

Wine will be the star at EXPO

Spirito diVino interviewed Diana Bracco, president of the 2015 Milan Universal Exposition and section Commissioner General for the Italian Pavilion. This world event will consecrate Italy's nectar of Bacchus

by Enzo Rizzo

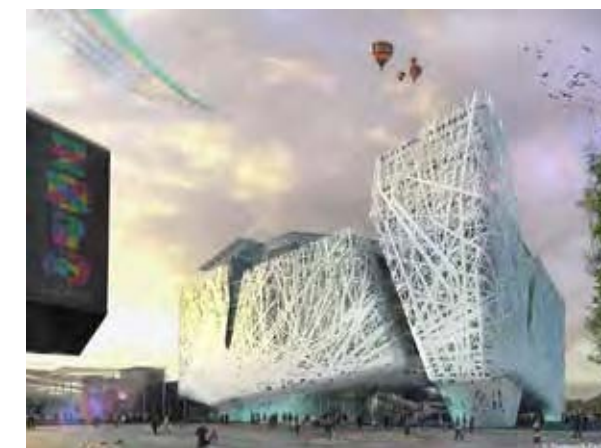
Diana Bracco is President and CEO of Bracco, a multinational group that operates in the healthcare sector with consolidated sales of over 1.1 billion euro, of which approximately 75% from foreign markets, and more than 3,200 employees. Through its subsidiary Bracco Imaging, it is an international leader in diagnostic imaging and is present in more than 90 countries. Diana Bracco graduated in Chemistry from the University of Pavia, where she also received an Honorary Degree in Pharmacy in 2001. Following in her family's footsteps, Diana Bracco has held several positions in the Confindustria system, and is currently Vice President of Research and Innovation in Confindustria. She is also President of Expo 2015 SpA, and Section Commissioner General for the Italian Pavilion at Expo 2015. Despite her efforts for her company and the Expo, Diana Bracco has not neglected her great passions. "Whenever I can", she says, "I try to find the time to visit an art exhibition or go to a concert in La Scala or in Salzburg". Diana Bracco also decided to place these passions at the centre of the family Foundation, which was established to promote art, science and culture, and to pass their values on to the coming generations. Wine is a more recent passion, and one in which her

husband played a decisive role. Roberto De Silva was a zealous wine producer, and with his wife Diana he shared his love for a small winemaking company named "Botolo".

Question Unesco has recently declared the winemaking districts of Piedmont a World Heritage Site. Important recognition, especially in view of Expo 2015, whose theme is "Nourishing the planet, Energy for life"...

Answer Unesco's listing the grape-cultivating regions of Langhe and Monferrato among world heritage sites is an extraordinary satisfaction for us. It is a success for the whole of Italy that must be exploited to the full, beginning with the Universal Exposition in Milan in 2015, where wine will receive fitting valorization. For me, it is a double satisfaction, because that is the area where my

husband, Roberto De Silva, originally from Casale Monferrato, created "Botolo", a small, family-run winery that produces Barbera, Moscato, Chardonnay, Dolcetto, Brachetto and Cortese. **Q.** What is the secret of Italian wine? **A.** The high quality of our wine comes from judiciousness and passion for the work, but nature lends us a hand, too: the vines are cultivated on sunny hillsides with precise orientation that favours the best possible ripening of the grapes. The "Botolo" experience is



This portrait by photographer and artist Bob Krieger captures all the elegant femininity of Diana Bracco, president of Expo 2015 and president and chief executive officer of Bracco, a multinational operating in the healthcare sector. Right, the edifice of the Italian Pavilion at the 2015 Milan Universal Exposition, created by Nemesi & Partners to represent an urban forest (www.expo2015.org).

Bob Krieger



the result of our love of the history, the culture and the beauty of these lands, where wine production merges with the poetic quality of the places. Not surprisingly, there is an excerpt in the UNESCO Standing Committee's justification that struck me particularly: Langhe and Monferrato are mentioned as "exceptional examples of man's interaction with the environment whose great aesthetic qualities embody the archetype of European winemaking". And besides, the 'culture' of a population arises and derives precisely from its 'cultivation': hence, from its bond with the soil, from which it draws lymph and sense. The Italian landscape is inseparably linked to our agricultural tradition, and in particular to the vineyards dotted all over our extraordinary peninsula, which make the Italian wine sector unique in terms of variety and quality.

Q. How do you plan to promote Italian wine in the Expo, which will bring more than 20 million visitors to Milan between 1 May and 30 October 2015?

