

GIUSEPPE GRAPPOLINI



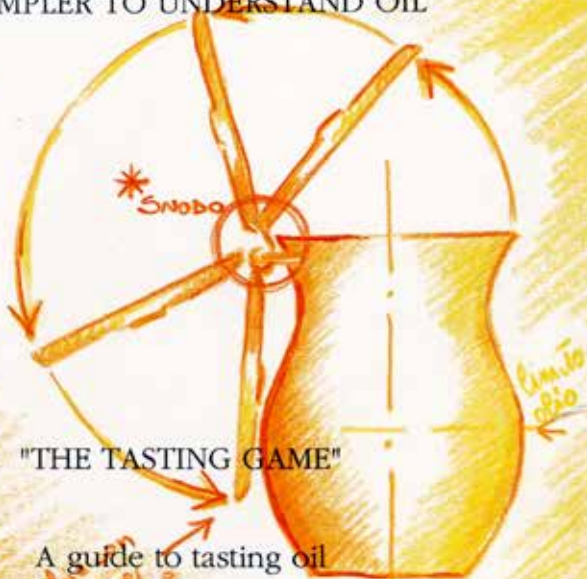
*apertivo
con scitta*

DEGUSTO

A SAMPLER TO UNDERSTAND OIL



* momento
SNODO



"THE TASTING GAME"

A guide to tasting oil

*Capitolo in
Prosecco
fino a 270°*

* 25 *
base

Guide
The Tasting Game

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Loro Ciuffenna - Arezzo - ITALIA

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Often ideas represent reality.
Objects allow us to know it.
G.G.

DEGUSTO

An invitation by Grappolini to sample
Extra Virgin Olive Oil.

DEGUSTO

The Grappolini "DEGUSTO" sampling kit was born from an inspiration:

to increase tasting practices so that the difference between good and bad Extra Virgin Olive Oil can be distinguished.

"DEGUSTO"

How often has the question been asked: "How, and with what, is an oil sampled?"

The answers are many and diverse: with a finger dipped in oil...on bread...on boiled rice....from a teaspoon...from a glass.

The "DEGUSTO" sampler was conceived as a response for all those who wish to improve their oil tasting knowledge.

The sampler is made from stainless steel. This permits the heat from the hand to be effectively transferred to the contents. It also masks the colour of the oil sample (often the cause of subjective judgement), as well as allowing easy cleaning.

The tulip-style design, is easily gripped in the hand and gives an optimum sensing of taste and aroma.

And the "DEGUSTO" sampler is always at hand, if needed, to taste an oil before use.

As a natural complement to the "DEGUSTO" sampler comes the instruction manual "The Tasting Game".

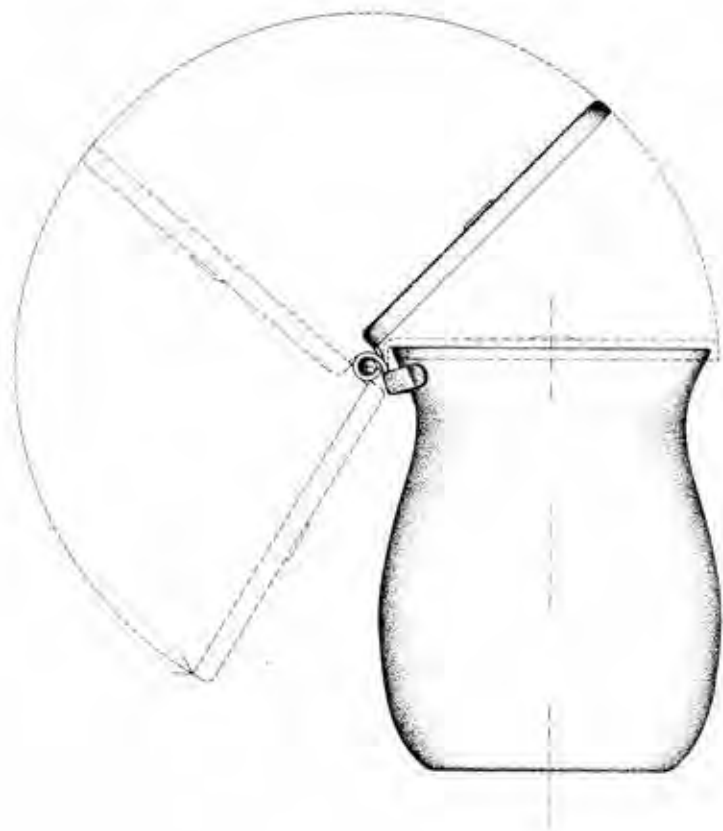
This easy-to-read booklet provides the necessary information, both written and illustrated, to understand this precious natural food.

Plan of the "DEGUSTO" sampler from above.

