

guidando il

camion. Solo

io avevo la

patente C

sposati?

«Da 56. E da 56, seguendo lui, mi occupo di grappa.

Macchine agricole per alcuni anni, poi mobili in me- Benito, alla guida

tallo. In famiglia ero piuttosto viziata. A un certo punto dell'azienda omonima

Mio padre era imprenditore ma in un altro settore.

Amore e matrimonio. «Sì, ci siamo sposati presto. Però, non ho mai capito quanto il mio fidanzato, poi marito, fosse veramente innamorato di me. E ancora non lo so. Non è un tipo da complimenti. Un "selvaggio"... Vivere nell'incertezza mi ha spronato a dimostrargli quanto contasse per me. In verità, Benito mi è sempre stato vicino e incoraggiato, specie sul lavo-

Pavia di Udine (Udine)

e dal 1962 produce

grappa con il marito

### CORRIERE DELLA SERA 19

#### Venerdì 21.09.2018

### Con la dieta mediterranea rischio morte ridotto del 25%





ro. Il mio primo incarico? Acquistare vinacce, materia prima di produzione della grappa. Guidavo il camion e facevo il giro dei vignaioli. Prendevo anche qualche porta in faccia, ma alla fine centravo l'obiettivo. Sono seduta in basso a estarda e grintosa»

Al volante di un mezzo nesante? Attitudi singolare per una donna, considerando anche l'epoca.

«È vero. Tutto nasce dal fatto che, per casualità e burocrazia, ero "munita" di patente C. Non entro nei dettagli, sarebbe troppo lungo. Fatto sta che, pur non essendo mai salita su un camion, messa alla prova, riuscii a guidarlo».

#### Da allora non si è più fermata. Quando Giannola Nonino diventa Signora della Grappa, con la G maiuscola? In breve, come la grappa da Cenerentola è diventata Regina?

«In premessa, mi piace ricordare la magia della distillazione. Ricordo ancora l'incanto e la meraviglia delle prime volte. L'alambicco, il vapore, i profumi. La nuova avventura comincia quando si decide di distillare separatamente le vinacce da uve di antichi vitigni autoctoni: Picolit, Schioppettino, Ribolla Gialla.... Ottenendo un prodotto di alta qualità e carattere. Erano gli anni Settanta. L'esperimento nasce con 5 damigiane di grappa di Picolit monovitigno, successivamente messa in piccole (belle) bottiglie da 250 ml».

Troppo cara per riuscire a venderla. Allora Giannola ha un'idea: regalarla alle persone ricche e famose: Gianni Agnelli, per citare un nome.

«Non è stato facile sfondare; perfino i colleghi distillatori erano contro il nuovo corso. Il tempo e il successo ci hanno dato ragione. Il primo a credere in noi fu Gino Veronelli»

Intraprendenza, lungimiranza, successi. Da qui, i numerosi riconoscimenti che lei ha avuto. Per esempio la laurea honoris causa in Economia aziendale. Fra tutti, quale le ha dato più soddisfazione?

«Sono una donna pratica e non do peso alle onorifi-

#### N FAMIGLIA

Giannola Nonino destra sul prato della illa distilleria di Percoto con le nipoti: le gemelle Costanza e Beatrice e Caterina. Sulle sedie da sinistra le altre 5 donne della famiglia Nonino

cenze ricevute. Tuttavia, non posso dimenticare la gioia, di ritorno da un viaggio in Giappone nel 1998, nell'apprendere della nomina a Cavaliere del Lavoro da parte del presidente della Repubblica Oscar Luigi Scalfaro. Mi sono sentita felice ed emozionata come donna, a nome di tutte le donne. Mi considero fortunata e sono orgogliosa di fare un lavoro che mi piace, mi diverte ed è valorizzato. Va detto, però, che anche nell'imprenditoria, come in altri settori. le donne devono sempre dimostrare di essere all'altezza dei maschi» Viviamo in tempi difficili, precari, soprattutto per i giovani. La

sua storia tramette positività, voglia di mettersi in gioco... «Sono d'accordo. Infatti mi piacerebbe che la mia esperienza avesse il valore di uno stimolo per le nuove generazioni. Non bisogna mollare mai. Avere coraggio, fiducia in se stessi e ottimismo».

Il Premio Nonino. Da tempo è un'istituzione culturale. Senza entrare nel merito, le chiedo: che significa avere a che fare con personaggi di caratura internazionale?

«Una cosa ho capito: quanto più è grande una persona, tanto è più facile dialogare con lei. I grandi, quelli

veri, sanno porsi sul tuo stesso piano Ancora: il Premio mi ha insegnato che ognuno nel suo piccolo, se ama ciò che fa, è un grande».

