

VANITY FAIR

REGION

FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA

GRAPPA NONINO MONOVITIGNO®, **GRAPPA NONINO RISERVA ANTICACUVÈE®**,
GRAPPA NONINO VENDEMMIA RISERVA

OUR SPIRIT

If grappa is loved in the world it's because of the Noninos, a family where women are the protagonists.

“We are the family that has revolutionized grappa, ennobled in the world thanks to the Monovitigno®, the process we created to distill the pomace of Picolit grapes separated from the other”. Giannola Nonino and her daughters, Cristina, Antonella, Elisabetta and her granddaughter Francesca are proud of the goals achieved over time by the company, winner in 2019 of the Award Best Distillery in the World by Wine Enthusiast. Their passion is the same as Benito's, Giannola's husband, and the heir of the founder, as well as the daily commitment to promote and protect the rural culture in their land.

THE RESEARCH OF THE ESSENCE

Cristina Nonino, master distiller and responsible for the Italian market in the family company, in Percoto (Udine), which dates back to 1897.

LOVE AND STILLS

Determined and optimistic, Cristina Nonino, master distiller in the family business, tells of her passion for a profession that allows her to rediscover her roots.

by ANNA MAZZOTTI

A still on wheels, itinerant, the only legacy of a farmer whose only wealth was his physical strength and a vision. Thus began in 1897 a story of challenges and perseverance to produce that “fire-water that burned even your hunger and gave you the courage to face every effort” (David Maria Turollo). Every time she produces her grappa, Cristina Nonino, master distiller in the family business, goes back to her origins, to the simple but wise gestures of her great-great-grandfather Orazio, the founder of a long dynasty of distillers who have refined their art to the most coveted award: the nomination by Wine Enthusiast as “Best Distillery in the World 2019”, the first grappa brand to achieve this recognition. “It's an alchemical art that allows you to extract the soul of the matter: you feel you're replicating an ancient ritual, that you're part of your own history”, says Cristina Nonino, who leads with her sisters Antonella and Elisabetta and the youngest of her three children, Francesca, the family business (for the role of CEO they take turns, now it's Elisabetta's turn) but where the parents are always present and their word is law: Benito is for everyone “the Owner”, Giannola “the Lady”.

After all, they are the ones who revolutionized the way of producing grappa by creating the Monovitigno® Nonino, distilling the pomace separately, thus elevating it to a queen of spirits.

“There is a sentence in the film *The Great Beauty* that moves me, when the Saint says to Jep: “Do you know why I only eat roots? Because roots are important”. We can understand how fundamental it is to find what we are.

Distilling goes to the essence of things with all the senses involved: sight, captured by the iridescent shades of the pomace, from the gold and bronze of Picolit to the burgundy of Merlot, and then the scents that exhale from the vapors and the sound that vibrations produce as they rise from the copper of the stills”. Creativity and concreteness, the same of her parents: “The example is fundamental. We women have a great responsibility in raising children. “I’ve never felt in trouble because female”, she continues. “During the harvest, when the seasonal workers - all men - arrive, I’m proud to feel their esteem, but it wasn’t always like that: at first, to get accepted, I would help myself by saying 'dad said to tell you' even if the directions were mine. It wasn’t a problem, I was just interested in finding the solution”. The company is almost all female: “We introduced blue quotas because there were no men. And if I once didn’t approve pink quotas, now I’m in favor of them because they have allowed very capable women to have visibility. Today I feel that men are more flattened, we have a great ability to be resilient, not to fear fatigue. But I have a lot of faith in the new generations”. Master distiller or lady-distiller? “Distiller, I want to be like my father. He’s the master and I’m the student, fired badly several times because I wasn’t good enough. But he promoted me since I distilled pure ginger, my own project. To me, master distiller is a neutral title. It has to apply to merit, and that’s it.”