

## **Amaro and no rum. The Mojito from Friuli Nonino: grandpa's recipe re-harmonized**

New ways of drinking.

The alchemists from Percoto bustle about alembics and copper pots. They proportion tastes and scents, control transparencies and colors. And when the elixir is perfect, proportioned at the right point, they chose the most precious glass, the suitable phial to contain such fragrance and knowledge. The alchemists from Percoto, a village in the middle of a sweet and wild countryside, are little witches expert of herb and grape extracts, but they are also genial business-women, ready to catch moods and trends, to invent time by time that “something” more that can turn a liquor into a sublime potion of good humor, to be sipped wisely in good company.

“The secret of our success? Never give up trying, never be satisfied, always go ahead”, says Giannola, the matriarch of the Noninos, the mother of three young women, Cristina, Antonella and Elisabetta, all working with her in the over a hundred year old family distillery, whose reins for almost 40 years have been in the firm hands of Giannola, Benito, her husband, and their three daughters. All of them overwhelmed by Giannola's overflowing energy and enthusiasm.

The latest invention created in that forge of art and craftsmanship of drinking is an ancient bitter, restored according to today's taste. “A recipe of my grandfather's – Cristina explains – a mixture of Alpine herbs re-harmonized and enriched with parts of “Ûe”, our aged grape Aquavita. Bitters usually turn out to be quite nauseating to the palate or so sour to taste like medicine. We wanted to create one neither too bitter nor too sweet. When we found it we called it Quintessentia”.

It is not enough. They have made it the base of a product that is already a cult among young people, a very special Mojito, where instead of rum there is this new bitter that, mixed with cane sugar, mint, and lime, offers new sensations. “A creation made by the bartender Davide Girardi that has excited the *mixologists* of the web, an unlimited forge of comparisons, recipes, and opinion exchanges”, Cristina explains. Another wizard of alcoholic alchemies, Mirko Falconi, is the creator of another cocktail that mixes the legendary family Fragolino Grappa with some rose syrup. Title: Nonino Passion. “Passion has always been a winning arm – Giannola assures -. Our first goal, profit comes after. Without passion, without the enthusiasm for research, the challenge to reach the top, nothing of all this would have happened”.

But Our Lady of Grappa hasn't stopped there. If Nonino has become one of the best known brands of the made in Italy all over the world (40% of the turnover in foreign countries) this is due also to another passion. Giannola's love for the values of rustic civilization and culture. “My father, son of immigrants who later became a farmer, passed me the affection for the land. My mother came from a wealthy family, she was graduated, and taught me the taste for beauty. Special parents, who educated me in a non-conventional way. Certainly not as a “crybaby”, but as a modern and independent woman, however without forgetting the bond with land and nature. A lesson Giannola has never forgotten and out of which, in 1977, the Nonino Prize for literature was born. A very special Prize, which in the years has turned the village of Percoto into a meeting place of the best talents of narrative as well as music, architecture, and cinema. Peter Brook and Claudio Abbado, Ermanno Olmi, Renzo Piano, Claudio Magris, Le Roy Ladurie, Javier Marias, Rigoni Stern, Leonardo Sciascia, Edgar Morin, Levi-Strauss, Senghor, Grotowsky, Adonis, Naipaul ... have been

here. All of them sitting around the fireplace in that old country house, talking and tasting one of the magic family grappas. Giannola, lady of spirits, and her three beautiful girls always there, to watch over them, to make their guests at ease, and turn the austerity of a Prize into a joyful meeting of old friends. “Sepulveda was so enthusiast that wanted to make a film on what he called the ‘very special atmosphere’ of our house”, Giannola says. She is so fond of her grappa that she always has two small bottles in her bag. “A small flask of honey distillate and one of Prosecco Grappa. If I go somewhere for dinner, I pour some in my glass, instead of other spirits. Sure that my stomach won’t have problems and at night I’ll sleep very well”.

For her longer sleep she’s getting organized. “When my time will come, I have decided that my ashes shall be preserved in one of the columns of the distillery. So my daughters passing there will knock on that spot and say: ‘Hurrah mum even this time grappa has turned out very well!’ And I will smell the fragrance and be happy. Spirit among spirits”.

by Giuseppina Manin

### **Cocktail Quintofiore**

Ingredients:

50 ml Amaro Nonino “Quintessentia”

1 top of soda

1 lime

Cane sugar

2 leaves of mint

#### **How to make it:**

Pound ¼ lime with two spoons of cane sugar. Fill the glass with ground ice, Amaro Nonino and a top of Soda. Stir with energy with a spoon in the glass and decorate with two small leaves of mint and a segment of lime.

### **Nonino Passion**

Ingredients:

3 cl. Nonino Cru Monovitigno Fragolino

1.5 cl Cinzano bianco

1 cl. Aperol

1 cl. Passion juice

0.5 cl. Rose syrup

#### **How to make it:**

Shake all the ingredients but Grappa. Pour into a mixing glass, add ice and Nonino Grappa and serve in frozen Martini goblets. Decorate with apple, melon and pumpkin.