

SPRING • 2009



THE NEWSLETTER of THE COUNCIL of ITALIAN RESTAURANTS in AUSTRALIA

news



Janni prepares for his greatest roll -- cannoli with spiced orange salad

inside this issue

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- The CIRA cooking school: full spring program
- A history: Italian eating in Sydney since 1831

The surprises of spring

The Sicilians have a saying about their relationship with the Greeks: "Una fazza, una razza" (literally "one face, one race").

It acknowledges that Sicily was settled by Greeks 2,800 years ago – a fact that becomes apparent when you compare the look of modern Sicilians with the look of modern Greeks. So it wasn't that much of a leap for Janni Kyritsis, a chef born

in Greece and trained in French cookery, to try his version of the classic Sicilian pastries called cannoli, and combine them with the luscious Valencia oranges that make their appearance in spring. Full story, page 4

Nomination Form

For the CIRA-ALMA Young Talent Award
(two weeks at the ALMA Cooking School near Parma, sponsored by San Pellegrino mineral water)

The award is open to citizens or residents of Australia aged between 18 and 30 and currently working in an Italian restaurant in NSW or Canberra. Nominations close October 7, 2009.

Name

First

Last

D.O.B.

Day/Month/Year

Address

Street

Suburb

State

Postcode

Email

Phone

Your Current Workplace

Reference at Your Workplace

Name

Contact Details

Two Previous Work References

Name

Contact Details

Name

Contact Details

Please attach a statement of between 300 and 400 words describing your philosophy and approach to Italian food.

Please return completed form and attached statement to:
CIRA Scholarship
PO Box 285 • Harbord NSW 2096
Or email this information to cira@cira.com.au

The president's message

My dear colleagues and friends of CIRA

Spring is here and what a beautiful time of year to excite our readers and customers with dishes that reflect the season. Like the farms and orchards of Australia, I'm bursting with news ...

First, I want to urge you to make your bookings now for CIRA's annual Gala Dinner on October 26. There are still seats available, but you'll need to move fast.

At the dinner, we will announce the winner of CIRA's scholarship to ALMA, the school of gastronomy in Parma established by Gualtiero Marchesi, the father of modern Italian cooking. Professore Marchesi had agreed to come to Sydney and present the award, but just as this newsletter went to press, he got doctor's orders not to leave Italy.

The young Australian chef chosen to receive this year's scholarship will spend two weeks studying the fine details of Italian cooking with ALMA's teachers. The scholarship covers return air fares to Italy, accommodation, lessons at the school and a uniform. The CIRA scholar will return to his or her restaurant inspired by the latest ideas about la cucina Italiana, and help to educate colleagues here in Italy's most successful colony.



like to thank S. Pellegrino for their generous sponsorship of the CIRA-ALMA Young Talent Award.

Also in October CIRA is proudly participating in the Sydney International Food Festival by taking our cooking to the outer suburbs. Danny Russo of The Beresford will be demonstrating at Casula High School on the afternoon of Tuesday October 7, while Giovanni Pilu of Pilu at Freshwater

“The CIRA scholar will return to his or her restaurant inspired by the latest ideas about la cucina Italiana, and help to educate colleagues here in Italy's most successful colony.”

So if you know of a gifted cook under the age of 30 who is currently working in an Italian restaurant in NSW, please urge them to apply. The form appears at left. The judges will be restaurateur Tetsuya Wakuda of Tetsuya's restaurant in Sydney, restaurateur Steve Manfredi of Bells at Killcare, and Terry Durack, restaurant critic with The Sydney Morning Herald. They will interview the finalists and set them tasks that require both technique and imagination – cooking a classic recipe and a dish of their own choice. I would

and Alessandro Pavoni of the soon-to-open Ormezzio at the Spit will be demonstrating at the Kingswood campus of TAFE Western Sydney Institute Nepean College on the morning of Saturday October 24. For more information and to book one of those classes, email us at cira@cira.com.au.

Of course, CIRA members will also be revealing their secrets at CIRA's own cooking school – our spring program appears opposite. I look forward to seeing you there.

Saluti
Armando.



JOIN US FOR DINNER CIRA's annual Gala Dinner will be on October 26.

