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Locals flock to aperitivo at Radetzky Café for classic Italian cocktails and its can't-beat spread, which the restaurant has been perfecting for two decades.

Photography Alamy

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## Aperitivo in Milan's Fashion District

How to enjoy happy hour, Milan style—a look at the best restaurants, bars and boutiques offering Italy's oldest social tradition

Jul 16, 2013 By: Stephanie Epiro

In addition to being known as the design capital of the world, Milan also holds rank as the capital of *aperitivo*, one of Italy's oldest social traditions. Aperitivo is similar to a Western happy hour, except that here, expertly crafted cocktails are served alongside complimentary spreads of Italian delicacies designed to spark your appetite for dinner.

Today, a number of restaurants, bars and boutiques located in the recently revived Garibaldi area and its buzzy Corso Como street—Milan's fashion district—are putting their own twist on the classic aperitivo. Catering to Milan's unique range of tastes and styles, aperitivo seekers can choose to sip surrounded by old-school elegance or in a sleek new locale.

Radetzky Café has served its ever-popular aperitivo for more than 20 years. Here, dashing bartenders whip up traditional cocktails while the city's well-heeled set dines on the accompanying buffet of cured meats, tomato-dotted focaccia, and pasta dishes, which will quell the fiercest pangs of hunger. In the warmer months, Radetzky's spritz-drinking crowd spills outside onto its pretty piazza.

Just down the road, Davai Milano (*davai* means "let's go" in Russian) recently opened its shiny doors and offers guests a taste of Russian culture with its own aperitivo menu. Davai's lustrous metal interior, peppered with red accents, is the perfect place to enjoy one of 100 specialty cocktails (each made with Russian liquor) and small plates that include caviar-topped scones.

In the city's style centre, some of Milan's most notable boutiques are also partaking in the aperitivo trend. Time a trip to the famous 10 Corso Como boutique just right, and once you've finished browsing the clothes, books, art and music, you'll be treated to an après-shopping aperitivo in the foliage-filled courtyard.

American style giant Marc Jacobs is one of the newest additions to the aperitivo scene, thanks to his Brera boutique, which features the first-ever *Café Marc Jacobs*. This stylish spot is best enjoyed with a glass of Prosecco in hand on a summer night, when the enchanting courtyard is bathed in dusk's golden glow. Designer duds optional.

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