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Farewell to Michele Chiarlo: An Advocate of Nizza and an Icon of Italian Wine in the World.

The Man Who Brought Piedmont to the World

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The Italian wine world recently bid farewell to a luminary figure, Michele Chiarlo, who passed away at the age of 88 in his residence in Calamandrana. Known for his pivotal role in the development of the Nizza appellation and as a global ambassador for Italian wines, Chiarlo's legacy is etched deeply in the history and culture of winemaking.

Michele Chiarlo was born on May 25, 1935, into a family of grape growers. He pursued his passion for enology by attending the Scuola Enologica in Alba, where he rubbed shoulders with future Italian winemaking legends such as Pietro Ratti, Ezio Rivella, Franco Ziliani, Giuliano Noè, and Giacomo Tachis. At 23, Chiarlo embarked on his entrepreneurial journey, starting a bottling business with his sister while managing the family's farm and vineyards. His dedication to the Piedmontese wine tradition was evident in his meticulous selection and acquisition of promising crus in Langhe, Monferrato, and Gavi.

Chiarlo's journey was marked by not only business acumen but also a deep commitment to enhancing the value of the local territory. This included acquiring and renovating Cerequio, a hamlet in La Morra, in 1988 and opening the Palás Cerequio resort. In 1989, he took on the challenging task of creating the first terraced vineyard on the steep slopes of Cannubi hill, thereby combating erosion and hydrogeological instability.

A visionary for the Asti region, Chiarlo was a firm believer in collaboration and teamwork. He played a pivotal role in elevating the prestige of the Barbera grape, serving as the first President of the Associazione dei Produttori del Nizza DOCG. From the mid-1960s, he was among the first Piedmontese producers to venture into international markets, successfully introducing Italian wines to Northern Europe and America.

Throughout his career, Chiarlo held various influential positions, including President of the Consorzio della Barbera d'Asti e Vini del Monferrato in the 1980s and being a founding member of the Consorzio Grandi Vini and the Istituto Grandi Marchi. These organizations played crucial roles in promoting high-quality Italian wines globally.

In 1995, Chiarlo's passion for wine led him to acquire Tenuta La Court in Castelnuovo Calcea. He saw wine as more than just a beverage; it was a synthesis of history, culture, art, tradition, and conviviality, deeply rooted in the territory. This vision culminated in the creation of Art Park La Court in 2003, the first of its kind, an open-air museum amidst vineyards, showcasing works by renowned artists.

Michele Chiarlo is survived by his wife Giuseppina and sons Alberto and Stefano, who have been integral to the family business. The Chiarlo family has expressed gratitude to those who accompanied Michele on his remarkable journey and requests charitable donations to the AIRC - Foundation for Cancer Research in lieu of flowers.

Chiarlo's passing marks the end of an era in Italian winemaking, but his influence and contributions will continue to shape the industry for generations to come.