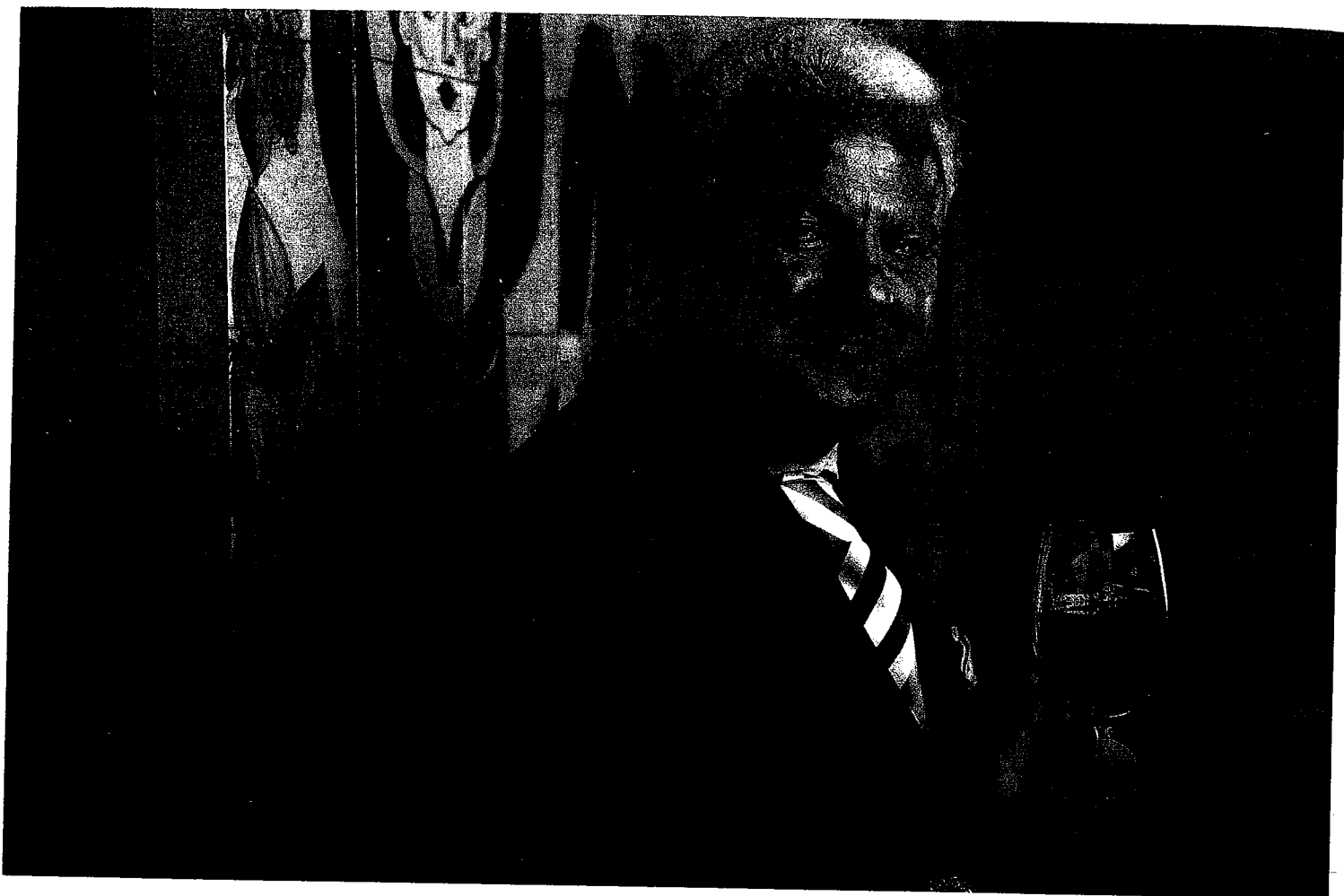


A BOLD PALETTE



Leonardo LoCascio, president and CEO of Winebow, Inc. An avid collector of Italian ceramics, LoCascio imported this 6x10 series of tiles featuring a harvest scene, now on display in his Montvale, NJ office.

On paper, Winebow, Inc.'s president and CEO Leonardo LoCascio might sound a tad... "Liberace." But in the flesh, those finely tailored Verona pink oxfords and Napoli silk ties splashed with vibrant yellow, turquoise and purple ultimately cut a stylish silhouette.

"When I was younger, somebody told me that a man should always wear something unexpected," says LoCascio, 59, slipping off the trendy turquoise reading glasses that pair nicely with his cuff links. "I took that to heart. I like to add color to my wardrobe. It cheers me up. Wearing dark colors or white can be very elegant, but you are limiting the possibilities of expressing yourself."

Like his portfolio of carefully chosen wines, LoCascio's attire is masterful. With Winebow's 2007 sales at \$184 million and sales for 2008 approaching \$200 million, it's no surprise that he's rarely spotted in the same thing twice.

As the head of Winebow, an importer and distributor of global wines and spirits, LoCascio has made his name importing premium Italian wines from the southern regions of Italy and searching for new vineyards beyond the obvious Tuscany, Piedmont and Veneto regions. For wine aficionados, a Leonardo LoCascio Selections label is the de facto seal of approval. His Winebow Brands International division has an ever-expanding portfolio of 65 Italian producers—mainly family-run vineyards—which makes for roughly 400 wines from Italy alone. Spain garners 20 producers in the division, many from the Basque country. And wine regions in Chile, Portugal, France, Germany, Austria, Israel, Argentina and South Africa are also part of Winebow's repertoire. LoCascio and Winebow's 430 staff members work with 4,000 wines around the world.

