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Italy’s No-Alcohol Drinks Surge

Producers rush to meet rising demand for mocktails and low-alcohol cocktails at Milan’s Tuttofood fair

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In Italy, demand for no-alcohol and low-alcohol drinks is rising fast, and companies that make spirits, water and mixers are moving to capture it. At Tuttofood in Milan, which runs through May 14, ready-to-drink products without alcohol were among the most visible items on display, with gin tonic, Spritz, Negroni and Paloma versions aimed at younger consumers and at bartenders looking for new bases for cocktails.

The shift reflects a broader change in the market. In Italy, sales volume for no- and low-alcohol products and mocktails has grown 15% over the past three years, while the traditional alcohol sector has fallen 2.7%, according to industry figures cited at the fair. The trend has been helped by Dry January and by a wider focus on wellness and healthier habits, which have pushed more consumers to look for drinks that fit a lighter lifestyle without giving up the ritual of a mixed drink.

Among the companies betting on the category is Plose, the water company from Bressanone in northern Italy, owned by the Fellini family. It introduced Alpex, a line of four ready-to-drink beverages inspired by classic cocktails: Paloma, Hugo, Gin Tonic and Spritz. All are alcohol-free and made with Plose spring water from Bressanone. The company says it uses fresh Italian fruit in its products, except for pineapple imported from abroad. Grapefruit has become one of its strongest flavors because it works both as a standalone drink and in mixology.

Bartenders say the appeal is not only about abstaining from alcohol but also about flexibility behind the bar. Fabio Lunghi of Flair Academy in Milan said that having a neutral base of good quality is ideal for mixology because it allows bartenders to build drinks with more control over flavor and balance.

Galvanina, based in Rimini, is also pushing into the segment with products designed for cocktail use. The company has teamed up with Ginarte, Bitter Fusetti and Vetz on “Ma però,” a low-alcohol line launched in February with an alcohol content of 4.7%. The project also involves bartender Flavio Angiolillo, whose name is tied to Milan venues including Mag, Backdoor and 1930.

Farther south, Polara 53 in Modica, Sicily, is leaning on its long experience in beverages to expand its mocktail business. The family company, led by Giuseppe Polara and operating since 1953, says it has seen a boom in mocktails over the past three years as demand has grown in markets such as the United States, Northern Europe and Spain. It now is studying new ready-to-drink flavors.

The strongest momentum appears to be in zero-alcohol mocktails aimed at Generation Z. Giovanna Cannizzaro, who works in sales for Polara 53, said alcohol-free versions of drinks such as Spritz and Negroni have been especially popular with young people. She

said health concerns are one reason, but added that many younger consumers simply do not have the same drinking culture as older generations and prefer a more casual approach to beverages. Because the drinks are alcohol-free, she said, they also work for minors.