5 (Inter)National Spirits

On the Cultural Politics of the 'Cocktail Craze' in Fascist Italy, 1920s–1930s[1]

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Introduction

In March 1926, the Martini & Rossi company – one of northern Italy's principal heavy spirits manufacturers – filed a lawsuit against three other vermouth producers in Torino over copyright infringement. During the preceding years, the company's lawyers contended, the Cinzano, Cora, and Gancia companies had repeatedly used the phrase 'Martini Cocktail' in their marketing materials, with the intention of capitalizing on the widely recognized affiliation between Martini & Rossi's liquors and the exploding popularity of American-style cocktails in both Italy and abroad.

In response to the latter's lawsuit, Cinzano, Cora, and Gancia contended that the Martini Cocktail was no longer exclusively associated with Martini & Rossi's brand of vermouth, as the popular beverage had expanded, in accordance with (inter)national consumers' preferences, to encompass the liquors of any one of Torino's major producers (*Corriere della Sera* 1929b: 6).

Such claims, in fact, shared some resemblance with the truth. In his popular 1936 how-to manual *1000 misture* (*1000 Mixtures*), Elvezio Grassi highlighted this widespread confusion in regard to the ingredients for the Martini Cocktail, cautiously explaining to his readers that many Italian barmen were 'unlikely to agree on the preparation'. Thus, 'without wishing to nitpick', he proposed to 'give the recipes of various . . . mixtures'. In total, Grassi offered his readers mixing instructions for six different versions of the Martini Cocktail, none of which explicitly required any particular brand of Italian vermouth (Grassi 1936: 75–76).[2]

Martini & Rossi's leadership, however, recognized no such ambiguities with respect to the Martini Cocktail's ingredients. Following a series of largely unfavorable rulings during the latter half of the 1920s, Cinzano, Cora, and Gancia requested a hearing with Torino's Court of Appeals. In the build-up to the 1931 hearing, Martini & Rossi reportedly conducted an ambitious investigation in both Europe and the Prohibition-era United States (1919–1933), during which the company's investigators trekked 'from speakeasy to speakeasy writing down [the] professional opinions' of the various barmen they interviewed. Having conveniently concluded that a majority of

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those surveyed preferred Martini & Rossi's brand of vermouth when mixing a Martini Cocktail, the company's leadership believed that it had obtained the required evidence to establish its exclusive copyright over the popular alcoholic libation in Italy and, with it, the legal authority to block Cinzano, Cora, and Gancia from using the phrase 'Martini Cocktail' in any of their domestic marketing materials.

After a careful consideration of both sides' arguments, the Court ultimately sided with Martini & Rossi, declaring the other three companies as 'villains', forbidding them from manufacturing 'any bottled cocktails labeled Martini Cocktail or American Martini Cocktail', and ordering them to 'pay the expenses of the trial and appeal' and 'to publish announcements in ten papers to be chosen by . . . Martini & Rossi, admitting to their guilt' (*TIME* 1932). In observing the terms of the judge's sentence, Cinzano, Cora, and Gancia begrudgingly published an advertisement in Benito Mussolini's daily, *Popolo d'Italia* (*People of Italy*), which acknowledged the judge's decision and, signaling their intransigence, stubbornly proclaimed their intention to file an appeal on the unfavorable ruling with Italy's Supreme Court (*Popolo d'Italia* 1932a: 3–5, Ibid. 1932b: 9).

More than just a banal, if a little humorous, legal squabble between four warring liquor companies, this struggle over the regulation of the Martini Cocktail in Italy highlights the seriousness with which Italian heavy spirits producers competed for dominance within the intensely popular, and potentially lucrative, mixed alcoholic beverages industry under *Il Duce's* 20-year dictatorship (1925–1945).

During the opening decades of the 20th century, the shores of the 'New' and 'Old' worlds were brought closer together via the growing number of international passenger steamships, which crisscrossed between New York Harbor and various ports in Western Europe. In bridging the watery gap between North America and Eurasia, these early ocean liners served in globalizing various uniquely American fashions, especially in the realms of consumer tastes and habits. Among the commodities and practices implicated within this milieu of commercial globalization was the American-style cocktail beverage. As Joseph Carlin has pointed out, it was in 'smoking rooms aboard steamships' traveling between North America, Great Britain, and other European locales that 'non-Americans tasted their first cocktails' (Carlin 2013: 56–57).

Although the cocktail-style beverage was developed during the United States' 'Gilded Age' (1870–1900), its popularity, somewhat ironically, peaked during the years of Prohibition. While cocktails were going underground in the United States, they were being transplanted – along with the jolting rhythms of jazz music, the spectacle of Hollywood films, and the glamor of American women's *haute couture* – in the swanky bars, nightclubs, and middle-class households of 'Roaring Twenties' Western Europe.

This study explores the way in which bourgeois Italian consumers and Fascism-sympathetic figures within Italy's heavy spirits industry responded

to the so-called 'cocktail craze' which swept across the peninsula during the 1920s and 1930s. Serving as the largely imagined symbols of the glamor and liberties associated with American consumer capitalism, at least within the minds of many interwar Italians, cocktails not only became many Italians' preferred alcoholic beverages, they served as powerful signifiers of cosmopolitanism, individualism, and upward social mobility under the long shadow of the 'Black Decades' of Fascism.

Such worrying trends among the country's cosmopolitan classes, of course, deeply concerned Blackshirt hierarchs in Rome. Having come to power on a wave of ultranationalist political violence with the objective of 'resurrecting' Italy from centuries of acquiescence to the 'Great Powers' of Western Europe and North America, Mussolini's regime attempted to stamp out Italians' 'xenophilia' and, in its place, rehabilitate their appreciation for Italy's national resources, heritages, and typical consumer tastes and habits (Marinetti 1932: 71–77).

'The fascists won followers', Ruth Ben-Ghiat rightly explains, highlighting the dictatorship's self-appointed mission of fulfilling the Italian Unification-era project of 'making Italians', 'by promising to reverse this situation of foreigner-worship and create a national culture that would be well received abroad' (Ben-Ghiat 2004: 7). In pursuing this program of national 'regeneration', however, the Fascist State relied heavily upon various individuals and organizations within interwar Italy's intellectual, artistic, and commercial spheres, many of whom co-opted, and occasionally elaborated upon, the regime's policies and programs in accordance with their groups' respective *private* objectives (Gentile 1996: 11; Stone 1998; Griffith 2020: 394–396).

This chapter will seek to demonstrate how, under the influence of the dictatorship's policy of 'autarky', or national self-sufficiency, prominent figures within or closely associated with Fascist Italy's heavy spirits industry attempted to transform Italians' obsession with American-style cocktail beverages into Italo-centric consumer preferences and practices. Ranging from the winemaking industry's anti-cocktails propaganda campaign, to Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's *polibibite* (that is, Italian Futurist cocktails), to the aggressive marketing campaigns between the country's vermouth producers in both Italy and the post-Prohibition United States, these groups' struggles for dominance within the country's mixed alcoholic beverages industry, I contend, highlight the significant interplay between Mussolini's dictatorship and various entities within Italy's commercial sphere in the shaping of Italian culture and identity during the interwar decades.

Cosmopolitan Cocktails

During the years immediately following the First World War (1914–1918), Italy was 'invaded', in the eyes of many anxious contemporaries, by various currents of American popular culture. Transfixed by the glamor of

Hollywood's early cinematic 'stars', the allure and, for some, exoticism of Chicago's and New York City's smoky jazz clubs, and the seemingly ubiquitous consumption of various types of mixed alcoholic beverages, many Italians viewed North American fashion standards and consumer preferences as synonymous with emancipation from the inherited weight of national traditions and, for many Italian women, the hegemony of patriarchal institutions.

