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What takes my eye is a couple of young women ordering two bottles of wine. Way to go! How many Torontonians realize that it's only been since 1972 that a woman has been allowed to enter a bar without a male companion? In those dark ages, restaurants were forbidden to cook with alcohol. Barflies were forbidden to stand with a drink in hand, and you couldn't buy a drink on Sunday unless you ordered food. It was only in the '80s that the government permitted us to drink outside and thus made way for patios. Imagine Toronto today without patios!

We're making up for it now. Once, it was the food and cooking that drew customers to restaurants. Increasingly, it's booze. At first, it was upscale resto-lounges like Kultura and Nyood with deep wine lists, Sex and the City cocktails and a marquee chef, Roger Mooking. Winlai Wong's Asian tapas at The Spice Route are good, too, but what discerning eater really cares — the draw is the booze, the scene. Now the trend is infecting neighbourhood restaurants where drinks show signs of trumping eating. Some of the new places are really old-fashioned pubs, friendly hangs for a pint or a glass of red or a Moscow in Mexico and whatever's being dished up. Parts and Labour has a promising chef, Matty Matheson, but who would know it from the bar crowd. Which brings me to Campagnolo, the city's newest homage to Nonna Italy.