

Salute

A toast to Italy's classic cocktails.

BY IVY GRACIE

Like its art and architecture, its couture and cuisine, the Boot's classic cocktails never go out of style. Neither does the art of cocktail making. Here's a primer on imbibing Italian style.

Italians don't really drink for the sake of drinking and rarely drink without eating. Instead, they enjoy an *aperitivo*, a pre-dinner libation designed to awaken the senses and arouse the appetite. As even slight intoxication is considered distasteful, this is a great way to unwind without completely unraveling.

Classic cocktail choices tend toward the dry end of the flavor spectrum, favoring hints of pepper from Campari, bitter orange rind from Aperol, and herbal notes from dry (white) or sweet (red) vermouth and gin. Other options include a crisp, bouncy Prosecco; bold, tannic red wines like Barbera and Barolo; or red or white vermouth on the rocks. Accompanying appetizers run the gamut from potato chips and olives to crostini, bruschetta, and sliced meats and cheeses.



Here are three classically cool Italian cocktails intended to be sipped slowly, savored with small bites, and never overdone.

Americano

1.5 oz. red vermouth
1.5 oz. Campari
seltzer
orange slice or twist

Fill a lowball glass with ice. Stir in vermouth and Campari. Top with seltzer and garnish with orange.

Aperol Spritz

1.5 oz. Aperol
6 oz. Prosecco
seltzer
orange slice

Fill a large wine glass with ice. Add Aperol and Prosecco, and splash with seltzer. Garnish with orange.

Negroni

1.5 oz. red vermouth
1.5 oz. Campari
1.5 oz. dry gin
orange slice or twist

Fill a lowball glass with ice. Stir in vermouth, Campari and gin. Garnish with orange. **AL**