Perhaps most enticing for many Italians was the uniquely American institutions of the jazz club and cocktail lounge. Filled with symbols of cosmopolitan modernity as well as various types of transgressive behaviors, including the intermingling of White and Black clientele, these spaces of consumption and socialization exhilarated many young bourgeois Italian night-goers and, simultaneously, worried many conservative naysayers (Ferris 2022). 'The jazz-band has, in fact, conquered almost every corner of the Earth', Alceo Toni disapprovingly declared in *People of Italy*, adding that jazz music constituted little more than 'a world full of tremors and nervous twitches, reflecting a spirituality whose magnetic forces attract the energies of a lifestyle sensitized by mechanics and electricity' (Toni 1929: 5).[3]

Jazz music and the nightclubs in which it was typically played and 'consumed' went hand in hand with the explosive popularity of cocktails, both in the United States and Italy. During the early 1920s, many Italian cities witnessed a flourishing of jazz clubs and cocktail lounges at which the country's middle classes enjoyed one, or more, of their preferred mixed beverages. Signifying the novelty of these American institutions and pastimes in post-WWI Italy, many of these establishments simply adopted the name 'American Bar', as was the case with the in-house lounges at Milan's Palace Hotel, Florence's Grand Hotel Baglioni, Rome's Hotel Majestic, and Naples' Hôtel des Thermes, to name just a few (Grandi 1927: 10, 18, 20, 64). Complete with glossy wooden countertops, rotating bar stools, luxury furnishings, and the occasional billiard table typical of these types of establishments in the United States, these institutions – in contrast to the peninsula's largely working-class *osterie* (taverns or public houses) – were quickly adopted by Italy's bourgeoisie as 'respectable' and decidedly cosmopolitan spaces of conspicuous consumption (see Figure 5.1).

Aiding the expansion of the 'cocktail craze' among the Italian middle classes were a handful of cocktail mixing manuals, which began appearing on the peninsula's bookstore shelves during the early 1920s, the first and most important of which was Ferruccio Mazzon's *Guida del barman* (*Barman's Guide*). Having acquired the knowledge for preparing 'American and international drinks' while serving as the Head of Service for a number of swanky hotels and nightclubs throughout Western Europe during the preceding years, Mazzon decided to 'collect in this booklet the knowledge' required for keeping 'the cosmopolitan world' well-entertained via alcoholic beverages (Mazzon 1920: 3).

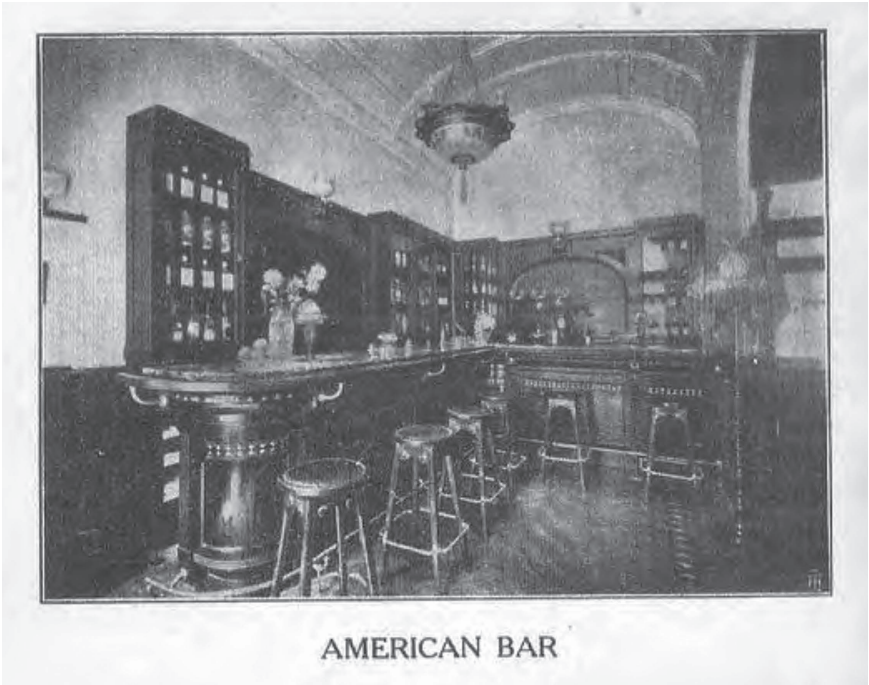

Figure 5.1 The 'American Bar' at Florence's Grand Hotel Baglioni
Source: Grandi 1927: 18

Featuring hundreds of cocktail recipes, along with detailed explanations of the various types of 'necessary materials' any well-equipped Italian barman ought to have at the ready for 'preparing "American Beverages"', Mazzon's *Barman's Guide* undoubtedly helped in popularizing cocktails in Italy during the immediate post-war years. Much like 'Vermouth wine in Italy', he explained in his manual's opening pages, the 'cocktail is the most popular drink that is consumed before meals' in the United States. The beverage's preparation was very simple, Mazzon continued, providing his readers with the steps required for mixing a world-class cocktail beverage: 'take a glass containing crushed ice, add bitter, sugar, etc.' and 'mix everything with the Bar spoon'. Once completed, he concludes, serve it with a 'slice of lemon peel', along with 'small straws or fruit' (Mazzon 1920: 11; 13).

Offering his readers a number of concise explanations on the fundamentals of mixing, Mazzon's *Guida* featured nearly 150 pages of recipes for making a variety of internationally popular cocktails. Mazzon's aptly titled 'Americano', for instance, called for a mixture of vermouth, Cognac, and

a few drops of Angostura. For his 'Manhattan Cocktail', he recommended an intoxicating blend of vermouth and whiskey, along with a few drops of Angostura and, to infuse the beverage with a splash of sweetness, a teaspoon of confectioners' sugar (Mazzon 1920: 98; 15).

Underscoring the influence of American mass culture in 1920s Italy, Mazzon's manual also included a recipe for the wildly popular 'Knickerbocker Cocktail'. Calling for a combination of rum, curaçao, raspberry syrup, and a twist of lemon, the Knickerbocker not only symbolized the cosmopolitan modernity of Roaring Twenties-era New York City, where the cocktail originated, but also the quasi-colonial exoticism of tropical, and largely Caribbean, climes (Mazzon 1920: 15, 98).[4]

Beyond cocktail recipes, Mazzon's *Barman's Guide* featured the recipes for a wide range of other types of beverages, including *frappés*, toddies, and fizzes, as well as various types of popular snacks, including alcohol-infused fruit bowls and sorbets. Despite its clear American and British influences, however, Mazzon's mixing manual attempted to respond, if only subtly, to the tumultuous ideological atmosphere of post-WWI Italy. Channeling the zeitgeist of the 'Red Biennium' (1919–1920), which was marked by instances of political violence between the internationalism of maximalist Socialism and the ultranationalism of *Il Duce*'s Italian Fighting Squads movement, Mazzon's list of *sorbetti* carefully juxtaposed the popular *Café Glacé* (iced coffee) and the *Sorbet all'ananas* (pineapple sorbet) alongside more specifically Italo-centric offerings, such as the *Coppa Re* (King Cup, referring to King Vittorio Emanuele III) and the *Coppa Mussolini* (Mussolini Cup) (Mazzon 1920: 65–137).

In addition to dancing to the intoxicating rhythms of jazz music, perhaps under the influence of one or more alcoholic beverages, Italy's middle classes were kept well-entertained by various forms of cocktail-themed live performances. Between the mid-1920s and the middle of the following decade, Roman spectators were dazzled by 'Manhattan Cocktail Girls' and 'Cocktail Jazz Follies' shows, the latter of which reportedly consisted of a troupe of jazz musicians accompanied by a 'mechanical accordion' and 'eccentric' (that is, sexually questionable) dancing (*Giornale d'Italia* 1925a: 2, Ibid. 1934: 5).

Such theatrical attractions extended to Italy's cinema houses as well. In 1935, Italian moviegoers were humored by W.S. Van Dyke's American talkie *The Thin Man* (*L'uomo ombra* in Italy), which follows the story of the heavy-drinking former detective Nick Charles as he investigates a murder mystery in the streets of New York City while sipping on various types of cocktails along the way, including the previously mentioned Knickerbocker (f.s. 1935: 6).

