

WHY...

...did I feel I wanted to rewrite the history of **Caffè Miani**, formerly **Zucca**, formerly **Camparino** after so many illustrious writers had already published numerous tracts on it?

I still don't know if the project came about by chance or if it was intentional but, as Alexander Manzoni would say "*let those who come after decide*". For some time now I have been trying to get to know the Caffè better. One of the reasons for this is that my customers have been inundating me with questions about the place or regaling me with their memories of it. It has been a living and important part of the history of Milan for almost 150 years.

So then, like a bookworm, I got down to consulting old texts. Very interesting and full of peculiarities. But I found that each of these recounted something more than the others. They were, what is more, old publications which were possibly no longer to be found and therefore no longer in the public domain.

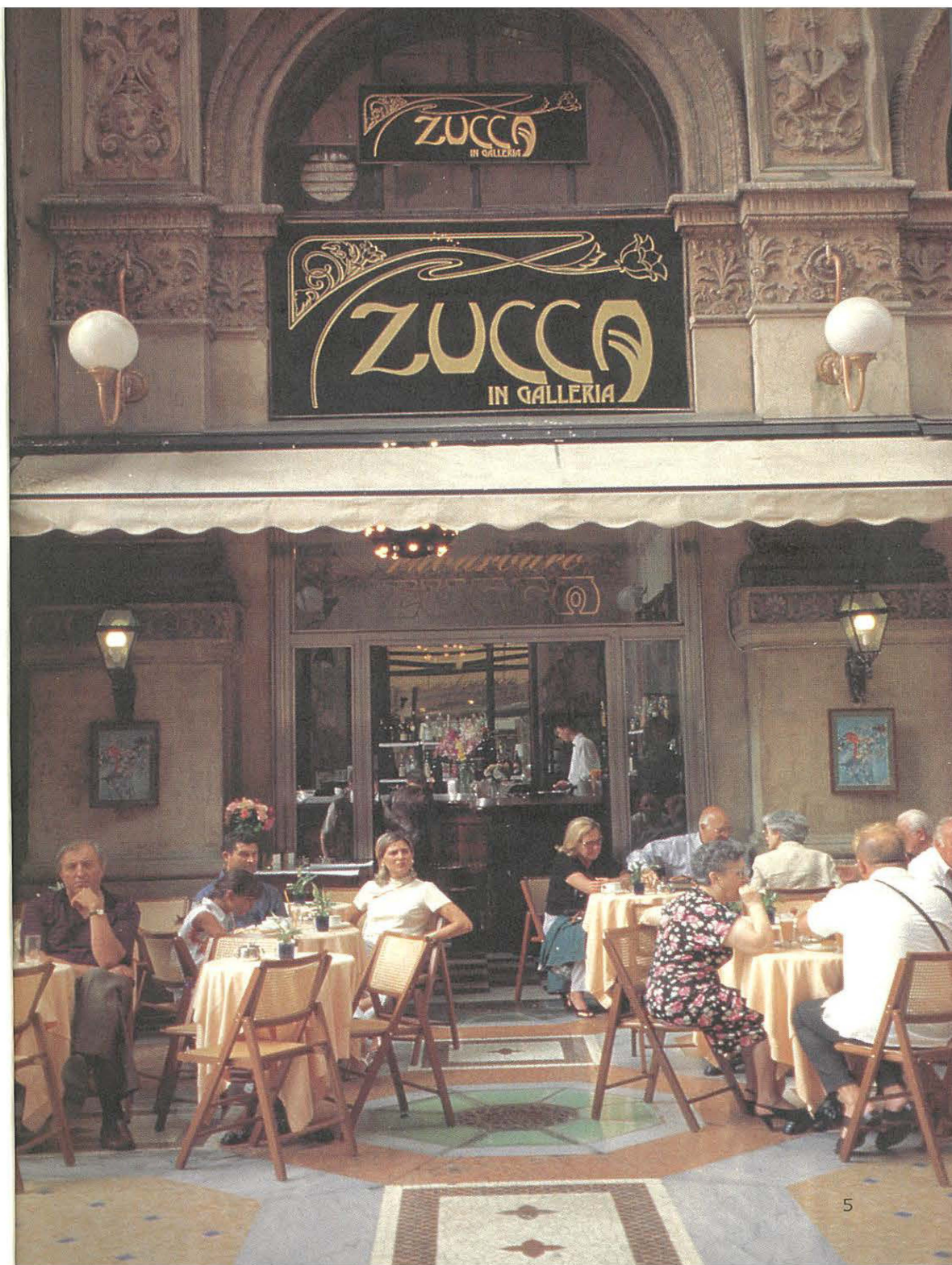
Why not try to bring all this knowledge together into one easy to read, unpretentious book, and thus spread the information around among the customers of the **Caffè Miani**?

