

Centoventi anni della Famiglia Nonino

SPIRITO di VINO

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(MIXOLOGY)

Amaro in its Quintessentia

By Elena Maffioli

One of the products that most represent the Italian style and there is no sumptuous meal that finishes without a good amaro. Born from the wisdom of alchemic and home pharmacopeia, the first among the amari we have knowledge about was made in 1300 as a medicine. The patient it was given to was so important that its use had a worldwide resonance. Arnaldo da Villanova, a Catalan alchemist, used an amaro for the first time to cure a renal colic attack that had hit Pope Boniface VIII. Thanks to this event the infusion of alcohol, herbs and roots for medical purposes spread in monasteries and abbeys, whereas the use of amari addressed to satisfy one's pleasures, especially of the senses, started officially at the court of Catherine de Medici, where delicious preparations were served to welcome the guests.

Straight or with ice today amaro remains an evergreen and it is trendy also in mixology, elected a base ingredient for before and after dinner cocktails. In Italy there are amari with a more balsamic and herbaceous taste or others that are spicier and with notes of citrous fruit, but it is sure that the tradition of amari is widely spread and that every region suggests different recipes, all to be discovered. Also in Friuli Venezia Giulia, the prestigious Nonino Distillery prepares one in particular, Amaro Nonino Quintessentia, obtained from the union of Antonio Nonino's ancient recipe and the experience in the art of distillation of the family.

It was 1897 when Orazio Nonino established in Ronchi di Percoto the premises of his distillery which, until then, had existed just as an itinerant still, assembled on wheels. Only later, in 1933, Antonio Nonino fulfilled his passion for the best Friulian traditions, preparing through the alchemic art infusions based on Grappa and herbs from Carnia. In 1984 this tradition was honored by Giannola and Benito Nonino with a creation unique in the world for its purity, it was *ÙE* (grapes in the language of Friuli), the grape distillate made distilling in a single operation the skin, the pulp and the juice of the grapes. A distillate that later was aged in Limousin, Nevers and ex-Sherry barriques and that in 1922 joined with Antonio's experience, creating the precious elixir branded Nonino and ennobled by *ÙE*. «One of the most elegant existing expressions of amaro », this is how it is defined by Brad Thomas Parsons, one of the top experts of bitters at international level

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and exactly with Amaro Nonino Quintessentia, Parsons opens his new book Amaro: The Spirited World of Bittersweet, Herbal Liqueurs, a work dedicated to world bitters. Served at room temperature at the end of a meal, it is perfect as a digestive, an elegant amaro with an extraordinary scent of herbs and bitter orange marmalade.

Or served hot, wonderful for cold winter evenings, the Nonino Punch is prepared heating orange peel infused in amaro. Excellent also an aperitif with some ice cubes and an orange slice, even better if in the Giannola style with sparkling wine at pleasure. An amaro used also to prepare fabulous cocktails, among which we quote the Paper Plane, conceived in 2007 by Sam Ross, mixologist in New York, which made all the cocktail bars in the world fall in love and which has now become a modern classic. To be tasted fresh, in purity, paired with dark chocolate, this amaro will be an unexpected surprise! (www.grappanonino.it)