



Turpentine or a "Digestivo?"

This drink is not for the faint of heart or those with a weak, worn out esophagus.

Grappa—the turpentine-like *digestivo* (those after meal drinks said to aid in one's gastric performance) that will get your meal processing through your system in no time. Made from the sludge of the grapes already squeezed to death to make wine, it becomes a potent drink of between 35-60% alcohol.

Originally thought of as the poor man's drink, it is now considered to be a connoisseur-worthy distinguished beverage. How did this fairy tale transformation happen?

Most likely, the distillation process was developed by the 8th century in the Middle East. Moorish crusades spread not only mayhem, but distillation know-how, as well. The production of "acquavite" (water of life), the term used for distilled pomace (pomace is all the wine debris leftover: seeds, skins, etc.), was underway in Salerno by the 1300s. It wasn't a beverage for pleasure, however. It was, instead, a perfect liquid to preserve medicinal herbs sold by the Benedictine Monks. (Preserve? That's how

powerful it is!)

It's easy to imagine an old farmer somewhere on a bone-chilling Italian night enjoying the warm, fuzzy feeling that came with slurping down the monks' tonic. Very soon other folks caught on, as well — and grappa production in the northern regions of Trentino-Alto Adige and Val d'Aosta took off. The poor man's drink was now a valuable source for easing the work of a hard life and those cold winter's nights.

Since it caught on, it eventually also "caught" the eyes of the officials and it became a licensed—and taxed--product.



There's a happy farmer in this house with his grappa to keep him warm.



A distillery in Bassano del Grappa

The claim that grappa is uniquely Italian can be credited to the efforts of one man. Bartolo Nardini. He made his way from Trentino to Veneto in 1779 in search of a place to build a distillery. His choice of a spot next to the town of Bassano del Grappa was a good one and Italy's first grapperia was established.

The Nardini name and fine grappa still go together to this day. Nardini only knew his product as "aquavite di vinaccia," literally translated as "water of life from grape pomace" – a term still included on the Nardini label today. The term grappa wasn't in widespread use until 1951 and sophistication developed along with its popularity.



Most people are introduced to grappa after an Italian dinner and a few glasses of wine (you need that wine at dinner to convince you to drink the grappa afterwards). An after-dinner espresso is almost a requirement in Italy, but once asked, most will cry out, "Oh, no, I can't! The caffeine will

keep me up all night." So how to deal with that late night caffeine?

"Correct" it with a **caffè corretto**, of course! Simply splash a dose of

grappa in with your caffè...correction accomplished. If you think you need a bit more “correction,” request **ammazza caffè** – a coffee killer. Toss back one cup of espresso, immediately follow with a shot of grappa... sweet dreams are guaranteed as it will dull both the coffee’s taste and its effects (and probably you, too). If you’re not feeling quite that daring, a **resentin** (small rinse) might be in order: once the espresso is downed, a few drops of grappa are swirled about the cup to collect the last clinging remnants of coffee...and down it goes.



Chef Pipero's Carbonara

Let's talk Pasta Carbonara for a minute. The best carbonara in Italy? There is one name that stands out in the “top ten” versions of carbonara in Italy – Alessandro Pipero, maître and owner of Pipero, the starred restaurant in Rome.

Their carbonara is a legend, but he has an even further embellished version with the unusual extra touch of grappa. You can spend a good deal of time (and many steps) to make it. To give you the opportunity, we've put his recipe on the Club's website under LaCucina [Just click here](#) But if you're more inclined to go with a **very** quick grappa version, put your fork down and [click here](#).

One change we suggest: use bacon (guanciale in Italian) instead of processed ham slices.



The super quick version done to a snappy tune!

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