Outside its country of origin, grappa has been the subject of confusion, ignorance and even prejudice for far too long. This is extraordinary, especially when one considers the acclaim rightfully heaped on Italy's gastronomic culture by the rest of the world in recent years.

In this handy pocket book, Marcin Miller sets out to reveal the quality, heritage and vision that combine to make grappa one of the finest and more versatile spirits in the world today.

“It’s about time that grappa was recognised as a classic spirit. This book will help that process immensely.”

Dave Broom
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After more than 225 years, Nardini’s famous grasperia – and the distillery’s head office – is still located on the old bridge at Bassano del Grappa, Veneto.
Introduction

Two alcoholic drinks have been central to the tradition of Italian life since time immemorial: wine and grappa. They are, of course, related; you can’t make grappa without grape pomace. Grappa started as a by-product of winemaking, a rough drink made with what was available, potent enough to get the farmers through the cold winter months. At least they were Italian farmers. Let us scoff at grappa’s humble origins, spare a thought for Cognac. France’s most venerated spirit was invented by English and Dutch wine shippers who discovered that distilling their cargo meant less spoiled wine and improved financial return.

In the early days, grappa – as with most spirits – was considered rather coarse and found popularity among people of low social status, many seeking even the briefest of respites from a tough reality. The nobility did not drink it. However, this changed when Italian culture took centre stage in the mid-20th century and it became a potent symbol of a stylish, escapist, romantic vision in a post-war world of optimism. Grappa became part of *La Dolce Vita*.

Thereafter, many winemakers and distillers jumped on the grappa bandwagon in an attempt to exploit this new opportunity. First came the exotic – and, frankly, rather camp – hand-blown Murano glass flasks. Then came the varietal revolution and experimentation with whole grapes. Such changes, although they doubtless increased the profile and – by extension – sales, (currently some 47 million bottles per annum), paid little heed to the ancient traditions of grappa production or to the essential heritage of Italy’s unique distillate.

Along the way, grappa was swept up into ever more rarified and precious circles, presented with ever more pomp and in ever more pretentious stemware. Several of today’s best-known grappas were first distilled in the 1980s.

By way of contrast, the Nardini family has been making Italy’s finest grappa since 1779. Bortolo Nardini established the family business three years after the American War of Independence and 15 years before the French Revolution. Nardini grappa still features the original Remondini label design (which is over 200 years old) and comes in a traditional bordelaise bottle.

The aim of this book is to reclaim grappa’s rightful place as the quality spirit of choice for those who appreciate the tradition, provenance and heritage of Italian gastronomic culture. At the same time, it sets out to illustrate the versatility of the spirit, both as a long-valued cooking aid and – in the case of Nardini’s portfolio especially – as an exciting ingredient in the modern cocktail. Of course, we are delighted to be assisted in this endeavour by two of the most celebrated exponents of their art, Gennaro Contaldo and Dale DeGroff.

Marcin Miller
Bassano del Grappa
Origins of grappa

Spirits are distilled from a wide range of fermentable organic materials. Whisky is made from grains, while molasses gives us rum. Most brandies come from fermented fruits or wines, whereas vodka can be made from grains, potatoes or sugar beet molasses. Grappa, like its French cousin marc, is derived from the skins, seeds and pulp of grapes, typically after most of the juice has been extracted to make wine. This raw material is called pomace or vinaccia.

Whilst their most likely birthplace was the Middle East in the 8th century, the first spirits were produced for medical purposes and grappa is no exception. In the 10th century, the Medical School of Salerno codified the rules for the concentration of alcohol through distillation and prescribed its use as a cure for various diseases. Since grapes and their residues were cheap and widely available in many of the regions that now make up Italy, they were the obvious home-grown choice for distilling spirits.

No-one knows for sure when the first grappa was made, although it is mentioned in documents dating from the mid-14th century. Nevertheless, by the end of the 15th century, grappa was not only being exported from Italy, but production was licensed, with taxes levied on distillates from wine and pomaces.

For many centuries, no distinction was made between distillates obtained from grapes and those obtained from other kinds of fruit. Only in the early 18th century did grappa become a distinct product with its own set of special characteristics. Today, grappa is protected and regulated by national and EU laws. In fact, only grappa distilled in Italy, made from Italian grape pomace can legitimately be called grappa.

While every region of Italy will claim superiority for its wines, it is generally agreed that the best grappa comes from the north of Italy and, more precisely, from Trentino-Alto Adige, Veneto, Friuli and Piedmont (see map on page 8). While this is partly due to the concentration of leading distillers in the area, the cooler weather and the altitude combine to ensure that the acid in the grapes degenerates more slowly, which helps to produce higher quality pomaces for distillation purposes. At the same time, it is arguable that the flavour characteristics self-evident in wines derived from specific grape varieties are effectively masked by the distillation process. The exception to this rule is the particularly floral Moscato (Muscat) grape, especially when it is used to make a single grape varietal grappa.
While diligence and skill in the distillation process are paramount, the quality of any grappa is determined by the condition of the pomaces from which it is made. It is especially important that these pomaces are fresh and moist. Antonio Guarda-Nandini – one of the four members of the Nandini dynasty who run the family-owned company – applies a simple method to detect the quality of the pomaces used to make any grappa: rub a small amount of the spirit on the back of your hand for a few seconds and then inhale the aroma. Irrespective of the taste of the grappa itself, the smell instantly reveals the precise condition of the pomaces used to make it and whether they were fresh or stale.

It also follows that in order to be fresh and slightly moist, the pomace (see picture above right) needs to be supplied locally and sourced from local vines. If the quality of the raw material provided by the winegrower is critical, his skill as a winemaker is not. It is a huge mistake – often made and understandably so – to assume that a grappa label branded with the name of a famous winemaker or wine will have any bearing on the quality of the distillate in the bottle. Quite the reverse. Most great red wines are heavily pressed and as a consequence, the resulting pomace is too dry for optimum distillation purposes.

At the same time, it is more than likely that the winemaker is transporting pomaces halfway across Italy to a contract distiller in order to have the grappa produced and bottled. While one can’t begrudge the wish of any successful winemaker to exploit his or her fame, instances of this kind don’t help to lessen the confusion and misunderstanding that have dogged the assimilation of grappa in territories beyond its Italian borders.
Understanding grappa

Grappa is the source of a great deal of confusion, misunderstanding and even prejudice, most notably from outside Italy. It’s not hard to see why. If there are 123 legitimate distilleries in Italy, there is something of a tradition for home distillation. The result of which ends up on the tourist’s table from time to time – and with varying consequences. Moreover, much of the grappa available in export markets has been of questionable quality.

While it can be as little as 37.5% alcohol by volume (75% proof) in order to achieve the official grappa appellation, low alcohol varieties – like their gin and vodka counterparts – were created for exporting to countries where spirits are the subject of punitive tax based on alcohol content. Such products are, by their very nature, poor ambassadors for any spirit because they have been conceived to achieve the lowest possible retail price, with no thought of creating enthusiasm or loyalty. One of the most depressing experiences for any grappa lover is to be pleasantly surprised by the spirit’s appearance on a drinks menu in an Italian-style restaurant chain, only to find it is the cheapest possible example. Of course, grappa only appears on the list because the restaurant is trying to appear authentic. Anyone that selects the product will simply be disappointed or misled. If it is their first grappa experience, it might well be their last – a great shame all round.

Fortunately, we are now living in an era where, for some at least, quality matters more than quantity. Whisky aficionados are seeking out cask strength spirits and discerning gin drinkers have stopped buying some of the big name brands that have been stealthily reducing their alcohol content over the years. Meanwhile, modern grappa fans are discovering that the best examples of the genre are comparatively high in alcohol and rarely less than 43% abv (86% proof).
Wood-aged or not?

When most people think of a grappa, they picture a clear spirit. While grappa has to be aged for a minimum of six months in order to satisfy the regulations that govern its appellation, that ageing need not take place in wood barrels; but in stainless steel tanks or glass jars. Nardini Bianca, for example, is harmonised for 12 months in steel tanks before it is blended into its 50% abv (100% proof) drinking strength for bottling.

The moment a grappa is aged in a wooden cask it begins, like any spirit, to absorb the characteristics of the wood, usually oak. In the modern era, boutique grappa distillers have experimented with a wide range of wood types including apple and cherry. The most obvious change affected by wood ageing is appearance which can vary from a light straw colour – as typified by Nardini Riserva – to an even darker hue, depending on the wood used and the length of maturation time. Wood also changes the taste of the spirit, making it softer and sweeter on the palate, while adding a warmth to the finish that many find reassuring, in many cases because it reminds them of more familiar drinks, such as Scotch whisky or Cognac.

Aged grappas can be labelled invecchiata (aged), stravecchia (old) or simply riserva. As a rule, rather like rum, grappa benefits from gentle ageing, with three to five years in oak casks the norm. Some excellent variants can be produced by a much longer time in the barrel, but these tend to be much closer to tawny port whisky or Armagnac in style, ensuring they are pitched rather firmly in the after-dinner drink category. Nardini Riserva 15 Anni – created to celebrate the distillery’s 225th anniversary and the company’s first new product for 76 years – is an obvious case in point.
Some interesting varieties

Flavoured grappas have been popular in Italy for centuries, pre-dating the rather more precious approach to grappa encouraged by boutique distillers during the 1970s. These are also subject to strict regulation so all flavours must be totally natural and make use of herbs, nuts and fruits indigenous to Italy.

