

BEER RENAISSANCE IN ITALY

Particular products, with unique characteristics

In Italy, the per-capita consumption of beer has been steadily increasing since the last 30 years. The turning points were held in 1996 and 1997 with the opening of several microbreweries, of which most are still open. They produce beer with unique characteristics. Beer in Italy is now a fashion, no longer a curiosity, sold in the world of wine bar and shops.

Few sectors have seen major changes of the brewing one and our readers know this very well. Many of the transactions of the recent past were due to the interest caused by an “attractive sector”, which unfortunately is having a crisis as, with the current decline in consumption, many of these were supported by a financial risk.

In Italy the situation is better, because facing a steady increase over the past 30 years, which brought the per-capita consumption from 12.8 to 31.1 liters, the last drop year was limited to 4 per cent.

The drink is chosen by 42 per cent of consumers on Saturday and Sunday, against 39 per cent

who prefer wine; an Italian of two, between 18 and 44 years, believes that the image of beer in Italy is better than 5 years ago.

The households have been affected positively: about 2 of 3 Italians (61.6 per cent, rising to 75.6 per cent in the case of 18-44 year old), consider a good beer perfectly adequate for dinner, with friends at home (Makno search).

Advertising campaigns

Credit also goes to the long wave of popular advertising campaigns, including the first: “Who drinks beer lives 100 years”, dates 1907 and the one commissioned in the 80’s by the Brewer Association with a famous and engaging

character named Renzo Arbore as a testimonial. Few claims were more positive than those designed for the occasion, including: “Beer ... and you know what you are drinking” and “who drinks beer has always twenty years.”

Forattini, a notorious cartoonist, drew a series of famous people and their relationship with the beer, presented in an irreverent way, in line with his style. This, along with a sea change in society, customs and food habits, led to a strong growth in consumption. Since then, no more campaigns have been made of the same incisiveness, although Assobirra is strongly committed around the three areas of Taste, Nutrition/Health and Responsible Consumption.

Part of the diet

The product has become part of the diet of the Italians without inferiority complexes. Handicap flashy, it’s the advertisement directed exclusively to target youth, essentially male, while the average age of consumption is raised and women represent

Photo: Cascinazza

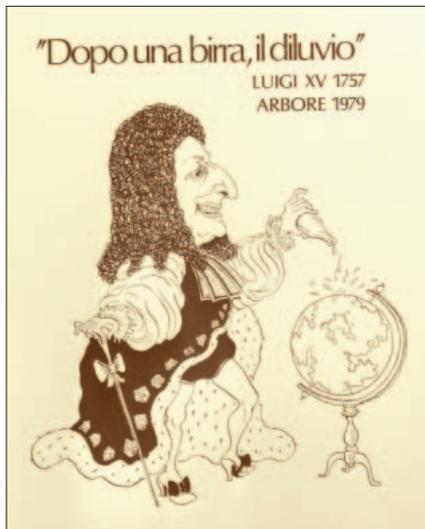


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33 per cent of consumers. But even situations that seem immutable can change: the fact has been the emergence of craft breweries and brew pubs.

In a world where there is a spasmodic research of productivity growth, acquisition of competitors, "critical mass", economies of



Part of a very successful campaign: cartoon from Forattini

Beer in Italy: the facts

Total beer sold: 17,800,000 hl

Production: 13,273,000 hl, 66.2 % of total consumption

Per capita consumption: 29.4 liters.

Sales: Off Trade 55 %, Ho.re.ca 45 %

Export: 1,503,000 hl, +77 % in four years

Import: 6,000,000 hl, -2 % compared to 2008 (57 % from Germany)

Persons employed: direct 4,000 (+28 % compared to 2004).

Brands present: 1,500, double the figure for 2005.

Excise duties: 25/35 % on the selling price

scale, the St. Joseph Sorrento was founded in 1983, to produce few hundred hectoliters per year.

On 1986, in Arco, on the tip of Lake Garda, two friends joined by the passion for sailing, Gianfranco Oradini and Luitpold the Prince of Bavaria, founded the Jolly Garda. It matters little if their experience ended in 1994, that bureaucracy would later

make it difficult, for several years, the lives of their rivals: the die was casted.

