

BREAKING NEWS: Magazine mogul accused of rape after he helped drunken woman to bed is found not guilty

Antioco Piras was accused of forcing himself on a woman after her spiked drink. The alleged incident happened at the exclusive Home House, in Marylebone. But a jury at Southwark Crown Court cleared him of the rape charge he faced. 36-year-old Piras is the co-founder and publisher glossy food magazine Four

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PUBLISHED: 16:24, 26 May 2017 | UPDATED: 16:50, 26 May 2017



Antioco Piras pictured leaving court earlier in the week

A magazine mogul has been cleared of spiking a woman's drink and raping her during a champagne-fuelled party at an exclusive private members' club.

Antioco Piras, 36, co-founder and publisher of glossy food magazine Four, was accused of forcing himself on the woman after she became dizzy and unwell during the party.

She claims Piras gave her a tainted drink and then raped her when she went to sleep in one of Home House's luxury bedrooms in Portman Square, Marylebone.

But Piras insisted the 21-year-old invented the story after drinking too much at the palatial venue, which offers 'a magical mix of 18th century splendour and 21st century avant-garde.'

The Italian entrepreneur founded Four, an award-winning lifestyle magazine branded 'The World's Best Food Magazine'.

It features writers such as Tom Parker-Bowles - a judge on ITV's 'Food Glorious Food' and son of Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall - and is distributed to Qatar and British Airways, Armani Hotels and Resorts, and Palazzo Versace in Dubai.

Piras denied one count of rape and was cleared by a jury of nine women and three men after almost six-and-a-half hours' deliberation at Southwark Crown Court today.

Recorder Vanessa Francis said: 'Mr Piras, as a result of the finding of the jury you are discharged from the court and you can leave the dock.'

'Thank you very much.'

Piras, who came to the UK when he was 16, told jurors spiking a drink was a 'disgusting and despicable act' he would never be capable of.

He told jurors: 'She could hardly walk so I asked her to put my arm around her shoulder.'

'I led her upstairs and put her on the bed and told her that if she needed me I was just downstairs and I left the room.'

'I felt like I was protecting her.'

He added: 'I took off my shoes and shirt and laid down on the bed next to her.'



Piras was accused of giving a woman a tainted drink and then raped her when she went to sleep in one of Home House's (pictured) luxury bedrooms in Portman Square, Marylebone

'She was still fully clothed, she had her shoes on.

'She looked at me and smiled.

'We kissed at which point I said: "I don't think this is right."

He said the woman was 'put out', 'not happy' and 'frustrated', but after rolling a cigarette she asked to go home and he called a taxi for her.

Asked if the truth was he had spiked her drink and raped her, Piras replied: 'No.

'It is lowly disgusting thing to do.

'What kind of person would I be to do such a thing?'

The woman told jurors she had just two glasses of champagne before Piras gave her another, different drink that made her throw up.

Judy Khan, defending, said: 'Are you absolutely sure that you only had, in what must have been several hours, those two glasses of champagne?'



Piras was cleared by a jury of nine women and three men after almost six-and-a-half hours' deliberation at Southwark Crown Court (pictured) today

The woman replied: 'Yeah, one hundred per cent.'

Ms Khan continued: 'I'm not making any criticism at all when I say this, but you were accustomed to drinking, weren't you?'

'You said in your police interview 'I can handle my drink.'

Jurors heard the woman told officers about a drinking session where she had half a bottle of rose, two glasses of wine, a double disaronno, and a double vodka.

'And afterwards you didn't feel tipsy after that - in fact, you went on to party at a different venue after that,' said Ms Khan.

'I'm suggesting there was never any time when you were given a drink by Mr Antioco.'

The barrister added: 'You were mixing your drinks as well, and that's why you got into that condition and you have chosen to blame him for that.'

The woman said: 'It was the drink he gave me that put me into that state.'

Antioco denied and was cleared of one count of rape.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4545652/Four-magazine-mogul-cleared-Home-House-rape.html>