One of the most traditional varieties is Ruta, where sprigs of a herb called rue are cut to be infused as the principal flavouring ingredient (see above). While the bitter-flavoured rue is still employed in modern homeopathic treatments as a fever suppressant, its more mythical ability to stimulate the male libido and encourage female relaxation has long made it a logical choice of the Latin Italianno. However, such provenance should not prevent experimentation on the part of anyone keen to explore the wider grappa genre. Nardini Ruta is a firm favourite for many grappa connoisseurs, not least, the cocktail king himself, Dale DeGroff.

Natural nut flavours – sourced from Italian almond or hazelnut trees – have become increasingly popular, partly because of their excellence in partnership with espresso, but also because of their versatility in cocktail recipes. Nardini Mandorla is a fine example of the almond variety, albeit one that has been enjoyed for over 120 years. Fruit can also be blended with grappa to stunning effect. Probably the best exponent of the art is Vittorio Capovilla, the much-acclaimed ’kaiser of Grappa’, who distils rosaries, cherries, quinces, pears, and apples – the majority of which he selects himself from organically cultivated fruit plantations. If proof were needed that extraordinary attention-to-detail can combine with an artisan approach to distilling, Capovilla certainly provides it.

Although they can’t be given the grappa appellation, distillates made from whole grapes or ‘must’ rather than grape pomace, can be very similar in style to fine grappa and frequently delicious. Such spirits are termed ’aquavite d’uva’ and most have only been introduced within the last 40 years or so. Rarely aged, the best examples are capable of revealing the idiosyncrasies of individual grape varieties to a degree which pomaces cannot. While this doesn’t make ’aquavite d’uva’ spirits inherently ‘better’, it does make them different, interesting and certainly worth exploring. Two innovative fruit-based distillers, Nonino and Tosolini have carved out impressive reputations in this specialist arena, the latter offering an exceptional range of blended and single grape varietals under its prestigious Most label. While this may not be grappa in the strictest sense, it would be churlish to discuss the spirit in any depth without acknowledging some of the more positive aspects of its evolution in recent years.

So, banish any remaining pre-conceptions you might have of ‘rocket fuel’ and silly bottle designs. Whether aged in wood, flavoured with fruit, laced with natural nut essences, spiced with herbs or enjoyed straight as a pure, young spirit, one thing must be self-evident. There is every chance that, somewhere out there, a fine grappa is waiting with your name on it.
Distillation,
the Nardini way

As the guardians of what is – by some way – the biggest premium grappa brand in Italy, the Nardini family strives for total consistency. Achieving consistency is more critical for a spirit than it is for wine, which we expect to vary from year to year. If such variation is one of the exciting dynamics of wine appreciation, it is something of an irritation for spirits drinkers and especially bartenders, even if several Armagnac and Scotch whisky distilleries follow the wine model and market individual vintages with successful results. Interestingly, true artisan grappa producers – like Vittorio Capovilla and Romano Levi – won’t distil single grape grappas in years when they feel the fruit isn’t up to standard.

For a major brand with an output of four million bottles a year, such artistic licence may not be realistic; all the same, Nardini is geared up to cope with disaster, with some three years of reserve stocks in tanks and barrels. Like all grape-dependent European distillers with an ancient pedigree, Nardini learned the hard way when the phylloxera aphid struck in the 1860s. Thus it also shares the same gratitude to the United States for the phylloxera-resistant vines that saved wine production from extermination.

Nardini only uses grapes sourced from DOC (Denominazione di Origine Controllata) vineyards, located in the foothills of Veneto and Friuli. The grapes are: Merlot; Cabernet Sauvignon; Pinot Bianco and Friuliana (formerly known as Tokaj) all of which are traditional to the best wines in both regions. While the recipe favoured by Nardini is dominated by the two red wine grapes, blending pomaces is a simple measure that reduces the dependence of the flavour and quality of the end product on the vagaries of any one grape. The choice of grapes is also important. For example, Nardini has always avoided using Prosecco as it attacks the pomace. If the red wine grapes impart a great deal of the flavour and character, the lightly-pressed Pinot Bianco and Friuliana are exceptionally moist. This is important, because Nardini considers moist pomace essential in distilling fine grappa, refusing dry or over-fermented pomaces at the distillery gates in true ‘Man from Del Monte’ fashion.

The pomace is delivered to one of the two Nardini distilleries in Monastier and Bassano, where they are sorted into varieties and stored in large pans. These pans are covered with sand, which acts as a seal to keep the pomaces fresh and to prevent uncontrolled fermentation. The condition of the pomace is hugely important at this stage.

Poorly-conserved pomace will ultimately have a significant effect on the quality of the distilled grappa, a difference that is detectable in the glass as well as from the back of a hand. In late autumn, when the fermentation has occurred, the pans are uncovered and the grappa distillation process begins – and indeed continues – right through until the following spring.
In the Nardini distillery at Monastier, near Treviso, high-strength 80% abv (160% proof) grappa is produced in a continuous double distillation process using steam columns. This spirit is also used as the alcoholic base for other beverages in the Nardini portfolio, including the aperitivi, amari and liqueurs.

For the Nardini grappa ranges, spirit from the Monastier distillery is blended with a double-distilled grappa of similar strength produced at Bassano, using the traditional discontinuous pot method. It is the Bassano distillery’s more flavoured output that imbues Nardini’s range of grappas with its unique character and consistent hallmark.

After the two grappa distillates are combined, the resulting spirit – still around 80% abv (160% proof) – is stored in steel tanks for a year. While the majority of the grappa heads straight into the transformation process to create Nardini’s biggest seller, Bianca, each year around one million litres are transferred into barrels of new Slavonian oak for ageing. This means five years for Riserva and a hefty 15 years for Riserva 15 Anni. Visitors to the Bassano cellars are sometimes given the opportunity to try a high-strength grappa that has been aged in oak since 1959. Even allowing for the ‘angel’s share’ – the small proportion of alcohol ‘lost’ to evaporation during the ageing process – this undiluted cask-strength spirit is certainly challenging.

Hand-cut rue branches are added to the blended high-strength grappa to create Ruta, which enjoys a further maceration period – in steel vats – for 12 months. For almond-flavoured Mandorla, a further blending is made with natural almond essence and a cherry distillate, the sweetness of the latter offsetting the nut’s inherently bitter flavour.

Before any of Nardini’s grappas are ready for bottling, they need to go through the transformation process, a stage which sees them achieve optimum drinking strength as well as undergo additional purification. The high-strength grappa spirits are placed in special vats and mixed with demineralised water, until the alcohol content is reduced to 50% abv (100% proof) or 43% abv (86% proof) in the case of Ruta. However, there are still some tiny amounts of oily concentrates present within the liquid. These are not easily digested and considered undesirable in the final product. To remove them, the grappa is then cooled at -10°C with fossil flours added to absorb the oils.

The grappa is then filtered twice. The first filtration takes place through a steel mesh and the second through a traditional board filter. Then, and only then, is the grappa bottled for onward distribution to the many thousands of bars, restaurants and shops around the world that now carry Nardini products.
Grappa: the eco-friendly beverage?

At Nardini, a process was initially devised to employ leftovers from winemaking now produces a remarkable range of by-products. Absolutely nothing is wasted.

At the end of the distillation process, all the grape pomace is passed through a rotating drying kiln where the seeds are separated from the skins. The seeds are sent off to have the oil extracted. Grapeseed oil is a particularly useful ingredient since it has anti-inflammatory properties that make it ideal for use in a range of foods and even cosmetics. Not only that, but the leftover grape skins are employed as a vegetable supplement in animal feed.

Distilling - like winemaking - has always been considered something of an art. All the same, there are scientific methods of evaluating the quality of any potable spirit. One of the most important indicators is the absence - in the final distillate - of methyl alcohol. Nardini grappas have long been appreciated for the low levels of impurities they contain, including extremely low levels of methyl alcohol. That’s important, because it is the presence of methyl alcohol in some products that continue to damage the reputation of the entire grappa genre, causing the enthusiastic drinker to have stomach upsets as well as a sore head. In fact, Nardini is now so good at separating off the methyl alcohol, they sell it to a chemical plant in Veneto.

Clearly, those of us who drink Nardini grappa at home need to make sure we do our bit and recycle the glass bottles...

Where does grappa get its name from?

The term ‘grappa’ has been in colloquial use for hundreds of years and would seem to derive from the Latin word grappapolis which means ‘bunch of grapes’. Although records indicate that it has been subject to tax as far back as the 15th century, grappa, in common with most spirits, has a chequered history. Ancient brands like Nardini may span four different centuries, but from the outset they had enough marketing sense to differentiate their skilfully-made distillates from the bad and the downright illegal ones.

Nardini labelled their own spirit ‘aquavite di vinaccia’ (directly translatable as ‘water-of-life from grape pomaces’) and even today it’s hard to find the word ‘grappa’ on a Nardini bottle in Italy. Although, very recently, in selected territories, (most notably the UK and Scandinavia) Nardini have allowed ‘grappa’ to appear proudly on the label, this is principally to avoid any confusion with the Scandinavian spirit ‘aquavit’. Indeed ‘grappa’ only came into official use in 1951, when the Italian authorities decided to apply a national denomination to the spirit.

While Nardini might be flattered that Bassano del Grappa is increasingly identified as the principal source of fine grappa, it would seem that the name grappa is derived not from the town, nor even from Monte Grappa, the mountain that shadows it. Bassano only achieved its ‘del Grappa’ suffix after World War I in recognition of the many soldiers who lost their lives on the nearby mountain, though it is certain that the slopes and foothills of Mount Grappa have been plentiful with ‘bunches of grapes’ since the times of the Roman Empire.
As a child, I travelled a good deal with my family. Dad was a US Navy pilot and the rest of us got to see the world without joining the navy. The one constant in my youthful days was my mother’s childhood home in Wasterly, a predominantly Italian town in south-western Rhode Island. Tradition runs strong in my family, even three generations away from the old country.