LoCascio doesn't limit his procurements to wine. There's a Bruichladdich whiskey from Islay, Scotland and a Pitu Cachaca from Brazil. In June 2008, Winebow announced its acquisition of the marketing savvy and innovative Click Wine Group, home to brands like France's Fat Bastard and Germany's Clean Slate. Add to that the two Tuscan vineyards he purchased in partnership with the Allegrini Family winemakers, Tesoro and Poggio San Polo, and another investment partnership with the Renacer vineyard in Mendoza, Argentina, and it's clear that LoCascio is a true mogul.

A maverick move for the Palermo, Sicily born connoisseur was his recent brand extension to Japan. With the help of his son, Claudio, who studied economics and Japanese in college, he'll be bringing select artisanal sakes to American menus. LoCascio predicts that soon, a bottle of sake will garner the same acclaim Italian wine did 28 years ago. And thanks to Winebow, sake, like wine, may become an accessible luxury—even during rough economic times. "Wine drinkers perhaps will not go out to dinner as much; they'll be eating at home. But I don't think they are going to give up having a good bottle of wine. It's an affordable luxury. We are well positioned because we have wines in every price point," continues LoCascio. "Winebow has grown through different economic cycles. We always found a way of adapting and growing the business."

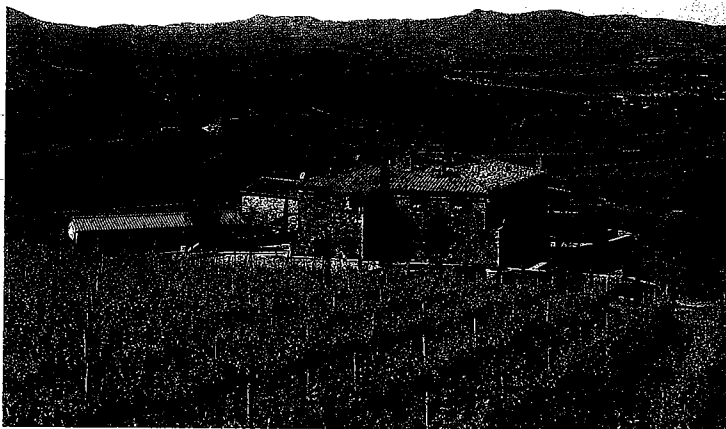
Adapting is second nature to LoCascio. He came to the U.S. to study journalism at Columbia before opting instead for a business degree from NYU, going on to earn his MBA at the University of Chicago. Getting his feet wet first in corporate finance at Rockwell International and then as a management consultant for McKinsey and Company, he was a VP at Citibank by 30—before he decided to shift gears. An avid collector of Italian ceramics, he contemplated importing them or Italian gourmet foods before eventually settling on wine and spirits.

Winebow has LoCascio traveling between his two Tuscan estates, his Central Park West apartment in Manhattan and his Saddle River, New Jersey home. He's also building a vacation getaway on the secluded Caribbean island of Anguilla. "My life is frenetic and I need balance. Anguilla is an understated wealth. People don't flaunt it. It's not Naples or Palm Beach."

Not that he has anything against expensive taste. LoCascio hired a Verona architect to design the NYC apartment. His Indonesian custom-made furniture was shipped first to Italy for upholstery and then onward to the States. Not one to forget details, there is a mirror lined with six colors of LED lights above his four-poster bed. "I have a sense of humor. What am I going to do when I lie in bed? Be sad?"



LoCascio has just as much enthusiasm when it comes to his business; he can rattle off details about any of his 4,000 wines. The Solosole Vermentino, for example: "An intense wine where the power comes from the grape, not the oak, fermented in stainless steel and not blended with any other varietals." He's also extremely passionate about Winebow's relationships with the family vineyards. His continued success can be attributed to searching out independent and family-owned wineries.



San Polo, in the Tuscan town of Montalcino, is a joint venture between LoCascio and Marilisa Allegrini, co-owner of the renowned Allegrini winery in Italy's Veneto region.

At the Zardetto family winery, patriarch Pino produces a light, clean prosecco. Pino's now in his seventies, so LoCascio has spent the last decade working with son Fabio. And now Fabio's son Filippo is entering the business. "We don't have a contract with these people. I feel that the handshake, the connection and the relationship are worth a lot more. It's inconceivable for us to work with another prosecco and its inconceivable for them to work with another importer in the U.S."

LoCascio is excited to welcome the youngest of his own four children into the business. "It's an interesting dynamic for me to work with my son Claudio now, after working with all these families. People tend to stay involved too long, making every decision, when at some point the kids will run the business. You have to train them; let them make their own mistakes. I am determined to do that if my son stays in the business. To let him become his own person as opposed to cloning him into some younger version of what I like and what I do."

"I'd like to be able step back from the day-to-day running of this business and act as an ambassador," LoCascio concludes. "I spend a lot of time in board meetings and I get hundreds of e-mails a day. I'd like to get to the point where I can be out with my suppliers and customers. If I can do that, I don't see a need to retire."