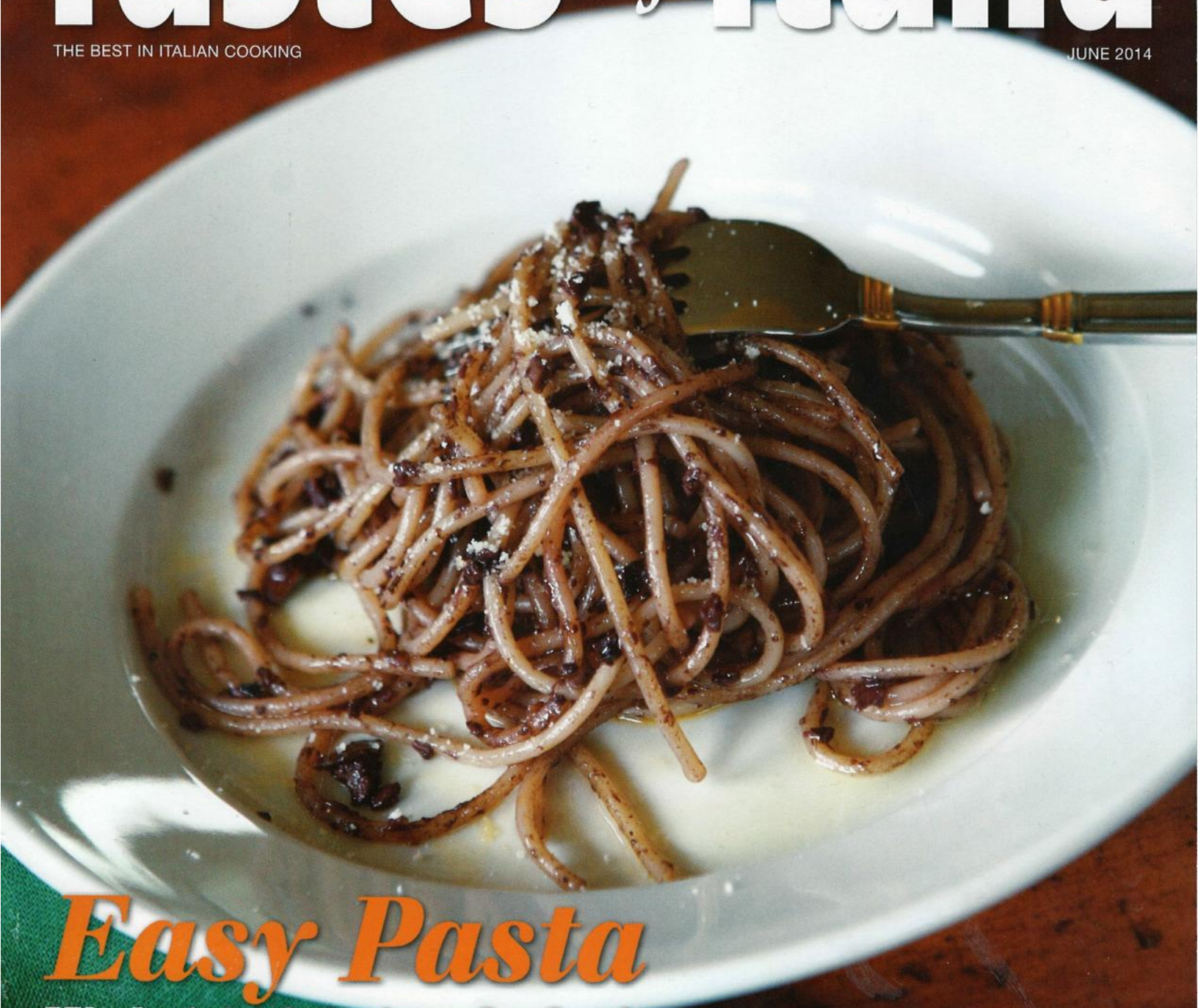


HOW AN ANCIENT ITALIAN GRAPE IS COMING BACK

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# KITCHEN MEETS CULTURE

Milan's Larte, a new food emporium,  
is just one of the city's must-see features

*Text and Photography*  
*Lauren Birmingham Piscitelli*

I

Duomo, La Scala, The Last Supper, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II and La Borsa Italiana are just a few of Milan's landmark attractions. Milano is Italy's second largest city and is set in the region of Lombardy. It was founded by the Celts, conquered by the Romans and then it passed through the hands of France, Spain and even Austria, before the Kingdom of Naples gained power in 1859. The Neapolitan influence continues today with the arrival of award-winning executive chef Gennaro Immobilo, who is working his magic behind the scenes at Milan's newest restaurant, Larte.

