



Back in 1957 my father, Duilio Fiorini, gives life to “Il Fiorino” dairy. Since then we produce Tuscan Pecorino, sheep cheese, in Roccalbegna, a small town between the Maremma and mount Amiata.

Where everything started. My family comes from Casentino, a land with a long tradition in sheep's farming, and in the shepherd's footsteps begins the adventure of Fiorini family and of “Il Fiorino” dairy. Along the roads of transhumance, looking for the best pastures, from the mountains to the Maremma and vice versa, stories, experience and knowledge met and accumulated like a treasure. The map for this treasure was in the minds of those who had the ability to recognize it and make the most of it, starting a new story.

Origins. Our presence in Roccalbegna can be found since 1750, even although the first official document that certifies this change between migrant shepherds to residents is dated 1812, with the certificate of baptism of Francesco Fiorini. He was probably the first Fiorini that bought properties in Maremma and the first Fiorini that dedicated his life to sedentary sheep farming. In 1925 one of his descendant, Ferrero, married Caterina Pandolfi in Roccalbegna and increased the business opening a small shop in town, where he sold various items but also food.

Caterina Pandolfi, the woman for “Il Fiorino”. Caterina (the mother of Duilio) had a key role in the history of our family. My Grandmother worked as a shop assistant and she gained commercial experience buying and selling goods for the family shop. The product range was huge: from hardware to paint, up to the trade in sheep products, as wool, lambs and cheeses. She was sensitive, smart, and able to take advantage of the opportunities on the fly, and she dedicated these skills to the family and the company. She changed the course of our history, leading Il Fiorino to who we are today. Cacio di Caterina, one of our most famous cheese, is dedicated to her, and extended to all the women that had a precious role in dairy art.

The first place for Il Fiorino, in the heart of Roccalbegna. With the marriage between Caterina and Ferrero were born Fernando e Duilio, the one that had the courage and the intuition of building Il Fiorino in a wonderful place, where, however, there were difficulties, such as the lack of paved roads.

For example, in 1957 (the year of our foundation) the roads needed to reach the dairy in “Via del Moro 7”, in the heart of the town, were still dirt roads.

Overcoming all obstacles the company was born and starts to grow, thanks to Duilio's passion and dedication. The first boiler, preserved like an antique relic, today welcomes our guests in the entrance of the dairy, showing the year Il Fiorino was founded.

Step by step, with labor and passion you become great. The company grows and in 1962 it moves to Via Amiata 365, a comfortable "house and workshop", still inhabited today and still used today for the aging of the best of our pecorino cheese, given the freshness and constant humidity of the suggestive rocky ravines to which the house is leaning. It is the “house on the stone” both in a material and in a symbolic sense. Our most famous and renowned pecorino cheeses continue to come out of this cave, and this rock continues to support the house, which is also the depository of the values that we transfer, every day, in the company and in our products.

In 1989, after 17 years, we built a modern plant in locality Paiolaio, suited to the growing market needs that Il Fiorino faces. Just few hundreds of meters away from the cave, this factory represents a long journey if we look back to the story of our family company.

A path that is also a journey of human growth for those who have devoted their lives, with love and passion, for Il Fiorino and to the territory in which it was born and developed.

The Founder. The leader of this adventure is Duilio. He had the intuition to establish the dairy, he supported its grow and he led it, step by step, to a constantly evolving world. More than an entrepreneur with business acumen, my father was a man of labor, who loves to work and loves to surround himself with capable collaborators who are eager to learn and grow together with the company. “This is an house of work” were the first words he told to Simone when I presented him home. He transmitted to me and Simone the secret of his art and the humility with which to face each day. The journalist Stefano Bonilli, in one of the first edition of Gambero Rosso (the world's authority on Italian food, wine and travel) defined Duilio “the surly magician of Tuscan pecorino”. Six words that are worth more than a thousand books and capture Duilio's style and talent forever.

Forecast the future, before others do. My father, moreover, had the merit and the ability to see where others cannot see and he layed seeds that, over time, produced very important results. I am thinking, for example, at his commitment to the creation of the Consortium for the Protection of Pecorino Toscano DOP, of which he is a founding member. Or the desire, from the very beginning, to go beyond our territory, to bring our cheeses from the slopes of Mount Amiata to the most important grocery stores in various Italian cities. An old photo from the early 1960s shows the cheeses of Il Fiorino in a historic grocery store in “via della Panetteria” in Rome, behind the Quirinale (the official residence of the President of Italian Republic). Today our cheeses are in the best grocery stores all over the world, but we are very bound to that picture, a symbol representing

the philosophy of our company, always looking for quality, recognition of value and a relationship of trust and empathy with those who decide to buy our cheeses.

Passing the baton. Today, more than sixty years after the start of that adventure, my husband Simone Sargentoni and I carry on the family tradition with great passion. All the milk processing takes place inside the dairy and the whole process is handcrafted. Together with our cheesemakers, we take care of every detail of every stage of the cheesemaking process.

