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THE BEAUTY OF GRAPPA

Delicacy and personality of the distillate obtained from pomace

THE AMBASSADRESS OF GRAPPA

Nonino, the producer of the famous drink obtained from pomace, with its delicate qualities and personality.

They are the world's most charming grappa producers. The sisters Elisabetta, Cristina and Antonella Nonino have inherited from their grand-grandparents a brand that has turned into tradition. The company was established in 1897 in the region of Friuli, in the North-East of Italy, where the drink is worshipped. Side by side with their parents, Benito and Giannola, the three sisters keep on increasing the quality of the brand, considered the best distillery in the world by some publications.

Elisabetta came to Brazil to show *Mesa Ao Vivo* how the distillation process of premium grappa works and to offer a tasting of some of her best labels. According to the producer, one of the secrets to obtain a refined drink is using fresh pomace, harvested immediately after the wine making process of the grapes coming from quality vineyards. "The primary product is essential to obtain complex grappa with well defined notes", she says. The specialist explains that, even if Friuli is acknowledged for some of the best qualities in the world, the denomination of origin of the region has never been registered. Today, in practice, any country can distil grape pomace and call the product obtained "grappa", differently from what happens, for example, with French cognac. In Brazil there are some producers that actually make it, like Casa Valduga. In other countries, on the contrary, they prefer to maintain the traditional name of these products, as in Portugal, where the digestive is known as 'bagaceira', and in Spain, where it is called 'orujo'.

ALWAYS FORWARD

It is not a chance that the Nonino has become the reference point when speaking of grappa. The company's philosophy is to break with the fundamental paradigms of the history of the drink, being the first to use the pomace coming from famous wines of Friuli and Piedmont. In 1973, for example, it was the first to process the product obtained from the pomace of a single variety, inventing the concept of 'single grape' for the distillate. Today, according to the rules of the sector, it is possible to maintain such name only if using up to three vines, under the condition that they are distilled separately before making the blend.

Cent'anni della Famiglia Nonino

In 1986, they were the first to create a kind of grappa obtained from the pomace of grape juice. It is also the only distillery that owns 66 traditional copper stills where most of their 900.000 bottles produced every year come from. And they also have the title of the only producers able to distil pure honey, something that, according to Elisabetta, is very difficult to obtain. During the tasting, Elisabetta introduced some qualities of white grappa not aged in durmast barriques, among which the prizewinner Cru Monovitigno, obtained 100% from Picolit grapes, a native vine and an icon of Friuli. Awarded in several evaluation centers, the drink presents the flavor of figs and floral acacia notes, the palate perceives it as complex and balanced, hiding an alcoholic content of 50% with class. The 500 ml bottle is sold at Mistral for 612 Real.

The most exclusive product of the distillery is Gran Riserva Nonino, aged 26 years in French durmast of the region of Limousin. In Italy, this rarity is sold for about 400 Euro. Elisabetta says she's never used it in a blind test with premium cognac or Armagnac, but she found the idea interesting. This is the challenge we issue her for her next visit, together with her sisters, in Brazil.

Elisabetta Nonino: fresh pomace is one of the secrets of the distillate.