



GIACOMO CASANOVA

Castello di Spessa in Capriva del Friuli is inseparably linked to the fascinating figure of **Giacomo Casanova** (1725-1798), one of its most eminent guests.

Even though he is universally known for his skills as a seducer, Casanova was above all a distinguished representative of 18th century culture and an inspired literate.

Giacomo Casanova, Knight of Seingalt: a brilliant man who demonstrated an "astonishing multilateralism for us modern people", as Hermann Hesse said about him. Therefore, not only a renowned lover, adventurer, spy of the Venetian Inquisition, but also and firstly a multifaceted and cosmopolitan intellectual who wrote 43 works, translated Homer and invented several different literary genres.

Giacomo Casanova met **Count Luigi Torriani** during a French comedy performance held in the mansion of the Baron of Königsbrunn in Trieste. On that occasion the Count invited him to spend some weeks in autumn in his country mansion in Spessa, six miles away from Gorizia. Casanova accepted and in the **early September 1773 he arrived in Spessa** and stayed there for about two months.

The prominent Venetian dedicated several pages of "**Storia della mia vita**" (History of my life), his renowned memoirs, to his stay in Spessa. Among many things, he wrote that the count's estate mainly consisted in his **superb vineyards which surrounded the castle** and produced "an excellent wine". The quietness of country life enabled Casanova to devote himself to his studies and writings and to conclude *Istoria delle turbolenze della Polonia* (History of the Troubles in Poland) that was published in the following year in Gorizia by the publisher Valerio de Valeri.

Not even in Spessa was Casanova's fame as a seducer proven wrong. Sgualda, a young widow in service with the Count, was in the good graces of the prominent suitor, who described her as "in love and as mild as a lamb, a very rare feature for Friulian peasant girls". They met clandestinely, night after night: Sgualda would arrive at midnight in Casanova's room, without being seen, and she would leave at dawn. But the secrecy of their affair was just an illusion. One morning, apparently the same as many others, Sgualda left Casanova's room, and as soon as she had closed the door, he heard a terrifying scream. He re-opened the door and he witnessed a scene that was by far more than deplorable: the Count was bludgeoning Sgualda, grasping her by her dress. Torriani was the girl's sworn enemy because she had always denied him, although he had been harassing her since when her husband was still alive. Casanova's reaction was immediate: still wearing his nightgown, he pounced on Torriani, he grabbed him by his throat nearly strangling him and with the same stick that the Count had just used to beat Sgualda, he started beating him and obliged him to run away.

This episode, added to the lack of kindness of the Count on other occasions, persuaded Casanova to leave the castle. Later he lived in Gorizia and Trieste for more than one year, whilst waiting for pardon from Venice (where he was under investigation by the Inquisition).

To honor Giacomo Casanova, a romantic literary walk has been created in the Historic Park of the Castle among centuries-old trees, arbours, balconies decorated with statues: 10 stages marked by wrought iron signs where quotes by Casanova on love, women, friendship and life are engraved.



GIACOMO CASANOVA CASTELLO DI SPESSA AWARD

Since 2003 the **Literary Award Giacomo Casanova Castello di Spessa** has been dedicated to the illustrious Venetian (www.premiocasanova.it).

The first seven editions have been dedicated to literature, and the acknowledgment went to the authors of "the greatest work inspired by the values of freedom, tolerance and openness to other cultures".

THE WINNERS OF THE GIACOMO CASANOVA LITERARY AWARD (2003-2009)

- 2003 - Magdi Allam - *Saddam*, pub. Mondadori
- 2004 - Antonia Arslan - *La masseria delle allodole*, pub. Rizzoli
- 2005 - Patrizia Bisi - *Daimon*, pub. Einaudi
- 2006 - Anna Maria Mori - *Nata in Istria*, pub. Rizzoli
- 2007 - Francesca d'Aloja - *Il sogno cattivo*, pub. Mondadori
- 2008 - Giovanni Bianconi - *Eseguendo la sentenza*, pub. Einaudi
- 2009 - Andrea Vitali - *Almeno il cappello*, pub. Garzanti

