

the mezzo ciel



In Bassano del Grappa in northern Italy, an ancient wooden bridge designed by Palladio is the best-known landmark. At either end of the bridge are small distilleries, their best-known offering a local drink known as the Mezzo Mezzo. Made primarily of grappa brandy, it is deliciously bitter (thanks to rhubarb extract) and strong enough to fell a lumberjack.

You'll have to go to Bassano to partake of a true Mezzo Mezzo, so instead I offer a compromise: the Mezzo Ciel. Named after the fictional village where *Our Darkest Night* takes place, this take on the classic Boulevardier cocktail is sweet yet bitter, strong yet smooth, and the perfect aperitif before a dinner focused on Northern Italian cuisine.

ingredients

1 ounce grappa brandy
¾ ounce sweet (red) vermouth
¾ ounce Campari or Aperol
A dash of Angostura bitters
A twist of orange peel
A maraschino cherry (optional)

instructions

Add the grappa, sweet vermouth, Campari or Aperol and bitters to a cocktail shaker. Add sufficient ice to just submerge the contents. Shake vigorously until well chilled, about thirty seconds. Strain into a cocktail glass, allowing one or two pieces of ice to join the liquor. Garnish with a twist of orange peel and a maraschino cherry (optional).