Christmas Eve is still celebrated with 13 fish dishes, Easter with frittata and Prosecco, so January and February are the most special months of the year when the whole family, young and old alike gather to make ‘soupy’ – our name for the special air-cured sausage soppressata. When Easter is near we take the dried sausages from the racks in the cold cellar that my grandfather (my ‘nanutz’) created especially for that purpose when he built the house. The sausage is then submerged in crocks of olive oil where it will remain until a family occasion requires something very special.

A few years back, while working at the Promenade Bar of the Rainbow Room in New York City, some of that tradition came rushing back. I was ordering in anticipation of a new seasonal menu of cocktails and a salesman dropped off a couple bottles of Nardini grappa. In one of the bottles was a green and succulent-looking plant I instantly recognised as ruta. This herb was a household miracle at nana’s house back in Rhode Island. We had ruta tea to settle the stomach and ruta was liberally added to bottles of rubbing alcohol, mercifully taming the burn and miraculously speeding the healing when it was applied on our scrapes and bruises. And here it was, that magical plant in a bottle of commercial grappa... I bought it of course!

It turned out not to be just any grappa but a traditional artisan grappa with just enough of the rough edges showing to proudly proclaim its character. Nardini Ruta is one of the great brandies in a category crowded with nobility.

Be wary my fellow craftsman; mixology with this unique spirit, like its strong flavoured cousins – single malt Scotch whisky and tequila puro – is no pushover. A crafty matchmaker with a deft hand is needed to tame this rebel in a well-balanced cocktail.

I chose a cousin of grappa from the same region of Italy, Prosecco – along with aperitivi, fresh fruits and herbs – to partner with the Nardini grappas. I worked simply and with a light touch. I wanted to enjoy these drinks with food – like antipasti and other appetizers – in the company of family and friends; and with at least one of the cocktails as a partner to tiramisu or zabaglione.

Nardini grappa’s soul is in the grapes that go into the wine and its power and strength come from the soil and minerals within, but its character comes from the assured hand of the distiller.

Chef Gennaro Contaldo enjoys Nardini simply poured into espresso and I do as well. But I often also celebrate a quiet moment with Nardini Ruta at room temperature by itself... sipping away my cares.

Dale DeGroff
Grappa cocktails

All Nardini drinks are grappa-based, so our cocktail line-up includes recipes featuring a broad selection of products from the distiller’s portfolio. Nardini is the only grappa brand to appear in the bartender’s bible, Schumann’s American Bar.

Its distinctive flavour, contained scent and high alcohol content – 50% abv (100% proof) – all combine to make Bianca an exciting alternative to vodka, pisco and other white spirits.

The oak-aged Riserva is more complex. Although a stunning digestivo in its own right, Riserva is becoming increasingly at home in modern cocktail recipes. Its more venerable sibling – Riserva 15 Anni – is first and foremost a post-prandial drink for gentle sipping, but it still has a role in recipes that require a highly flavoursome dark spirit. Try any Nardini grappa straight first. One of the best ways to enjoy Bianca and Ruta is to mix them with fresh juices or purees. That way, you not only guarantee that the spirit’s unique taste comes well to the fore, but you’re in a position to gauge the alcohol content. This approach might also provide ideas for other cocktail ingredients. As well as a superb partner for espresso coffee as a caffe corretto, the almond-flavoured Mandorla makes a stunning Sour and an excellent Alexander.

The Mezzo e Mezzo (see page 53) is famous in the Nardini’s home town of Bassano and a wonderfully simple pre-dinner drink. The Nardini liqueur line-up also has a role to play in cocktails. With its intense flavour of juniper, caraway and local botanicals, Ginjepro del Grappa is steadily gaining recognition as a versatile cocktail component and the basis of an ultra-accessible Martini.

The following cocktails are culled from a range of sources. While some are traditional, several have been created especially for this book by a range of leading mixologists. Others are contributions made by professionals and enthusiasts alike to the website for Nardini’s UK & Ireland importer, Nick Hopewell-Smith Associates; www.nardingrappa.com. If you come up with any creations of your own, do submit them using the special online form provided. If they pass the taste test, they will be added to the site and become candidates for a future reprint of this book.
Glossary

Build
Many of the world’s favourite long drinks – for example, the unsurpassable gin and tonic – are built; fill a glass with ice, add the ingredients (spirit first), stir a few times and garnish. Simplicity itself.

Frosted
Some cocktails are served chilled but without ice. These require frosted glasses and this is done by keeping the appropriate glasses in the fridge or freezer.

Garnish
When adding lemon, lime or orange to a drink it is important to squeeze the juice from the wedge of fruit into the glass – the addition will give the cocktail another dimension. This simple rule is ignored far too often.

Muddle
This is the term given to pressing down on cocktail ingredients with a small pestle – or muddler. This combines the disparate elements, often creating something greater than the sum of its parts, like in a Sour, for example. Muddling generally takes place in the glass itself.

Shake
This is done to combine the ingredients of a cocktail, usually in a shaker. Although you may immediately think of the traditional all-metal shaker, the tool of choice for most bar professionals is the Boston shaker. This consists of two cones, one glass and one metal.

Strain
An advantage of the metal shaker is that it usually features a built-in strainer. If you choose to go for a Boston shaker you have the option of a spring-loaded strainer for the metal cone or a simple ‘julep’ strainer for the glass half. The cocktail should be poured into a pre-prepared glass through the strainer.

Zest
If the recipe calls for a twist then the essential oils from the citrus must be added to the drink. Take a strip of fruit (as identified in the recipe), hold it skin side down with an end in each hand. Then twist by turning your hands in opposite directions to extract the oils.
APERITIVO FRUTTA E GRAPPA
by Dale DeGroff

Ingredients
20ml Nardini Riserva
20ml Ramazzotti Amaro
40ml fresh grapefruit juice
40ml fresh orange juice
Grated nutmeg
Orange peel, to garnish

Preparation
Build all the ingredients in a tumbler with ice and stir. Grate the nutmeg over the top and garnish with flamed orange peel to serve.

BARONE ROSSO
by Ago Perrone, Montgomery Place, London
Ago Perrone was voted Class Magazine Bartender of the Year 2006

Ingredients
15ml Nardini Rosso
35ml Cognac
5ml orange curaçao
Dash of Angostura bitters
Lemon peel, to garnish

Preparation
Stir in a mixing glass and strain into an old-fashioned glass over ice. Garnish with lemon peel.
BASSANO MULE

Ingredients
50ml Nardini Tagliatella
125ml ginger beer
Lemon zest and a cherry, to garnish

Preparation
Serve in a Collins glass with plenty of ice. Garnish with some lemon zest and a fresh cherry. A great alternative to Pimm’s (or Tuaca even). With apologies to Poul Jensen.

CAMERINO
by Peter Hammill

Ingredients
35ml Nardini Bianca
50ml freshly squeezed orange juice
60ml Prosecco

Preparation
Pour grappa and orange juice into a mixing glass with ice and stir. Strain into a Champagne flute, top up with chilled Prosecco and stir gently.

This drink was designed in 1975 by the legendary Van Der Graaf Generator front man for his sax player, David Jackson, while the band was touring Italy.
CHIARO DI LUNA (MOONLIGHT)
by Dale DeGroff

Ingredients
20ml Nardini Bianca
10ml orgeat syrup
3 chunks of pineapple
90ml Prosecco brut
1 sprig of fresh rosemary, cut in half
Slice of orange, to garnish

Preparation
Muddle the pineapple chunks and half the rosemary sprig in a bar glass with the orgeat. Add a couple of cubes of ice and the grappa. Slowly pour in the Prosecco while gently pulling the other ingredients up from the bottom of the glass with a bar spoon. Strain into a chilled Champagne flute and garnish with a pineapple wedge and the other half of the rosemary sprig on the rim of the glass or simply with a slice of orange.
CORRETTO NICO
by Nick Hopewell-Smith

Ingredients
35ml Nardini Bianca
25ml crème de banane
25ml double cream
25ml espresso coffee

Preparation
Pour all ingredients into a cocktail shaker over ice and shake hard. Serve in a martini glass (or similar).

A little like an Alexander, the original recipe was much-improved following the advice of cocktail guru and all-round drinks authority Simon Difford. Thank you Simon!
ESPRESSO COCKTAIL

by Dale DeGroff

Ingredients

- 30ml Nardini Riserva
- 20ml Tia Maria
- 40ml espresso coffee
- Dollop of lightly whipped cream
- Ground cocoa nibs, to garnish

Preparation

Prepare a martini glass by coating the rim with ground cocoa nibs (optional). Shake the first three ingredients with ice and strain into the martini glass. Drop a dollop of lightly whipped cream in the centre of the glass.
FIORE DI GRAPPA RUTA
by Dale DeGroff

Ingredients
15ml Nardini Ruta
4 small strawberries
20ml St. Germain elderflower liqueur
90ml Prosecco brut

Preparation
Muddle three of the strawberries together with the liqueur and the grappa in the bottom of a mixing glass. Add a couple of cubes of ice and slowly pour in the Prosecco while gently pulling the other ingredients up from the bottom of the glass with a bar spoon. Strain into a chilled Champagne flute (or similiar) and garnish with the remaining strawberry.

