La cerimonia a Percoto

Messaggero

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Segnali di pace al Premio Nonino Friuli fra tradizioni e innovazione

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«Some years ago I made the proposition, that at the beginning of a conference, the opening of the parliament or even at the beginning of a meeting of a bank, not to speak about the start of a week in school, one should read a poem. Imagine, that Mrs. Meloni reads a poem by Montale before opening the discussion on emigration, or Mme. Christina Lagarde reads, before announcing the reduce of the base rate, a poem by Rene Char, or Mr. Olaf Scholz, before stepping back, decides to read a poem by Ingeborg Bachmann - the atmosphere in the room would change immediately, the sharp rhetoric, which tries to hurt and violate the opponent - and, by the way, the language itself -, would become more civilized or at least acceptable». From the speech of Michael Kruger, Nonino International Prize 2025.

The Ceremony in Percoto

Signs of Peace at the Nonino Prize Friuli between tradition and innovation

De Villepin's invitation to the 50th edition: the reconstruction of Gaza should be a symbol of a new order

Fabiana Della Valle

The Nonino Prize reaches the milestone of its fifty years of life for the first time without Benito, the patriarch of the world-famous family of distillers, to whom it dedicates a touching video tribute right at the opening of the award ceremony, an opportunity to listen to the vibrant and necessary appeal for peace that comes from the heart of Friuli and from the four internationally renowned personalities chosen by the Prize Jury chaired by the neurologist, neuroscientist, psychologist and essayist Antonio Damasio: the German writer Michael Krüger (Nonino International Prize), the mother of African contemporary dance Germaine Acogny (Prize to Master of our time), the former French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin (Nonino Prize) and Ben Little and the Friulian Pignolo (Nonino Risit D'Aur Prize). The philosopher and sociologist Edgar Morin, via video link, has the task of reminding the world that «we cannot separate lucidity from commitment: there is no commitment without lucidity and there is no lucidity without commitment».

Speaking in Italian, Morin, who will be 104 next July, underlined Villepin's "moral commitment", expressing, in a heartfelt way, great appreciation for "the deep feeling of the Prize", for the "magnificent Nonino family", thinking back "to the memories linked to Friuli and Benito Nonino". Dominique de Villepin, the first of the prize winners to go on stage, said he was «honored to receive an award that embodies the loyalty and values of nature. Having dedicated a large part of my life to diplomacy», recalled the intellectual, a convinced European, but above all a diplomat who has always been committed to peace, «I am happy to welcome the signing of a ceasefire agreement in Gaza. This news I hope will bring hope to all the hostages and the Palestinians. However, I observe with deep concern the multiplication of crises that mark our time, from Ukraine to the Middle East, passing through Sudan and many other places. The challenge is immense; especially at a time when a new American administration is emerging that combines imperial ambitions and technological messianism. To move forward together, we need

evidence and I want to hope that the reconstruction of Gaza and the recognition of a Palestinian state can become the symbol of a new possible international order, based on peace and justice». In tune with Villepin's words are those pronounced by Ben Little, Irish by birth and Friulian by adoption, writer, popularizer and blogger, but above all the singer of Pignolo, an ancient native Friulian vine, to which he has dedicated research, studies and a book. «Pignolo reminds me that nothing happens by chance. Without Giannola and Benito, none of us would be here. Pignolo and I want to thank them for sharing the "spirit" with the world». His speech also finished with words of peace: «When the power of love overcomes the love for power, the world will know peace». Michael Kruger, a multifaceted author, refined intellectual and editor, introduced by Claudio Magris who defined him as «a strong and intense poet, discreet and perplexed in the face of life and even more so in the face of History», «I am deeply convinced that the idea and use of poetry are one of the last links that connect us to the past and to the richness of our imagination. Europe – I think some of you will agree – is in a deplorable state. The insatiable desire for the infinite, which is also the heart of poetry, has been replaced by a vulgar attempt to beat the other to obtain a small benefit». The last to go on stage introduced by Mauro Ceruti, philosopher and theorist of complex thought, member of the Jury of the Prize, was Germaine Acogny. «I dedicate this prize to "my" President Leopold Sèdar Senghor, poet and statesman awarded in 1985 with the Nonino International Prize. He was the one who supported me in the crucial moments and allowed me to meet the great choreographer Maurice Béjart, who entrusted me with the direction of Mudra Afrique, the first pan-African school of professional training for dancers on the continent. I would like to thank you with a short dance. It is called "Danse intérieure" and symbolizes the search for peace after the travails of life. I dedicate it to Benito Nonino and President Senghor. "The dead are not dead" wrote the Senegalese poet Birago Biop. May peace be with you». At the end of her speech, Acogny took off her shoes and danced barefoot for the Nonino Prize and became the embodiment of the sacredness of peace. We cannot think of anything more precious to celebrate half a century of the Prize and its patriarch Benito. —

A restrained elegance, without overdoing At the table with the twisted flavors of Friuli

Gian Paolo Polesini

Giannola is the embodiment of enthusiasm and is always the quickest to get on the stage at every edition of the Nonino Prize: in just a few lines, she knows how to put in order a prolonged story of a family's love for the earth.

This year, then, as the calendar marked half a century of intense narration while the heart was grieving the loss of a leader, such as good Benito was, the Iron Lady gathered around her affectionate community, giving in for a few moments to a frugal emotion, the time to put tears back and off again to set the rhythm of the celebration so as not to lose the rhythm.

Really an unbeatable woman, like Sinner.

The magnificent daughters do not seem to stray too far from their images on the distillery's billboards when they were little girls: Cristina, Antonella and Elisabetta manage a charm in line with maternal enthusiasm.

