

From the Fine Wine Geek. This document can be found here:

<http://www.finewinegeek.com/rinaldig/Angelo-Gaja-on-Beppe-Rinaldi.pdf>

Below is a translation of an article that appeared in the Milan daily newspaper *Il Corriere* which can be found here:

[https://cucina.corriere.it/divini/18\\_settembre\\_04/gaja-mie-anni-beppe-rinaldi-che-non-volevo-chiamare-citrico-f1fa5412-b03f-11e8-943d-6f0a93576229.shtml](https://cucina.corriere.it/divini/18_settembre_04/gaja-mie-anni-beppe-rinaldi-che-non-volevo-chiamare-citrico-f1fa5412-b03f-11e8-943d-6f0a93576229.shtml)

I started with Google Translate, then did some editing, then asked my friend Ezio Biglieri for help. Please feel free to send any suggestions that you think would improve this translation. Comments in square brackets are those of the translators.

**Gaja: “My years with Beppe Rinaldi that I did not want to call Citrico”**

[Note: “Citrico” can be translated as “the citric or acerbic one”.]

by Luciano Ferraro

Angelo Gaja, with his speech [it is not clear if he said this or wrote it], tells of his years with Beppe Rinaldi, the Barolo producer who died on Sunday 2 September in his home-cum-winery in Barolo. A tribute by a vigneron to a vigneron.

With the admission of a lost battle: Angelo, the lord of Barbaresco, wanted Beppe to no longer be addressed with the nickname "Citrico". But that nickname, which indicated the ability to have ideas which also sting, was now part of the character of Beppe. So, a short time before his farewell, Rinaldi confessed to Gaja that he had decided not to have his nickname removed. As he would always do, he turned to Gaja calling him by his family name. Gaja explains his answer in this speech.

Speech [statement?] by Angelo Gaja: [unclear whether it was a written statement or a speech. My guess is “speech,” due to the fact that he mentions “today’s newspaper”]

When in January, *Il Corriere* [an Italian daily newspaper published in Milan] had reported that Beppe Rinaldi had become favorable to the extension of the Barolo production area to the town of Alba, I had thought it might not be true, that they were looking for a scoop. Petrini in today's newspaper “La Repubblica” still writes “his battle against the enlargement of the Barolo production area was one of the strongest representations of his thinking”. Instead it was all true, at that moment Beppe thought about it just that way. He was able to change his mind, with a genuine and honest spirit, which is a virtue of intelligent people.

In the second half of the 1990s I had been with him, [Teobaldo] Cappellano, and [Elio] Altare on the Board of the Barolo and Barbaresco Consortium. Disagreements would be at the heart of each meeting (they lasted until late at night, and almost invariably ended with nothing done), and upset all the participants. The decisions remained difficult to make, but their interventions forced us to think differently, to open our brains. Cappellano had ambitions to lead the Consortium, without success, Beppe remained in the Board for a few years, then left. In reality, the Consortia groups together very different producers, in terms of size, commercial strategies, and economic means. Adopting choices that satisfy everyone is impossible, and, even for the little that is eventually done, sharp arbitration skills are needed.

Thomases’ article, which by chance was published on the very day of Beppe’s death,

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was critical of Beppe's ideas, but far from negative: it contrasts logical thinking with an appeal to common sense and respect for identity values of an area of production that enjoys excess visibility. [We do not know what article he is referencing.]

Since we began interacting, Beppe would always call me by my family name: it was not just a form of respect, but also a nice way to tease me. There was no way to make him change. I always fought against those who called him "Citrico". It was a vaguely annoying nickname, not really accurate, that had been given to him by a student at the Enology school. Many times I tried to correct those present who called him "Citrico," reminding them that his name was instead "Beppe Rinaldi". No way. I saw him the last time in Monforte, July 19th, at the Horszowski auditorium on the occasion of Gilberto Gil's performance. He was sitting in a wheelchair and Marta tried to protect him from friends who wanted to take the opportunity to get closer and experience the joy of seeing him.

I approached him too, he was very lucid and still calling me by my family name, he asked me about the "gaiety" of my daughters [This is a play on words. "Gaio" means "gay" in the old sense of happy or light hearted (as in "Gay Nineties"). It has nothing to do with the more recent use of "gay" in English referring to homosexuality.] and the "gaietude" of our work [same as above]. Then, asking me to get closer, he told me that he too had repeatedly tried to impose the use of his real name, but others had continued to call him "Citrico" and in the end he had to surrender.

The message to me was: "Thank you, but you can give up as well". I never go to funerals, the clapping makes me very uncomfortable. Maybe there will be an opportunity to meet with his daughters, certainly my daughters will meet his.