Beyond the realm of public entertainment, the popularity of cocktails in interwar Italy influenced a variety of changes in Italian women's fashion sensibilities. Clothing fashions, of course, have always played a significant role in distinguishing the privileged classes from the masses of workers and peasants beneath them, marking out their alleged 'prestige' from the purported 'barbarism' of the popular classes. Indeed, as Victoria de Grazia has pointed

out, the 'battle over fashion' in interwar Italy was very much 'about social rank', adding:

> Fashion . . . signals the cohesiveness of those belonging to the same social circles, at the same time as it closes off these circles to those of inferior social rank. There was no more visible sign of parvenu, often ill-gotten, wealth accumulated in the war and its aftermath than the so-called luxury display of bourgeois female dress.
>
> (De Grazia 1992: 222)

In some of Fascist Italy's most widely read women's magazines, such as *La donna* (*The Woman*), *La donna italiana* (*The Italian Woman*), and *Amica* (*Girlfriend*), women were kept up to date on the latest styles for cocktail-themed clothing fashions. Intended to appeal to women's obsession with international fashion trends and standards, many of these articles, along with the accompanying photographs and illustrations, promoted cocktail dresses, gowns, and evening jackets as 'the latest trends' from Paris, London, and New York City.

In one article in *The Woman*, aptly titled 'How to Dress', Corinne Griffith recommended putting on a 'little "cocktail jacket" ' to introduce an 'elegant . . . bright note' to any fashionable woman's nightly wardrobe before heading out to the local cocktail lounge. 'The sympathy enjoyed by the "cocktail jacket" ' among many Italian women, 'with its golden sheen of silver, crystals, [and] specks', she continued, safeguarded the appropriate projection of bourgeois prestige (Griffith 1929: 32; Violetta 1930: 2).

The middle classes' obsession with cocktail-themed fashions extended to the realm of accessories, as well, including women's perfumes. By the late 1920s, a growing number of Europe's swankiest nightclubs, and particularly those in Paris, were offering 'scented cocktails', which were frequently served in 'pretty little glasses representing flower buds', as the editors of Rome's *Giornale d'Italia* (*Italy's Newspaper*) phrased it in January 1930. In addition to the 'usual quantity of gin, Vermouth, whiskey, and [various] luxury ingredients', they explained, these 'fragrant cocktails' included perfume-infused essences in order to 'harmonize' the 'scent of the "cocktail" . . . with the scent emanating from the lady who drinks it' (*Giornale d'Italia* 1930: 5; *Corriere della Sera* 1929c: 3).

Beyond fragrances, some Italian companies even developed an array of beauty products, with an eye on addressing the challenges many women were faced with while enjoying cocktails in public spaces. In one 1932 advertisement, the Louis Philippe cosmetics company pitched its brand of red lipstick as being particularly resistant to 'the wind, rain, dust', and, most significantly for our purposes, 'the dissolving effect of [consuming] cocktails'. 'A single touch of Rosso Louis Philippe', the advertisement confidently proclaimed, was 'enough for the whole day', including any nightly outings to the local jazz club or American Bar (*La Donna* 1932: 82).

Interwar Italy's nightlife scene, however, was not the only location where the country's middle classes enjoyed 'exotic' cocktail beverages. While appearances in key public spaces served in lubricating bourgeois sociability, the domestic sphere also functioned as an important 'stage' for the projection of middle-class respectability. As Emanuela Scarpellini notes, the peninsula's well-to-do classes frequently inscribed their self-proscribed notions of social rank via their household's carefully selected furnishings. Each room and every corner of the bourgeois Italian household held a specific symbolic meaning. While internal divisions demarcated the public spaces from the private ones – above all, the husbands' and wives' bedrooms – the use of 'closed doors, windows, drapes, and curtains' helped designate spaces within the household 'designed for social use, where guests would be entertained'. In fact, the 'best furnished rooms', Scarpellini explains, were 'the reception and drawing rooms', which oftentimes constituted 'half of the [family's] entire furnishings'. By decorating their living spaces in this way, bourgeois housewives performed their family's upward social mobility by 'imitat[ing] the lifestyle of the nobility and the importance of social appearance' among upper-class circles of polite society (Scarpellini 2011: 30–31).

Among the more popular types of social gatherings staged within the middle-class Italian household were beverage-themed receptions. Such practices, however, were by no means unique to the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, during the *fin-de-siècle* period, many Italian women enthusiastically adopted the British custom of serving tea and biscuits at their in-home get-togethers. Nicknamed the 'Five o' Clock', after the popular English tradition of 'tea-time', the observation of this decidedly British cultural practice in pre-Fascist Italy illustrates the degree to which the country's well-to-do classes had distanced themselves from their country's 'traditional' beverages and spaces of respectable consumption, above all, domestically produced wines, grape-derived liquors, and the *osteria*.

By the immediate post-WWI years, the late-afternoon consumption of American-style cocktails had begun overtaking tea-time as one of the beverages whose in-home preparation, presentation, and socially implicated consumption served as a proxy for the 'performance' of middle-class belonging. The popularity of cocktail beverages had spread in Italy with 'great rapidity' during the 1920s, wrote Anna Maria Pastrovich in *The Italian Woman* in 1931, emanating originally from 'the Olympus of the aristocracy' down to the quotidian spaces of 'the bourgeois world' (Pastrovich 1931: 431). The '"cocktail party" is now preferred to the "five o' clock tea"' within Italian polite society, one anonymous columnist proclaimed in the December 1925 issue of *Italy's Newspaper*, rhetorically but nervously inquiring: 'Is the "cocktail" destined to become the feminine drink par excellence?' (*Giornale d'Italia* 1925b: 3).

Aiding the replacement of tea-time with the in-home cocktail mixing party were the latter's favorable logistics for many Italian housewives. In contrast to the 'Five o' Clock', the *Gazzetta Venezia* (*Venetian Gazette*) explained to

its readership in 1930, cocktails were typically consumed 'from six to eight', which helped explain the cocktail party's growth in popularity during the early 1920s, since bourgeois hostesses could 'receive many more guests' with cocktails than they could have with tea or coffee, 'for which they always need lengthy preparations' (*Gazzetta Venezia* 1930: 3).

By the early 1930s, then, cocktail mixing parties had become firmly established within the quotidian practices of many middle-class Italian households. In support of this popular pastime, women's magazines and other related publications began encouraging their readerships to set up 'in-home cocktail bars' for carrying out successful cocktail-oriented social gatherings within the privacy and luxury of their own living rooms (see Figure 5.2).

'In the most important European capitals', wrote Pastrovich, 'there is no elegant apartment that does not have its Bar stocked with various bottles containing the best spirits, [and] with an army of glasses of all sizes' (Pastrovich 1931: 431). Indeed, cocktails were becoming 'increasingly popular' in Italy, wrote Amina Polito-Fantini in her monthly advice column in *Cordelia*, 'The Lady and the Household', which had made it a virtual necessity to 'install a bar in the most elegant and modern [of] homes'. In doing so, she suggestively explained, Italian women could not only demonstrate their family's respectable social standing, they could also distinguish their beverage-oriented gatherings from 'those public haunts' – such as the peninsula's working-class taverns, public houses, and saloons – which were purportedly lacking in 'certain good customs' and reputation (Polito-Fantini 1931: 292).[5]

More than just a flourished accessory for alcohol-related socialization, however, many influencers encouraged their readers to think of their in-home cocktail mixing stations as a kind of stand-alone fashion accessory. 'There are Bar models for all tastes and all budgets', Pastrovich explained to her