The success of a brand is not only the quality of the product: people do not buy what you do, but why you do it. And we would also say how you do it.

The usual comings and goings of mid-morning elegance. The ceremony is a usual act that every last Saturday of January is shown to a select and cultured audience, ready to receive the messages of those who display the prize. The foresight of the jury that has anticipated the Nobel Prize winners six times is no mystery.

Ladies clearly more precise and careful not to show off their already ostentatious clothes. A midday dinner does not imply any particular elaborate garments, a restrained elegance is sufficient, without overdoing.

The heel is still necessary to tower over the husband. Every single year, casting a glance at the ground, it is revealed that the men's footwear is almost never up to the level of the suit. A common carelessness, there is no remedy now. Only sporadic cases of courtly combinations.

Everything is resolved with legs under the table for the gathering, in the hall, of the varied humanity: tastes and wisdom undergo an intriguing mix and from the stills comes a perfume that adds a variable to the dishes. The "Gustà" (food) is curated by Viroca by Romeo Sturma with the participation of the Amira maîtres Fvg and the boys of the Ial.

Glasses with a delicate eight-degree solution, created by bartender Monica Berg from Oslo, circulate. Fashion dictates a thick block of ice cut on the spot and, indeed, a light drink to challenge the street tipping points.

The Mont Malghe Montasio cheese with blackberries will be followed by Gnòcs di cavòcie (Pumpkin dumplings) on the scuète fumade (smoked ricotta). Like pumpkin dumplings, to put it simply. Delicious is an adjective that doesn't do justice to goodness.

There is a tribute to dad Benito with a raising of glasses of Grappa Nonino Monovitigno. A leap back to 1973 when G&B revolutionized the way of producing and introducing grappa in the world. And it was a real epochal turning point.

Ada's cake gives us sweetness, which won't be the only one of a reception without limits, as usual. This is why infusions were invented.-

A glorious story to re-discover values Ben Little and his meeting with Pignolo

Ancient vines

The Risit d'Aur and the battle that started 50 years ago

THE ORIGINS

Elena Commessatti

First year without Benito, the master distiller: "Ben Noah's fourth son ", in the drawings of his friend Altan.

And today, in the 50th edition, another Ben, this time Irish, (but Friulian by adoption), wins the Risit D'Aur – Gold Vine-shoot Prize, born exactly fifty years ago from the original Ben to defend and restore the native vines of the region.

«Without you, Giannola and Benito, none of us would be here. This is the truth», declares the prizewinner Ben Little, author of the beautiful book in English "Pignolo - Cultivating the Invisible", and who in 2023 founded the Pignolo Association of Friuli Venezia Giulia, to promote the legendary Pignolo around the world. But how did this glorious story begin? It was the Seventies when Benito and Giannola, researching the ancient native Friulian vines to distill their pomace, realized that the most representative of them - Schioppettino, Pignolo, Tazzelenghe, Fumat - were in danger of extinction, because cultivation was forbidden. And that's when the challenge began. They began a courageous, passionate - and solitary - battle that led to the establishment in 1975 of the Risit D'Aur – Gold Vine-shoot Prize: one million lire to the winemaker «who will plant the best system of the vines listed above» and a scholarship of five hundred thousand lire for «the best study of both technical and historical nature».

As Giannola, moved in this edition without her Benito, "comrade in arms", declared from the stage: «We put on the jury ... whoever was against us»! And so the Noninos began the

bureaucratic process to obtain the community authorization to grow Pignolo, Schioppettino and Tazzelenghe, which were joined by pure Ribolla gialla. And they obtained it in 1978, to arrive in 1983, with a European law, to even have them as "recommended" crops.

Antonella highlights: «Ben comes from Ireland. My parents from here. The world is big, we have so much hope for things to save»". And she is right, because Ben Little, writer, sommelier, blogger, and "poet by chance", is part of this family of visionaries. In his brilliant and lyrical speech Ben begins with a poetic quote, demonstrating that in the 50th edition poetry is the protagonist, as it is written in the exceptional speech by Michael Krüger. And how could it be otherwise?

To tell the essence of the world it is fundamental; only poetry can express nature, and the truth about Pignolo, the black berry vine variety, belongs to this feeling. «What are you going to do with your unique, wild, and precious life?» Ben wonders, and tells us: «Listen to yourself, be patient, the answer comes from deep within». And then he adds: «Pignolo led me to find this question and never ceases to remind me that nothing happens by chance».

He knows it, and how he knows it, Ben Little, a traveler in his almost decade-long holistic odyssey defending the Pignolo, he who thanks everyone. «We are never alone. There is always a spirit that guides us, in the wind, in the storm, on a quiet morning». «Truth and peace are the very roots of our being». He says that in English grappa is called "spirit" and then: «The Pignolo and I would like to thank you as you wanted to share your collective spirit». Then he remembers that «fifty years ago Benito and Giannola believed in a dream». «A person is the product of his/her dreams; make sure you dream great. And try to live them». «A great soul is at the service of all. The dream of the Nonino Prize is great, and Pignolo and I are grateful to be awarded by two master dreamers, eternal spirits: Giannola and Benito». He concludes: «When the power of love overcomes the love for power, the world will know peace». —

Photo captions

In The Distillery The Ceremony Dedicated To The Founder Benito Who Passes Away Last Summer

Signs of peace at the 50th Nonino Prize in Percoto The Nonino Family with the prizewinners. Commessatti, Dalla Valle, Polesini

A moment of the ceremony with the deeply felt memory of patriarch Benito

The vast audience that took part in the ceremony