This is also excellent with elderflower cordial which makes it a little less alcoholic...
GENOA

Ingredients
25ml Nardini Bianca
50ml Plymouth Gin
25ml sambuca
25ml dry vermouth
1 olive, to garnish

Preparation
A deliciously powerful martini. Shake vigorously over ice. Serve in a martini glass and garnish with an olive.

Some use a full measure of sambuca but this has a tendency to dominate the drink.
GINEPRO BLOSSOM MARTINI
by Mark Jenner, Sartoria, London

Ingredients
30ml Nardini Ginepro
20ml Citadelle apple vodka
5ml fresh lime juice
Slices of apple, to garnish

Preparation
Shake and double strain into a chilled or frozen martini glass.
Garnish with slices of apple.

GINEPRO ORANGETINI
by Nick Hopewell-Smith

Ingredients
35ml Nardini Ginepro
35ml Noilly Prat vermouth
15ml Gabriel Boudier orange liqueur
Dash of fresh lemon juice
Orange peel and plain chocolate shavings, to garnish

Preparation
Shake ingredients vigorously. Serve in frosted martini glass, garnish with orange peel (preferably flamed in Nardini Bianca and a little sugar) and sprinkle with coarse shavings of plain chocolate.
GRAPPARINHA

Ingredients
50ml Nardini Bianca
1 fresh lime
15ml brown sugar syrup
Slices of lime, to garnish

Preparation
Cut the lime into eight wedges and – using a pestle – muddle them with the sugar syrup in an old fashioned glass (or similar). Pour in the grappa and stir. Fill glass with crushed ice and stir again. Garnish with slices of lime.

They call this a ‘Capinari’ in Miami apparently.

ITALIAN SLAMMER

Ingredients
35ml Nardini Bianca
60ml Prosecco

Preparation
Take a large shot glass. Add the measure of grappa, then add Prosecco. Immediately cover glass with hand and ‘slam’. Drink it – as it fizzes – in a single gulp. Responsibly, of course!
**IVOR**

**Ingredients**
- 60ml Nardini Bianca
- 25ml vanilla vodka
- 25ml lemon juice
- Dash of sugar syrup
- Slice of lemon and a cherry, to garnish

**Preparation**
Shake all ingredients. Pour into a frosted martini glass. Garnish with a slice of lemon and a cherry.

The vanilla comes through delightfully. This really is one of the best.

**LEMON LIFT**

**Ingredients**
- 35ml Nardini Acqua di Cedro or limoncello
- 35ml Nardini Bianca or Nardini Riserva

**Preparation**
Pour both into an old-fashioned glass over ice and stir. This drink works equally well with Riserva.
MANDORLA SOUR

Ingredients
50ml Nardini Mandorla
35ml fresh lemon juice
15ml sugar syrup
10ml egg white
Dash of Angostura bitters
1 maraschino cherry, to garnish

Preparation
Fill a shaker with ice cubes, add ingredients, shake hard and pour into a frosted martini glass. Garnish with the cherry.

This is so good you won’t believe it. Without the egg white is fine too.
MANDORLA E ZENZERO  
by Dale DeGroff

Ingredients
20ml Nardini Mandorla  
10ml ginger honey syrup or piece of ginger with regular honey*  
3 pieces of clementine or tangerine  
90ml Prosecco  
Slice of orange, to garnish

Preparation
Muddle the three fruit sections with the ginger honey in a Boston glass. *If muddling the ginger root, mash first with the honey then add the fruit sections. Add a couple of ice cubes and slowly pour in the Prosecco while gently pulling the flavours up to the top with a bar spoon. Strain and serve in a Champagne flute and garnish with an orange slice.
MEZZO E MEZZO

Ingredients
- 35ml Nardini Rabarbaro
- 35ml Nardini Rosso
- Soda, to taste
- Twist of lemon peel, to garnish

Preparation
Mix the two together in an old-fashioned glass (or similar) over ice. Add a twist of lemon peel. Top up with a little soda — not too much!

The best six o’clock drink in the world. This has been served in the Nardini grapperia on the Ponte Vecchio in Bassano del Grappa for decades.

MEZZO E MEZZO INGLESE

Ingredients
- 35ml Nardini Rabarbaro
- 35ml Nardini Bitter
- Soda, to taste
- Twist of lemon peel, to garnish

Preparation
Mix over ice in an old-fashioned glass (or similar), top up with a little soda. Garnish with a twist of lemon.

This variation on the traditional Mezzo e Mezzo was hit upon when Nick Hopewell-Smith, James Rackham and Marcin Miller were in Bassano for the first time and in a creative frame of mind. It is now offered in Nardini’s grapperia. Two of the bartenders actually prefer it to the original Mezzo e Mezzo. That’s British innovation for you.
MINTED MARINELLA
by Jack Lewens

Ingredients
60ml Nardini Bianca
2 sprigs of mint
1 teaspoon of sugar syrup
Dash of orange bitters
Orange peel, to garnish

Preparation
Drop sprigs of mint in a shaker full of cubed ice and shake hard to break up the mint. Mix in the grappa, sugar syrup and bitters then shake vigorously again before pouring. Zest rim of martini glass with orange peel. Garnish with an orange twist. This also tastes good with Nardini Riserva.

Jack was Bar Manager of The River Café in Fulham, London, when he created this splendid drink.
NARDINEZ

by Ago Perrone, Montgomery Place, London

Ingredients

25ml Nardini Rabarbaro
25ml dry London gin
5ml Luxardo maraschino liqueur
2 dashes of orange bitters
40-50ml Champagne

Preparation

Stir ingredients in a mixing glass with ice and pour into a Champagne flute. Top up glass with Champagne (to taste).

NARDINI ALEXANDER

by Nick Hopewell-Smith

Ingredients

75ml Nardini Mandorla
50ml crème de cacao
50ml double cream
Pinch of grated almonds, to garnish

Preparation

This is a distinctive take on the traditional Brandy Alexander. Put all ingredients into a shaker with ice cubes and shake hard. Pour into a frosted martini glass and garnish with a dusting of finely grated almonds. For a less hardcore alternative, use a 50ml measure of Mandorla.
NARDRONI
by Ago Perrone, Montgomery Place, London

Ingredients
25ml Nardini Bianca
25ml Nardini Rosso
25ml Nardini Rabarbaro
Wedges of orange, to garnish

Preparation
Mix ingredients with ice in an old-fashioned glass, stir and serve with a wedge of orange. This turbo-charged Mezzo a Mezzo is, in essence, an all Nardini ‘Negroni’ from Ago Perrone.

Soda can be added to make it longer.
THE NEW FASHION

by Santino Cicala, The Blue Bar, The Berkeley Hotel, London

Ingredients
60ml Nardini Riserva 15 Anni
1 cube of white sugar
3 drops of orange bitters
5ml Cherry Marnier
Twist of orange peel and a cherry, to garnish

Preparation
Muddle ingredients and stir over ice. Build in an old-fashioned glass and garnish with the orange peel and a cherry.
**PESCA BIANCA SOUR**

by Mark Jenner, Sartoria, London

**Ingredients**
- 30ml Nardini Mandorla
- 15ml white peach puree
- 10ml egg white
- 10ml fresh lemon juice
- Dash of sugar syrup
- Dash of peach bitters
- SanBitter (or mix a little Nardini Rosso with plenty of soda)
- 1 fresh cherry, to garnish

**Preparation**
Shake all ingredients and strain into an old-fashioned glass filled with crushed ice. Top up with SanBitter and garnish with a fresh cherry with stem.

A sophisticated and elegant Sour, devised by Mark Jenner, Head Barman at Sartoria in London’s Savile Row who recommends Les Verges Boiron white peach puree and Fee Brothers peach bitters.

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**RED POPPY**

by Andrea Carnazzola, Caffe Ponte Vecchio, Bassano del Grappa

**Ingredients**
- 50ml Nardini Riserva
- 100ml SanBitter
- Dash of honey
- Pinch of poppy seeds
- 4 poppy flower petals, to garnish

**Preparation**
In a tall tumbler, place honey and poppy seeds, add SanBitter and crush with a pestle. Fill the tumbler with ice cubes, add Nardini Riserva, decorate with four poppy flower petals and stir.
RIVER CAFÉ GRAPPA COCKTAIL WITH FRESH CHERRIES
by Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers

Ingredients
10ml Nardini Bianca
30ml fresh cherry juice, sieved
100ml Prosecco

Preparation
Using a processor, slowly pulse-chop around 600g of fresh cherries. Sieve the pulp and place the liquid and the grappa in a shaker over ice. Shake well. Add the Prosecco and stir. Pour into a frosted Champagne flute.

This recipe is taken from River Café Cook Book Green (Ebury Press £17.50 ISBN 0-09-187943-4)

ROCKET

Ingredients
60ml Nardini Bianca
15ml kümmel
Slice of lemon, to garnish

Preparation
An aptly named cocktail and you need to go easy on the kümmel. Pour both over ice into an old-fashioned glass and stir. Garnish with slice of lemon. Er... that’s it.
SOLDIER PETER PAN
by Andrea Camazzola, Caffe Ponte Vecchio, Bassano del Grappa

Ingredients
20ml Nardini Riserva
30ml Nardini Acqua di Cedro
20ml melon liqueur
10ml lime juice
20ml kivi juice
Twist of lime peel and redcurrants, to garnish

Preparation
Pour the ingredients in a shaker with ice and shake. Serve in a cocktail glass. Garnish with a twist of lime peel and redcurrants.

This cocktail takes its name from a Hungarian soldier (called Peter Pan) who gave his life at the age of 21. His grave can be found on Monte Grappa in memory of those who fell in WWI.

