

VareseNews

In the lively courtyards in the centre of Varese, “Bock” is still king

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Ultimo is certainly one of the most popular bars in the centre of Varese, especially among young people; it is an evening bar, in the heart of Varese’s nightlife, situated in one of the beautiful courtyards in the pedestrian area of Varese. In just a few years, this pub has become an important meeting place for anyone going out in the evening “to drink something”, in search of a friendly place that serves nice cocktails and good quality products.

“Ultimo is turning five soon; this year, we’re going to celebrate our birthday on 19 April,” said Fabio (Fabietto) Maroni, the bar’s young manager. “We have a party every year, and always on a Thursday, because we opened on a Thursday, 24 April 2013. It’s a very important moment, for us and for our customers; there was nothing here before. The bar where we are used to be a shop; when we came to look at it, **it was only an empty space.**”

Before setting up *Ultimo*, Fabietto had worked for many years in a number of bars in town. “And the bar I was most fond of, *Balthazar*, **was in the very next courtyard.** I really felt at home there, it was where I learned the ropes, but it closed in 2009. So, for two or three years, I did another job, and then **I left for Australia. By the time I came to Italy,** I’d already made up my mind what I wanted to do: **I**

wanted to open my own bar. When I started looking for the right location, I found this place; it reminded me of my “old school”, I had no doubts, this was where I wanted to come.”

However, the decision entailed a considerable commitment. **“I had to start from scratch. To turn the place into a bar, we had to redo everything, from the counter, to the bathrooms, to the furniture.”**

Now, it is one of the most popular bars in Varese’s night scene; it is open from Wednesday to Sunday, from 6.30 p.m.

Fabietto, 33, came to this line of work “by chance, in the summer of his last year at high school. **A bar by the lake was looking for a waiter, and I wanted to buy a motorbike, so I took the job. Since then, I’ve never stopped.** I moved around for a while, until I finally “landed” at the old *Balthazar*, where I literally fell in love with the job; there, I learned to have fun while working. The “first” experience at *Balthazar* was wonderful, and when it came to an end, it encouraged me to open a place of my own.”

The relationship between Ultimo and the Angelo Poretti Brewery is almost de rigueur. **“When you open a bar in Varese, you can’t not sell Bock,”** Fabietto explained. “This is why it was necessary to look for their beers. The people of Varese are proud of their origins and, therefore, of their beer ...”

The most popular, *Angelo Poretti* beer sold at Ultimo is **“without doubt Bock (the 5 hops).** Then there’s the **7 hop variety, because it’s seasonal and has something to say;** people want to try it, because it’s always something new, a different beer that changes every three months.” Of course, there are those that only make a short stop. *Ultimo* has been chosen by Poretti to be one of the sixty bars taking part in the initiative **#140annidiluppoli.**

Even for a long-time manager, the first memory of the Poretti brand was ... as a customer. **“You never forget your first beer; when I was younger, the beer drunk at barbecues was Bock.** Who could ever forget it?”

di Translated by Donini & Macheda (Reviewed by Prof. Rolf Cook)