

The Italian Modernists

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"La Fleurette", Birrifico Italiano, Lurago Marinone 3,8% alc. vol.
Grilled peaches with goat cheese over baby arugula and some garden color

In addition to whole roses and violets, citrus blossom honey, and elderberries, this dry, delicate beer also incorporates a little bit of black pepper, "because," as brewer Agostino Arioli likes to point out, "love is also spicy." Inspired nine years ago by a poetic bout of newfound love, La Fleurette is his "celebration beer of personal happiness."

"Wayan", Birreria Baladin, Piozzo 5,8%
Antipasti

Brewed with five different grains and twelve undisclosed spices, Teo Musso's kaleidoscopic take on the Belgian saison is a good introduction to his eccentric style. Coming from a brewer who pipes music into his fermenters via headphones and purposefully accentuates aspects of beers that others would consider critical flaws, Wayan, named after his 9-year old daughter, is actually quite tame.

"Chiostro", Piccolo Birrifico, Apricale 5,0%
Traditional green pesto with peas, pinenuts & penne

Grande wormwood, or *Artemisia absinthium*, is one of the three key herbs in the spirit absinthe. It's a little misleading, then, that Chiostro is labeled an "absinthe singel" (the designation *singel* to indicate its incorporation of a Belgian abbey yeast), but the premise is no less striking. Here the leaves and flowers are added alongside the hops, directly in the kettle, to contribute an herbal hint to the initial aroma, and add dryness and bitterness to the finish.

"Nora", Birreria Baladin, Piozzo 6,8%
Chickpea & kamut flour shrimp fritters served alongside homemade herbed butter

Another example of Italian poetry in brewing, this sweetish golden ale is a loose, imaginative interpretation of an ancient Egyptian beer, brewed in honor of its namesake, Musso's wife of Algerian descent. Kamut, an ancient cereal grain with its roots in the Fertile Crescent, and myrrh, that Biblical aromatic resin, are the standout additions here.

"Strada San Felice", Birrifico Grado Plato, Viale Fasano 8,0%
Pan-fried soppressata over slow cooked tomatoes & rosemary grilled polenta

Chestnuts play a central role in the Italian food psyche, and as such, feature prominently in their brewing. As a native starch, it's seen as not only as a dietary staple, but moreover as a symbol of their connection to the land. This one, labeled as an ale but actually brewed with cold, bottom fermenting yeast, puts wood-fire roasted, local Piedmont chestnuts on center display.

"BB10", Birrifico Barley, Maracalagonis 10,0%
Chocolate infused eggplant caponata with seeded crackers

The name "*Dexi*", while indicating the alcohol level of this unique Barley offering, does nothing to indicate the oddness within: Cannonau wine grapes, the Sardinian varietal that dates back to at least the 14th century. In an area that's embracing wine and beer equally as the perfect accompaniment to good food, this beer is emblematic of the blurred line between them.

Intermezzo of Meyer lemon, wild mint & pineapple sage granita

"ReAle EXTRA", Birra del Borgo, Borgorose..... 6,4%
Sunday-style rainbow peppers sautéed with mild Italian pork sausage

Brewed with the unorthodox method of a single, ten-minute long hop addition, this IPA bears little resemblance to what we've come to think of the style. Del Borgo says their "main goal when brewing a beer is to solve the riddle between using unusual ingredients and creating perfect food pairings," which in this case has resulted in an atypically earthy, farmhouse variation on the theme of hop-centric beers.

"Palanfrina", Birrifico Troll, Vernante 9,0%
Black Mission fig & honey cake, served upside-down

In summing up the mission of their small brewpub, Troll states: "Sun, snow, streams & forests, music, peace and joy are the emotions in our beers and our dishes." This is a strong, tawny ale, made with local chestnuts in tribute to their role in aiding their survival during the war, and is, as the brewer says, "brewed from tradition and in search of synergy with nature."

"Verdi", Birrifico del Ducato, Roncole Verdi di Busseto 8,2%
The tiniest bite of chili pepper chocolate

Lastly, with an espresso-like bitterness and hints of cocoa, this imperial stout is brewed with chile pepper, and is paired per the brewer's instructions as one would similarly do with an after-dinner cup of coffee.