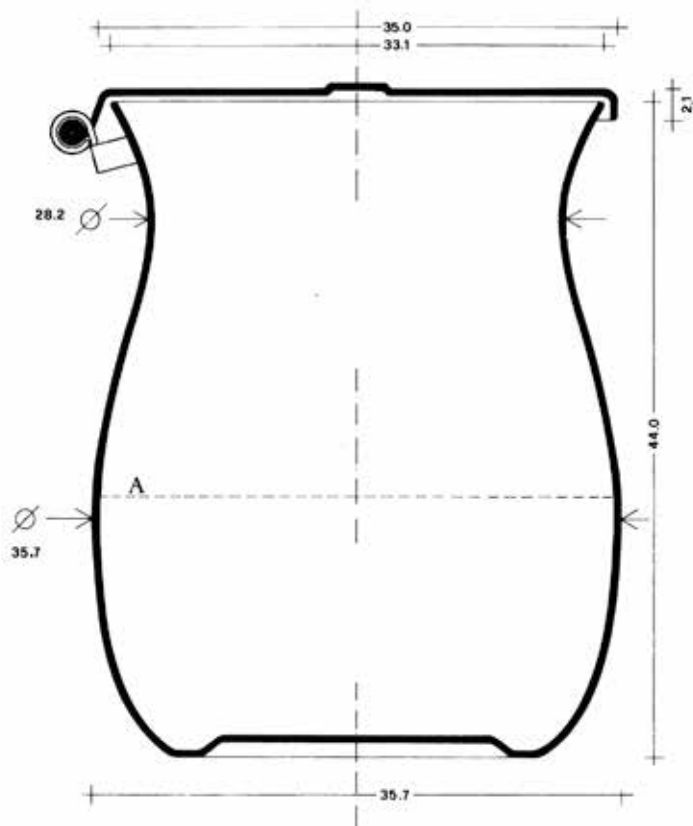


Protected by international patent

Front view of the "DEGUSTO"
sampler showing the opening
variation of the lid.



Section plan of the "DEGUSTO" sampler.



A - Recommended level of oil for sampling taste and aroma.

THE SENSES

Our senses. The slightest arousal and they're afire. Smell, taste, sight. A small stimulus in the brain is enough to set them in action. Such an impulse gives life to a magical game.

The sensory perceptions invade our being; they weave and compound our thoughts, they gather in our memory and quickly evolve into a judgement. Proof.....? The tasting game.

THE WORKING OF THE SENSES

When a product is "sampled", often the fact that this is a moment when we want to put ourselves to the test is ignored.

Actually we put our senses on the alert before fully exercising them.

Smell, taste and sight allow us to determine aroma, flavour, and colour.

Let's look at these senses close up:

The nasal membranes have the task of revealing aromas.

Taste, which comes from the sensors, or taste buds, on the tongue, reveals the flavour, the consistency, or the tactile sensation.

Sight determines colour or chromatic range.

It's vital that the senses form a continuous dialogue between themselves and are guided by a good memory, capable of mentally comparing our experiences so that they can be summarized.

LET'S BEGIN THE TASTING GAME

The moment of tasting is an opening to a world of emotions which begins with the sensory perceptions.

There are some small aspects which we must take into account when we prepare to taste an oil. They are suggestions which influence the success of the tasting game, and so we must keep them in mind.

- Be in good physical condition so that the appreciation or the accusation is valid.
- The best time for tasting is in the morning, about an hour after breakfast, and mid-afternoon. Never after the main meal.
- Perfumes, deodorants, coffee, sweets and cigarettes can negatively influence our judgement, reducing the sensitivity and intensity of our perception.
- No less important is the environment in which the tasting is held; odours, noises and colours can be distracting elements.

Now let's "switch on" our sensory memory. We must gather our recollections so we can judge the intensity of merits and defects, and reduce personal taste preferences or dislikes as much as we can in order to obtain an objective evaluation of the product.

THE TASTING

Pour about a soup spoon of oil (10 -12ml.) into the "DEGUSTO" sampler.

Warm the oil in the container using the heat from the palm of your hand.

When no difference can be felt between the hand and the "DEGUSTO" sampler you're ready to begin the tasting.

Make sure that you have warmed the contents of your "DEGUSTO" sampler well, because this simple operation can affect the outcome of the tasting.

Prime your memory of the appropriate sense.

Upon opening the lid of the "DEGUSTO" sampler immediately begin examining the aroma, following up with the taste test.

Bring the "DEGUSTO" sampler to your nose and inhale slowly two, or at most three, times.

With the necessary concentration the aroma you receive from the oil will indicate a great many things which will be confirmed largely by the taste test.

Now bring the "DEGUSTO" sampler to the lower lip of the mouth and allow. Eight or ten drops of oil to slide onto the tongue, but do not swallow.

