



latest news

# “ THE SPIRIT REVOLUTION ”

THE SPIRITUAL MACHINE, a startup based in Italy in Turin, plans the new era of beverage

“ **W**e are really the fools who believe that it is possible to transform the world of spirits”. Stay foolish the famous statement of Steve Jobs applied to one of the most traditional economic sectors of our country. These are the words of Matteo Fornaca, Elisa Cravero and Matteo Dispensa, founders of the Turin - based startup The Spiritual Machine, which aims to innovate the beverage galaxy. A startup that is also a community, that of “The Botanists”: not just members, financiers or stakeholders, but the result of a “humanist crowdfunding”, that selects people, ideas and values before capital.

The Spiritual Machine has chosen a less traditional approach to capital raising, through a “controlled” crowdfunding, which brings investors closer, gathering not only economic resources, but experiences and intelligence. “Ours is not only a process of fundraising, but of skills, market players, suppliers, professionals, that can be strategic for us. We aim to develop the business by combining different experiences and creating a common culture, which joins us on a plan of ideas and values,” explains The Spiritual Machine founder Matteo Fornaca.

## THE SPIRITS OF THE ITALIAN STARTUP ARRIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Internationalization is one of the most relevant results produced by the crowdfunding of the “human capital”, which is bringing The Spiritual Machine to the markets of Latin America and Persian Gulf, where spirits will arrive in the UAE, Qatar, Maldives, Seychelles, signing agreements with major international hotel chains. It might seem almost a paradox to sell alcohol where there is a strong perception that you can’t consume, but market analysis confirms instead that these are strategic areas, very receptive, because there are the headquarters of large corporations in Asia and Middle East, cruise companies and many international brand hotel chains. Maldives and Seychelles are also major tourist hubs, which have their own procurement right in Dubai.

An international expansion that also looks across the Atlantic, in particular to the Latin American world, a market



- An innovative “humanist” crowdfunding model that selects people before capital, tailor-made mixology recipes, opening to new markets, algorithms, big data and focus on sustainability.
- Matteo Fornaca, co-founder: “What we are implementing is really a change from a pattern in which there are few producers and billions of consumers, to a scenario in which potentially, in 2030, every bar, every starred restaurant will have its own products”.





in great acceleration, with growth rates of 5%. A continent with a young population, which sees Millennials and Gen X more attentive to a conscious consumption of alcohol, who prefer to drink less and better: therefore we look at custom-made drinks, where the spirit tailor made can be a product of great impact.

### MIXOLOGY, GROWING INTEREST IN SPIRITS IN ITALY

In Italy mixology is becoming a growing trend, with increasing interest both at the consumer and business level. The trend is confirmed by the numbers of the startup The Spiritual Machine, with the company going from 5 thousand bottles produced in 2019 to 80 thousand in 2022, despite the impact of the pandemic that has effectively paralyzed the entire sector. The target is to reach 1 million by 2025 and 5 million in 2027

"The market is taking off, artisanal productions grow by 22.5% year on year (source: Technavio report. Forecasts and Analysis 2022-2026). The premium grows and we see daily a demand for training, information and craftsmanship. It's a very quick change and I think the climax will be reached in the next four years, because what happened with beer will happen also with the spirits: few and small brands will be acquired by the big ones. Today, craft beer makes up 14% of the American market and the phenomenon is repeating itself in the same way on craft spirits". Words of the CEO of The Spiritual Machine Elisa Cravero, who in a sector still very masculine, in agreement with the team, has built a company with an 80% female crew.

To confirm the growth of interest in the world of spirits by consumers - looking for new products to have an increasingly personalized drinking experience - are also the data relating to recipes: during three years of life the startup has created over 150 proprietary recipes, to which are added the more than 200 conceived in 2022 alone. A research and development work that will have its heart in The Spiritual Machine Lab, a laboratory where to create recipes for finished products.

### WHAT ARE YOU DRINKING? THE ANSWER COMES FROM AI

"Alembics" and test tubes that marry with technology, thanks to the partnership with the startup Vedrai, a company that develops solutions based on Artificial Intelligence to support SMEs, which last April closed a 40 million euro capital raising. This deal will allow The Spiritual Machine to obtain 36 months in advance the forecasts of the consumption of different alcoholic beverages on the global market. Starting from these trends, the company is working on the creation of a predictive algorithm that, by aggregating sales data, market trends, community feedback, will allow to develop recipes increasingly tailored to a given audience or market segment.

### ZERO EMISSIONS AND GEOTHERMAL DISTILLERIES

"All of us founders care about sustainability", says Fornaca. The commitment to sustainability is one of the key points in the development strategy of the startup, which has given itself a roadmap, with a series of goals to be achieved year by year. So in 2022 The Spiritual Machine obtained the compensation of all CO2 emissions and aims in 2023 to have 50% of recycled glass production. In 2024, the agenda plans to work with carbon-negative distilleries, such as those powered by geothermal energy that already exist in other countries and are also being studied in Italy.

"In the world of spirits - concludes Fornaca - today there are huge opportunities for innovation and a growing demand for novelties that, not always can be fully grasped. We are here to fill this gap. What we are implementing is really a change from a model in which there are few producers and billions of consumers, to a scenario in which potentially, in 2030, every bar, every starred restaurant will have its products. It is the great revolution of spirits".

[thespiritualmachine.it](https://thespiritualmachine.it)