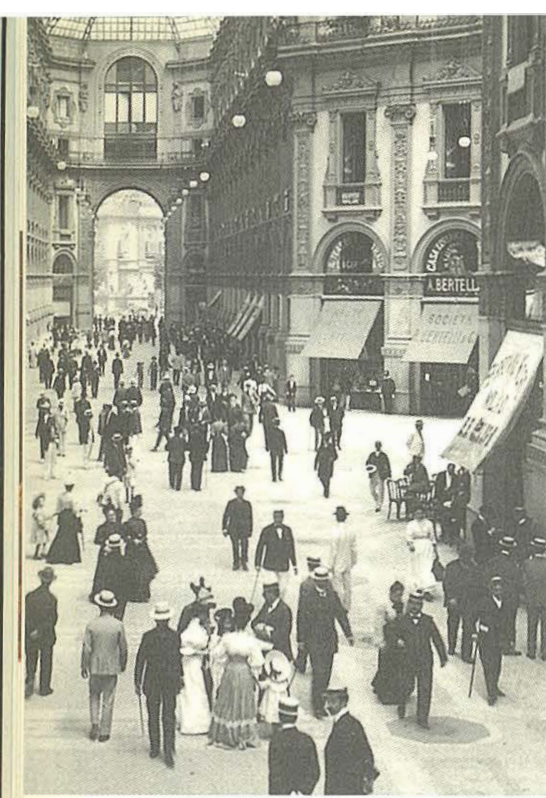
Readers will be free to judge the result of this second edition of our booklet whose contents were expanded and improved.

A heartfelt thanks to three excellent journalists who are no longer with us: Guido Vergani who helped me greatly in reconstructing the history of the Campari and the Camparino, Gaetano Afeltra who, as a friend more than as a journalist, wrote the story of a Man from the South who came "*from Puglia to Milan to become English*" and, finally, Orio Vergani for his fascinating personal experiences of the Campari.

Finally, I would like to thank my dear friends who, by their contributions, made it possible for me to spread the history of the Caffè Miani with this booklet, and above all the Dr. Silvia Paoli, curator of photographic civic archives and Dr. Ferdinando Maffioli, journalist of the newspaper "*Il Giornale*".

Orlando Chiari





the dome, small knots of curious people form looking up, waiting for something that can't be seen..."

On 14 November 1867, in the four rooms above the Caffè Campari the fourth heir, Davide, was born: the first Milanese citizen to be born in the Galleria.

In the meantime, the Campari, decorated according to the taste of the times in Empire style, had grown from one window to six. A restaurant had been added to the usual facilities of a café-liquor store. At its tables, regularly enlivened by "filles de joie", the first performance of Nerone by Pietro Cossa

was discussed as was the first night of Partita a scacchi by Giacosa and the much jeered flop of Rabagas by Sardou at the Santa Radegonda.

The idol was Ferravilla who triumphed at the Teatro Milanese in corso Vittorio Emanuele with El barbè de Porta Tosa which vied in its takings with the satirical revue Menimpipi at the Castelli. However, it was the old Verdi, then over sixty and living in Hotel Milan, who was the star of the moment.

On 8 February 1872 people stayed up till the small hours in the Galleria in the excitement for the first Italian performance of Aida at the Scala after its debut in Cairo: takings amounted to 13 thousand lire and there were 35 curtain calls.

At the Campari you could chat to Tito Ricordi and Attilio Manzoni. The latter founded the first advertising agency which also collected paid obituaries for Il Secolo.

One day a young man, Giovan Battista Pirelli, came in. He had just opened a factory between via Galilei and Ponte Seveso which produced rubber tubes and belts.