In 2010 and in 2011 the Giacomo Casanova Award has been awarded to the "**most seductive scene in the Italian cinema**", as conceived by Franco Zanetti. As Roland Barthes said: "Seduction is the skill to capture you and take you away with them. One can seduce with the look, with the body, with the voice. With movement and with immobility. One can be seduced by a person, by an object, by a sound, by an image, by a colour, by a detail, by a flavour. By a dress or by a perfume. Maybe one can even be seduced by an obsession". The artistic director was the film critic Gianni Canova, Dean of the Faculty of Communication, Public Relations and Advertising of the University Iulm in Milan, and he used to select the 10 scenes in competition. The price is conferred every year at the beginning of July, during an evening complexly devoted to seduction, among food, wines, suggestive atmospheres. On those two edition dedicated to cinema there was also the screening of the 10 finalist scenes on the façade of the castle, and the technical jury was composed by: Natalia Aspesi, Paola Jacobbi, Erica Arosio, Giuseppe Longo, Gianni Canova and Gianluca Zappoli and the popular jury, who was consulted through MyMovies (the main Italian cinema website).

THE WINNERS OF THE GIACOMO CASANOVA CINEMA AWARD

- 2010 - *Giulia non esce la sera* by Giuseppe Piccioni
Premio Casanova according to the public: *Baaria* by Giuseppe Tornatore
- 2011 - *Io sono l'amore* by Luca Guadagnino
Premio Casanova according to the public: *Mine vaganti* by Ferzan Ozpetek

THE WINNERS OF THE GIACOMO CASANOVA AWARD

- In **2012** the Giacomo Casanova Award has been dedicated to **Music** and was conferred to the lyric singer Daniela Barcellona.
- In **2013** the Giacomo Casanova Award has been dedicated to **Theatre** and was conferred to the theatre director and writer Giorgio Pressburger.
- In **2014** Giacomo Casanova Award has been dedicated to **Music** and was conferred to the musicologist and music critic born in Gorice Quirino Principe.



Since **2015**, Giacomo Casanova Award is a tribute to the Friuli Venezia Giulia and is assigned to a character who has brought to the world the image and values.

In **2015** he was awarded to Giannola Nonino, founder of the eponymous distillery known worldwide that has enhanced the image of Friuli around the world.

In **2016** it was awarded to Marco Simonit, the pruner rock, which brought the world the know-how of Friuli Venezia Giulia and has revolutionized the craft of lives.

In **2017**, the prize was given to Mario Luzzatto Fegiz, for bringing news readers closer to the "unknowing" music seductions, witnessing and spreading their strength and social impact.

In **2018** the prize was given to Andrea Segré, university professor, writer, promoter of visionary projects based on ecological sustainability and the circularity of the economy.

In **2019** it was assigned to the Friulian actor Giuseppe Battiston, for having returned characters, places and the feeling of Friuli Venezia Giulia through a personal stylistic figure, unmistakable and seductive, and for having often valued, with his interpretations, the healthy culture of wine.

In **2022** it was awarded to the conductor Hirofumi Yoshida, an artist who has always been committed to building a dialogue between people and cultures through music and art, in particular between East and West.

In **2023** it was awarded to Sonia Bergamasco, actress, director and multifaceted artist for her role as an ambassador of art and beauty in the world.

In **2024** it was awarded to Alessandro Marzo Magno, a Venetian journalist and historian who, among his writings, boasts the writing of a brilliant biography of Giacomo Casanova.

In some special editions the **Cavaliere di Seingalt Award** (Knight of Seingalt Award) has been conferred, a title that Casanova himself used. This initiative is linked to the literary contest and is aimed at awarding a many-sided man, of excellent culture and flexible art of living, the ideal elegant man of our times who deserves the appreciation of the world of women". The jury is made up by women only.

THE WINNERS OF PRIZE CAVALIERE DI SEINGALT

2004 - Ottavio Missoni

2005 - Luca Barbareschi

2006 - Giuseppe Pambieri

2007 - Gelasio Gaetani Lovatelli D'Aragona

2008 - Sebastiano Somma

2009 - Henri Chenot

2010 - Filippo Timi

2011 - Luca Dini

SOCIAL NETWORKS



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<https://www.whatsapp.com/channel/0029VaAHJxVGehERYaUqjq3h>



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