A five course banquet will be prepared by Alessandro Pavoni (formerly of the Park Hyatt, and about to open Ormeggio, near the Spit Bridge); James Kidman (formerly of Otto, now at the National Gallery restaurant in Canberra); Armando Percuoco and Darren Taylor (of Buon Ricordo); Lucio Galletto and Logan Campbell (of Lucio's); George Pompei (of Pompei's at Bondi); and Giovanni Pilu (who is about to open Cavallino Ristorante Pizzeria on the site of the old Il Piemonte at Terrey Hills, and whose Pilu at Freshwater won Wine List of the Year in the recent Good Food Guide awards). The dinner will be held in the new venue of the Doltone House Group at Darling Island, 48 Pirrama Road, Pyrmont (near the Casino). This complex is the first building in NSW to receive a "six star" green rating. Its concrete is made from recycled products, its glass, insulation and building materials minimise heat loss in winter and heat gain in summer, and its waste water is used to fertilise nearby parkland. At the dinner, the judges **Tetsuya Wakuda**, **Stefano Manfredi** and **Terry Durack** (pictured above) will announce their decision on which NSW chef has won the CIRA-ALMA Young Talent Award to study Italian cooking near Parma, the heartland of Italian gastronomy. A seat at the event will cost \$160 if you are not a CIRA member or friend, \$150 if you are, and \$1500 for a table of ten. You can book by phoning 85710622.

COME BACK TO SCHOOL The spring session of the CIRA cooking school gets under way on September 19. The classes are held at Casa Barilla, 4 Annandale Street, Annandale.

To book a place, phone 0405 286 067 or email cira@cira.com.au – This is the program:

Saturday September 19, 10 am: Neapolitan Classics

In a hands-on class, Mario Percuoco of Intermezzo restaurant will help you make Capesante Con Gorgonzola (Scallops in a light gorgonzola sauce, topped with lightly seared pancetta); Pesce al Aqua Pazza (fish fillet poached with tomato concasse, herbs and black mussels) and Torta di Capri (baked almond tart).

Monday September 28, 6.30pm: The food of Northern Italy

Alessandro Pavoni of Ormeggio (pictured left) will demonstrate Crudo Di Tonno con Uovo Di Quaglia e Peschiola Tartufata (Raw tuna with soft boiled quail eggs and truffled peaches) and Guancina Di Manzo Brasata Al Vino Rosso, Risotto Allo Zafferano (Red wine braised wagyu beef cheeks with saffron risotto).

Thursday October 15, from 10 am: Kids in the Kitchen

As a school holiday special, Kate Connor of Omerta will show people under 16 how to make pizza and other family favourites. Dress for mess.

Monday November 2, 6.30pm: Cooking from Beppi's

Chef Joe Camilleri will demonstrate classics from Sydney's longest surviving Italian restaurant.

Saturday November 14, 10am: Logan's Ligurian Experience

In a hands-on class, Logan Campbell of Lucio's will help you make dishes from the Italian Riviera.

Monday November 24, 6.30pm: Cucina Povera

Armando Percuoco of Buon Ricordo will show how to get maximum flavour from modest ingredients, with pasta sauces such as ricotta and lemon or lard, nutmeg and breadcrumbs.





CELEBRATING THE SURPRISES OF SPRING

Janni Kyritis and Jonathan Barthelmess are both of Greek background. So what were they doing at the CIRA cooking school, which celebrates great Italian cooking?

The answer lies in the phrase “una faccia, una razza” – one face, one race -- a reference to the way many Italians look like the Greeks who settled southern Italy 3,000 years ago. The two nations remain linked by a devotion to seafood from their shared ocean and a passion for olive oil, from the trees the Greeks planted all around the Mediterranean.

Janni was born in Greece but trained as a French chef in Australia, and worked at Berowra Waters Inn, Bennelong and MG Garage. Jonathan, whose grandfather came from Greece to run the legendary Primo’s restaurant in Sydney, worked until recently at Coast at Cockle Bay and starts work in December at Manly Bathers restaurant.

