

THE VICTORIA BAILLIAGE OF THE CHAÎNE GOES TO TUSCANY ITALY FOR CROSTINI



On Friday night, 7p.m. April 30th on the West Coast, it was 5a.m. In Tuscany. Why is that of interest to anyone? Eighteen intrepid Victoria Bailliage Members set out to explore the mysteries of the traditional Italian “Aperitivo” at 7pm, when the locals typically enjoy it. For us to do so, our delightful guide, Beatrice, (Bea) from *Virtual Eating Europe Tours* was on line with us through ZOOM, looking bright-eyed and ready to roll at 5am at her home in Tuscany!

This was a “first” on-line experience for our Bailliage and we had the option of watching Bea prepare from scratch traditional Aperitivo finger food, taught to her by her grandmother (Nonna) as

well as the somewhat “deadly” cocktails that accompany it. Well ahead of time we had a list of ingredients for those of us who planned to prepare the recipes along with Bea. My kitchen counters were loaded with Italian comestibles destined to become a selection of delicious Crostini. (See the Aperitivo food and Cocktail recipes at the end of this report).

The most outstanding feature of the evening was the ambiance and the friendly atmosphere that Bea was able to generate from her home kitchen. She asked us to introduce ourselves and note what was our signature “tipple”. These ranged from Bubbles to Martinis to customized cocktails, none of

which were Aperitivo typical, though we could see that most of us were enjoying a glass of something interesting as we watched!

From the shopping list of beverages suggested, Bea, opened a bottle of Prosecco, ready to introduce the first Aperitivo cocktail ingredient. I, on the other hand, had bought a rather toothsome, Dry Villa Theresa Rosé Prosecco and would have been happy with just that, but sloshing it into the Cocktail recipe won (see recipe below). Next the Crostini began to take shape. Bread was sliced and toasted in the oven, while cherry tomatoes were chopped, salt pinched and Basil torn; lashings of virgin olive oil splashed; green and black olives minced; fresh pork sausage was mixed with softened cheese for later baking; Gorgonzola, walnut halves, slices of salami and slivers of dried figs were readied for toppings with one or two more splashes olive oil.

Throughout the evening, Bea related anecdotal snippets of information about the history of Aperitivo and the rather bitter beverages, Campari and Aperol, that are its features, along with a touch of a sweet Vermouth and, of course, Prosecco. Once the Crostini were made, Bea cautioned us on the potency of the second and most famous and popular Aperitivo cocktail, the Negroni, which Tuscans maintain was an Italian invention, by one Mr. Negroni, in the early 20th century. While there have been many Negroni imitators, using a different com-

bination of spirits, to the Italians, none of these produce the genuine article! I diligently mixed my Negroni. Bea was definitely correct. Frankly it was too strong for my palate and it is hard to believe that Mr. Negroni was reputed to drink 15 of his cocktails each day!



Our virtual trip to Tuscany was only possible as a result of the programmes offered by **Virtual Eating Europe Tours**, which, prior to COVID operated very successful, actual tours to many of the world cities. Victoria is the first Chaine Bailliage to hold an event with **Eating Europe Tours**. Their on-line programmes are typically scheduled for European time zones and we are particularly appreciative that the Company and Bea were willing to conduct her tour so early in the morning in Italy to accommodate our Bailliage. We are already considering another Virtual tour with this excellent organisation.

You can learn more about Eating Europe at <https://www.eatingeurope.com/>

Recipes for food and drinks for the Chaîne Tuscany event have been provided by Bea and may be found on the pages following.

Review by Gail Gabel

5/1/2021

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Following are the recipes for the food and cocktails made at our event.

Virtual Eating Europe Tour for La Chaine des Rotisseurs, Bailliage de Victoria.