Tradition and innovation. For us, each wheel is unique, which is why each sheep's milk cheese is handled, followed and cared for as if it were to be the best cheese ever made. Even today, all the processes are done by hand, from the ricotta cheese taken by surfacing, to the salting, turning and brushing of the cheeses, all done rigorously by hand. The careful choice of raw materials is fundamental, starting with the sheep's milk, which is collected within a radius of thirty kilometres from our dairy. In the case of special cheeses, such as Marzolino d'Etruria or Riserva del Fondatore, Cacio di Caterina, Cacio di Venere and Grotta del Fiorini, the milk selection is even more rigorous. But we are not only selective about the milk. In order to make excellent cheeses, we cannot ignore any of the elements that determine their quality. We use raw materials from local or Tuscan companies, such as Volterra salt for salting, but also saffron, chilli pepper and truffles for some of our flavoured products that come from our region. Other ingredients come from world excellence, such as Genovese pesto from the Rossi company with which we have made a pecorino with Genovese pesto.

In many years of expertise in the art of cheese making we have acquired a vast know-how that we try to enhance every day, trying to keep up with the times and seizing new opportunities. Tradition and innovation, therefore, always at the service of product quality and excellence.

Cacio Marzolino and the link with the territory. The range of pecorino cheeses we produce, all made without the use of preservatives, includes all the Tuscan classics. Marzolino has been one of our first flagships, which we revived by renewing the ancient tradition of this cheese. Again, it was Duilio's intuition to bring this pecorino, known as 'the cheese of the Medici', back onto the tracks of history. Tradition states that Catherine of the Medici brought it to France, to Henry II's wedding, and gave it to the Pope during the Feast of St John of the Florentines. My father became part of this great history by resuming the tradition of our master cheesemakers. A bold move that turned out to be a winner, from all points of view.

A high quality pecorino cheese that is still very much appreciated, Marzolino has indelibly linked us to the territory. A bond that is one of our strengths and a key element to understand the philosophy and spirit behind our company.

Our cheeses. We travelled a long way from Marzolino onwards. Our products of excellence are: Riserva del Fondatore, Cacio di Caterina, Grotta del Fiorini, the classic Pecorino Semistagionato, Cacio Marzolino and many others. The Cacio di Venere, a pecorino with truffles made with the highest quality milk and white Bianchetto truffles from Tuscany, was recently added to the list of our cheeses. Each of them tells a story. There is the women's cheese, Cacio di Caterina, dedicated to my grandmother, Duilio's mother; there is Fior di Natura, made with vegetable rennet (a rennet that was already used by the Etruscans), an example of innovation that triumphed in many international competitions. Then there is the Riserva del Fondatore, dedicated to Duilio. A cheese that made us lose sleep over the desire, the passion and the madness we put into making it, but which has repaid us for the satisfaction it still gives us every day. Pecorino Toscano DOP is another great classic of our production. When we think of our cheeses, we like to stick to tradition, but at the same time we like to venture into less-travelled terrain in search of new products that meet the tastes of our customers and new trends. In this regard, we are referring to Fiorin Blu, a blue-veined cheese made from sheep's milk, which has only recently been launched but is already enjoying great success. Then there are our ricottas, the refined and lastly the flavoured pecorinos, which represent an interesting market niche today.

Where to find us. We market our references, in particular, through wholesalers and gourmet food shops, paying particular attention also to the top large-scale retail trade, both in Italy and worldwide. Each of our success partnerships is centred on the recognition of the value of our product: on the quality of the raw material, on the artisan nature of the processing, on the search for excellence at every stage of production. We don't want to sell out in pursuit of turnover, but we have partnerships that know how to give value to the product.

Il Fiorino in the world. Our pecorinos are sold all over the world. In the map of foreign presences we find the USA, Europe, especially in Spain, France, Belgium, England, Norway, Poland, Germany, Sweden and Denmark. Then there are new markets that are rich in opportunities, such as Australia and Japan. One of Il Fiorino's main ambassadors abroad is Pecorino Toscano DOP, which is highly appreciated, especially in its matured version. There are also markets that prefer particular types of cheese, such as Germany, where our "flavoured" pecorinos are very popular.

2017, a Golden Year. Every year in our history, for better or for worse, is a special year, but we will always carry 2017 in our hearts, for at least two reasons. The first is because we celebrated our 60th birthday with a party that we will always remember. Then, on 10th August, we received the 'Grifone d'oro', the highest honour awarded by our city, Grosseto, to companies and people who have made a significant contribution bringing prestige to the Maremma.

Il Fiorino Hall of Fame. Our cheeses have been awarded numerous prizes both domestically and internationally. Some of the most prestigious prizes include those obtained at the 2018 World

Cheese Awards in Bergen, Norway, where our cheeses were the absolute stars. We collected numerous medals including: two Super Gold for Pecorino Grotta del Fiorini and Riserva del Fondatore, which was also been awarded with “Best Italian Cheese” and the fifth “Best Cheese in the world”.

Riserva del Fondatore in 2013 gained also the first place at the World Cheese Award in Tours. In 2014 it has been awarded with a Super Gold and arrived second in the world in London; it gained a Super Gold in 2016, in Saint Sebastian, and two gold medals in London in 2017. In 2020 it received three stars at the British Great Taste. These awards fill us with pride because they represent an acknowledgement for our work, for our employees, our breeders and all those who collaborate with us, and finally for the Maremma.

Brand and Mission. Year after year, our Brand concept and mission continue to be the same: bond with the territory, identity, uniqueness, handcraft production.

Angela Lisetta Fiorini