They got together at CIRA’s cooking school to prove the affinity between the nations is more than geographical. Jonathan tackled a rustic risotto, made with fennel-flavoured Italian sausage and the sharp green leaves which the Italians call cime di rapa (sometimes translated as “broccoli raab” or “bitter broccoli” in English). He also created a kind of flourless prawn pancake and served it with borlotti beans and pesto sauce.

Janni demonstrated a tasty appetiser of deep fried artichokes in gremolata crumbs and his interpretation of cannoli. The Greek touch came in his use of filo pastry for the cannoli shell, but he revealed that filo simply means “leaf” and refers to the thinness of the pastry sheet (the Italian word is foglia). It was a case of one face, one race, one palate.

the recipes

Frittatina di gamberi con pesto

Jonathan’s pounded prawn and borlotti bean salad with pesto.

300gms fresh borlotti beans
24 king prawns peeled and deveined
Extra virgin oil for oiling baking paper

For the Pesto:
3 cloves garlic
85g toasted pine nuts
3 large handfuls of basil leaves
100ml extra virgin olive oil
3 table spoons of grated parmesan
Salt and pepper to taste

Place garlic and salt in a mortar and pestle and grind to a paste. Add the pine nuts and pound some more. Add the basil and pound to a paste. Add the oil gradually and stir in the parmesan at the end.

Place the borlotti beans in salted boiling water and cook till tender – about 15 minutes. Sadly they will lose

their beautiful pink and white marbling, but they’ll taste great. Strain and set aside.

Chop the prawns into small pieces and place on an oiled piece of baking paper place another piece of baking paper on top of the prawns and lightly squash with a rolling pin until you have a thin even layer of prawn between the papers.

Heat through under the grill for 30 seconds to a minute till the prawn has changed texture. Remove from the paper and place on the plate with some beans on top and a little pesto.

When borlotti beans are not in season, you can use pieces of zucchini which have been fried to crispness.



Risotto con salsiccie e cime di rappa

Sausage and bitter broccoli leaves

350g Arborio rice
1 onion, finely diced
80g butter
100g grated parmesan
2 litres chicken stock
200gm sausage
1 bunch cime di rappa
Salt and pepper to taste

In a saucepan heat the olive oil. Cut the sausage into chunks about the size of a thumbnail. Fry the sausage till golden – about 5 mins. Remove the sausage from pan and set aside. Add half the butter to the pan. Add the onion and fry till transparent – about 5 minutes. Add the rice and fry gently for 2-3 minutes, stirring with a wooden spoon.

Bring the stock to a boil and add one ladle to the rice mixture, stirring with a wooden spoon. As the simmering rice absorbs the broth, keep adding more with the ladle. At around the 20 minute mark add the sausage and the cime di rappa and cook for another 5 minutes.

When the risotto is cooked fold in the parmesan and the rest of the butter. Season and serve hot.

Acciughe fritte in gremolata

Fried anchovies
In gremolata breadcrumbs

1 cup fresh breadcrumbs (made from slightly stale white bread)
½ cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves
½ clove garlic, finely chopped
Grated zest of ½ lemon
12 anchovy fillets in oil
¼ cup plain flour
1 egg, lightly beaten
olive oil, for deep-frying

First make the gremolata breadcrumbs. Cut the crusts off day-old white bread and grate or pulse in a food processor until crumbed. Crusts can be left on for a more rustic flavour. (Always store fresh breadcrumbs in the freezer, or they will go mouldy.)

Combine the breadcrumbs with the parsley, garlic and lemon zest, and mix thoroughly.

Dip the anchovies in flour, egg and the gremolata breadcrumbs. Press crumbs onto anchovies very well. Dip in egg again, then in the gremolata breadcrumbs a second time, leaving this second coating loose. Heat the olive oil till it sizzles a drop of water and deep-fry the anchovies until golden (about 3 minutes).

Serve with tartare sauce.

