

Cocktails

BY DICK DAVIS

Guests at Alfredo of Rome in New York City's Rockefeller Center can not only eat but drink as the ancient Romans did, thanks to a signature cocktail menu based on Empire-era Roman cookbooks.

Wines in the days of Caesar were not as refined as today's spirits and needed spices, herbs, floral essences, roots or seeds to make them more palatable, says Alfredo's general manager Alex Berlingeri, who concocted the cocktail program along with owner Russell Bellanca and Chef Stefano Riccioletti. Berlingeri believes restaurants today must be as creative behind the bar as they are in the kitchen and dining room.

Martini Maximus, made with fig-infused vodka, is Alfredo's best-selling drink. It was inspired in part by the recent popular movie *Gladiator*. Following closely in popularity are a Roman Sangria and The Mulsum, which is white wine with a healthy dollop of honey.

Other tasty selections include the Cynarito, which is house peach-infused vodka with Cynar, Grand Marnier and orange juice; Eve's Martini, vodka combined with chestnuts, chestnut paste, honey and cinnamon; Roman Absinthe, port wine with rose petals, dates and green apples; and Brutus, vodka with Cynar and sweet vermouth, served on ice. Alfredo of Rome's version of the classic Negroni combines Campari, sweet vermouth and gin; the Allisium consists of *limoncello*, vodka, honey and the nectar of peach, apricot, and pear; and the Limonata is made with *limoncello*, Absolut Citron vodka and a sour mix and served with a lemon twist.

The Cynarito, Negroni, Brutus, Allisium and Limonata appeal to guests who prefer drinks that are not too sweet. All cocktails complement Alfredo of Rome's extensive *Piccoli Tesori* (Little Treasures) Italian bar menu selections, featuring *bruschetta*, *salmone*, *alici*, *frittata*, *cavolo*, *melanzana*, *tonno* and *prosciutto*. **FINE**

Alfredo of Rome is located in Rockefeller Center, 4 W. 49th St., NYC, NY, 10020. For reservations, call (212) 397-0100. The original Alfredo's is in Rome, while Disney World Resort in Orlando is home to another U.S. restaurant. You can get more information at www.alfredos.com.