

THE PROUST Q&A: ALBERTO ANTONINI

7th March, 2014 by Lucy Shaw

Tuscan wine consultant Alberto Antonini has a 30-strong portfolio spread across Italy, the US, Canada, Armenia, Australia, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. He aims to help clients “free their mind from the French recipe which has colonised the world in the last 40 years”. Uninterested in chasing 100-point scores, Antonini seeks to create wines with character and a sense of place. He has formed a tag team with Chilean “terroirist” Pedro Parra, who is involved with over half of Antonini’s global consultancy projects. He lives in Tuscany with his wife and three children.



What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Christmas day with my family and relatives at home in Tuscany.

What is your greatest fear?

Death, because I like life so much.

Who do you most admire?

American jazz tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins.

What is your greatest extravagance?

Spending money on my two greatest passions in life: wine and vinyl. When I'm in a wine or a record shop, I turn into a kid in a candy store and have an urge to buy up the whole place – I've gotten close sometimes.

What is your current state of mind?

Happy and focused.

What is the quality you most like in a woman?

Femininity and honesty.

What or who is the greatest love of your life?

My wife Alessandra and our three children: Angelica, Margherita and Carlo.

When and where were you happiest?

At the births of my three children, who were all born in Empoli, Tuscany.

Which talent would you most like to have?

I'd love to be able to play the trumpet like Miles Davis.

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

I'd like to make more time for my family and friends.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Thanks to wine, I've been lucky enough to know a lot of the world – travelling to amazing places and meeting interesting people of different cultures. It's made me rich in experiences, which I consider an achievement.

Where would you most like to live?

Where I was born, raised and still live – Tuscany.

What is your most treasured possession?

My vinyl collection.

What is your most marked characteristic?

I never give up, especially when things seem impossible!

Who are your favourite writers?

Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi, American novelist Jack Kerouac and French psychoanalyst Jaques Lacan.

Who is your hero of fiction?

Anyone played by Robert De Niro.

What is it that you most dislike?

Passionless people.

What is your greatest regret?

Not having been in San Francisco during the “Summer of Love” in 1967.

What is your motto?

Do what you love, it doesn't matter what it is.

Who would be your ideal dinner party guests and what wines would you serve them?

It would be a mixed bunch – I'd invite American singer-songwriter Grace Slick, film director Woody Allen and former Soviet statesman Mikhail Gorbachev and would serve them Barolo Monfortino Riserva 1988 and Altos Las Hormigas Malbec Reserve 2011, ending with the sublime Soldera Brunello di Montalcino Riserva 1983.