

**Ciro Longobardo | Wine Director/Partner**

---

Owner **Ciro Longobardo**, a native of Naples, Italy, told his family at an early age that he would one day own his own restaurant. He graduated at the top of his class from **Hoteliere School** in Naples, pursuing an education focused on proper service techniques as well as the finer points of wine and spirits. After graduating, he moved to Switzerland where he honed his skills at many five-star hotels, including the world-renowned **Hotel Suvetta House**, **The Gstaad Palace**, **the Steigenberger**, **The Lucerne Palace** and the **Edenroc**.

After moving up the ranks through various restaurant and hotel positions in London, Germany, and Italy, he moved to the United States in 1996 and started working at Chicago's **Coco Pazzo** and **Coco Pazzo Café**. He quickly rose to the position of the Café's General Manager and was responsible for all aspects of the restaurant, from hiring and training a winning team to purchasing the restaurant's fine wines. His leadership, wine program and service focus helped **Coco Pazzo Café** achieve laudatory reviews by local media.

After five years of running **Coco Pazzo Café**, Longobardo was hired as an Italian wine specialist for wine importer **Direct Imports**. He was later drafted by **Empson USA**, a national wine distributor to serve as a national wine specialist. In 2008 he brought together his years of restaurant management experience with his in-depth knowledge of Italian wines by joining former colleague **Chef Tony Priolo** to launch **Piccolo Sogno**. Since the restaurant's opening, Longobardo has strived to foster a truly authentic Italian experience through his wine selection, offering a varied assemblage of wine that people drink every day in different regions, from Naples to Tuscany. Another key component of Longobardo's wine philosophy is value, ensuring that guests receive a balanced selection from more approachable options to rare finds.

**Piccolo Sogno** rapidly garnered acclaim both from patrons and critics alike, leading Longobardo and his partner, **Chef Tony Priolo**, to open their second restaurant, **Piccolo Sogno Due**, in 2012. Longobardo gains inspiration from the owners of wineries, learning their background stories and appreciating the families' hard work and perseverance for generations. Longobardo still considers himself a student of the craft, taking every opportunity to travel the globe, acquiring new knowledge and skills as he interacts with his contemporaries in the wine industry. Outside of the wine world, Longobardo continues his travels for pleasure, taking the opportunity to learn new languages and spend time with his family, including a set of twins.