SOUTH TO NORTH

Ingredients
40ml Nardini Mandorla
30ml Mirto (a Sardinian liqueur made with myrtle berries)
10ml still water

Preparation
Shake and strain in a martini glass

This cocktail was devised by Santino and appeared in an article entitled ‘The Last of the Mojitos’ in The Guardian.
SPRUZZARI
by Zoran Peric, Bar Manager, Skylon, London

Ingredients
15ml Nardini Rosso
50ml Nardini Ginepro
Peel from one orange

Preparation
Make a small twist from the orange peel. Fill a mixing glass with ice, stir in the Nardini Rosso. Spray the oil from about half of the peel into the glass. Pour in the Nardini Ginepro and stir for 20 seconds. Take a chilled martini glass and, with the remaining peel, spray oil into the glass and also rub the rim. Strain the mixture into the glass and garnish with the twist.

VENOMOUS LOVE
by Martijn Weterings

Ingredients
35ml Nardini Bianca
15ml crème de fraise
20ml pink grapefruit juice
3 strawberries
Light dash of balsamic vinegar
1 black grape, to garnish

Preparation
Muddle the strawberries, add liquids, shake with ice, double strain into martini glass and garnish with a black grape.

This drink (dedicated to Martijn’s ex-lover, apparently) scooped first place at the 2004 ‘Bar-Netherlands’ cocktail contest. At the time, Martijn was a mixologist at Vakzuid in Amsterdam’s old Olympic Stadium, which is one of the city’s best bars.
Grappa and me

When I first came to England in the early 1970s, I was shocked to discover how cold the winter mornings were. I tried everything to keep warm — from running on the spot while getting dressed to hot cups of tea — but nothing seemed to work. So like all Italian boys, I called mamma in Italy for advice and she said 'figlio mio, devi bere una grappa' (my dear son, you must drink a grappa). I received a bottle of grappa from my sister and on cold mornings, I would drink a shot with my espresso. Believe me, it was the best central heating I could possibly have had.

There are many different varieties of grappa and most Italians, loyal as they always are, will favour their locally made brands. It really is a very popular everyday drink all over Italy. A small grappa is often drunk early in the cold mornings by farmers working in the fields to keep them warm and give them strength. In busy cities, many office workers stop for their customary mid-morning caffe corretto. I'm told that, given half a chance, grandma will also steal a drop or two to calm the baby!

Grappa is fantastic to cook with — it's wonderful with game and meat dishes and I often use it in preference to brandy. It goes very well with desserts and gives a real kick to a panacotta. Outside Italy, it is quite difficult to obtain pure alcohol, so I frequently use grappa to preserve fruits such as raspberries, strawberries and peaches.

It is so versatile, I always keep a bottle or two at home... like most Italians do!

Enjoy and get cooking.

Love

Gennaro Contaldo
Great taste combinations

If this section focuses on the role that grappa can play as a cooking ingredient, it’s worth remembering that the spirit can be sipped alongside a wide range of flavours and foods. The most obvious of these is coffee. For many of us, the espresso is arguably the greatest Italian invention of the 20th century. The combination of the two is known as a caffè corretto, which can be translated literally as a ‘corrected coffee’. Italians invariably add sugar to their espresso, with the grappa enjoyed either as a small shot in the coffee itself or in a separate glass.

You can enjoy the best of both worlds by sipping from both glass and cup before pouring the remaining grappa into the coffee cup, swilling the two liquids together for a final exquisite mouthful. This is a taste sensation popularly known as a ‘rasentin’ or ‘rinsing’. For those who prefer not to take sugar in their espresso, Nardini Mandorla works particularly well, since it imparts a degree of sweetness – as well as a delicious almond aroma.

In common with other grape-based distillates – and unlike whisky – straight grappa tends not to dilute harmoniously in a glass with ice or water, a simple fact that makes it impractical – outside the kitchen – as an accompaniment to most savoury foods. Desserts – the richer the better – are an entirely different matter, and grappa can perform admirably as a powerful and welcome alternative to a customary glass of Sauternes or Barsac. Dark chocolate is one of the best and most simple partners for grappa, not least because there are distinct chocolate notes in many of the finest examples of the spirit. And finally, for those of you who can still find somewhere to do that sort of thing, a good grappa combines extremely well with a decent cigar.
Cooking with grappa

Grappa developed as a digestivo; it is still generally drunk after a meal but is also used extensively in the preparation of regional Italian dishes from antipasti to desserts.

Fish can be sprinkled with grappa before serving it as an antipasto; to make a delicious ceviche, grappa can be added to lemon juice to provide a marinade that – in just a few hours – “cooks” white fish to make a delicate and mouth-watering starter. Alternatively, grappa can be drizzled onto the flesh of any grilled fish.

For fans of flambé cooking, Riserva and Bianca are both ideal. Indeed, there are several Venetian shellfish recipes that specify grappa for precisely this purpose. Grappa is frequently used to marinade meat, especially game, and to flavour pickled vegetables and preserves.

Grappa can be brushed over cheeses during the ageing process or added to especially rich, heavy sauces. Pastries and creams are often enhanced with grappa to liven up their flavour. Grappa also adds zest to fresh fruit salad.

In most of the following recipes, unless specified by name, either Nardini Bianca or Nardini Riserva can be used. There are four dessert recipes featuring grappa in Jamie Oliver’s excellent book Jamie’s Italy, one of which – the pear sorbet – he has volunteered for our selection. As well as a stunning capon recipe from Gennaro Contaldo, we are fortunate to have contributions from a range of leading international chefs, including the wonderful Valentina Harris, who has written more than 20 books on Italian cookery.

The following recipes are listed in the order of starters, pasta and rice (primi), entrées and desserts.

RED PEARS AND PORCINI SALAD
by Stefan Pramstrahler, Romantik Hotel Turm, South Tyrol
Serves 4

Ingredients
4 small porcini mushrooms
1 red pear
50g goats cheese
4 tablespoons of olive oil
1 tablespoon of Nardini Riserva
1⁄2 lemon
Salt and pepper

Preparation
Finely slice the porcini, pear and cheese with a sharp knife.

Flavour with grappa, olive oil, salt and pepper and add a splash of lemon juice.

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SMOKED TURKEY BREAST WITH MARINATED ASPARAGUS FROM BASSANO

by Andrea Campagnolo, Ristorante Al Pioppeto, Romano d’Ezzelino, Veneto

Serves 4

Ingredients
300g smoked turkey breast
200g white asparagus from Bassano
50ml Nardini Bianca
50ml vinegar
100g juniper berries, bay leaves and black pepper
A handful of cherries, pitted and chopped

Preparation
Clean the asparagus and marinate the tips in the vinegar and grappa, plus the juniper berries, black pepper and bay leaves.

Serve the slices of turkey breast on a dish, garnish with the asparagus and decorate with fresh, chopped cherries.
GNOCCHI WITH GRAPPA
by Mara and Maurizio Martin, Ristorante da Fiore, Venice
Serves 4

Ingredients
800g potatoes
250g flour
1 egg
1 teaspoon of Nardini Bianca Bolognaise sauce
Salt
Parmigiano Reggiano, grated

Preparation
Peel the potatoes and boil in salted water then mash; let them cool and then mix with the flour. Add the egg, the grappa and salt; make small gnocchi and place them on a floured surface.

In a pot of boiling salted water add 20 gnocchi for each portion and, as soon as they rise to the top, remove and drain.

Arrange them on a plate, add the hot bolognaise sauce and top with the Parmigiano Reggiano.
GORGONZOLA AND PEAR RISOTTO
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- 1 shallot, diced
- 1 cup of carnaroli rice
- 4 cups of vegetable or chicken broth
- 1/2 cup of Nardini Bianca
- 2 tablespoons of chopped fresh sage or 2 teaspoons of dried sage
- 1/3 cup of Gorgonzola cheese, crumbled
- 1 ripe unpeeled red-skinned pear, halved, cored and diced

Preparation
Bring the broth and the grappa to simmer in a small, heavy saucepan over a medium heat. Reduce the heat to low; keep the mixture warm. Heat oil and butter in a medium-sized heavy saucepan over a medium heat. Add the diced shallot and rice and sauté until translucent (about two minutes). Add one cup of the broth and grappa mixture to the rice. Then simmer, stirring often. Mix in the sage.

Add more broth, one ladle at a time, and cook until the rice is still firm to the bite (al dente) and the risotto is creamy. If the risotto is too dry, add the remaining broth mixture one quarter of a cupful at a time. Mix in the Gorgonzola cheese and pear.

Cook for about one minute, until the cheese melts and the pear is heated through.

RAVIOLI WITH CHEESE AND PEARS ALLA NARDINI
by Alex Lorenzon, Ristorante Ca’ 7, Bassano del Grappa
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 200g fresh pasta dough
- 300g mascarpone
- 150g fresh crescenza (or mild cream) cheese
- 300g goats cheese
- 30g Parmigiano Reggiano, grated
- 50g butter
- 2 teaspoons of extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium pear, cut into small cubes
- 1 shotglass of Nardini Riserva
- 2 tablespoons of sugar
- 1/2 cup of cream
- 1 egg, beaten to brush pasta
- Salt, to taste

Preparation
Roll out the fresh pasta dough, cut into 90mm diameter circles and brush them with eggwash. To make the filling for the ravioli, mash the two soft cheeses; add the mascarpone, parmesan, oil and salt. Mix well until smooth. Add the filling in the centre on half the circles of pasta, top with another pasta circle and pinch the ravioli closed.