Another customer was Giuseppe Bagatti Valsecchi, the nobleman who had defied municipal bans by riding around the city on his velocipede and who had won one of the first cycling

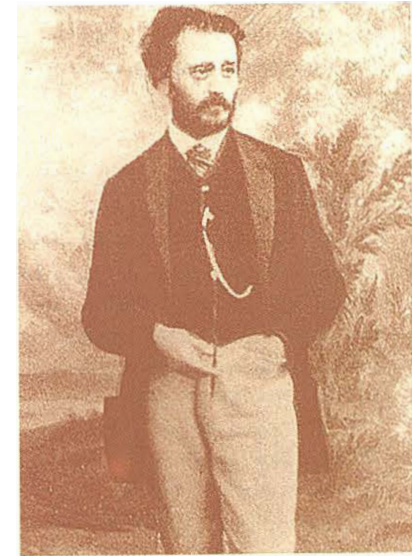
The Galleria Vittorio Emanuele in 1890. On the right, Giuseppe Mengoni, the father of the project.

races - Milan to Piacenza - in January 1873 at the incredible speed of 17 kilometers per hour. Others, seated at the outside tables, were the notables of art and literature, the former loose-living Emilio Praga, the sculptor Trubetskoy, the painters Cesare Tallone and Mosè Bianchi, the promising artist Emilio Gola, Arrigo Boito, Giuseppe Giacosa, the young Segantini and the budding writer Emilio De Marchi.

In May 1873 Alessandro Manzoni died. On the day of the funeral the Campari closed as a sign of mourning. It eventually opened its shutters however and offered a comforting atmosphere to the intelligentsia of the city. Umberto, heir to the throne, was also present and holding the drapes on the funeral carriage. He had a girlfriend in Milan: a passion for the older and more experienced marquesse Eugenia Litta.

THE MIRROR OF MILAN

The Campari was becoming more and more the in place to meet. On the evening of the Carnival of 1877 the Milanese nobility flocked here to witness, as if from a theatre box, the first experiment in electric lighting in piazza del Duomo and the inauguration in Santa Radegonda, where Rinascente now stands, of the



department stores "Aux Villes d'Italie", set up by two former hawkers, the Bocconi brothers. In the upper rooms of the café it was now usual for small orchestras to give concerts and performances of artists and musicians, at times bizarre and very funny.

In 1883 a certain professor Jalomelo, a pseudonym concealing goodness knows which bizarre music lover, entertained and astonished his audience by creating "fantasias" with the different sized glasses of the Campari.

In the streets of the centre the balladeers singing in dialect earned their living by performing the so-called "bosinade". These ballads



The bar of the café, inlaid by the cabinet-maker Eugenio Quarti. The chandeliers in the main room (on the right) are by Mazzucotelli, the wrought iron master.

It would be an extension of the plush café cum restaurant across the way.

It was the beginning of 1914. Very soon there would no longer be a place for optimism and the "belle époque" would breathe its last in that "Red Week" of June and the revolver shots in Sarajevo.

Whilst the furniture maker Eugenio Quarti, the master of wrought iron Mazzucotelli and the mosaicist Angelo D'Andrea were embellishing with an "art nouveau" touch the forthcoming Camparino and, in the basement, work was taking place on a system which would ensure a continuous supply of iced soda-water to the cocktail bar, outside, just beyond the shutters, in piazza Duomo and in the Galleria, the city was experiencing, in the midst of emotions, violence and

divisions, the events which would finally put an end to that epoch.

Carlo Carrà, in his book "La mia vita" (Longanesi – Milano 1943) wrote: "and so the European war came and people met at the Caffè Campari, in the Galleria: artists,

men of letters and others who frequented the place with us.

In those days my friend Tullio Garbari introduced me to the group of Trentini exiles who would meet in one of the upper rooms of the Campari.

These, almost all ardent young men, truly seemed to personify the spirit of the Risorgimento. Their language itself did not differ from that which had so aroused enthusiasm in their predecessors. For these irredentists living meant feeling that they existed as part of a whole and this whole was Italy.

Two brothers from Garbari belonged to this group. They went on to join the Fifth Alpine Regiment as volunteers, one of them losing his life in the course of fighting.

One evening, whilst everyone

was sitting at their usual tables, Cesare Battisti came in. Everyone rose to their feet. Introducing himself, Battisti put out his hand and I shook it effusively.

Sitting down once more conversation naturally turned to preparations for the war.

For some time after that occasion I no longer saw the Trentino exile. Only after war had been declared did I have the opportunity to meet him again. Recounting in the simplest of terms a battle on the Tonale in which he had fought he exclaimed: "If they get us they'll