Caffé, Galleria d'Arte, Cioccolateria, Boutique-Ristorante describes Larte. It's where culture meets cuisine. Located in the former home of Italian writer Carlo Emilio on Via Manzoni, 5, the new eatery, art gallery, café and chocolate shop has food lovers buzzing. The new Italian lifestyle concept restaurant is the latest Made In Italy creation by Signore Tonino Cacace (owner of the Capri Palace). Guests can sip wine, have a caffè, satisfy a sweet tooth, lunch or dine all while immersing themselves in a unique food, wine, fashion and art experience.

The scene is relaxed with its wide open spaces and a friendly, professional staff who





**CHEF** Gennaro Immobile



## Inside

caters to your every whim. Whites, beiges and creams set the neutral color scheme in Larte's minimalist atmosphere accented with modern dining tables, seating and an open kitchen. Pale marble walls make the perfect backdrop for ballerina sculptures in patina and bronze. Eye-catching art decorates the walls with some of the city's biggest names in fashion and design – Alessi, Artemide and Santo Versace on display from the entrance to exit. If you see something you like, you can purchase it on site.

I am here to meet Chef Gennaro. He invites me into the kitchen to learn about the food, concept and philosophy of Larte.

From Torre Annunziata, he had his first job in a kitchen on the Amalfi Coast in Praiano when he was 17. He also worked at the Touring Club Italiano in Sardinia as head chef and then at the Capri Palace. "When Dr. Cacace put the team together he sent me here. Now I am in Milano and I had a great opportunity opening Larte. It is a new experience for me in Milan and my first time here," he says, adding that the city has a lot to offer.

He shows me around the open kitchen, which is framed in glass and brimming with fresh ingredients. One corner is filled with an assortment of green herbs like basil, sage, rosemary and lemon leaves, while in another, baskets of deep purple eggplant and tomatoes are lined up for prepping alongside hand made pasta that is being laid out to dry. A delivery man enters and says *buongiorno* while he carries a crate of just caught fish laid on ice. This is a food emporium with a team of busy chefs dressed in snow white coats who never stop. The prep work is just as important as the final plate and it shows. A pastry chef assembles individual size semifreddi, garnishing them with panna and a ribbon of caramelized dark brown sugar; bent over in silence she works with great concentration. The food is a work of art!

"The cuisine of Milano is different from that in the south," Chef Gennaro says. "Our kitchen here is Mediter-





## Inside

anean. We try to bring the tradition of Campania to Milan with foods like ravioli, ragù and risotto; and also Italian classics like crudo di pesce and vitello tonnato that represent all of Italy. Our philosophy here is all about the big flavors of Campania. We are also developing “an encounter” with chefs from Lombardy in our kitchen with their regional cuisine like risotto alla Milanese, risotto allo zafferano, ossobuco di vitello and cassoeula—stufato di verza con salsiccia e pancetta,” he says.

Desserts include Caprese, pasteria, sfogliatelle, mousse al Mascarpone, mousse al cioccolato Cafferal (a rich Piedmontese chocolate) and a semifreddo alla liquirizia.

When I ask him how the local Milanese have reacted to the new concept of Larte,

especially if you want to visit Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*. There is always a line and tickets sell out way in advance. *The Last Supper* is one of the greatest masterpieces in the world, so do not miss it. It is housed in the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie which is part of a Dominican convent and is part of the UNESCO World Heritage. It is a small church and certainly worth the visit.

Milano is an epicenter of international fashion with its famous Quadrilatero d'Oro or Rectangle of Gold, incorporating Via della Spiga, Via Manzoni, Via Sant'Andrea and Via Montenapoleone and the Quadrilatero d'Oro. Armani, Missoni, Prada, Valentino, Dolce & Gabbana and Versace are just a few of the designers who have chic boutiques

call it the first shopping mall of its kind. The all-enclosed structure is a shopping must with shops like Cartier, Gucci, Rizzoli and Borsalino. The Galleria takes its name from Vittorio Emanuele, the first king of the Kingdom of Italy. It has an old world, grand style with marble mosaic floors and Il Salotto di Milano (Milan's living room), famous cafés like Zucca along with Prada's flagship store which has been in business here since 1913.

