

I.O.O.% - Antidote Against Italian Sounding

Natasha Lardera (July 15, 2011)



At the Summer Fancy Food Show Unaprol, the largest organization of Italian olive oil producers, introduced its traceability system, developed to guarantee the authenticity of Italian extra virgin olive oil (I.O.O.% stands for Italian Olive Oil)



The United States, with over 300 million potential consumers, represent the first market choice for Italian producers of extra virgin olive oil. The north American market uses an average of 250.000 tons of olive oil a year and lands third in the the world's consumer chart with a quota of 13%.

This data was presented at the Summer Fancy Food Show in a seminar organized by [Unaprol](#) [2] (Unione Nazionale tra le Associazioni di Produttori di Olive), the largest organization of Italian olive oil producers, in collaboration with the Italian Trade Commission, in order to introduce buyers, restaurant owners, journalists and chefs to I.O.O.% alta qualità italiana, the quality brand of high quality extra virgin olive oil which is produced in Italy from Italian olives and which may be traced by Unaprol traceability system which analyzes each step in the production process. This means that the production process respects predefined parameters which are stricter than those of the current regular production legislation.

The approval of the new community regulations which demands that the origin of the product to be shown on the label, permits consumers to easily recognize extra virgin olive oil in Italy. The 100% consortium covers olive growers, cooperative olive oil makers, associations, oil mills and packing companies and was founded to promote and add value to high quality extra virgin olive oil in Italy and abroad, to grant the certificate to the various actors in the production process which respect the regulations and undergo tests carried out by the certification body, and to organize educational campaigns on the consumption of high quality extra virgin olive oil.

“We need to watch out for Italian sounding products, that market is said to be ten times bigger than the Italian one,” journalist Michele Bongaro of Unaprol said at the seminar, “In order to defeat this problematic phenomenon Unaprol, with I.O.O.% continues to intensify its network in order to inform consumers that it is possible to locate real authentic Italian extra virgin olive oil through its certified origin.” Indeed in Washington Unaprol wanted to promote, inform and educate the American consumer of the health benefits of extra virgin olive oil in the diet in the fight against obesity, a real problem in this country.

According to wikipedia “there is a large body of clinical data to show that consumption of olive oil can provide heart health benefits such as favorable effects on cholesterol regulation and LDL cholesterol oxidation, and that it exerts anti-inflammatory, anti-thrombotic, antihypertensive as well as vasodilatory effects both in animals and in humans. Additionally, olive oil protects against heart disease as it controls the 'bad' levels of LDL cholesterol and raises levels of the 'good' cholesterol, HDL.”

“Italian extra virgin olive oil has evolved from being considered an ethnic product to a symbol of the health conscious Mediterranean diet,” Massimo Gargano, president of Unaprol has said, “it is the second most exported Italian product to the US and it is part of a market of 350 million dollars.”

At the seminar, food writer Bill Marsano gave some practical tips on extra virgin olive oil and how to taste it. Extra virgin oil is only 1% acid and is the result of the first pressing of the olives. The olives are crushed with grinding stones or steel presses which separate the dry part of the olives (pomace) from water and oil by pressure and/or centrifugation spinning.

Evoo can range from a crystalline champagne color to greenish-golden and light green and there are three main categories: mild – light and buttery (ideal for raw meats, pasta sauces, raw vegetables and fish); fruity – slightly stronger (pairs well with grilled meats, pasta sauces, cooked vegetables and bruschetta); spicy – strong taste (perfect for rustic dishes).

The steps to taste extra virgin olive oil are:

IPour the oil in a small glass and gently swirl in order to release all the various aromas. Warm it with your hands,

Inhale, first briefly than deeply trying to capture all the different aromas.

ISip a small quantity of oil from the glass, trying to keep it in the front of your mouth between your lower lip and tightly shut teeth.

Inhale, breathing first delicately then more vigorously so as to vaporize the oil in the oral cavity where the taste buds are.

IWhile trying to identify and catalogue all the different aromas and flavors, exhale from the nose so that the vaporized oil particles can reach the nasal membrane giving even more precise sensations.

IOnce you have collected sufficient information you can expel the oil.



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