### Il dolore della sua vita?

«La perdita di mio padre, primo confronto con la morte. E, di recente, la scomparsa di Ermanno Olmi, giurato del Nonino e amico impareggiabile». La gioia?

«Quando sto con la mia meraviglios: famiglia. Discutiamo, litighiamo ma ci vogliamo un gran bene».

Difetti e virtù: come si vede, Giannola? «Sono opprimente negli affetti e parlo troppo. Dovrei contare fino a tre, invece mi fermo a zero. Sbagliando, talvolta. Virtù? Grande passione per il mio lavoro, non sono mai stanca». Un progetto a cui pensa?.

«Un viaggio per il mondo ad incontrare le persone (ristoratori, enotecari, clienti) che ci hanno supportato. Godere della gioia che abbiamo trasmesso, con il lavoro e la ricerca».

«Anche nel mio settore

le donne devono

sempre dimostrare di

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le nuove generazioni»



**Perdere mio** 

padre è stato

il dolore più

grande. Con la

scomparsa

dell'amico

Ermanno

Olmi

CORRIERE DELLA SERA

### **GIANNOLA NONINO**

### THE LADY OF GRAPPA TURNS 80

by Marisa Fumagalli - 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018

The Friulian entrepreneur has married with the owner of the company, Benito, for 56 years: "And for 56, following him, I have been dealing with grappa". Also hers was a family of entrepreneurs, agricultural machines, and then furniture: "When my father got sick I had to start working and interrupted my studies at Ca' Foscari". Then love at first sight, double: for the future husband and aquavitae: "I like to remember the magic of distillation. The still, the steam, the perfumes …". Finally the idea that marked the success of the company: giving bottles as presents to famous people, like Avvocato Agnelli. And in 1998 the most appreciated acknowledgement: the Quirinale appoints her Cavaliere del Lavoro.

A beautiful goal, Giannola. How do you feel ... "Please, let's not pronounce this number. Otherwise I have to admit that I'm old. So I thought for a long time of the people who were my age today. Then when you get there, fortunately healthy, everything changes. Well, I was born in nineteen-thirty eight... is that all right?"

Wonderful lady of grappa! She finds an elegant and funny way to sneak off, playing on the year of birth. And, let's say it all: she accepted the interview with confidence, even if she does not like the idea of a chat that takes its cue from a birthday. It falls on September 27th. "A date that has not been meaningful for long time. Ignored. Also because it coincides with the harvest, a period of intense work — she points out —. The latest celebrations, by my decision and with surprise of all my dear ones, date back to ten years ago, when I turned 70: music, songs, dances, fireworks. Then I said stop. Never again".

Ok, let's not insist. But there is a life - and what a life! - to tell. A woman, a family that has made noble what was considered the distillate of the poor.

"After the war, it was produced in great quantity, and grappa was sold without care in regular and large bottles" says Giannola. We are in the offices of the company, located in a village of the Friulian countryside: Percoto, few kilometers from Udine. Red hair, natural face, she's a waterfall of words. He has got verve to sell, Giannola. Hard to follow her while talking, zigzagging between past and present. To start: born Bulfoni, she is the wife of Benito Nonino. Three daughters (Cristina, Antonella, and Betty), working at full speed in their parent's activity. Besides, 8 grandchildren: 7 girls and a boy.

Giannola, is it true that in your big family women command?

"Let's not exaggerate. First of all it is useful to remember a Friulian proverb that, translated into Italian, sounds like this: a woman in the family holds three corners of the house. Well, according to the habits of the territory, it is normal that the role of women is fundamental. Nonino women aren't an exception. In addition, we are extroverted, we communicate a lot. But Benito remains a steady point. In the choices he is decisive. I guarantee it. "

# Let's talk about Benito, then. Couple relationship and work. A perfect fusion. How long have you been married?

"56 years. And for 56, following him, I have been dealing with grappa. My father was an entrepreneur but in another sector. Agricultural machinery for a few years, then metal furniture. In the family I was rather spoiled. At a certain point my father got sick and I, with my sister, had to start working. I was enrolled at Ca ' Foscari, Faculty of Languages: I interrupted my studies. For the rest, what to say? I was a courted, lively girl. I really enjoyed dancing. Then I fell madly in love with Benito".