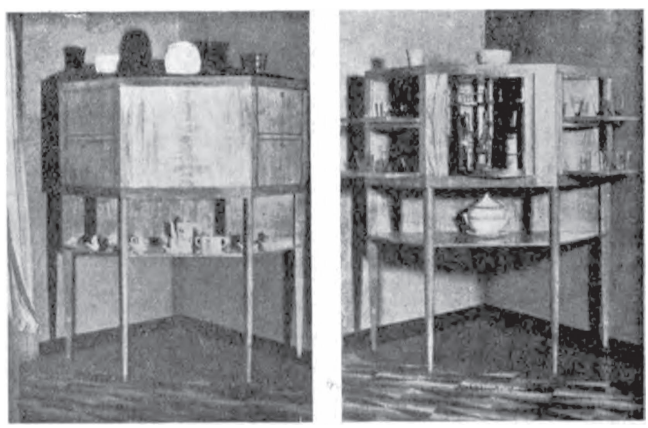

Figure 5.2 A 'Corner Bar' Featuring State-of-the-Art Cocktail Equipment
Source: Pastrovich 1931: 432

readers. Whereas the smaller models were capable of occupying 'only the corner of a room', others could be used as decorative centerpieces for 'the dining room, in the living room, or in the smoking room'. When closed, she continued, the larger models resembled 'a small wardrobe or a small cupboard' so as to blend seamlessly into the room's other decorative elements (Pastrovich 1931: 433). In addition to decorating one's parlor with a 'tiny and charming bar', Polito-Fantini explained to her readers, some women might consider enhancing their mixing stations with a wide range of complimentary embellishments, such as ultra-modern, bottom-illuminated countertops, glass amphorae and chandeliers from the Venetian island of Murano, and various types of fashionable bowls, trays, and sculptures. 'After all', she suggestively concluded, 'the domestic bar is a kind of fashion toy' which, as another cocktail popularizer aptly put it, 'every lady would be happy to receive as a gift' (Polito-Fantini 1931: 292; Dora 1933: 49).[6]

Beyond the realms of fashionable cabinetry, however, Italian women were still responsible for acquiring the requisite skills for competently mixing cocktails for their friends and family members. In response to this imperative, a variety of Italian-language mixing manuals began to appear both as monographs and as articles in women's magazines throughout the interwar decades. 'Ladies as kind hosts should not neglect to take a look at this little guide', Mazzon counseled in his *Barman's Guide*, for 'they will find reason to entertain their guests in any eventuality with drinks that are easy and quick to prepare without having to incur heavy expenses' (Mazzon 1920: 2). In 1927, the third edition of Piero Grandi's popular mixing manual, *Cocktails*, was published which, similar to Mazzon's *Guida*, featured detailed descriptions of in-home mixing stations and step-by-step instructions for preparing world-class cocktails (Grandi 1927: 4–105). Nine years later, moreover, Grassi – the manager of the popular Argentino bar in the city of Lugano – published *1000 Mixtures*, which began making its way onto the bookshelves of Italy's middle-class households during the latter years of Mussolini's dictatorship. Featuring hundreds of pages of cocktail recipes, organized by alphabetical order, Grassi's how-to mixing manual offered readers 'all the tricks and skills to offer you a delicious drink' (Grassi 1936). With such resources in-hand, Pastrovich explained, Italian women of polite society could competently identify their own 'special recipe to compose a cocktail to offer both in large and intimate receptions' (Pastrovich 1931: 431).

Autarkic Alcohols

The middle classes' obsession with all-things-cosmopolitan – and specifically with the trappings of interwar American popular culture – deeply frustrated officials within *Il Duce*'s regime. Indeed, the 'invasion' of American tastes and habits during the 1920s was viewed by many Blackshirts as little more than a thinly veiled program of commercial imperialism, whose objective was

to transform Italy into a southern European outpost of American consumer capitalism.

In coming to power in Italy, one of Fascism's professed objectives was to 'shield' Italians from the 'degenerative' influences of foreign fashions, worldviews, and behaviors, and, in their place, stimulate the 'rebirth' of uniquely Italian sensibilities and practices. The 'Americanization of the world and especially of Europe', lamented Filiberto Comito in the August 1932 issue of the regime-affiliated periodical *Costruire* (*To Build*), was being fueled 'by the dollar, by oil, by Ford's cars, by Hollywood films, by chewing-gum', and perhaps most insidiously, 'by the jazz band' (Comito 1932: 66). Indeed, as Mino Maccari put it in the pages of *Il selvaggio* (*The Savage*) five years earlier, the disruptive appearance of American popular culture in Italy during the early- to mid-1920s, with its 'black idols, the cocktail, jazz, [and] fashion', amounted to nothing more than a 'dazzling glitter of a civilization that is all sea foam and no land, all machine and no heart' (Bisorco 1927).[7]

Nowhere was Fascism's program of combatting the middle classes' 'xenophilia' more pronounced than in the regime's policies towards Italian women (Marinetti 1932: 71–77). In contesting what many Blackshirt hierarchs viewed as bourgeois 'decadence', the dictatorship frequently ridiculed the so-called *donna crisi* (crisis woman) of the post-WWI years who, as Kate Ferris has aptly phrased it, 'was thin, worked outside the home, wore fashionable – foreign – clothes and danced to fashionable – foreign – music at night clubs and cabarets' (Ferris 2021: 222).

In contrast to the 'crisis woman', the regime championed the *donna fascista* (fascist woman), who was not only 'sporty, dynamic and politically engaged', she proudly served her *Patria* and her *Duce* by faithfully reproducing a new generation of warm Italian bodies for the dictatorship's campaigns of popular mobilization and imperial conquest. Of particular concern to many fascist commentators was the purported connection between the *donna crisi* and the consumption of cocktail beverages. Indeed, as Ferris has pointed out, the 'crisis woman' was frequently depicted as 'popping up in fashionable city bars, alcoholic drink in hand, containing not Piedmontese Barolo nor Asti Spumante, but French champagne or some "poisonous" cocktail' (Ferris 2021: 11).

These incompatible archetypes of Italian womanhood under Fascism were fully captured by a *fumetto* (cartoon) which appeared in the June 1932 issue of *The Savage*. Aptly titled 'Cocktail', the satirical cartoon depicted the imagined behavioral differences between the 'crisis woman' and the 'fascist woman' (see Figure 5.3). On the left-hand side of the *fumetto*, the viewer is confronted by a full-bodied, modestly dressed Italian woman who is seen breastfeeding her new-born baby in what is implicitly understood to be her 'proper', or 'natural', sphere of influence: the kitchen. In contrast to this motherly example of regime-approved femininity, the woman on the right-hand side is depicted as exceptionally thin (and therefore physically ill-suited for prolific motherhood) with short, stylish hair, wearing the latest

Figure 5.3 The 'Fascist Woman' and the 'Crisis Woman' in One Cartoon
Source: Maccari 1932: 30

in international *haute couture*, and casually sipping from, as the cartoon's title clearly indicates, an American-style cocktail beverage. While the 'fascist woman' happily fulfils her assigned roles under Fascism, the *fumetto* suggested, the 'crisis woman' has given herself wholly to what Natasha V. Chang refers to as a 'decadent femininity' (Chang 2015: 65).

Such unpatriotic fashions among bourgeois women were, for many Blackshirt critics, indicative of a deeper spiritual 'degeneracy' among the country's 'snobbish' demographics (Marescalchi 1930: 1; Nencini 1935: 3). Indeed, the 'tendency among women to want to wear trousers', as Bruno Piergiovanni caustically phrased it in one 1933 issue of the women's magazine *Girlfriend*, illustrating the anxieties surrounding the *donna crisi* and Fascism's 'crisis of authority', was little more than 'a psychological reflection of a desire [among some Italian women] to rule decisively over men' (Ben-Ghiat 2004: 2; Piergiovanni 1933: 19).

In opposing these cosmopolitan sensibilities, the regime sought to 'cleanse' Italian society and culture of foreign influences by way of aggressively promoting 'indigenous' values, tastes, and habits as equal, if not superior, to international fashion standards and consumer practices.

In the realm of everyday language, the dictatorship pursued a policy of what Diana Garvin has dubbed 'linguistic autarky' by purging foreign terms, phrases, and expressions from Italians' vocabularies and replacing them with Italo-centric alternatives (Garvin 2022: 162). The Italian word *Lei*, for instance – the formal pronoun for respectfully addressing an individual of superior social rank – was suggestively replaced with the less subservient and more virile sounding *Voi* – the plural pronoun for 'you' (Falasca-Zamponi 1997: 107).

