only. On the one hand the single varietal grappa that the Noninos had just invented, on the other the sensibility, entirely of the family, for the safeguard of the culture of rural Friuli that risked being lost. So, on 29th November 1975 the Nonino Risit d'Aur was born, it means – not by chance – Gold vine shoot. «The idea of the Prize is with the aim of saving and having officially recognized, obtaining the authorization to the replanting, the vine varieties of my childhood, of stimulating vine growers to plant them and consequently induce the authorities to authorize the replanting of the forbidden vine varieties: not only Schioppettino, the lady of Grappa explains -, but also Pignolo, Tazzelenghe and later Ribolla Gialla vinified in purity». The prize: one million lire for the vine growers that had set to dwelling one or more varieties, five hundred thousand lire for the scholars who had improved their knowledge. So, the first Nonino Risit d'Aur was awarded – it was 1976 – to Guido Poggi, Angelo Nassig, the Earls of Trento from Dolegnano and Dina and Paolo Rapuzzi for «giving impulse to the cultivation, in its most suitable habitat in Cialla di Prepotto, of the ancient and prestigious autochthonous vine variety Schioppettino, of which – the motivation reports – absurd laws have decreed the death».

But let's take a step back, because the publication of the announcement of competition at that time had a disruptive effect. «On the following morning – Giannola Nonino remembers, today smiling – we found in our office the officers of the department of viticulture, at that time managed by dr. Amelio Tubaro, who ordered us to withdraw the announcement. Immediately, unless we wanted to be denounced for instigation against the law and to see the vine growers fined with two hundred thousand lire for each hectare cultivated with the forbidden vine varieties besides burning the vines in the breeders' plants». Nonino doesn't give up. «With determination I overcame the obstacle, involving in the Jury all the "controllers". From Orfeo Salvador, at that time the president of Ersa, to Antonio Calò, the director of the experimental Institute for viticulture of Conegliano. Calò, thanks to

Centoveventi anni della Famiglia Nonino

his relations with the Ministry of Agriculture and with the European Community, was fundamental for the achievement of what we had aimed to: the authorization to the growing of Friulian autochthonous vine varieties, first experimentally, since 1978 definitely, since 1983 recommended». In December 1976 there is the delivery of the prizes. In Percoto the Jury meets both producers and local administrators, among the guests. One above all: the Mayor of Prepotto, Bernardo Bruno. «Veronelli gets the promise of the summoning of an extraordinary town council, in the agenda the defense of Schioppettino and the request of its exclusive growing. That council reinforced the request of the authorization to the replant filed one year before, upon request by Giannola and Benito Nonino and with the support of the members of the Jury. Calò above all». Says Nonino, celebrating forty years later that team victory which changed the destiny of Friulian winegrowing so deeply. Schioppettino has become, in fact, one of our most appreciated red wines. A wine rich of history. It was mentioned already in 1282 in some documents found in the archives of the castle of Albana, which is its cradle still today.

(m.d.c.)

>> Forty years ago In Prepotto and its surroundings there was the first authorized harvest, after the law prohibition of 1960.

>> The lady of grappa established the prize hat later gained international visibility and prestige.