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*Forging His Own*

# DESTINY

CHILEAN-BORN IMPORTER AND INNOVATOR

*Alex Guarachi*

SHARES HIS STORY OF STRUGGLE AND SUCCESS

# Late Summer Splash

TWO NEW ITALIAN PRODUCTS DEFINE REFRESHMENT

story and photos by David Ransom



**Francesca Nonino with Nonino Distillatori's newest release, L'Aperitivo Nonino, at New York restaurant Marta.**

My good friend Tony Abou Ganim, aka The Modern Mixologist, once told me, "There's a saying in the bar business that there really are no new cocktails, just newer versions of old ones." I largely agree, as cocktails, like dishes, are for the most part based on common ingredients; it's how those ingredients are interpreted and combined that creates the impression of originality. I recently got to try a couple of new products that got me to thinking about how best to interpret them. I believe I found a solution: pairing them together.

First, during a lovely dinner with Francesca Nonino at Marta, Danny Meyer's upscale pizzeria in Manhattan's NoMad district, I was among the first to taste Nonino Distillatori's newest release, L'Aperitivo Nonino (\$40; Terlato Imports). Francesca—a third-generation member of the family behind this woman-run Italian company, famous for its grappa—was in town to launch the apéritif during Brooklyn trade event Bar Convent. The blend of 18 different botanicals, made without any additives or artificial coloring, was designed as a natural alternative to some of Italy's more famous apéritifs; elegant, refreshing, and slightly sweet, it's a perfect accompaniment to Scotch or mezcal and is also good on the rocks.

Next, during an outing with producers from Italy's Lake Garda region, I was introduced to Garda DOC sparkling wine, a new category of affordable sparklers created to compete against the Prosecco juggernaut. Hailing from Lombardy and the Veneto—most notably Bardolino, Custoza, Lugana, Soave, Valpolicella, and Valtènesi—the wines differ from Prosecco in that they are not made from Glera and that they can be white or rosé (Prosecco labeling rules do not currently allow for rosé). Regional planting practices dictate their makeup, and they can be made in the metodo classico or Charmat method.

While still young and finding its way, Spumante Garda DOC has some serious muscle behind it, including Cantina di Soave, Cavalchina, Riondo (Terlato Wines), and Valdo (Taub Family Selections). I am very intrigued to see what happens as these wines enter the U.S. market.

As for my pairing? L'Aperitivo Nonino and Garda DOC sparkling wine, of course—with a dash of orange bitters and a slice of lemon. While I would never profess to be a bartender, I think I just invented a new spritzer! Now all I have to do is name it. ■■

