

## UNCORKED: MARIA SABRINA TEDESCHI

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Maria Sabrina Tedeschi is the driving force behind one of the historic wine estates in Valpolicella Classico in northern Italy. Famed for producing Valpolicella, Amarone and Recioto, the winery has three vineyards in Monte Olmi, the latest purchased by the Tedeschi family in 2006. Maria Sabrina Tedeschi, together with her sister Antonietta and brother Riccardo, runs the family winery with her father. The heiress speaks to dbHK about the best advice she ever got from a Charlie Chaplin quote and her treasured bottle of Capitel Monte Olmi 1964 that she would save at all costs.



### What vintage are you?

1966...It was a bad vintage for Valpolicella, and as a result I don't have a single bottle from my land or my family's winery to celebrate my special vintage anniversary!

### What bottle sparked your love of wine?

The first wine I ever sipped was one made by my father, a Recioto, a wine usually opened at birthday parties. From when I was very young, I was allowed to have a small sip of wine, and all of us youngsters loved its sweet taste. The older I got, the more my taste matured and my sips expanded to other wines. I remember visiting a winery in Burgundy during my Erasmus program (Confuron et fils) and a 1966 vintage (my vintage and at that time it was 24 years old) of Pinot Noir was opened. I still have the cork. It doesn't matter how great the wine was, it's also about the emotion you can get from it.

### What would you be as a wine?

I would be an elegant wine of great character...Every day life has a way of making you tougher and more concrete... Wine, on the other hand, should make you dream and remember all the beautiful moments in your life, family and work.

### Where are you happiest?

I love to travel and discover new countries and new cultures. Work takes me to new places often, and that makes me happy. Traveling for work doesn't always allow cultural immersion, but it does allow me to get to know the lives of the people, of the place you are visiting and to discover different customs, particularly the many different ways people establish human to human contact.

### What's your greatest vice?

I am stubborn...and work too much, and often take on too many commitments. However, I am also generous, and I try to make myself available for non work related endeavours.

### Best advice you ever got?

They'll always criticise you, speak badly of you, it'll be hard to meet someone who will like you as you are, so live, do what your heart tells you to do. Life is like a play that does not allow testing. So sing, cry, dance, laugh and live intensely every day of your life, before the curtain closes and the piece ends with no applause. – Charlie Chaplin

### Your cellar's underwater, which bottle would you dive in and save?

A bottle of Capitel Monte Olmi 1964 because it represents the beginning of a new season for my family. My father began production of this cru by selecting the grapes from the Monte Olmi vineyard and putting the information on the label. From then on he established the family's production style and introduced other crus from our winery.

### What's the best and worst thing about the wine business?

At work I most often look at things in a positive light. As someone who, as one of my university professors put, was born in a fermenter, I have always had this passion that was imbued in me by my parents. It is exciting to invest in a vineyard, in one's own land, to vinify a new vintage that fills the winery with perfume. Passion has taught my siblings and me the patience to know how to wait for results from the vine, the fermentation, and the ageing in wood.

The hard part: without a doubt the hardest part is when nature manages to destroy the harvest. It creates a sense of true anguish in us to see our work and hopes crushed and washed away in a few minutes of stormy weather, but we have learned to endure this.

### What's on your wine bucket list?

It is hard to make a finite list...undoubtedly a wine from Burgundy, why not? A Domaine Romanée-Conti Grand Echezeaux, a Riesling from Alsace, an Amarone from one of the great vintages, but also one of the great Barolos that has given Italy a great name.

### Who would you invite to your dream dinner party?

Jack Nicholson, a great, crazy guy, or Robbie Williams, another crazy guy, or Matthew McConaughey – surely one of them would be free to join us!

### Personal satisfaction (Parker points – out of 100)?

I reach personal satisfaction when – beyond reaching some kind of point level – I give consumers great satisfaction and I succeed in making a change that makes my wine great and recognised by the world. Being rewarded with points by a magazine serves to echo our success, however, we don't want to wander too far from our story and tradition.

### Which wine would you like served at your funeral?

Oh dear Lord, that's a tough question. I wouldn't leave out any type. Certainly sparkling wine, but also Amarone, so red wine of great structure so that everyone could celebrate my passing in the manner in which they had come to know me.