In addition to fascisticizing the Italian language, the regime attempted to 'regenerate' Italians' everyday behaviors and mannerisms. The Roman salute, for example, was promoted as the ideal substitution for what many fascists considered to be the overly-bourgeois 'effeminate handshake', and the *Passo Romano* – or the fascist-style goose step for military parades – was intended to inculcate 'discipline and order' (De Grazia 1992: 227; Falasca-Zamponi 1997: 115).

With respect to the realm of everyday consumption, the dictatorship frequently urged Italians to purge any foreign items from their pantries and to always prefer domestically-produced commodities when shopping for their households (Nencini 1935: 3). Indeed, the regime's push for 'national self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs . . . projected the idea that austerity and patriotism must become the keystones of Italian consumer habits' (Ferris 2017: 124).

Within this milieu of linguistic, behavioral, and alimentary autarky, a significant number of interwar Italy's alcoholic beverage producers began aggressively marketing their wares by incorporating, and subtly manipulating, the language and values of the dictatorship towards their (oftentimes incompatible) commercial objectives. While the majority of Italy's liquor companies pursued a strategy of embracing – and Italicizing – the cocktail beverage, the Italian wine industry stood alone in its vociferous condemnation of, in one pro-wine campaigner's colorful words, these 'horrible and nefarious demonic concoctions' (Marescalchi 1931a: 1).

In pursuing its anti-cocktail objectives, interwar Italy's Industrial Wine Lobby (IWL) – a loose coalition of largely pro-fascist luxury winegrowers, merchants, and industrialists – sought to recontextualize heavy spirits, above all those manufactured in foreign countries, and mixed alcoholic beverages as antagonistic to the country's long, proud history of moderate, family-oriented wine consumption.[8] Among wine lobbyists' highest priorities was the 'battle' against what many pro-wine campaigners and regime operatives frequently referred to as the 'deplorable snobbery' of the peninsula's middle classes (Marescalchi 1931b: 1). 'Among the strangest, and certainly not harmless, aberrations of fashion', Arturo Marescalchi lamented in September 1937, was 'the spread of cocktails' among bourgeois Italian households. In addition to inflaming the allegedly 'foreign' socio-biological pathology of alcoholism in Italy, he explained, this 'American novelty' was composed of an admixture of 'exotic' substances, which had deeply corrupted Italians' 'physiological, artistic, and psychological taste[s]' (Marescalchi 1937: 357–362).

In highlighting the purported hygienic differences between wine and heavy spirits, many wine lobbyists pointed to growing rates of alcohol dependency in countries like France, England, and the United States, where cocktails were habitually consumed in comparatively larger quantities. In 1932, the IWL-affiliated *Il commercio vinicolo* (*The Wine Trade*) reported on a recently established commission in England whose objective had been to investigate 'the growing "cocktail" habit among the new generation' of Britons. Due to high rates of alcohol dependency in England, *The Wine Trade* explained, the commission had recommended 'the creation of special licenses for hotels and restaurants', in order to suppress the sales of alcoholic beverages in places where they were not being consumed alongside a nutritious family-oriented meal (*Il commercio vinicolo* 1932: 1).[9] The cocktail phenomenon had purportedly become so widespread in England, Marescalchi continued, channeling Fascism's preoccupation with the 'demographic question', that their overconsumption 'renders women sterile and predisposes them to the most serious diseases'. '[I]t is rightly said', *The Wine Trade*'s editorship proclaimed in 1939, echoing Marescalchi's concerns, that 'if an 18-year-old girl says that she "needs" a cocktail to wake up her appetite, it is a sign that that girl . . . needs a doctor' (Marescalchi 1939: 1).

Beyond the question of healthfulness, however, most of the wine lobby's wrath was directed towards bourgeois housewives. Among the IWL's principal strategies for reaching out to Italian women with respect to the purported 'dangers' of regularly consuming cocktails was undermining the beverage's affiliations with fashion, glamor, and social mobility. '[A]re the times really as favorable for cocktails as [they were] in the past', Gino Giulini rhetorically inquired in the August 1932 issue of *The Woman*, hoping to convince his readers that these once fashionable international beverages were, in fact, no longer in vogue, 'or has the ephemeral fifteen-minutes-of-fame' already occurred for this 'unfortunate American gimmick?' This 'treacherous concoction of liquors', which had purportedly been 'invented in a moment of Bacchic intoxication by an evil Yankee', he added, was little more than a 'scandalous sacrilege' against the country's national beverages, above all, Italy's 'typical' wines. 'The cocktail', Giulini cynically concluded, 'is going out of style' (Giulini 1932: 47).

Among wine lobbyists' highest priorities, however, was cajoling Italian women into 'substitut[ing] wine for tea and cocktails' when entertaining their friends and families in their parlors (Paris 1929: 305–306). Among women's 'specialties', wrote Attilio Terenzio, was 'serving cocktails' from a 'special state-of-the-art lacquered cabinet' in which they kept 'an armory of bottles of all colors whose contents were distilled in the cold darkness of some convent or in the tropical luminosity of a distant island'. Instead of entertaining their esteemed guests with a '"gray" cocktail', he continued, women ought to display 'an assortment of very fine [Italian] wines' (Terenzio 1930: 657–658).

Such sentiments were widely echoed across Italy's community of pro-wine campaigners. In an August 1934 issue of *La cucina italiana* (*Italian Cuisine*), Elena Morozzo della Rocca, a regular contributor, encouraged her readers to empty their living rooms of any cocktail mixing stations, tea sets, or any other artifact of foreign popular cultures to which they and their family members had subscribed. 'Here is my tiny [in-home] bar', she explained, which was '*without* the cocktail service, because Italian women should ban such nonsense of foreign import'. Instead of stocking their liquor cabinets with foreign beverages, Della Rocca insisted, Italian women ought to store 'good bottles of our liquors' and wines (Morozzo della Rocca 1934: 13).[10]

In September 1931, Luigi Cerchiari – who, alongside Marescalchi, served as one of interwar Italy's most outspoken and influential wine lobbyists – penned an open letter to Pastrovich, whose pro-cocktail writings in publications such as *The Italian Woman* had helped popularize the cocktail party among many Italian women during the preceding years. 'Just when the first signs of the spread of the use of domestic bars . . . in the intimacy of Italian homes reached the newspapers', he complained, 'I raised my voice' in objection and 'warned of the danger that a new barbaric custom might fill us with exotic idioms and customs and tastes, undermining more and more those homegrown characteristics that have centuries of traditions'. Why should Italians 'need a bar with cocktails and . . . jazz music," Cerchiari suggestively inquired, just to 'spend an hour with friends in the joyful intimacy of [their] homes'? By promoting in-home mixing stations, he contended, Pastrovich was guilty of pushing Italy's grape-laden hills to 'sterility', while 'the growing consumption of cocktails' increasingly 'enriches . . . foreigners' (Cerchiari 1931: 1).[11]

Despite the wine industry's unforgiving antagonism towards cocktails, some of interwar Italy's pro-wine campaigners pursued a 'third way' between opposing the purported 'invasion' of American customs and forging a distinctly Italian-style of preparing and enjoying mixed alcoholic beverages. In 1932, Marinetti – the 'founding father' of Italian Futurism and a frequent collaborator with Mussolini's regime – published *La cucina futurista* (*The Futurist Cookbook*), which featured a collection of innovative, experimental recipes designed to bring about a 'total renewal of food and cooking' in Italy by way of promoting Italo-centric preferences and practices (Marinetti 1932: 71–77).

