



ZENATO®

Pubblicazione: Wine Spectator

Luogo: web

Data: 7 novembre 2016

Wine Spectator

Robert Camuto: Letter From Europe

Acting Out

Wine funnyman Charlie Arturaola brings Italian wine stars to the screen



Photo by Courtesy of The Duel of Wine

There are three kinds of wine films these days: documentaries on the wine world, dramas set amid the vines and Charlie movies.

Charlie Arturaola, a charismatic Miami-based sommelier, is starring in his second feature film by Argentinean filmmaker Nicolás Carreras. *The Duel of Wine*, now making the rounds of international film festivals, was shot in some of Italy's most evocative cities and wine regions, from Piedmont and the Veneto to Umbria and Sardinia.

The film is a madcap blend of farcical comedy and emotion, wine tasting and infomercial, featuring cameos of winemakers and chefs playing themselves. Among them are the naturally comic Marco Caprai of Montefalco's Arnaldo Caprai, the elegant Nadia Zenato of Valpolicella's Zenato, the reserved Riccardo Illy of Brunello di Montalcino's Mastrojanni, members of the Accademia del Barolo and master chefs Gianfranco Vissani of Casa Vissani in Umbria and Jean-François Rouquette of Pur' at the Park Hyatt Paris-Vendôme.

"We're showing some of my favorite wine regions," says Arturaola, 55, on a film-tour swing through Northern Italy. "It is the first time this many Italian wine families got together to make a film."

A native of Uruguay who speaks five languages, Arturaola is an expressive bear of a man with a mane of gray locks, a silver goatee and an infectious smile. "An Italian couldn't do this project," he says, "because they [Italian wine families] don't all get along."

At times, *The Duel of Wine* can seem contrived as the action bounces among *terroirs*, detouring into Spain's Basque Country and Rioja. Arturaola and the film's producer, Lino Pujia, tailored the script to feature the wine producers who sponsored the project.

"Our funding was all product placement—the American way!" laughs Pujia, 50. "We had to create a story where we use all these people in different roles. But we wanted to make it true, so Caprai plays Caprai, Zenato plays Zenato"

The Duel of Wine is a sequel to Arturaola's and Carreras' 2010 *El Camino del Vino (The Ways of Wine)*, in which a famous international sommelier named Charlie Arturaola mysteriously loses his ability to taste. To rediscover his palate, he makes a wine pilgrimage through Mendoza, Argentina.

As *The Duel of Wine* opens, Charlie's wine career is over, and he is driving a taxi in Miami. But, he discovers, his palate is back at levels so keen he can not only identify grapes, region and vintage from a sip of wine, he can also recount the weather on the day of the harvest.

While his wife (in real life and film), wine consultant Pandora Anwyl, becomes agent to star sommelier Luca Gardini (the Italian named 2010's Best Sommelier in the World by the Worldwide Sommelier Association), Charlie must trick his way into the ultimate fictional wine taste-off, called the Duel of Wine, in Italy, Paris and New York.

At first, Charlie uses his friend and fellow cab driver with swarthy good looks, Lino Pujia (played by the producer), as a stand-in. Deploying a phone and earpiece, he coaches Pujia through public tastings.

But when the ruse is exposed, Charlie must try a different ploy to enroll anonymously in the Duel of Wine, disguising himself as a Zorro-like "Mysterious Count."

For Arturaola—who grew up around his father's bar, travelled around Europe as a young man and landed his first service job as a wine waiter on a cruise-ship line in Venice—big-screen comedy and drama are ways to make wine appreciation more accessible.

"A 95-minute film about wine tasting can be very dull," he says. "So we tweaked it."

"The last scene is like a bullfight. You know that somebody is going to be bleeding," he adds. "A lot of people cry at the end."

For now, Arturaola, who works as a consultant to North American importers and hotel chains, seems to have found a niche in film. He and Pujia are contemplating a third movie, bringing together China and Spain. "The Chinese and Russian mafias are faking European wine, and Charlie becomes a wine spy," Pujia says of the concept.

Arturaola is already licking his chops at the possibilities. "I love Chinese food," he says. "It's such a challenge for anyone who has a palate. You can play with a lot of different angles."