Sauté the pear cubes in some of the butter and a glass of Nardini Riserva with a pinch of sugar, then flambé. Boil a small amount of cream and add the Parmigiano until it becomes a smooth sauce.

Cook ravioli in salted boiling water then sauté in the pan with the rest of the butter. Add the sauce and serve hot.
GUITAR SPAGHETTI WITH SALMON AND GRAPPA

Serves 4

Guitar spaghetti is a fresh, square-shaped pasta that gets its name from the guitar-like box (with strings) used to make it. You can generally find it in Italian specialty shops. Alternatively use fresh (not dry) linguini.

Ingredients

- 500g fresh guitar spaghetti
- 200g smoked salmon, cut in small pieces
- 250ml heavy (double) cream
- 100g butter
- 1 shotglass of Nardini Bianca
- Salt and pepper

Preparation

Place a third of the butter in a wok (or deep frying pan) with cream, salt and pepper and cook for five minutes on a low flame. Add the glass of grappa and increase the heat for two minutes, then add the salmon and cook for another few minutes. Remove from heat. Cook the pasta in boiling salted water until al dente.

Drain and add to the mixture in the wok (or pan) and mix gently. If it is too thick, add a ladle of the water in which the pasta was cooked. Put the wok on the flame and add the rest of the butter and mix gently for one minute. Serve piping hot.
RISOTTO WITH GRAPPA AND AROMATIC HERBS
by Rico Guarnieri, Teatro 7, Milan

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 400g Carnaroli rice
- 15ml Nardini Riserva
- 15g shallots
- 10g each of rosemary, basil, thyme, marjoram, chives and sage
- 2 courgettes (zucchini)
- 2 carrots
- 1 medium red onion
- 1 stalk of celery
- 3 litres of water
- 50g butter
- 100g Parmigiano Reggiano, grated
- 5ml extra virgin olive oil

Preparation

To make the vegetable broth, cut the courgettes, carrots, celery and red onion into large pieces. Cook them in a large pot with a small amount of oil for approximately three minutes. Add three litres of water and cook over low flame for one hour. Let it cool for 15 minutes and sieve to separate the liquid from the solids.

To make the risotto, pulverize the shallots in a blender then cook them over a low heat in a non-stick pan or with very little oil and a small amount of water for five to seven minutes. While that is cooking, finely chop all of the herbs. Cook the rice with five grams of the butter in a pan over a high heat until golden (about three minutes). Add grappa and let it evaporate, then add half of the vegetable broth and after five minutes, half of the herbs. Cook the rice, adding the broth a ladle at a time, until it’s no longer crunchy.

Remove from the heat, then add butter and cheese, mixing vigorously with a wooden spoon for two minutes. Serve topped with the rest of the herb mixture.
TAGLIATELLE ALLA NARDINI

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 500g tagliatelle pasta
- 30g dried mushrooms
- 1 carrot
- 2 stalks of celery
- 1 medium onion
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 cup of heavy (double) cream
- 1 shotglass of Nardini Bianca
- Fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon of cornstarch
- 30g butter
- 3 teaspoons of extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup of vegetable broth
- 50g Parmigiano Reggiano, grated
- Salt and pepper

Preparation

Put mushrooms in a glass of lukewarm water for about half an hour, then wash, squeeze out moisture and cut finely. Wash and peel the carrot and cut finely along with the onion, garlic and celery. Heat the butter and oil and add the parsley, mushrooms and chopped vegetables. Add salt, Nardini Bianca and stir in broth. Cook the vegetable mixture for approximately 15 minutes.

Dissolve the cornstarch in two teaspoons of lukewarm water, add to the sauce and mix well to thicken. Then add the cream, Parmigiano and pepper. Heat for five minutes over a low flame, stirring constantly.

Cook the pasta in salted boiling water until it is al dente. Drain, then toss in pan with the other ingredients. Serve hot.
BEEF TENDERLOIN WITH CHERRIES
BEEF TENDERLOIN WITH CHERRIES
by Giuliano Hazan
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 350g red cherries
- 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons of butter
- 4 x 175g beef tenderloin steaks
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons of grappa
- 1 tablespoon of fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon of tomato paste

Preparation
Wash and stem the cherries then cut them crossways, remove the stone and cut in half again. Put the vegetable oil and one tablespoon of the butter in a pan large enough to accommodate the steaks comfortably and place over a medium-high heat. When the oil and butter are hot and the butter is just beginning to colour, put the steaks in and cook without moving them for about four minutes, until well-browned. Turn them over and cook for another three to four minutes (for medium rare). Remove them from the pan and set aside on a platter. Season with salt and pepper.

Remove the pan from the heat and pour in the grappa. Stir with a wooden spoon to loosen the browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Return pan to the heat and add the cherries. Season with salt and generously with pepper and cook, stirring periodically, until the cherries become soft and begin to form a syrupy sauce.

Add the lemon juice and the tomato paste. Stir and cook for another minute, then turn the heat down to low and swirl in the remaining tablespoon of butter. When the butter has melted, put the steaks back in, and turn them in the sauce. Cover the pan for about a minute to allow the meat to heat through. Serve at once.

CAPPONE FARCITO (STUFFED CAPON)
by Gennaro Contaldo
Serves 6-8

Ingredients
- 1 large capon, boned (about 1.5kg)
- Salt and pepper
- 6 sage leaves, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon of thyme leaves
- 2 bay leaves, finely chopped
- 7 sprigs of rosemary, finely chopped
- 300g cooked chestnuts, roughly chopped
- 4 tablespoons of Parmigiano Reggiano, freshly grated
- 150g pancetta strips
- 180ml extra virgin olive oil
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 4 carrots, finely chopped
- 4 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 180ml Nardini Bianca
- 2 glasses of white wine

Preparation
Preheat the oven to 220°C/435°F/gas mark 7. Flatten the capon, skin side down. First season with a little salt and black pepper, rubbing them well into the flesh. Then sprinkle the chopped herbs evenly over the flesh, reserving half the rosemary, followed by the chestnuts and Parmesan cheese. Top with strips of pancetta, covering all the stuffing. Carefully roll the meat up and tie with butcher’s string, trying to retain the original shape of the capon. Rub all over with salt and pepper again.

Heat the olive oil in a large pot-roasting pan, add the meat and seal well on all sides. Stir in the onions, carrots, celery and reserved rosemary, and sweat the vegetables for a couple of minutes until softened. Add the grappa and wine. Cover with a lid and place in the preheated oven for about two hours. Check occasionally to ensure the liquid has not all evaporated, if necessary, add more liquid – water will suffice.

Remove from the oven and leave to stand for five minutes. Place slices of meat on a large serving dish, pour over the sauce and vegetables, and serve.
**DRUNKEN RABBIT**

Serves 6

**Ingredients**

- 1 rabbit cleaned and washed (set aside rabbit liver for later)
- 2 cloves of garlic, cut in large pieces
- Handful of black olives
- Handful of pine nuts, chopped
- Sprig of dried thyme, broken into pieces
- 1 shotglass of Nardini Bianca
- 1 shotglass of Nardini Riserva 15 Anni
- 1 glass of dry sparkling white wine
- 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cups of vegetable broth
- Salt and white pepper

**Preparation**

Place oil in frying pan and cook garlic pieces with pine nuts and olives. After a few minutes, add rabbit (constantly stirring so it doesn’t stick to the pan) until browned. Sprinkle dried thyme and increase the heat, pour the Bianca over the rabbit and mix until the grappa evaporates. Repeat, adding the Riserva 15 Anni until it evaporates, then the Marsala.

Next, add the vegetable broth then the sparkling wine which will foam up. Cover and lower flame and cook for 20 minutes, add the rabbit liver and cook for an additional 15 minutes – if it becomes too dry, add some more wine.

The gravy should be very flavourful so season to taste and serve.

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**GRAPPA FLAVOURED CHICKEN CUTLETS**

Serves 4

**Ingredients**

- 4 chicken cutlets
- 50g butter
- Sage leaves, to taste
- Salt and pepper
- 1 nutmeg, grated
- 1⁄4 cup of Nardini Bianca
- 1⁄4 cup of heavy (double) cream

**Preparation**

Sauté the chicken cutlets in the butter, along with the sage leaves, salt, pepper and nutmeg. Add the grappa and let it evaporate. After one minute, add the heavy (double) cream and let it cook over high heat until the cutlets are ready.

Place them on a tray, cover with the sauce and serve.
GRAPPA FLAVOURED CHICKEN CUTLETS
PORK CHOPS WITH GRAPPA AND FONTINA CHEESE
by Valentina Harris
Serves 4

Ingredients
4 thick pork chops, with bone
100g unsalted butter
4 bay leaves
1 sprig of fresh rosemary
4 tablespoons of Nardini Riserva Water
Sea salt and freshly milled black pepper
600g Fontina cheese, sliced

Preparation
Trim and check over the chops carefully. Melt the butter in an ovenproof casserole dish then seal the meat by searing. Add the bay leaves and rosemary. Lower the heat, season with salt and pepper and continue to cook the meat slowly over a low flame, basting it with the grappa and just enough water to keep it moist.

When the meat is almost cooked through, pre-heat the oven to 190°C/375°F/gas mark 5. Take the meat out of the pan and put it on a board. Create a pocket in both chops by cutting the meat (two thirds of the way on one side and all the way along the other).

