



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The President of Italy's Council of Ministers has announced the induction of Luca Paschina, winemaker and general manager of Barboursville Vineyards, into the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, with the rank of Commendatore. The Order, originating in 1951, is modern Italy's recognition of the highest distinction in occupations which reflect honor upon the nation and the Italian people, in cultural pursuits, the economy, public service, the military, philanthropy or humanitarian activities. His election took place June 2nd, the anniversary of the founding of the Republic, and will be conferred at ceremonies at the Embassy in Washington or in Rome, later this year.

The government of Italy's bestowal of this designation on Luca Paschina is an expression of respect for international recognition he has won, for leadership in developing the wine estate of Barboursville Vineyards with the Zonin family, of Veneto. Winning countless regional prizes, 4 statewide Governor's Cups, and incomparable numbers of Gold Medals in international competitions; achieving stunning consistency of excellence especially in the estate's masterpiece, Octagon; and being cited both by the James Beard Foundation and the leading industry periodical as one of the 25 most significant wine professionals in North America, Luca Paschina has established Barboursville as the "standard," as Virginia's own wine board once remarked, for wines of this region.

The Order of Merit carries a more fundamental recognition in two unique respects. First, it represents the embrace of a different region, so distant from its ancient Italian cradle, for excellence which brings luster to the Italian patrimony of wine, itself. In addition, it is an expression of gratitude, for bringing distinction to a pursuit Italy embraces with intense filial pride.

Inevitably, Paschina immediately credits his winemaker father and both sides of his family in his home province of Piemonte, his first-class training at Italy's leading wine academy, Istituto Umberto I, and the peerless technical resources and passion of Italy's largest family wine growing enterprise, Casa Vinicola Zonin, for their inspiration and support. "I am fortunate to have been chosen at exactly the right time in my career and in viticultural history, to pursue this endeavor in Virginia. Placed in a growing region of no precedents and no rules for success, beyond the traditions I inherited, my colleagues and I were free to create a new and exemplary image of our heritage."

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