Even the big beer companies, who initially gave a disdainful attitude, because the thought of losing even 1 per cent of market share seemed to be a sacrifice too difficult to live with, have accepted the idea, even including some of the artisans in the association



Filippo Terzaghi, director of Assobirra: "Repositioning the top of the drink is a common goal in Italy who produces beer."

because, as Filippo Terzaghi, director of Assobirra "repositioning the top of the drink is a common goal in Italy who produces beer", thereby naturally creating discontent among the "pure and hard" who had suffered so much in its infancy, set up in a different association.

Proliferating craft breweries

The turning points were held in 1996 and 1997 with the opening of several breweries, of which most are still open: The Baladin of Teo Musso, Beba of Borio brothers, Italian Brewery, Lambrate Brewery and others, facilitated by a decree of October 1995, which removed some red tape. The plants are now proliferating: almost 290 who, while represen-

Table 1: 289 microbreweries in Italy: where are they located?

Valle d'Aosta	1
Piemonte	40
Lombardia	48
Veneto	23
Trentino Alto Adige	15
Friuli Venezia Giulia	16
Liguria	12
Emilia Romagna	23
Toscana	22
Umbria	4
Marche	11
Abruzzo	7
Molise	3
Lazio	9
Campania	15
Basilicata	2
Puglia	12
Calabria	5
Sicilia	9
Sardegna	12
Total	289

ting only 1 per cent of the market by volume, have a production value of 2/3 times higher.

Consumers have at their disposal a wider range of beers, greater choice of fresh craft beers, regional

and local, related to the territory. It's a fashion, no longer a curiosity, sold in the world of wine bar and shops, so much that Fontanafredda, a large very well known winery, has included Baladin beers in its portfolio. Small factories mainly produce particular products, with unique characteristics, much more flavoured than industrial beer.

Italian beer style

But a major reason for success is inherent in the nature of the Italians, who have made their main feature, sometimes negative – the difficulty of being "framed" in a logical area, and not to be exceeded – in a winning plus, linked to their innate creativity and imagination.

After the first time linked to productions inspired by the British or German school, they released their inspiration, creating an "Italian style", original, a true renaissance brewing. Here then is the use of Garfagnana chestnuts, juniper berries, pearl barley, cardamom, Savona bitter orange, strawberry honey, blackcurrant, Himalayan spices, hot springs, barriques for fermentation and maturation.

Or brewers fulfilling a social function, such as recovery of inmates in the prison house of Saluzzo, near Turin, whose beer called Tosta, is now even in the U.S., or adaptation of old abandoned buildings, sometimes linked to religious uses. The beer industry had a positive effect from this new age, as Filippo Terzaghi confirmed: "The strategy to overcome the crisis revolves around the development of a growing product and consumption beer culture during the meal, which is closely related to a responsible and self-restraint approach to the beer".

Beer and haute cuisine

In Italy the restaurant guides began a few years ago to review the premises which pay particular attention to the brewing world. The Gambero Rosso one included 276, more than 20 per cent over last year and twice as much as four years ago, the Espresso one identified nearly 200. Positive news from the world of bouncing sommelier, who has finally taken note of the product.



The restaurant Le Baladin of Rome has 40 drafts and gives the possibility to Italian microbreweries, to propose up to three products.

Theresianer beer

At the World Beer Championship 2009, organized by the Beverage Testing Institute in Chicago, Theresianer beer won a silver medal with the “Theresianer Premium Lager” and two gold



medals with the “Theresianer Premium Pils“ and ”Theresianer Vienna”. The last two, thanks to their score, deserved the title of “exceptional”.

The award is in addition to those received during the prestigious “International Competition”, sponsored by Deutsche Landwirtschaft-Gesellschaft, where the gold medals were awarded on 2006 to the “Vienna” and on 2005 to the “Strong Ale”, while “Theresianer Premium Pils” deserved the silver medal in 2006.

The project of Theresianer’s Pre-sident, Martino Zanetti, born as a bet 10 years ago, has been in this way crowned by the success.

Nearly 200 employees, a production of 20,000 hl, present throughout Italy and worldwide, Theresianer has been able to combine the traditional craftsmanship and industrial vision, targeting a product of absolute quality, picking up the lesson of Austrian beer, present in Trieste over two hundred years.

www.theresianer.com

Birrificio Foglie d’Erba

Located in Forni di Sopra, near Udine, produces the only PEFC beer certified brand, which is issued by the same name, to the products using elements from forests managed with certain requirements of sustainability.