In responding to the regime's campaign for 'cleansing' Italian popular culture of foreign language and concepts, Marinetti recommended replacing English words such as 'bar' with *quisibeve* (here-one-drinks), 'barman' with *mescitore* (one-who-mixes), and 'cocktail' with *polibibita* (multi-drink). These Fascism-inspired neologisms, of course, extended to the names of individual *polibibite* as well. Instead of the 'Manhattan Cocktail' or the 'Astoria Cocktail', Marinetti and his collaborators suggested namesakes such as the *Diavolo in tunica nera* (Devil in a Black Robe), whose recipe called for orange

purée, liquefied chocolate, and a generous quantity of grappa.[12] The *Giostra d'alcool* (Alcoholic Joust), on the other hand, required red Barbera wine, a splash of bitter Campari, and an infusion of cedar syrup.[13] For the multi-drink's garnish, Enrico Prampolini, one of Marinetti's Futurist colleagues and the innovator behind the *Giostra*'s recipe and mixing instructions, suggested skewering a 'square of cheese and a square of chocolate' via a toothpick and 'dipped in the liquid' of the alcoholic beverage. For the *Brucioinbocca* (Burning in the Mouth), *The Futurist Cookbook* provided its readers with step-by-step instructions along with an accompanying diagram for the beverage's layered construction. 'At the bottom of the glass,' the instructions explained, put some 'whisky with sour cherries' sprinkled with cayenne pepper. Above the whisky and cherries, readers were instructed to carefully dabble a substantial stratum of milk honey 'as a waterproof division' between the cocktail's lower and upper layers. Finally, *La Cucina futurista* called for a mixed reservoir of various Italian liquors, including Strega and a healthy splash of Torinese vermouth (Marinetti 1932: 211–212).[14]

Beyond providing specific recipes, Marinetti offered his readers a variety of innovative *polibibita* categories, which were intended as more well-suited to Italians' 'indigenous' tastes and habits. A 'Big Decision' multi-drink, for instance, included any combination of ingredients which 'help one, after a short but deep meditation, make a decision'. The 'Inventor', on the other hand, stood as a 'refreshing and slightly intoxicating cocktail that helps one quickly come up with a new idea'. Channeling both Futurism's and Fascism's obsession with masculine virility, the *Guerrainletto* (literally 'War in Bed') served as a *polibibita fecondatrice* (or an aphrodisiac multi-drink), ostensibly intended to stimulate a man's sexual performance with a woman (Marinetti 1932: 247–252).[15]

However, Marinetti was not alone in his attempts to integrate the cosmopolitan world of cocktails with Fascism's imperatives of linguistic, behavioral, and alimentary self-sufficiency. In his *1000 Mixtures*, Grassi offered his readers a variety of recipes for what he referred to as 'super modern cocktails', which were intended to highlight Italian ingredients and to commemorate Fascism's key political figures and 'accomplishments'.

In his 'Marshall De Bono Cocktail', which referenced the Italian general, 'fascist of the first hour', and member of the Grand Council of Fascism, Emilio De Bono, Grassi called for a blend of Cinzano Vermouth, aged Italian Cognac, and a splash of Aurum liquor.[16] Beyond commemorating members of Fascism's quadrumvirate, many of Grassi's 'super modern cocktails' openly celebrated the regime's imperial conquests in East Africa. In his 'Adua' and 'Macalle' cocktails, both of which are major cities in Ethiopia, Grassi celebrated the dictatorship's military conquest of Haile Selassie I's kingdom of Ethiopia during the Second Italo-Ethiopian War (1935–1936). In his 'East Africa Cocktail' – which, similar to the others, called for copious amounts of Italian vermouth, as well as various other types of domestically produced heavy spirits – Grassi bridged the gap between cocktails, Fascism,

and Italian-ness by celebrating *Il Duce*'s June 1936 declaration of 'Italian East Africa' with an Italian-style cocktail.

While Marinetti and Grassi explicitly highlighted the regime's autarkic and imperial campaigns, others, including Giuseppe Cipriani, adopted a more subtle, but nonetheless impactful, approach to promoting cocktails *a la italiana* (in the Italian style). Founded in May 1931, Cipriani's Harry's Bar – which is located in Venice near Saint Mark's Square – was the birthplace of the world-renowned Bellini cocktail. Prepared with a blend of white peach purée and prosecco, the Bellini, as well as Harry's Bar more generally, playfully referenced the cosmopolitan associations of cocktail beverages while simultaneously reinforcing the dictatorship's 'Buy Italian Products' campaign by utilizing an Italian-manufactured, Champagne-style white wine (Cipriani 2023; Arvidsson 2003: 40).[17]

The following year, the Campari company launched a premixed, bottled cocktail called Campari Soda, which featured a blend of its herb-infused liquor along with a splash of fizzy water. Billed by the company as a convenient, on-the-go cocktail, Campari's leadership hoped to provide consumers with a fashionable Italian alternative to the types of foreign beverages typically enjoyed in the country's swanky clubs and in-home mixing parties. In seeking to publicize Campari Soda in these ways, the company secured the talents of the Futurist painter and sculptor Fortunato Depero for the design of an 'innovative bottle'. Shaped like a 'truncated cone' and featuring a ribbed profile along the bottle's exterior, Depero's visionary design helped establish Campari Soda as one of the most recognized, and widely consumed, cocktail beverages in Italy during the 1930s.

In addition to Depero's avant-garde bottle design, Campari manufactured a number of customized, coin-operated vending machines which were used to sell Campari Soda to street-level consumers throughout Italy (Annicchiarico 2022; Piccinino 2014: 114–115; Mendini et al. 2009) (see Figure 5.4). With these 'autarkic' beverages in hand, Campari's leadership hoped, Italians would not only find inspiration from their own country's long history of producing and consuming its own alcoholic beverages, they would receive a uniquely 'Italian' experience while enjoying Campari Soda – a subtle reminder of Fascism's self-proclaimed ability to produce an alternative modernity to those emanating from the liberal democracies in Paris, London, and Washington D.C. and, no less important, the Bolshevik dictatorship in Moscow (Ben-Ghiat 2004: 1–15; Griffin 2007: 219–248).

Of Italy's various styles of heavy spirits, however, it was the country's vermouth manufacturers who most aggressively pursued an exclusive space for their liquors within interwar Italy's marketplace for cocktail beverages. Among the peninsula's major producers, Martini & Rossi and Cinzano were the largest and most commercially successful both in and beyond Italy.

Known for its assortment of liquors and sparkling wines, Cinzano's leadership sought to market the company's beverages as, in the words of one 1927 advertisement, 'the best of Vermouths' for the 'most preferred cocktails'

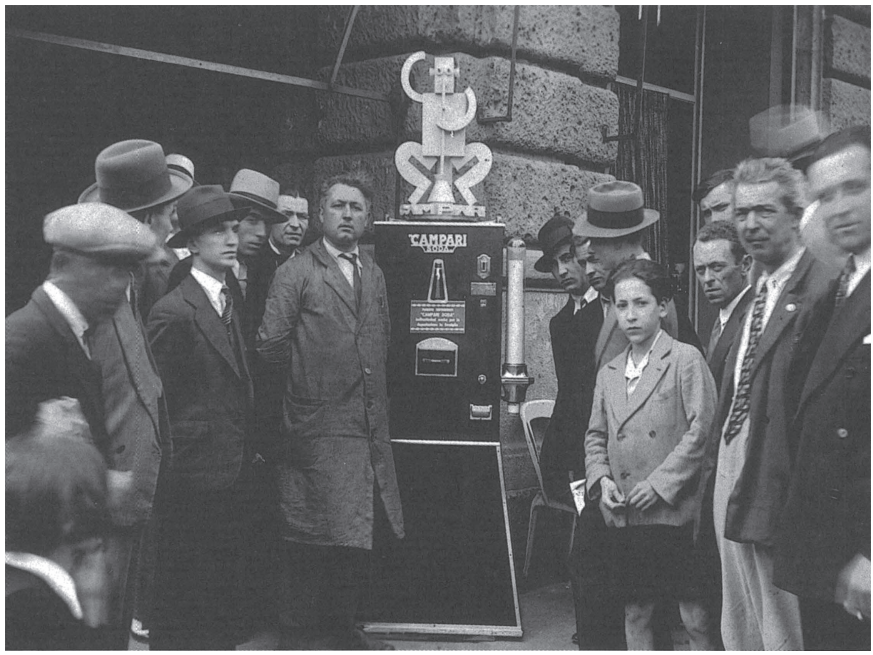

Figure 5.4 A Campari Soda Vending Machine
Source: Galleria Campari 1933

(Grandi 1927: 92). In November 1930, Cinzano began selling gift boxes featuring bottles of either vermouth or *spumante* along with a collection of handcrafted Murano cocktail and wine glasses, which were marketed as ideal Christmas gifts for housewives.[18] Sold at local pastry shops and pharmacies throughout the peninsula during the months of November and December, Cinzano's annual holiday season *cassette propaganda* (publicity boxes) were intended to closely associate the company's liquors and wines with the spirit of Christmas and, equally as significant, exclusively intertwine the company's brand of vermouth with Italian women's increasingly popular practice of hosting cocktail parties.