Cannoli con insalata di arancie

Cannoli with Spiced Orange Salad

Filo pastry to make 12 cannoli

125g plain flour
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ cup water
1 egg white to stick the cannoli ends together
Cooking oil for deep frying
Three pieces of dowel (broom handle thickness, about 8 cm long)

For the ricotta filling

500 g dry ricotta
About 100 g icing sugar
50 g bitter chocolate, finely chopped
2 teaspoon orange rind finely chopped
50 g dried apricots, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
24 glace cherries chopped
60 g pistachio nuts, chopped

Make a dough with the flour, water and salt. Knead until smooth then wrap in plastic film and leave to rest at room temperature for 1 hour.

Cut the dough in half and roll each piece through a pasta machine, using plenty of extra flour to avoid sticking. If you don't have a pasta machine you can do this with a rolling pin, but it will be tough on your shoulders and the sheets will not be quite as fine as you would like.

The dough should be soft to ensure the filo will be very thin. Roll dough to the thinnest setting on the machine. If it gets too long to handle at any stage, cut it into manageable pieces. When working with filo pastry, keep it covered with plastic film to prevent it drying out.

Cut 12 discs by putting a saucer on the dough and cutting around it. Roll each disc of dough loosely around the dowel (the size of a broom handle). Brush with egg white on one edge and overlap the other side so it sticks and creates a cylinder. Heat the cooking oil until it sizzles a drop of water. Drop the wrapped dowel into the oil and fry until the pastry is golden.

With tongs, remove each cannolo from the oil and gently slide it off the dowel.

Mix the ricotta with the sugar, chocolate, orange rind, dried apricots and cinnamon. Fill the cannoli shells with this mixture, using a spatula or piping bag. Garnish with a cherry at each end. And sprinkle both ends with pistachio nuts.

Insalata di arancie

Spiced Orange Salad

6 oranges
3 small candied clementines or other candied fruit, cut into thin segments
6 dates, stoned, sliced and rolled in castor sugar
6 mint leaves, thinly sliced
12 pistachio nuts, shelled and thinly sliced
Cinnamon
Icing sugar to taste.

Peel the oranges and divide them into segments. Put the segments into a bowl. Squeeze the remaining pulp over the bowl to extract the juice.

On a plate, place the orange segments and some of the juice. Arrange the pieces of candied fruit, dates, mint leaves, and pistachio nuts over the segments. Place cannoli on top and dust with cinnamon and icing sugar to taste.





the season

FRUITS AND VEG AT THEIR BEST IN SPRING

Here's how to make the most of the ingredients that are at their best between October and December, Italian style.

Artichoke (carciofo).

Peel off the outer leaves, cut in quarters, dip in flour and egg and deep fry.

Asparagus (asparagi)

Chop up, boil in chicken stock for 8 minutes, add a little cream, and blend into a soup.

Broad beans (fava)



Boil for 10 minutes, then add to fried onions, olive oil and pancetta.

Beetroot (barbabetola)

Boil, slice and dress with a mixture of oil, balsamic vinegar, garlic and mint.

Blueberries (mirtillo)

Simmer for 10 minutes with a little water, sugar, lemon rind and star anise and serve as a compote with vanilla gelato.

Carrots (carota)

Boil, slice and toss with oil, vinegar, oregano and a little chilli.



Cherries (ciliegi)

Dip them in dark chocolate melted with a little cream.

Chillies (peperoncino) Cucumber (cetriolo)

Finely chop red chillies (discard seeds), and mix with diced cucumber and white balsamic vinegar for an invigorating salad.

Green beans (fagiolini)

Boil for 3 minutes, then dress with sauce of garlic, parsley and anchovies briefly fried in olive oil.

Mangoes (mango)

Cut flesh into cubes and mix into semifreddo (beat egg yolks, sugar and cream, then stir through whipped egg whites and freeze)

Passionfruit (frutto della passione)

Whisk over very low heat with honey into zabaglione (egg yolks, lemon juice)

Peas (piselli)

Make a slow cooked rise e bisì soup with fried onion, rice, stock, and parmesan.

Pineapples (ananas)

Mix with ricotta to make a refreshing cheescake

Rockmelon (melone)



Cliché it may be, but serve it with slices of the best Italian prosciutto.

Spring onion (cipolloto)



Make a gremolata, using finely chopped spring onion instead of garlic, and orange rind instead of lemon rind, plus parsley, and sprinkle over osso bucco.