A. Thanks to the support of the Minister for Agriculture Maurizio Martina, wine will occupy a prominent place at the heart of the Italian Pavilion: a beautiful installation by Italo Rota which will evocatively reveal the very special relationship between man and the soil that produces Italian wine. This is a strategic decision that will permit the best possible valorization of this product, which is so important for our exports and for our nation's overall image. We

are expecting more than 100 Heads of State and Government in the Italian Pavilion, with 500 official delegations, trade missions, and B2B encounters. It is a great honour for us that the European Union has decided to locate its exhibition space in the Italian Pavilion a short distance from where Italian wine will be promoted, and it is a further opportunity for Cardo Street to attract interest. The space given over to wine will be a stupendous tableau narrating Italian winemaking, which envisages the construction of an educational and creative trail. This will be very different to the standard trade fair model, and will ensure the presence and active participation of everyone. In fact, I am sure that, together with the big exhibition of the Regions and the Territories in Palazzo Italia, and the one on the Food of Desire, the wine space will be the highlight of the entire Italian Pavilion.

Q. Can you tell us something more about this Italian Pavilion?

A. Like in all Expositions, the heart of the exhibition site, which will cover a surface area in the region of one million square metres, will be the Pavilion of the host country; that is Casa Italia, the departure point for a new Grand Tour, a journey through the landscape, culture, and the excellent food and wine of our country. Remember, firstly, that our Pavilion, designed by Nemesi & Partners in the shape of a nest that recalls an urban forest, is something that, after the Expo, will be passed on to the terri-

The concept is the nursery, our targets are the coming generations



Here above, Diana Bracco photographed with children at the Milan Triennale presentation of the exhibition trail of the Italian Pavilion at Expo 2015: the letters behind read 'Orgoglio Italia' (Italian Pride), the slogan paired with the pavilion's logo. Adjoining page, Diana Bracco in the cellar of Il Botolo, a winery in Piedmont created by Diana Bracco's husband, Roberto De Silva.



Expo is a tool for restoring Italian citizens' pride in their nation

tory, constructed along Cardo, the paved avenue that intersects with Decumano and runs from the Open Theatre to the Lake Arena. Incidentally, in the very centre of the lake stands the Tree of Life, an interactive 35-metre-high structure in wood and steel. An iconic figure, which is strongly Italian and at the same time present in many cultures and also in cinematic imagery; apart from accommodating many of the events in the Pavilion's full schedule, the Tree will change as the hours pass, creating an extraordinary interactive show of lights, colours and music. As I often say, we want our visitors to experience the so-called "Wow factor": my ambition is for there to be a longer queue of visitors for Palazzo Italia than the ones for the other beautiful Pavilions that we are in friendly competition with, and longer even than the queue for the Italian Pavilion in Shanghai, which received more visitors than any other Pavilion, apart from the Chinese one. Speaking of visitors, let me emphasize that with Expo – and in particular with the Italian Pavilion – we have a unique opportunity to highlight the beauty of Italy. We will ensure that anyone coming to visit the Expo from China, a nation that will have some three Pavilions, will also tour the rest of our fine land, and hopefully be persuaded to return. The other major strategic objective we want to reach, thanks to the showcase of the Italian Pavilion, is managing to increase the export quota of

our great Agri-food chains. We have a network of districts and quality products, but we are often not as proficient at promoting them abroad as they would deserve.

Q. What is the concept of the Italian Pavilion?

A. Our targets are the coming generations, and in fact, the concept that we chose together with the Artistic Director Marco Balich is that of the 'nursery': that is, a space in which to bring forth young talent and educate the next generations in correct nutrition. Speaking of education, the Italian Pavilion is proud to be promoting the training project for the Chinese sommeliers, who served us some great Italian crus. We have already begun looking for financing partners, starting with the Italian Government and the Ca' Foscari University in Venice, which has already made a group of young people available to operate as cultural mediators with the students.

Q. The Italian Pavilion logo is dedicated to Pride...

A. Yes, because we want to make the Expo, and our Pavilion in particular, a powerful tool for restoring Italian citizens' pride in their nation, starting with the youngest ones. We must rediscover pride in our know-how, and show the world that "better Italy" of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Because the past is not enough, and now is the time to recapture our future. For this reason we decided to put the 'Italian Pride' slogan alongside the logo of our Pavilion. 🍷

Top of page, Diana Bracco: despite strenuous work for her company and the Expo, she is not one to neglect her grand passions, "Whenever I can, I try to find time to visit an art exhibition or go to a concert at La Scala or in Salzburg", she explains. Right, the vines of Il Botolo, which yield wines such as Barbera, Moscato, Chardonnay, Dolcetto, Brachetto and Cortese (www.ilbotolo.net).