By 1936, Cinzano's marketing campaign had expanded to include a number of highly desirable prizes, including in-home mixing stations (see Figure 5.5). By purchasing one of the company's 'publicity boxes', consumers would be automatically entered into a sweepstake for one of ten Balilla models by the F.I.A.T. automobile company, refrigerators, radios, kitchen countertop mixers, bicycles and, most tellingly, an assortment of fashionable women's jewelry. Beyond these prizes, Cinzano also offered some 3,200 *cassette propaganda* filled with the company's vermouth liquors, spumante wines, and customized glasses, as lower-tiered prizes during the 1936 and 1937 holiday seasons.[19]

Figure 5.5 A Cinzano Spumanti Publicity Box Advertisement Showing In-Home Cocktail Mixing Stations among the Prizes

Source: *Popolo d'Italia* 1936: 8

Cinzano, however, was faced with steep competition in its quest to establish itself as interwar Italy's top cocktails-friendly vermouth producer. The Martini & Rossi company also competed aggressively with Cinzano via a wide range of its own ambitious marketing campaigns during the 1930s. In contrast to Cinzano's marketing strategy, however, which had focused its efforts on promoting its heavy spirits and wines as ideal substitutes to various foreign commodities, Martini & Rossi sought to intertwine its products with Fascism's emphases on health, virility, and physical prowess by promoting its liquors as the ideal sportsman's beverages.

In 1934, the company launched a marketing campaign in partnership with Italy's annual *Giro d'Italia* (Tour of Italy) bike races. With tens of thousands of spectators expected to assemble along the 3,712-kilometer route between Torino and Bari, Martini & Rossi put together two identical mass-marketing vehicles, which promoted the company's Elixir Chino and its brand of vermouth as the 'liquor of sportsmen'.[20] Featuring oversized liquor bottles, along with two mechanical fish playfully spinning around the bottles' slender upper halves, the company's Tour of Italy marketing campaign informed consumers that Martini & Rossi's heavy spirits 'keep you as healthy as a fish' (see Figure 5.6).

In addition to competing against one another in Italy, northern Italy's vermouth producers struggled, especially during the mid- to late-1930s, for primacy within North America's cocktails marketplace. In March 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Volstead Act into law, thereby

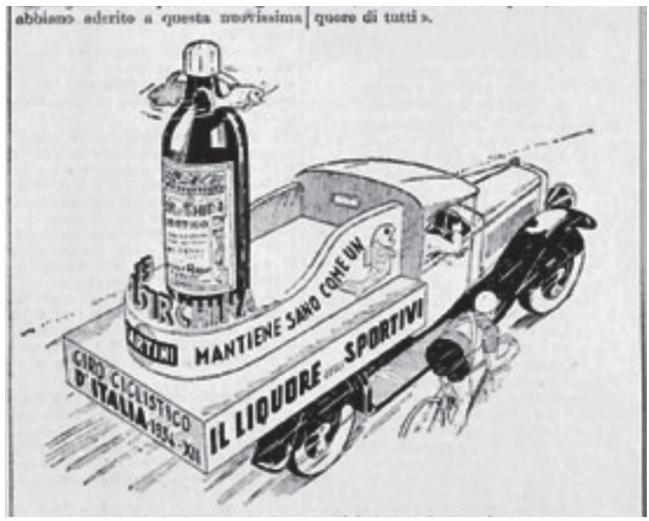

Figure 5.6 Martini & Rossi's 'Liquor of Sportsmen' Marketing Vehicle
Source: *Gazzetta dello Sport* 1934

repealing the Eighteenth Amendment and bringing Prohibition to an official conclusion.

With the collapse of the 'dry regime' in the United States, Italian liquor companies began preparing to re-enter the American marketplace after a nearly 14-year hiatus. Luckily for them, Italy's heavy spirits manufacturers had willing commercial partners in the United States – above all, influential individuals within the Italo-American community. In the fall of 1933, Alberto Bonaschi, the secretary for the Italian Chamber of Commerce in New York, came up with an innovative idea for promoting Italian-style cocktails in the United States. Dubbed the 'Berghem Cocktail' – named after the northern Italian city of Bergamo, the secretary's city of birth – Bonaschi's recipe was intended to stimulate the consumption of Italian liquors and wines specifically among Anglo-American consumers.[21] The Berghem Cocktail, Marescalchi approvingly reported in the *Evening Courier*, would include Marsala, Torinese vermouth, which would impart 'body, sweetness, [and] aroma', and Italian Cognac, along with a 'squeeze of Italian lemon', a few 'drops of Italian bitters', and everything 'quickly stirred with a few pieces of ice'.[22] The mixed beverage, he hopefully concluded, 'appears as though it would be a delight for American palates' (Marescalchi 1933: 1; *Il Sole* 1933: 3).

While Bonaschi and Marescalchi attempted to stimulate exports of Italian liquors and wines, generally speaking, Martini & Rossi and Cinzano simply exported their contentious marketing squabbles from Italy to the United States. Unwilling to be lumped into the general category of Torinese vermouth within the potentially lucrative post-Prohibition American consumer marketplace, Martini & Rossi began advertising its vermouth on transatlantic steamships between Europe and North America, in the hopes of winning the loyalty of newly 'wet' American consumers. Featuring the catchphrase, 'Don't ask for Vermouth, ask for a Martini', the company hoped to outpace its Italian competitors by further reinforcing the commercially constructed synonymity between the Martini Cocktail and Martini & Rossi's heavy spirits (Massano 1936: 1).

Cinzano, of course, was quick to respond with its own North American marketing initiative. Motivated, perhaps, by a sense of petty bitterness with respect to Martini & Rossi's 1931 legal victory in Torino's Court of Appeals, Cinzano began running one advertisement in the *New York Times* and other major American dailies which intentionally violated Martini & Rossi's Martini Cocktail copyright in Italy. 'It is said by those who really know', the Torinese company's advertisement explained to prospective American consumers, 'that a Martini is as good as its vermouth', which was why 'the elite of Europe have chosen Cinzano Vermouth (both for cocktails and as an aperitif) for more than 100 years' (*New York Times* 1934: 11).

These tit-for-tat marketing campaigns, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, eventually tipped the commercial scales in favor of northern Italy's vermouth producers. Indeed, during the late 1930s, Americans were consuming more Italian vermouth than ever before. In 1937, for instance, some 46,000

hectoliters of alcohol were exported from Italy to the United States, 57% percent of which consisted of vermouth (*La Rivista Commerciale Italo-Americana* 1938: 8). By 1939, the Martini Cocktail – which, unlike in Italy, was not legally associated with the Martini & Rossi company's liquors – had become the third most popular mixed alcoholic beverage in the United States (Garey 1939: 11).

In commemorating his industry's apparent successes during the 1930s, Count Napoleone Rossi di Montelera, one of the leading executives behind the Martini & Rossi company, celebrated his industry's contributions to Fascism's autarkic program: 'Today . . . the Fascist Nation brings its prestige to the footsteps of the Great Powers', he proudly exclaimed, adding that vermouth exports to the United States had disproportionately contributed to the 'liberation' of the Italian economy from 'slavery' to the international marketplace. 'The contribution of Vermouth is not a simple fashion that has favored . . . aperitifs and cocktails', Rossi di Montelera confidently contended, but rather 'it is a notoriety created by Latin geniality', which, sooner or later, would 'subjugate . . . the most reluctant mentality' among both Italian and North American consumers (*Il commercio vinicolo* 1938: 2).