After some seconds (necessary for bringing the oil to the body's temperature of about 36°C) form the tongue into a spoon shape and position it forward towards the top teeth, which should be resting upon the lower. Now, with the mouth semi-closed, quickly inhale two or three times in rapid succession.

The air, mixed with the oil, mists those sensory

parts of the tongue and palate, causing a series of sensations.

Store in your mind the perceptions of sweetness, bitterness, spiciness, of merits and defects received at that moment.

It's worth repeating the tasting a second time a few minutes later, after having cleansed the palate and tongue with fresh water.

To make it easier for those without previous oil tasting experience, we recommend that you obtain an oil noted for its characteristic quality and flavour. First sample the oil under examination and then the "reference" oil.

This simple taste comparison will allow you to readily determine the organoleptic differences.

If you wish to compare more oils test each generally for aroma to decide which to taste first; always begin with the mildest or least aromatic to avoid the likelihood of strong aromas saturating your taste facilities.

For those who can distinguish defects we recommend tasting those affected oils last because such defects can strongly disturb the tasting mechanisms, causing incorrect perceptions.

TO KNOW AN EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL IS TO KNOW HOW TO VALUE DEFECTS AND MERITS
It's always easier to discover flaws than virtues. And so let's begin with the most common defects which can assail those of our senses involved in the tasting.

If we can perceive an unpleasant sensation of over-ripe melon, or pumpkin, we have a defect called "rancidity". This comes from the ageing of the oil which is caused by light, heat and oxidation.

Impressions of mould, scalding, or sourness come from the poor conservation of the olive fruit before it's crushed.

In some cases these olives are piled for many days in areas which are damp and poorly ventilated.

Scalding can be caused by a raising of the temperature of the olive paste during the crushing process.

The musty odour of sediment, or dregs, comes from the oil's contact with the solid residue.

A metallic taste in the oil can originate during the crushing process. This is due to the oil coming into contact with metallic parts which have not been properly cleaned.

More common is a coarse taste in an oil, which is a sign of its lack of harmony and poor cleanliness in general.

The most appreciated virtues in an extra virgin oil are the taste of "freshness" which gives the sensation of just-picked olives, and a "fruity" flavour which can be distinguished when the aroma lingers unaltered for some time.

Bitterness can be attributed to a new oil. This taste is present in oils of the latest harvest when aromatic characteristics are almost over-ridden by a pleasant but not persistent bitterness.

A spicy sensation on the bottom of the palate is also often present in oils during the first few months after pressing.

Among the most sought-after characteristics is harmony which evolves when the aroma, taste and tactile sensation are in perfect balance.

When the word "sweet" is also used it emphasises that the oil is delicate, typical of certain production areas and plant varieties.

And the term "vegetable" refers to a taste in the oil which can be compared with some greens, vegetables, or fruits, most frequently sweet or bitter almond, artichoke, tomato, freshly-cut grass, and pulses.

If the mental association is of a fruit it's often apple, a typical and wide-spread flavour in certain oils of the Mediterranean basin.

It's worth remembering that, all too often, defects have prevented extra virgin oil from achieving the universal success that it has always deserved.

A CLOSE-UP OF EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

Here it is, the fruit of the olive in your hand. It has an oval shape, rounded and elongated, and consists of three parts.....the skin, which is called the epicarp; the pulp, called the mesocarp; and the pit, or endocarp, which contains the seed.

Between 96 and 98 percent of the oil is in the pulp. Only 2 to 4 percent is contained in the seed.

The oil contained in the olive ranges between 15 and 25 percent of its total. The quantity of water can vary between 30 and 60 percent, and the level of sugar can also be high, around 19 percent.

The remainder is fibre (5.8 percent), protein (1.6 percent), and other elements (about 1.5 percent). Certainly, though, you'll want to learn more about how extra virgin olive oil is reached from an olive. Let's find out.

By anticipating this moment by a few days it's possible to obtain a better aroma and quality: a better oil overall.

Olives are picked when they ripen.

Basically, olives can be picked in two ways. They can be plucked directly from the plant by hand, or by forcing the fruit to fall on mats spread under the tree either by battering the branches with sticks or by mechanically shaking the tree.

The fruit is then gathered in small crates and taken to the crushing plant.

The crushing of the olives is done in various ways, but essentially comprises:

- Millstones, large wheels of stone (granite) that revolve within a specially designed hopper in which the olives are contained.
- Steel hammers which spin at the bottom of a container into which the olives are poured.

In both cases the operation seeks to reduce the olives to a homogenous paste which, after appropriate mixing (called "kneading"), is ready to undergo the process of oil extraction. The separation of the oil from the kneaded paste, which comprises the pit, pulp and skin of the olive, is also carried out in various ways:

- By pressure, or pressing the paste spread on, or within, special mats of natural or synthetic fibre stacked one upon the other in the press.
- By centrifuge, a quick, modern system.

