

## From Grappa to Made-in-Italy Mixology: Nonino's Revolution in Conscious Drinking

*At "Xcellent Spirit", at Vinitaly 2026 (April 12–15), marking the debut of spirits at the fair, the historic Friulian distilleries also take center stage*



From the rebirth of grappa—from the “poor relative” of wine to a noble spirit—to its recognition as a trendy ingredient in high-quality, Italian-style mixology, Nonino’s journey has also been a revolution in the conscious consumption of alcoholic beverages.

The historic distilleries of Ronchi di Percoto, in Friuli—today led by sisters Antonella, Cristina, and Elisabetta Nonino together with their mother Giannola Nonino, “Our Lady” of grappa as Gianni Brera called her—alongside Benito Nonino, the “father” of Italian grappa, created in the 1970s the first Monovitigno® Grappa from Picolit grape pomace. In those same years, they also founded the Nonino Prize, which anticipated the Nobel Prizes on six occasions, with the “blessing” of leading Italian food and wine journalists Luigi Veronelli and Mario Soldati.

Not only did they transform Italy’s flagship distillate into a symbol of Made in Italy excellence, but long before mixology became a global trend, they experimented with grappa’s versatility in cocktails and, in 2007, pioneeringly launched a movement to promote it: #bebravemixgrappa.

They will continue to do so at Vinitaly 2026 (Verona, April 12–15), showcasing the art of 100% artisanal distillation—both neat and in Nonino Signature Drinks—during the debut of “Xcellent Spirit”, which marks the entry of spirits into the fair alongside some of today’s most renowned bartenders.

“The preparation of any mixture must obey a categorical imperative: only good ingredients make a good drink,” wrote Luigi Veronelli well ahead of his time, listing over 30 cocktails based on

Nonino Grappa and naming creations after the Nonino women—Giannola Keel, Cristina Keel, Antonella Cobbler, and Betti Cooler—made with Grappa Nonino Vuisinâr.

Over the past 20 years, some of the world’s most famous bartenders—from Salvatore “The Maestro” Calabrese to Simone Caporale, from Monica Berg to Alex Kratena, from Joerg Mayer to Edoardo Nono—have created cocktails for Nonino (named “Best Distillery in the World” in 2019 by the U.S. magazine *Wine Enthusiast*). These include the Paper Plane with Amaro Nonino Quintessentia®, the Gritti Passion with Grappa Nonino Cru Monovitigno® Fragolino, the NoninoTonic®, the Giannola 38 with Grappa Monovitigno® Moscato, and the Ben 90 Espresso—an original twist on the Espresso Martini with Grappa Nonino Monovitigno® Moscato, to name just a few.

What truly sets the Nonino family apart is their commitment to promoting education around quality consumption of grappa, helping it gain global recognition alongside the world’s finest spirits. They have also moved it beyond its traditional role as an after-dinner drink into the realm of food pairing—thanks in part to Nonino Grappa Cocktails & Aperitifs and the art of high-quality mixology, especially appreciated by younger generations.