Insert the prepared slices of cheese into each cut, and then close the pocket with a cocktail stick. Transfer the meat and all remaining juices to the oven and allow the meat to cook through until the cheese has melted. Remove the cocktail sticks and serve.
SEARED SCALLOPS WITH GRAPPA, ROSEMARY AND LEMON
by Valentina Harris
Serves 2

Choose nice big scallops that will cope best with being quickly seared over a very high heat. You can also use flattened chunks of monkfish if you prefer. Serve with really good, fat chips and a green salad. This is a yummy autumn lunchtime treat.

Ingredients
12 large king scallops, cleaned and ready to cook
4 teaspoons of fresh rosemary, finely chopped
1 clove of garlic, peeled and very finely chopped
8 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
2 small lemons, halved
8 tablespoons of Nardini Bianca
Fine sea salt and freshly milled black pepper

Preparation
Wash the scallops carefully, pat dry gently and put them in a shallow bowl. Heat a heavy frying pan with a mere smudge of oil brushed across the surface. Mix together the rosemary, garlic, olive oil and seasoning, pour over the scallops. Leave to stand for a few minutes until the pan is really hot, then slip in the scallops and cook very quickly on either side for two minutes, squeezing over the lemon juice as they cook, then drizzle with the grappa and burn off the alcohol; try to do this really fast or the scallops will become overcooked and turn rubbery.

Transfer the scallops to a warm serving dish. Pour any remaining marinade and lemon juice into the pan. Swirl it all around, scraping the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to dislodge any scraps and then pour it all, bubbling hot, over the cooked scallops.
GALANI
by Maria and Maurizio Martin from Ristorante da Fiore, Venice
Serves 8

Ingredients

- 4 eggs
- 100g granulated sugar
- 4 tablespoons of Nardini Bianca
- 4 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- 450g white flour
- 2 litres peanut or corn oil
- Pinch of salt
- Confectioner’s sugar

Preparation

Break the eggs into a large bowl, add sugar and mix.
Add the oil, grappa, salt and flour. Knead the dough until it is
no longer sticky, adding flour if necessary. Then put it into a
pasta maker to form thin sheets 30 centimetres long.

Heat all the oil in a frying pan to 180°C. To test the oil, drop
a piece of dry bread in it; when it sizzles, the oil is ready.
Lower the heat and delicately place the sheets in the oil
and turn when golden.

When finished, place on absorbent paper towel.
Sprinkle with white confectioner’s sugar and serve.

These crispy dessert wafers are traditionally served at the
Venice Carnevale every year.
PEAR SORBET
by Jamie Oliver
Serves 6

Sorbet is a great way to finish a meal if you don’t want anything too heavy. They can also be used as palate cleansers between courses. Either way, a sorbet is pretty much always made the same way – a fruit purée is mixed with a little stock syrup in the right quantity to make it freeze. It will become really shiny and soft to scoop.

This particular recipe for pear and grappa sorbet is a wicked combo and is one of my favourites, so give it a bash. It’s great served in a bowl with lovely soft fruits scattered over the top. A good-quality vodka instead of grappa would be quite interesting and, without wanting to sound like a nutcase, absinthe would be nice too, but to be honest most good supermarkets and off-licences sell grappa these days. Nardini is a particularly good brand.

This recipe will make enough for six people to have a couple of scoops each, but for four you can make this amount and keep the rest in the freezer for another day. I suggest you use a fairly shallow earthenware or thick porcelain dish that you can put in the freezer beforehand – this speeds up the freezing process for the sorbet.

Try to get really ripe pears – even the ones they sell cheaply in the market. If they’re really ripe and soft to the touch, simply remove the skin and put the flesh into a bowl – you won’t need to cook them at all. This is how I did it in Italy when the fruit guy called Pippo at the weekly Teranuova Bracciolini market near Montavarchi gave me a whole tray of pears for free. Go and say hello and he might do the same for you!

Ingredients
- 200g caster sugar
- 200ml water
- 1kg soft pears, peeled, quartered and cores removed
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 55ml grappa, to taste

Preparation
First of all put the sugar and water into a pan on the hob. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for three minutes. Add your quartered pears and, unless they’re super soft, continue to simmer for five minutes. Remove from the heat, leave to one side for five minutes, then add the lemon juice (minus the pips) and zest. Pour everything into a food processor and whiz to a purée, then push the mixture through a coarse sieve into the dish in which you want to serve it.

Add the grappa, give it a good stir, and taste. The grappa shouldn’t be overbearing or too powerful – it should be subtle and work well with the pears. However, different brands do vary in strength and flavour, so add to taste. (This isn’t an excuse to add the whole bottle, though, because if you use too much alcohol the sorbet won’t freeze.) Put the dish into the freezer and whisk it up with a fork every half-hour – you’ll see it becoming pale in colour. After a couple of hours it will be ready. The texture should be nice and scoopable. Delicious served with ventagli or other delicate crunchy biscuits.

This sorbet will last in the freezer for a couple of days – after that it will crystallize.
PEAR SORBET
SEMIFREDDO WITH GRAPPA AND MARINATED DATES
by Riccardo De Pra, Dolada restaurant, Belluno, Veneto
Serves 4

Ingredients
95ml Nardini Riserva
165g sugar
6 egg yolks
450ml heavy (double) cream
4g gelatin
3g each of powdered cinnamon, anise and liquorice
40g poppy seeds
600ml water
100g sugar
40g Nardini Bianca
100g dates
5 mint leaves

Preparation
Pour grappa and sugar in a pan and heat to 118°C. In the meantime beat the eggs, preferably with a professional mixer, slowly pour in the grappa and sugar mixture and continue beating until thickened. Soak the gelatin in cold water, squeeze out moisture and place in the microwave with a tiny amount of the cream. Whip the remaining cream. Add the egg yolk mixture to the whipped cream, add half the spices, poppy seeds, then the rest of the egg mixture. Fill the semifreddo forms in layers alternating with the rest of the spices and put in freezer for a day.

To make the marinated dates, make a syrup by boiling the water with the sugar and let it cool. Meanwhile cut the dates in half lengthways, remove pit and marinate them in the syrup that has been prepared in advance, with mint leaves and grappa.

Place three slices of semifreddo on plate and garnish with the candied dates.
The Nardini family of grappas, *aperitivi* and *liquori*

“Our aim is to continue making grappa to the same high standards and traditions established by Bortolo Nardini in the 18th century.”

Antonio Guarda-Nardini
Nardini Bianca
50% abv (100% proof)

Far and away Italy’s best-selling premium grappa, Nardini Bianca remains unchallenged as the connoisseur’s benchmark. Authentically high in strength, Nardini Bianca fills the palate with an exciting sparkle, then - thanks to a fine balance and extraordinary distillation quality - surprises the drinker with a remarkably gentle follow-through. It’s not hard to appreciate why this grappa continues to be valued for its digestive capabilities as well as its excellent flavour. Nardini Bianca was awarded a coveted Silver Medal in the 2006 International Wine & Spirit Competition.

The ideal temperature at which to drink Nardini Bianca is 8-10°C (46-50°F). Some prefer it chilled in the fridge or freezer and while this masks some of the ‘sparkle’, it can render the drink more accessible to anyone trying grappa on its own for the first time. Avoid serving neat grappa over ice; like other grape-based spirits, it doesn’t blend in the glass in the same way as whisky or vodka.

Nose:  Hints of jasmine tea, lemon and chocolate, with honey notes

Palate:  Full and intense with cinnamon spice, lemon zest, dark chocolate, honey and gingerbread

Finish:  Warm, with jasmine tea, gingerbread and lemon

Try also:  Capovilla Grappa di Bassano
             Da Ponte Grappa Italiana
             Domenis Storica Nera
             Grappa Nonino Friulana
Not well known to many outside Veneto, Nardini Mandorla has begun to prove popular in a range of tasting events involving the public as well as professional bar staff.

While the almond aroma is well to the fore, Nardini employ a cherry distillate to balance the nut's naturally bitter flavour. As a result, Mandorla enjoys a slightly sweet aftertaste, making it a natural 'first-time' grappa for those new to the spirit. The same characteristics also render the spirit ideal for espresso drinkers who choose not to take sugar with their coffee.

Mandorla achieved the highest rating - "Superb" - in Paul Pacult's prestigious and independent Spirit Review (2005). In addition, Mandorla was awarded a Silver Medal at the International Wine & Spirit Competition 2006.

Nose: Highly floral with clear marzipan, cherry and lemon notes

Palate: Intense and nutty, with hints of lemon meringue and vanilla

Finish: Slightly sweet and spicy, lingering with cherries and vanilla
Nardini Riserva
50% abv (100% proof)

Matured in Slavonian oak barrels from eastern Croatia for five years, Nardini Riserva enjoys a delicate sophistication that has made it hugely popular all over the world. The subtle wood ageing imbues a degree of sweetness to this grappa on the palate, while delivering a delightful warmth in the finish, which some people consider reminiscent of a lowland malt whisky.

Described as "exquisite" by drinks writer Malcolm Gluck, Nardini Riserva was awarded the accolade 'Best in Class' in the 2006 International Wine & Spirit Competition.

The ideal temperature at which to drink Nardini Riserva is 16-18°C (61-64°F). Again, avoid serving Riserva neat over ice, like other grape-based spirits, it doesn't blend in the glass.