Both in the first and second case the oil must undergo an appropriate centrifuge operation which separates the oil from the vegetal water.

The oil obtained is cloudy, and is clarified by passing the liquid through paper or cellulose filters, or more rarely, cotton.

The methods described above are simple mechanical operations; this could lead one to believe that there is little difference between one extra virgin oil and another.

This is not so.

There are more chemical variations and differences in taste than it's possible to imagine.

Determining factors are climate, the environment in which the plants grow, the tree variety, the composition of the soil, the time of picking, the maturity of the olive, and the health of the fruit. These apply from the onset, but it doesn't end there.

Influencing the final result, and therefore the goodness and quality of the oil, are also the method of picking, the way the olives are transported, the condition of storage within the mill before crushing, the system of mechanical extraction of the oil, and the way it's conserved.

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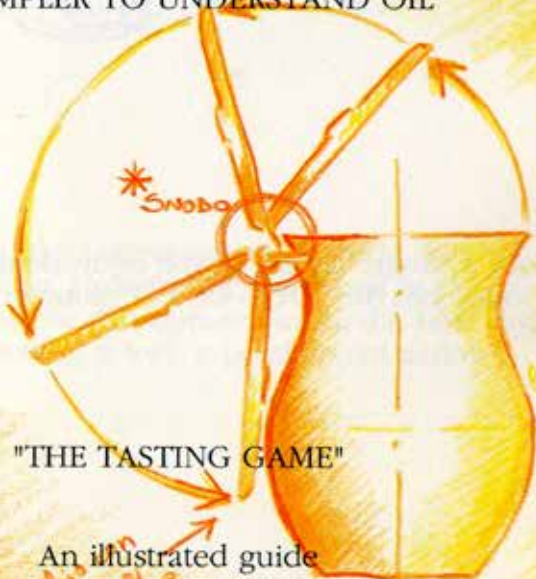
*esperienza
con scintille*

DEGUSTO

A SAMPLER TO UNDERSTAND OIL



* momento
SNOZO



"THE TASTING GAME"

An illustrated guide

*Opuscolo
Prestazione
fino a 270*

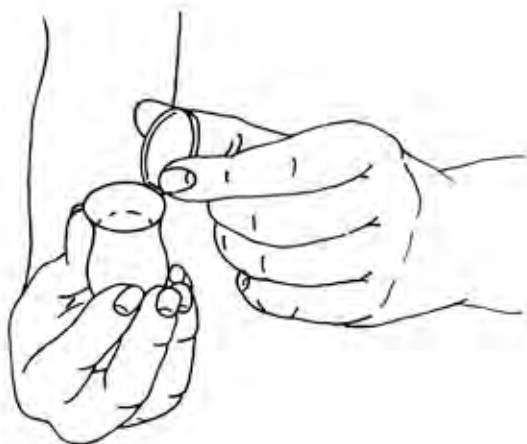
* 25 *
base



Pour a "finger" of oil, or the equivalent of a soup spoon, into the "DEGUSTO" sampler and close its lid.



The success of the tasting can depend on this simple operation. Heat the oil contained in the sampler for one or two minutes using the heat from your hand, rotating it with a gentle wrist action.



When the "DEGUSTO" sampler has reached the temperature of your hand, raise the lid and begin the tasting game.



Concentrate, arouse the memory of your senses. Bring the "DEGUSTO" sampler to your nose and inhale slowly two or three times in succession.

The oil itself will tell you all.

Merits and defects emerge from the "DEGUSTO" sampler to capture your senses, like in a game.

Try to fix the sensations you receive in your memory.

Close the "DEGUSTO" lid and, if necessary, repeat the test after about a minute.



Afterwards, with your memory well on the alert, bring the "DEGUSTO" sampler to your lower lip and allow eight or ten drops of oil into your mouth, without swallowing. Allow the oil to warm slightly, then position the tongue, formed into a spoon-shape, forward towards the top teeth which should be resting on those below. Then, two or three times in quick succession, rapidly inhale air into your semi-closed mouth. In this way the air, mixed with the oil, sprays your tongue and palate.

At this precise moment the taste buds capture the sensations of sweetness, bitterness, spiciness, consistency, and of all those small merits and defects not revealed by the nose.



The memory condenses and confronts the sensory perceptions and quickly translates them into a judgement.

If necessary the tasting can be repeated after a brief pause.

Rinse the palate with fresh water.

If you liked the oil use what is left in the "DEGUSTO" sampler on your salad, or on a dish you consider suitable.

Clean the "DEGUSTO" sampler with hot water and unperfumed soap. Rinse well and dry with a cotton towel.

Now that you have entered the tasting game and have experienced its simplicity and pleasure, take our advice.....continue to play it. This way you'll appreciate more each day the advantages of knowing and tasting a fine extra virgin olive oil.

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