

FOODSERVICE EAST PRESENTS

# SECRETS OF **SUCCESS**

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An ongoing series of interviews with chefs, restaurateurs and foodservice operators, Secrets of Success looks at the paths taken to professional recognition and acclaim.



## **Marcello Lunelli**

Chief Winemaker, Ferrari Trento, Trento, Italy  
By Foodservice East

# FOODSERVICE EAST SECRETS OF SUCCESS

**FSE: Was there ever a question for you about going into the wine industry?**

LUNELLI: I was born into a wine-making family and I immediately developed a passion for this field. When I was 13 years old I decided to attend the agriculture school to become an enologist and I instantly realized that I made the right choice. Before joining the family business, I also had some amazing work experiences in great wineries around the world, such as Simonsig in Stellenbosch, South Africa and Ederle in California.

**FSE: How did Ferrari Trento come to be your family's business?**

LUNELLI: My grandfather, Bruno Lunelli, bought the company from Giulio Ferrari in 1952. He owned a wine shop in downtown Trento and was so passionate about Ferrari wines that Giulio, who had no heirs, decided between many prospective suitors to sell the winery to him. Bruno had to make a huge economic investment and had to sign promissory notes for a large amount of money, but his entrepreneurial talent and the vision that he shared with Giulio Ferrari permitted him to succeed and immediately increase production, without ever compromising on quality.

**FSE: Before Giulio Ferrari began making sparkling wine in 1902, he studied Champagne in France. Had Italy made sparkling wines prior to his starting to make them?**

LUNELLI: In 1865 Carlo Gancia produced the first Italian sparkling wine in Canelli, near Turin, in the Piedmont region, but then the family decided to invest in muscat grapes and started producing Asti Spumante. We can say, however, that Giulio Ferrari was the first to create a wine in Italy capable of competing with the best French Champagnes. Thanks to his pioneering vision, the Trentino region became the birthplace of high quality Italian sparkling wines.

**FSE: You were recently honored as Producer of the Year at the Champagne and Sparkling Wine World Championship 2015 which also named your Ferrari Perlé Trentodoc as Best Italian Sparkling Wine. Do you foresee a wider market for Italian sparkling wines?**

LUNELLI: This important award represents for Ferrari an accomplishment that makes us proud of

achieving the dream of Giulio Ferrari and encourages us to continue working in this direction. We do foresee a larger market for Italian sparkling wines because of the increasing worldwide appreciation of the quality of our Trentodoc sparkling wines as well as the global success of Prosecco. In addition, all over the world people love the Italian art of living and Ferrari embodies perfectly this concept.

**FSE: How many cases do you now produce?**

LUNELLI: We produce 4.5 million bottles (375000 cases of 12 bottles).

**FSE: What is the market like in the U.S. for Italian sparkling wines?**

LUNELLI: The U.S. market is undoubtedly one of the most, if not the most, important market in terms of volume and value; it is certainly an incredibly influential arena for Italian wine.

Ferrari has recognized this and we are investing a lot of energy into this market.

**FSE: How can restaurateurs encourage customers to drink sparkling wines all year long and not just over the Christmas/New Year period?**

LUNELLI: Sparkling wine is not just the perfect companion for celebrations, it is much more than that. Sparkling wines can be proposed at different stages during a meal. Sommeliers and restaurateurs should propose the correct food pairing to their guests, who might not have made sparkling wine their first choice. I also think that one of the best ways for customers to enjoy our product all year long is to have it be offered in restaurants by the glass. I finally suggest having it served as the classic Italian aperitif; in this way wine becomes a fantastic opportunity to promote the Italian Art of Living that American clients appreciate so much.

**FSE: You're known for saying "sparkling wines pair with everything" and love the sparkling rosé with pizza. How can restaurant operators/sommeliers make customers aware that there are many ways to drink these wines?**

LUNELLI: Sommeliers agree on the fact that structured bottle fermented wines are very flexible and they could be easily proposed for any of the courses. Restaurateurs could try new and exciting pairings with different seasonal and regional dishes, not only Italian food, but other international cuisine such as sushi and sashimi.

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The role of the sommeliers and restaurant operators is crucial, they have to educate the final consumers and help them discover the many different ways to enjoy sparkling wines.

## **FSE: As the climate changes and temperatures begin to rise, how do you as a winemaker adjust to those changes?**

LUNELLI: The Ferrari vineyards are located in the mountains of Trentino, in Northern Italy, where Giulio Ferrari, more than a century ago, foresaw the great potential of this land as a producer of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes ideal for bottle fermented sparkling wines. The alternation of warm days and cooler nights, indeed, gives the grapes a peculiar and varied range of flavours; this is the real secret of elegant and complex sparkling wines. For our part, due to climate change, we continue to raise the elevation of our vineyards and we work on new agricultural techniques in order to maintain the unmistakable characteristics of our Trentodoc.

## **FSE: What is the ‘secret’ of your success?**

LUNELLI: Our territory is our greatest ally. We live in a region that is perfect for the production of high quality sparkling wines. This great resource, however, needs to be managed in the best way possible and I believe that our main strength is that Ferrari is a family business. This manifests as a great passion in our work and a long term vision in all of our choices. We have been able to be faithful to Giulio Ferrari's philosophy of more than a hundred years ago: devotion to this territory and research of excellence in every stage of the supply chain, from the vineyard to the table. Moreover, another Ferrari secret consists of being a great ambassador of the Italian Art of Living around the world: with natural elegance, they represent the innate taste of beauty and love for life that is so typically Italian.

## **FSE: Do you drink wine at home and if so, which ones?**

LUNELLI: I usually drink at home and of course I love all our wines; depending on the occasion I alternate our sparkling wines with the great red wines we produce in our Tenute Lunelli wineries, and above all, the Montefalco Sagrantino “Carapace” of our winery in the Umbrian region.

## **FSE: You are the third generation of your family in the wine business. Do you have children who will carry on that tradition?**

LUNELLI: The fourth generation of Lunelli Family is still very young. I have a eleven year old daughter and I would like to pass down my passion for wine making to her as my parents did for me. I think the wine industry still allows you to stay in contact with nature while sharing important human and ethical values. If she ever decides not to enter into the family business I hope that wine will always be associated with joyful moments in her life!