**Nose:** Supple oak aroma with jasmine tea, cinnamon, lemon meringue and mixed fruit, extending with apple, pear skins and honey

**Palate:** Smooth, elegantly oily with distinct oaky tones, leading to jasmine tea, clove-baked apples and honey, animated by spicy cinnamon with lemon meringue hints

**Finish:** Balanced oak, spice and cooked fruits

**Try also:** Bertagnoli Grappino Oro
Maschio Marcello Grappa di Cabernet Riserva Speciale
Nardini Riserva 15 Anni
50% abv (100% proof)

Nardini Riserva 15 Anni is a prestigious bottling created to celebrate the 225th anniversary of the Nardini distillery in Bassano del Grappa. In a world of constant reinvention, it is instructive to bear in mind that this was the first new product introduction from Nardini for 76 years. The last launch would have taken place in the 1930s!

Aged for 15 years in Slavonian oak casks, the grappa is soft and intense with complex flavours derived from the remarkably long ageing period.

Some say it is reminiscent of an Armagnac or even an Islay malt whisky. Either way, it is very much a post-prandial grappa combining extremely well with espresso and strong dark cigars, such as Partagas Series D No 4.

Nose: Fragrant, distinct and full with overtones of wood and resin

Palate: Soft, intense with vanilla and tobacco notes

Finish: Sweet and complex with hints of wood, spice and tobacco

Try also: Gaja Grappa Costa Russi
Rivetto Grappa di Nebbiolo Riserva
Nardini Ruta
43% abv (86% proof)

Each bottle of Nardini Ruta features a large sprig of rue, a bitter herb that gives this unusual grappa a delightful herbal flavour. Although the infusion is an acquired taste for some, Nardini Ruta has many champions: it was always a personal favourite of Aldo Signetti, the legendary head barman at Dukes Hotel in London’s St James’s Place. Dale DeGroff is also a famous advocate.

In homeopathy, rue is sometimes used as a fever suppressant but, according to Italian folklore, it not only increases male potency, but also assists women to relax. A useful combination, it would seem.

**Nose:** Herbaceous and floral, redolent of a freshly mown lawn in a summer rainshower

**Palate:** Intense and dry, yet delicately astringent, with finely balanced herbal botanics

**Finish:** Gentle bitterness, with a sweetish, grassy follow-through that goes on and on...

**Try also:** Candolini Grappa Ruta
Bitter-sweet - the Italian aperitivo

The concept of 'yin and yang' is central to almost every great Italian aperitivo - it's just a question of degree. Campari, Aperol, Martini, Cynar, Averna and Ramazzotti all display bitter-sweet qualities - and Nardini aperitivi share the same heritage, the difference being an alcohol base that is entirely grappa-derived.

Of course, the sophisticated bitter-sweet style is not to everyone's taste: the role of the aperitivo is to cleanse the palate, preparing the mouth for the culinary delights to follow, whether at lunchtime or pre-dinner. Amaro-type beverages are especially interesting. With the addition of soda or sparkling water, they perform admirably before a meal, yet served straight or over ice, they are probably more effective as a digestive - in a clinical sense - than any spirit. This is thanks in no small way to the homeopathic properties of the herbs used to make amari, such as gentian and peppermint.

There is a resurgence of interest in aperitivi and amari throughout Italy, especially amongst the younger generation, who enjoy the drinks long, more often than not as an alternative to beer.
Nardini Amaro
31% abv (62% proof)

Flavoured principally with bitter orange, peppermint and gentian, Nardini Amaro is widely acclaimed in the north-east of Italy as the finest example of the genre. Enjoyed straight up, or with ice and soda, bitter-sweet Amaro is intensely flavoured with the peppermint well forward and a delightful liquorice-like aftertaste.

The latter is largely due to the gentian, a root-based ingredient long-appreciated for its digestive qualities.

Nose: Fresh, mint-cool with herbal notes
Palate: Sweet at first followed by bitter fruits and peppermint
Finish: Well balanced and cleansing, with a vibrant aftertaste

Try also: Averna, Cynar, Ramazotti

Nardini Bitter
24% abv (48% proof)

Nardini Bitter is a traditional and distinctive red aperitivo in the bitter-sweet style made famous by Campari.

Rather less sharp, but with a green and herbaceous flavour, Nardini’s special recipe features an exotic blend of botanicals including; bitter orange, sweet orange, chinese rhubarb root, gentian and roman absinthe. Since Nardini Bitter does not contain cochineal - the beetle-derived colouring agent - it is suitable for vegan and kosher diets.

Taking equally well to a twist of lemon as a slice of orange, Bitter is best enjoyed with ice and soda or mixed with fresh citrus juices. It also performs admirably as one half (with Nardini Rabarbaro) of the stunning, yet simple, Mezzo e Mezzo Inglese cocktail (see page 53).

Nose: Rich, herbal, with obvious mixed citrus notes
Palate: Bitter-sweet, with a distinct flavour of caramelised oranges
Finish: Grassy botanicals with bitter orange and a gentle hint of aniseed

Try also: Campari
Nardini Rosso

24% abv (48% proof)

Softer, richer and sweeter than Nardini Bitter, Nardini Rosso shares the same citric qualities, but replaces the natural sharpness of Roman absinthe and bitter orange with quinine and natural vanilla.

Rosso is extremely accessible as a pre-prandial aperitivo, especially amongst those who find traditional bitter-sweet varieties too intense on the palate.

Nose: Vermouth-like, with distinct citric and vanilla notes

Palate: Sweet, delicate and velvety, with overtones of citrus and tonic water

Finish: Fruity with and slightly bitter follow-through

Try also: Dubonnet (and Nardini Rosso is also an excellent alternative to red vermouth in a Manhattan)

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Nardini Rabarbaro

19% abv (38% proof)

Highly aromatic and delicious with a unique flavour reminiscent of caramelised fruit, Nardini Rabarbaro is derived largely from the Chinese rhubarb root, a component found in several leading Italian aperitivos.

Superb over ice or with soda, Rabarbaro can be mixed 50:50 with Rosso and soda to make the Mezzo e Mezzo (see page 53), a simple cocktail that has been enjoyed for years in Nardini’s legendary grapperia on the old bridge at Bassano.

Nose: Redolent of stewed prunes and rich fruit cake

Palate: More sweet than bitter, with a strong flavour of caramelised fruit

Finish: Tart, fruity and herbal, with a great deal of length

Try also: Zucca Rabarbaro
Nardini liquori: The sweeter experience

Nardini liquori are just what they sound like - ‘liqueurs’ - in that they have a comparatively high sugar content. Some enjoy these straight up and even freezer-chilled, typically after a meal. Others choose to attenuate the sweetness with ice or soda. All have the potential to perform as exciting cocktail ingredients. As with other drinks in the distiller’s portfolio, the alcohol content of Nardini’s liquori is grappa-based.

Nardini Tagliatella
35% abv (70% proof)

Tagliatella may be a bitter-sweet fruity liqueur of exceptional complexity but it was created largely by chance. In the 18th and 19th centuries the grapperia in Bassano sold the Nardini drink range on tap as well as in bottles. As various tap handles were used, they would drip and the bartenders captured the leakage. Since the word ‘taglio’ is Italian for ‘a cut’ and the drink was a cut or cocktail of the other distillates offered by Nardini, it was nicknamed Tagliatella.

When the grapperia dispensed with its old copper serving vessels, many regular customers continued to request their Tagliatella. Today the drink is an infusion of grappa, cherry juice, orange and several other natural, aromatic components used by Nardini across a range of products. Usually served over ice, Tagliatella makes an excellent grappa-based cocktail, especially when combined with fruit juices and sodas.

Nose: Clear nose of caramelised fruit, led by orange and a hint of cherry

Palate: Bitter-sweet and herbaceous, laced with orange and cherries

Finish: Dry and citric, with a pleasantly tart follow-through
Nardini Ginepro
45% abv (90% proof)

Rather like a rich and generous gin in character, Nardini Ginepro is exquisite over crushed ice with a twist of lemon or a dash of bitters. While its name correctly implies it has a grappa base, Nardini Ginepro del Grappa is actually so-called because it features juniper harvested from the foothills of Mount Grappa. Other botanicals include aliprani – a secret recipe of local herbs and spices. The result is a powerful liqueur with the potential to attract drinkers who have stayed away from conventional gins. Ginepro is a highly versatile cocktail component, making an excellent Collins (without recourse to gomma syrup) and performing as a key ingredient in a range of accessible martini cocktails. Awarded a Silver medal at the 2006 International Wine & Spirit Competition, Nardini Ginepro was also given the accolade of ‘Best In Class’ (Herbal Liqueur category).

**Nose:** Redolent of fresh pine, with caraway and aniseed-like notes

**Palate:** Sweet, intense and luxurious, packed with a complex range of botanicals, lead firmly by juniper

**Finish:** Warm and generous, with a delightful peppery finish of juniper and caraway

**Try also:** Hayman’s 1820 Gin Liqueur

Nardini Acqua di Cedro
19% abv (38% proof)

Nardini Acqua di Cedro is a sweet, grappa-based liqueur made with cedro lemons, known as citron. If the drink is limoncello-like in concept, it is crystalline in appearance rather than cloudy and altogether more sophisticated, thanks in part to its uniquely dry aftertaste. This is due to the cedro, which while being much larger (and uglier) than a normal lemon, has an especially tart zest. The liqueur is excellent refrigerator-chilled and served ice-cold with a twist. As a palate cleanser or after dinner treat try a sgroppino: one part vodka, one part Acqua di Cedro and a scoop of lemon ice cream. Blend and serve immediately; it should have a thick drinking consistency.

**Nose:** Rich lemon balm with floral notes

**Palate:** Viscous and sweet, cut with a lemon sharpness

**Finish:** Lingering sweetness, backed by a surprisingly dry follow-through

**Try also:** Limoncello from Amalfi
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For additional information about Nardini and Bassano del Grappa, visit www.nardini.it

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