### Love and marriage.

"Yes, we got married quite soon. However, I never understood how much my boyfriend, then husband, was really in love with me. And I still don't know it. He's not a guy that makes compliments. Quite a "savage"... Living in uncertainty spurred me to show him how much he counted for me. Actually, Benito has always been close to me and has encouraged me, especially at work. My first assignment? The purchase of pomace, the primary product for the production of grappa. I drove the truck and went to visit the winemakers. I also took a few door slams in my face, but in the end I reached the goal. I'm stubborn and spirited".

### Driving a heavy vehicle? A peculiar ability for a woman, considering also the period.

"It is true. It all starts from the fact that, by case and bureaucracy, I was "equipped" with a truck license. I won't go into the details, it would be too long. The fact is that, although I had never got into a truck, put to the test, I managed to drive it".

# Since then you haven't stopped anymore. When does Giannola Nonino become the Lady of Grappa, with the capital G? In Short, how did Grappa from Cinderella become Queen?

"First of all, I like to remember the magic of distillation. I still remember the enchantment and wonder of the first few times. The still, the steam, the perfumes. The new adventure began when we decided to distil separately the pomace from the grapes of ancient autochthonous vine varieties: Picolit, Schioppettino, and Ribolla Gialla.... Obtaining a product of high quality and character. We were in the Seventies. The experiment was born with 5 demijohns of grappa of Picolit Monovitigno, later bottled in small (beautiful) bottles containing 250 ml".

# Too expensive to be able to sell it. Then Giannola has an idea: to give it as a present to rich and famous people: Gianni Agnelli, to quote a name.

"It was not easy to have success; even fellow distillers were against the new course. Time and success have proved we were right. The first to trust us was Gino Veronelli».

Initiative, farsightedness, and success. From here, the many acknowledgements you've had. For example the honorary degree in Business Administration. Which, of all these, has given you more satisfaction?

"I am a practical woman and I do not give weight to the honors received. However, I cannot forget the joy, returning from a trip to Japan in 1988, in learning of the appointment as Cavaliere del Lavoro by the President of the Republic, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro. I felt happy and excited as a woman, on behalf of all women. I consider myself lucky and I am proud to do a job that I like, I enjoy it and it is valued. WE have to say, however, that, even in entrepreneurship, as in other sectors, women must always show that they are at the same level of men".

We live in difficult times, insecure, especially for young people. Your story conveys positivity, the desire of getting involved...

"I agree. In fact I would like my experience to have the value of a stimulus for the new generations. You never have to give up. You must have courage, self-confidence and optimism".

The Nonino Prize. It has long been a cultural institution. Without going deeply into the matter, I ask you: what does it mean having to deal with personalities of international level?

"One thing I understood: the greater a person is, the easier it is to talk with him/her. Great persons, the true ones, know how to put themselves on your same level. Again: The Prize has taught me that everyone in his small way, if he loves what he does, is a great one".

The sorrow of your life?

"The loss of my father, the first confrontation with death. And, recently, the death of Ermanno Olmi, a member of the Jury of the Nonino and an incomparable friend".

The joy?

"When I am with my wonderful family. We argue, we quarrel, but we love each other a lot".

Faults and virtues: how do you see yourself, Giannola?

"I am oppressive in the affections and I speak too much. I should count to three, on the contrary I stop at zero. Sometimes making a mistake. Virtues? A great passion for my work, I'm never tired".

A project you are thinking about?

"A journey around the world to meet the people (restaurateurs, wine shop owners, customers) who have supported us. To enjoy the joy we have conveyed, with our work and research".

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"Until the age of 70 I celebrated: then no more, it's the days of the harvest ... And I still haven't understood if that "savage" of my Benito loves me..."

🔊 Nonino Distillatori in Friuli dal 1897 - 33050 Percoto Udine Italia - Tel. +39 0432 676331 - www.grappanonino.it - info@nonino.it

From top three key men for Giannola: Gianni Agnelli (who died in 2003), her husband Benito (84 years old), and Ermanno Olmi (who died last May 5th)

In the beginning I purchased the pomace from winemakers driving a truck. I was the only one who had a truck-license.

### THE ENTREPRENEUR

Giannola Nonino, 80 next 27th September, was born in Pavia di Udine and since 1962 she has been producing grappa with her husband Benito, leading the homonymous company.

### IN THE FAMILY

*Giannola Nonino, front left, sitting on the lawn of the villa distillery in Percoto with her granddaughters: the twins Costanza and Beatrice and Caterina. On the chairs, from left, the other 5 women of the Nonino family.* 

Missing my father was my greatest sorrow. Together with the death of my friend Ermanno Olmi

"Even in my sector women must always prove they are on the same level as men. I would like to be an example for the new generations".