Notwithstanding Rossi di Montelera's proclamations regarding his industry's contributions to the dictatorship's domestic and foreign policy objectives, however, the coming of the Second World War (1939–1945) deeply interrupted liquor exports from Italy to the United States, especially in the wake of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the Roosevelt administration's subsequent declaration of war against the Axis Alliance in December 1941. And while WWII would bring these material and cultural exchanges between Mussolini's Italy and Roosevelt's America to a temporary standstill, the uniquely Italian – and, in many ways, *fascist* – contribution to the international cocktails marketplace had been firmly, and irrevocably, stamped.

Conclusion

During the opening decades of the 20th century, cocktails not only crossed oceans, continents, and geopolitical borders, they crossed ideological boundaries as well. Arriving in Italy during the tumultuous years between the conclusion of WWI and Fascism's conquest of political power, these mixed alcoholic beverages came to signify both the positive and, for many, negative qualities of the first wave of 'Americanization' in Europe.

For Italy's bourgeoisie, cocktails symbolized the glitz, glamor, and, relatively speaking, 'liberties' associated with American popular culture. By conspicuously consuming cocktail-style beverages in jazz clubs and 'American Bars' or at in-home mixing parties, Italy's middle classes displayed their cosmopolitanism, individuality, and upward social mobility for their polite society circles.

For figures within Mussolini's dictatorship, however, as well as for their pro-fascist partners within the Italian heavy spirits industry, cocktails were largely viewed as manifestations of a poorly-disguised program of American

commercial imperialism, whose purported objective was to transform Italy into what one regime-affiliated intellectual colorfully described as 'a civilization that is all sea foam and no land' (Bisorco 1927). By establishing an ideologically charged milieu of linguistic, behavioral, and alimentary self-sufficiency, *Il Duce*'s regime provided groups within Italy's alcoholic beverages industry with a lucrative socioeconomic framework in which to aggressively peddle their wines and liquors as 'autarkic' alternatives to various foreign commodities, tastes, and habits. In marketing cocktails *a la italiana*, figures such as Marinetti and Grassi, as well as heavy spirits manufacturers such as Martini & Rossi and Cinzano, not only strategically recontextualized these quintessentially North American beverages as 'Italian', they articulated and helped firmly establish a repertoire of thoroughly Italian-style cocktails, which, unlike Fascism, survived as cultural artifacts of the interwar years well into the post-WWII decades.

These commercial and popular cultural innovations under the shadow of the regime's 20 years in power furthermore extended well beyond Italy. Indeed, by the 1960s, a number of interwar Italian-style cocktails, including the 'Martini' and the 'Negroni', to name just a few, had become among the most popular and widely consumed mixed alcoholic beverages on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, making appearances in Hollywood films and popping up in popular lounges in both Europe and the United States. These material and cultural vestiges of the 'Black Decades' in Italy, therefore, serve as subtle reminders of not only the insidious, if somewhat indirect, ways in which Fascism imposed its ideological program upon Italian society, culture, and identity, but also of the multi-directional flows and cross-cultural influences of early 20th century globalization.

Notes

1 I would like to thank Diana Garvin and Carol Helstosky for reading early drafts of this essay and providing me with insightful and constructive feedback. Thanks also to David Inglis and Hang Kei Ho, the co-editors of this anthology, for their support and patience as I completed this study. All errors and omissions are the responsibility of the author.

2 While Grassi maintained a position of cautious neutrality with respect to the Martini Cocktail's ingredients, others bravely acknowledged the popular beverage's exclusive connections with the Martini & Rossi company's brand of vermouth. See Rossi 1935: 25–28.

3 For a comprehensive study on the history of jazz music in Italy, see Mazzoletti 2004.

4 Vermouth is a type of fortified wine, typically manufactured in Italy and France, which is flavored with various botanicals such as roots, barks, and spices; Cognac is a variety of twice-distilled brandy, produced in southwestern France; Angostura is a bittering ingredient flavored with cloves and cinnamon; rum is a heavy spirit made from the fermentation and distillation of sugarcane molasses; curaçao is a liquor flavored with the peels of bitter oranges. The 'Americano' was originally named the 'Milano-Torino', which is a reference to the cocktail's primary ingredients: Campari (from Milano) and vermouth (from Torino). The Milano-Torino was eventually renamed the 'Americano' due largely to its popularity among

American tourists in northern Italy during the early 1900s. The Americano, moreover, reportedly served as the inspiration for the Negroni, which substitutes the former's fizzy water for gin. See Campari 2023; Picchi 2019.

5 In addition to promoting cocktail parties among bourgeois Italian women, Polito-Fantini also encouraged her readers to keep their in-home mixing stations stocked with largely foreign liquors and wines, such as brandy, Bordeaux wines, and French vermouth. See Polito-Fantini 1931: 293.

6 See also Dora 1933: 49; Lionella 1935: 3. Such accessorizations extended to the realm of wallpaper designs as well. In 1934, for instance, Braendli & Company began promoting two of its 'washable wallpaper' products, Salubra and Tekko, as fashionable compliments for Italian women's in-home cocktail mixing parties. See Braendli & Company 1934: 4.

7 O. Bisorco was a known pseudonym for Maccari, an influential pro-fascist painter and writer who, along with a group of others, founded The Savage in 1924. In addition to their anxiety with respect to the growing presence of American popular culture in interwar Italy, many fascists were deeply concerned about the influence of British customs among the country's bourgeoisie, especially following the Second Italo-Ethiopian War (1935–1936) and the League of Nations' application of economic sanctions against Mussolini's dictatorship. See Pili 2022.

8 For a more detailed analysis of the IWL's marketing campaigns in Fascist Italy, see Griffith 2020: 394–415.

9 For sources on the British context, see *Corriere della Sera* 1930: 3; Ibid. 1932: 5. For sources on the French context, see Ibid. 1929a: 3.

10 Emphasis is my own.

11 For an elaborated study on the IWL's pro-wine marketing campaigns among Italian women, which included the formation of an 'Italian Women's Propaganda Committee for Family Oriented Wine Consumption', see Griffith 2020: 404–406.

12 Grappa is a grape-based pomace brandy, typically produced in northern Italy.

13 Campari is an Italian liquor made from a blend of heavy spirits, herbs, and fruits.

14 Alkermes is made from brandy flavored with bay leaves and Southeast Asian spices; Strega is a bright yellow liquor commonly made via a blend of over 70 different botanicals, including saffron, mint, and juniper berries.

15 For additional analysis on the classification and preparation of these Futurist *polibibite*, see Helstosky 2004: 78–79; Piccinino 2014: 202–296.

16 Aurum is a sweet liqueur made from a blend of brandy and citrus juices. Gabriele D'Annunzio – the avant-garde Italian poet and one-time *Duce* of the Regency of Carnaro (1919–1920) in the Adriatic city of Fiume – was reportedly responsible for naming Aurum with a combination of the Latin words *aurum* (gold) and *aurantium* (bitter orange). See Gentilcore 2010: 153.

17 Prosecco is a sparkling white wine, typically produced in northern Italy. See also Marina 1935: 34.

18 Spumante is a category of sparkling Italian wine.

19 In 1936, Branca joined Cinzano in marketing its heavy spirits as ideal Christmas gifts for Italian women. See *Popolo d'Italia* 1936: 8.

20 Elixir Chino is a type of aromatic bark-infused liquor, typically produced in the northern Italian region of Piedmont.

21 As Lisa Jacobson has shown, a consumer marketplace for wine among Anglo-American consumers did not fully emerge in the United States until the late-1960s. Thus, interwar Italian winegrowers' only hope of boosting exports of Italian-manufactured alcoholic beverages to the post-Prohibition United States was via heavy spirits, especially those most closely associated with cocktails. See Jacobson 2017: 360–399.

22 Marsala is a fortified wine from western Sicily.

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