Sweetcorn (granoturco)

Burn on the barbie, then smear with extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper.

Spinach (spinaci).

Mix it with sultanas and pine nuts, as a base for poached fish.

Strawberries (fragola).

Serve them with freshly whipped zabaglione. Or just sprinkle with a little balsamic vinegar.

Turnips (rapa).

Slice and fry them as chips, or bake them with cheese sauce.

Witlof (indivia).

Mix with walnuts and blue cheese in a salad.

Zucchini (zucchini)

Slice, fry, and dress with oil, garlic, mint and white wine vinegar.

How did Italy conquer Australia so peacefully and comprehensively? David Dale presents part one of a research project...

The empire goes south

The first reference I can find to Italian eating in Australia appears in an advertisement for a Sydney department store, published on the front page of *The Sydney Herald* on Monday September 19, 1831:

Muscatel, Bloom, and Sultana raisins, Turkey Figs, Imperial or French Plums, Barcelona Nuts, Pickles and Durban Mustards, they being excellent articles, by the latest arrivals in the colony

**SPICES, &c
Jamaica Ginger
Currie Powder
India soy, and all kinds
of Fish Sauces
Chilli Vinegar
French Olives and Capers
Vermicelli, Macaroni
Ditto Coffee &c, &c.**

The ad was for “Ambrose Foss, Chemist & Druggist, No 18 Pitt-street, Sydney”, who seems to have been the David Jones or Myer of his day. It does not support the stereotype that Sydney in the early days was a town deprived of flavour and variety in its eating opportunities.

The availability of pasta in 1831 suggests Sydney had taken a giant leap since 1803, when this advertisement appeared in *The Sydney Gazette*.

**NEW EATING HOUSE
Victuals dressed in the English Way
Rosetta Stabler respectfully acquaints the Public that she prepares boiled mutton and broth every day at 12 o'clock, and a Joint of Meat roasted always ready at One, which, from its quality and mode of serving, she flatters herself will attract the Notice of the Public.**

That is thought to be the first restaurant advertisement ever published in this country.

Three decades later, Ambrose Foss did not feel the need to dress his victuals “in the English way”. He was clearly a successful purveyor of pasta, chilli, coffee, olives, spices and soy sauce – ingredients we smugly assume to be modern -- because he was able to afford big ads in every issue of the *Herald* during its first year, varying his offerings according to season. It seemed that Australia was already on its way to becoming a nation of foodies – even if not yet a nation of Italophiles.

A week later, in the “Domestic Intelligence” column (amongst reports of rapes, robberies and murders), the *Herald* revealed:

“The Royal Hotel in George Street was opened on Monday last, and an excellent lunch was given by the proprietor, to upwards of thirty persons.”

Does this constitute Australia’s first restaurant review? It’s a bit short on detail. What did the lucky “upwards of 30” eat? We can get a glimpse of what they didn’t eat, from this item in the same column: “The Sydney butchers have been scouring the country within one hundred miles, but without being able to procure any cattle fit for the knife, the consequence of which has been a very considerable rise in price of beef or mutton.” Perhaps they had to content themselves with some of Ambrose Foss’s macaroni and vermicelli.

A report on the scene at the Sydney races later that year refers to a picnic of “tarts, sandwiches, cold fowl and wine; with titbits of veal and ham, roast beef ... and members on benches discussing bread and cheese, with ‘pies all hot’ and sweetening life with rum, and gin and bitters.”

The discovery of gold near Bathurst in 1851 turned Sydney into a boom town. And the entrepreneurs soon arrived to take advantage of people’s need to enjoy their newfound wealth.

On May 27, 1854, *The Sydney Morning Herald* (now with an extra word in its name and selling 5000 copies a day) carried this advertisement:

Aux Freres Provencaux. Café Restaurant de Paris 491 George Street North opposite the Temple of Fashion.

Messrs Budin and Mellon beg most respectfully call the attention of the public to visit their New Establishment of Café Restaurant, which will be found to be kept quite in the Paris style. As regard the cooking and attendance, it is at present impossible to be surpassed in Sydney.

P.S. Dinners, picnics and luncheons executed on the shortest notice and sent to any part of the town.

