



Press release

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**Acafé is the name of the new Autogrill snack bar: six outlets have been opened in the last two months and 20 will be operational by the end of the year**

## **“A new approach to coffee”: tastes and opinions compared**

Milan, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2003 - How are Italian consumer tastes changing where coffee is concerned? This is the topic discussed by a panel including, among others, Aldo Grasso, Davide Paolini, Giorgia Caruso, Emilio Deleidi and Luigi Odello, secretary general of the International Institute of Coffee Tasters and chairman of the Study and Taster Training Center, at a conference and debate organized by Autogrill to present Acafé, its new snack bar concept, which is about to set a new way of life for travelers stopping for refreshments on Italian motorways.

Assuming that the cinema portrays life, Aldo Grasso divides the coffee “experience” into two main schools of thought: the American school and the Italian school. “The differences stem from the way in which the beverage is prepared,” explains Grasso. “Italian coffee is always a small cup of steaming liquid, which usually signifies protection: protection in the sense of ritual, help and comfort. It would be impossible to draw up a list of the films in which coffee appears, it always turns up. Scores of movies open with characters drinking coffee. Not to mention the number of times when the actor goes into a bar and orders a coffee. The café with a capital “C” is an essentially male meeting place, where the beverage, once the cheapest item on offer, is a pretext for a meeting or for observation, for example the cafés on Rome’s Via Veneto immortalized by Federico Fellini. Almost all the films named after a café (Café de Paris, Café Metropole, Café Europa) are spy stories or sentimental tales full of emotional struggles, black marketeering, gambling debts. One film in particular, the 1940 German movie Caffé Viennese directed by Geza Von Bolvary, combines romance and commerce. Set in a declining Central Europe, it is about the proprietress of a famous café who is secretly loved by her head waiter. After a series of misunderstandings and a violent quarrel, the waiter leaves to open a similar venue nearby and steals the custom of his former employer. In the end she realizes she loves him, and they unite their cafés, their hearts and their coffee.”

The use of the word “café” in the new Autogrill sign is intentional. “Acafé is a new concept in coffee and snack bars,” explains Aldo Papa, vice president Autogrill Italia. “It combines tradition and a modern approach, the history and heritage of the Italian café and the historical Autogrill motorway outlet, which until now was associated only indirectly with the company name. Coffee, and specifically a new blend also named Acafé, will be one of the critical success factors of the new concept.”

Extensive research was conducted in order to bring consumers a new coffee: new because it uses a new blend – based on the findings of an Autogrill customer survey on 150 million cups of coffee prepared every year – whose key characteristics were defined by Autogrill, which then transferred



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actual production to Segafredo, one of the most highly regarded names in the coffee business; new because Autogrill has installed new espresso machines and introduced new management and maintenance procedures to keep production parameters under full control; and new because Autogrill has invested extensively in training for the thousands of staff whose contribution to quality is so essential.

The excellence of the Acafé espresso combines Autogrill knowhow with the expertise of the International Institute of Coffee Tasters. "Twenty-five millilitres of brown liquid delivered by a machine in 15 seconds at a temperature of approximately 90°C and a pressure of 9 atmospheres from a blend created from an exquisitely Italian art," explains Luigi Odello. "But who decreed the vital characteristics of the Italian espresso? Not the latest style guru or a group of wise men intent on codifying everything, but the findings of approximately 5,000 consumer tests conducted on a full cross-section of the population and a variety of blends on the market, which also took into account that single origins might give better results than blends. The result is the certified Italian Espresso. The results of the tests conducted since 1995 by the International Institute of Coffee Tasters and the Study and Taster Training Center were used as the basis for the sensorial testing plan organized for the new Autogrill blend."

As a rightful tribute to the times and to Autogrill's standing as an international organization (approximately 50% of revenues come from the USA), while the new Acafé has a typically Italian flavor, it also offers a choice of top international specialties: coffee shakes and coffee cream, a wide selection of sandwiches and sweet and savory snacks, including muffins, cookies, pain au chocolat and quiches.

**Over the last two months, Autogrill has opened six Acafé outlets in Italy. By the end of the year, the new sign will be introduced at a total of 20 outlets and will eventually be extended to the entire network.**