INGREDIENTS for the Aperitivo Crostini

- French Bread Loaf
- Olive oil, salt
- Olives (black and some green ones)
- Gorgonzola cheese (blue-veined Italian cheese, made from unskimmed cow's milk)
- Walnuts
- Salsiccia: Fresh sausage (uncooked pork fresh sausage)
- Stracchino cheese (or a similar soft cheese like Crescenza or Taleggio. If you can't find it mozzarella cheese will work)
- Green grapes (a few)
- Parmigiano cheese (or parmesan cheese)
- Cherry tomatoes
- Mozzarella cheese (cherry size)
- Figs (fresh or dry) and salami (optional, extra bonus)
- 1 Orange

STEPS

Preheat the oven to 200 °C and slice your French Bread.

Stracchino & Salsiccia: Open the fresh sausage and mix it with stracchino cheese in a bowl, then spread it on the bread and bake it in the oven for 10 minutes, 200 celsius until cooked through.

Bruschetta with Olives Pate: Mince some black olives and add olive oil and salt (to enrich the taste add minced anchovies) while you toast the bread in the oven. Spread the olives pate on your crostini.

Gorgonzola & Walnuts: Spread a thick layer of gorgonzola cheese on toasted bread and add a piece of walnut on top.

Figs & Salami: Spread a thin layer of stracchino cheese on the toasted bread, add half a fig and cover with a slice of salami cheese.

RECIPE

APEROL SPRITZ



Tips

Pass the orange zest around the rim of the glass before putting it in the cocktail, your lips will be welcomed by the flavour!

If you prefer less bitterness or less alcohol play with the ingredients and put more sparkling wine (sweeter taste) or more soda (lighter).

Ingredients

- Aperol (It cannot be replaced with something else.. It is a bright orange drink, zesty orange flavour)
- Sparkling wine (best thing is to look for Prosecco, preferable "dry or brut", but you can use a dry champagne or spumante as well)
- Soda water
- Orange
- Ice (a lot of it!)

Preparation

1. First of all the glass need to be chilled, being put beforehand in the freezer or rolling some ice inside and pouring away the water that inevitable melts in the glass.
2. It is a very easy cocktail, built in the glass (you don't need shakers or other tools, just the glass and something to stir with at the end).
3. The official ratio is equal parts of the three ingredients, $\frac{1}{3}$ Aperol, $\frac{1}{3}$ Prosecco, $\frac{1}{3}$ Club Soda, you pour them in this order.
4. Stir the cocktail around and gently from bottom to top, love is the secret ingredient
5. Now the final touch. Add some orange zest or a slice inside the cocktail (you need the essential oil, don't squeeze it but let it in "infusion")
6. SALUTE!

RECIPE

NEGRONI



Tips

Pass the orange zest around the rim of the glass before putting it in the cocktail, your lips will be welcomed by the flavour!

This cocktail is the favourite of the Florentine people, who prefer a strong and bitter flavour for the Aperitivo. It was born in Florence in 1919 and named after its developer, Count Negroni.

Twists

This cocktail is worldwide famous and there are many twists, just replacing Gin with something else: for a more ladylike taste use Prosecco sparkling wine ("Negroni sbagliato/Wrong Negroni"). For a more smoky flavour use Bourbon or Whiskey (Boulevardier).

Ingredients

- Campari (It cannot be replaced with something else. It is a bright red liquor).
- Gin (what kind of gin depends upon the choice of Vermouth, I suggest Gordon dry, a classic)
- Vermouth
- Orange
- Ice (a lot of it!)

Preparation

1. First of all the glass needs to be chilled, being put beforehand in the freezer or rolling some ice inside and pouring away the water that inevitably melts in the glass.
2. It is a very easy cocktail, built in the glass (you don't need shakers or other tools, just the glass and something to stir with at the end).
3. The official ratio is equal parts of the three ingredients, $\frac{1}{3}$ Vermouth, $\frac{1}{3}$ Campari, $\frac{1}{3}$ Gin, you pour them from the less alcoholic to the higher one.
4. Stir the cocktail around and gently from bottom to top, love is the secret ingredient
5. Now the final touch. Add some orange zest or a slice inside the cocktail (you need the essential oil, don't squeeze it but let it in "infusion")
6. SALUTE!