Among the beers produced, most of them top fermented, Hopfelia, flavoured with resin mountain pine forests of the Friulian Dolomites Park and spices (cinnamon and cardamom) from the Fair Circuit and Ulysses, very hoppy, with

chocolate and coffee hints and in the aftertaste. A percentage of 5 per cent on any purchase is given to solidarity.

www.birreinmontagna.it

Carrobiolo Beer

It is prepared in the convent of Barnabites, running since 1571, at the initiative of David, Barnabite father and of Peter Fontana, layman enthusiast and expert on beer. The two are planning to use the wide spaces of the



convent (the Barnabites at Monza are only six), to give economic support to the monastery and its activities and create an original recipe, including the use of a local organic wheat.

Production is expected to be 300 hl year in total, divided among different types of beer, from low to high fermentation, until a Belgian inspired beer of 9 degrees, made with a blend of five grains, re-fermented in the bottle with addition of local honey. Artisanal sale methods include the least possible travel, delivery only to pubs and restaurants in Monza, except the trip by helicopter to take her to a shelter hut on the mountain, few km far away.

www.birradelcarrobiolo.it

Birra Milano

Descendant of Andrea dell'Armi which in 1810 organized in Monaco of Bavaria, the party celebrating the wedding of Crown Prince Ludwig to Princess Therese of Saxony, which later became



the Oktoberfest, it is natural that Renato dell'Armi, with a call like that, tried again with his ancestors beverage.

What better time then producing a beer called Milan, whose labels playing a wonderful poster of Mario Borgoni of 1907, with a beautiful silhouette of a woman holding a flute with the background of the Dome?

The agreement with Massimiliano Orsatti, marketing manager of the Municipality of Milan, gave the right to print, on the back of the bottle, the cross and shield with the ducal crown and a long red stripe, symbol of the city, in exchange for a royalty of 2 per cent on sales, to finance awareness campaigns against alcohol abuse. Dell'Armi produce in Paguba Brewery, near Treviso, all top fermented beers, 250 hl year, which often relate to other territories: San Marco, Padova and Montegrappa Beer.

info@birramorgana.com

Ora et labora

“Monks in the early Middle Age already produced beer, Belgian Trappist some of the most famous around the world, so why not start with this activity, since the rule of St. Benedict urges us to live of our work?”.

So says Father Claudio, of the Benedictine monastery of Saints Peter and Paul, 10 km from Milan, a place where time seems to stand still. Founded in 1971, incorporates an old renovated farmhouse, now inhabited by 15 monks, whose main activity until the early '90s was the stable, but one of the cyclical milk crisis, forced them to find an alternative livelihood. A permanence of two brothers living in some monasteries in Belgium and the partial funding of the initiative by the Cariplo Foundation, have helped to build a facility of great quality for their needs.

“We produce 35,000 bottles 75 cl of two highly fermented beers, which sell through retail outlets of other monasteries, wineries and wine bars” Father Claudio says, “and a dealer in Milan, specialized in high quality wines, has succeeded in introducing our beer in the drink menu of 40 prestigious restaurants

in Milan. Perhaps in the near future we will make a third product, without diminishing the time for our seven moments of prayer, the first at 5.20, the last one at 20.45.”

www.birracascinazza.it

Le Baladin

Even quoted by The New York Times, Matterino Musso, Teo said, is a real character. Helped by a very marked physiognomy, more rock star than master brewer, from a desire to know, experience and great communications skills, Teo was able, in a land where wine is a religion – Cuneo – to impose an absolutely original style, with products that sometimes are linked to Egypt, or Belgium brewing tradition, which astonish and fascinate every time.



“Teo” Matterino Musso

Exports in US, Spain, Australia, Great Britain, sold in wine shops, wine bars, 1,700 restaurants all over Italy, with a production which has reached 5,000 hl, Teo is one of the most significant artists of the Renaissance Italian beer. The restaurant Le Baladin of Rome, opened in September last year, has 40 drafts and gives the possibility to Italian micro-breweries, to propose up to three products, a total of 100 different real ales, a true “temple of beer craft.”

www.lebaladin.it