**Breakfast at 1s.6d.
1 cup coffee with milk bread and butter.
Or 1 ditto chocolate, with bread and butter ...**

**Dinners at 8s
2 hors d’oeuvres. 1 soup choice. 2 plates. Ditto. 1 entrants, ditto. 2 desserts. Half bottle fine wine. Bread at discretion. Dinners always ready, at the choice on the bill of fare.**

Further details of the menu are lost to history, but Aux Freres Provencaux started an upper class addiction to French cuisine that, subject to economic ups and downs, didn’t fade till the 1960s, when Italian and Asian began to take hold.

Another advertisement in the *Herald* of May 27, 1854 indicated the beverage that had caught the attention of the newly rich:

**The Patent Cafetieres.
To obtain a superior cup of coffee, so refreshing and exhilarating to the spirits, three essentials are absolutely indispensable, to secure which is our grand aim:**

**1st. That the coffee should be of the finest quality,
2nd. That such coffee should be roasted upon the best and most efficacious principle, whereby all impurities and deleterious acid is entirely dissipated.**

3rd and lastly. That the best mode should be adopted for making the same, for although care be taken in the selection and roasting on our part, if improperly made annoyance and dissatisfaction must be the result. The French Cafetiere so generally used in England and France, is alone able to obviate this, and with the least possible trouble and delay produces a beverage as clear as crystal in which is concentrated the very essence and full aroma of the berry. To be had only of Hanks and Lloyd, Australian Tea Mart, 367 George Street.

The “cafetiere” is the predecessor of the modern coffee machine. So the beginnings of Sydney’s coffee addiction can be found in the middle of the 19th century, even if there were few Italians around at the time to take advantage of it.

Continued in the summer issue of CIRA NEWS.

Time-tested traditions are the basis of all successful innovation, and cooking is no exception.

Italian food has taken Australia by storm. The variety and adaptability of Italy's regional cooking allowed it to flourish when transplanted, so in a new country it has become simultaneously an Australian and an Italian experience.

CIRA was formed to help this gastronomic culture to prosper and be passed on to the next generations of cooks and food lovers. Learn more by going to CIRA's website www.cira.com.au – and join our crusade to advance Italian fare.



How to join CIRA

AIMS

- Safeguard the culinary cultures of Italy's regions
- Increase public knowledge of traditional and evolving values in Italian cooking
- Encourage informed experimentation in the industry
- Encourage members to strive for excellence in their individual market niches -whether trattoria, pizzeria, café, catering, restaurant or providore
- Provide support and advice to members in relevant aspects of restaurant operation

STRATEGIES

- Promoting partnerships with educational and training institutions to transmit a

practical understanding of the methods and philosophies of Italian food, to a new generation of chefs and restaurateurs

- Create links with cultural institutions
- Promote research and publications on Italian food
- Conduct workshops, master classes, and symposiums on specific aspects of Italian gastronomy -- wines, cheeses, pasta, olives, etc

FROM HERE

CIRA further aims at facilitating training 'on the ground' by

- Training students and apprentices on the job in member restaurants
- 'Training the Trainers' on the job

- Establishing 'internships' within prestigious restaurants both in Australia and Italy.
- Through symposia on specific items, eg: olives and oils, sponsored by producers
- Providing a resource for food writers to help them evaluate dishes in their regional and historical context.

TO JOIN CIRA

If you are professionally involved in producing Italian food in Australia, you can become a member of CIRA. The annual membership fee is \$90.

If you are a lover of Italian food who shares our aims, you can become an associate member of CIRA for \$90 annually. If you are a student, apprentice or senior the annual fee is \$25.

2009

Annual Fee \$90.00

Concessions \$25.00
(Students, apprentices, Seniors)

Name	First	Second
Restaurant		
Address		
	State	Postcode
Email		
Phone		

Method of Payment (Please tick one)

Cheque – Please make payable to CIRA

Money Order

EFT Transfer BSB 012 362 - Acc No 498 980 981

Signature

Date

Please return completed form and payment to: CIRA PO Box 285 • Harbord NSW 2096

CIRA Council of Italian Restaurants in Australia

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