Then there is the majestic La Scala, formerly the church of Santa Maria della Scala which was built in 1381. This opera house is a must see, so reserve early. La Scala is hailed the most important opera house in the world and has had Italian greats such as Puccini, Verdi and Bellini perform on its stage. It

**“Every day Larte is full. Guests like the fact that they can come in to dine, relax and shop, too. Everything you see is for sale,” he explains.**

he explains: “Each day we serve around 90 people at lunch and 60 for dinner. All of our clients are returning and have become regular clients, which is a good sign. It means they like it. This is a chef's greatest satisfaction, when a guest returns.” Chef Gennaro is passionate about his new role at Larte, a new concept that has caught on.

“Every day Larte is full. Guests like the fact that they can come in to dine, relax and shop, too. Everything you see—tables, chairs, crystal and art work—is a collection of our partners, even the extra virgin olive oil, balsamic vinegar and chocolate, and it's all for sale,” he explains.

Milan is a city with endless things to see and do. So whether you walk on the roof of the Duomo, shop in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II or take in Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, stop in at Larte and try something delicious.

### Travel Notes

If planning to visit Milan, book early,

here, and continue to unveil their latest creations throughout the seasons.

The Duomo, set in the heart of the city's center, is home to Milan's crown jewel. This majestic piece of religious architecture is the largest church in Italy and it took over 500 years to build. The Duomo juts high above the Piazza del Duomo, has a Baroque and neo-Gothic façade and houses 3,500 statues. It is dedicated to Santa Maria Nascente and also has 135 astonishing spires that adorn the marble structure and bronze doors, which have been carved by different artists throughout time. Take the elevator up to the roof and catch a breathtaking view of the city and the Alps on a clear day.

Walk across the Piazza del Duomo and right to the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II for a little shopping, caffè, book browsing and people watching. It is one of the world's oldest shopping concourses and was designed in 1861 and built between 1865 and 1867 by Giuseppe Mengoni. It is a glass arcade with high vaulted glass ceilings. You could

was designed by Mario Botta and Giuseppe Piermarini and opened its doors for the first time in 1778 as the New Royal-Ducal Theatre alla Scala. Located on the Via Filodrammatici, 2, you can easily walk from La Scala through the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele and reach the Piazza Duomo.



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## Milanese Risotto

- 6 cups beef stock
- 1 ounce beef bone marrow
- 6 tablespoons butter, divided
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cups Arborio or Carnaroli rice
- $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon saffron threads
- $1\frac{1}{4}$  cups grated Parmesan cheese

Bring the beef stock to a boil. In a separate pan, heat the marrow and 5 tablespoons of butter. Add the onion and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Stir in the rice and cook, stirring, until the grains are coated. Add the beef stock, a cup at a time, until it has been absorbed. This will take 15 to 20 minutes. Before adding the last of the broth, stir the saffron into it. When the rice is tender, season with salt to taste. Remove the pan from the heat. Stir in the remaining butter and 1 cup of the Parmesan cheese. Sprinkle with remaining Parmesan before serving.

Makes 4 servings.

—Recipe adapted from *The Silver Spoon* (Phaidon Press, 2005)





## Italian Chocolate Mousse

- 1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet dark chocolate morsels
- 3 cups heavy cream, divided
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ¼ cup Frangelico liqueur
- Whipped cream for topping
- Cocoa powder or chocolate shavings for topping

Melt the chocolate morsels in the top of a double broiler. Whisk in 1 cup of heavy cream until well blended. Remove from heat. Let sit for 20 to 30 minutes to come to room temperature.

In a large chilled mixing bowl, combine the remaining 2 cups cream, the sugar and the Frangelico. Use a hand or electric mixer to whip them together until stiff peaks form when the beaters are stopped and lifted out.

Gently fold one-third of the melted chocolate mixture into the whipped cream. Add the second third and fold in gently. Add the last third and fold in gently. If the mousse becomes soft, don't worry. Chill in a bowl for 15 to 20 minutes and it will be as good as new.

Serve with whipped cream and sprinkle with cocoa powder or chocolate shavings, if desired.

Makes 6 servings.

## Milanese Veal Chops

- 4 veal chops, boned
- 1 large egg
- Pinch of salt
- 1½ cups fine bread crumbs
- ¼ cup butter

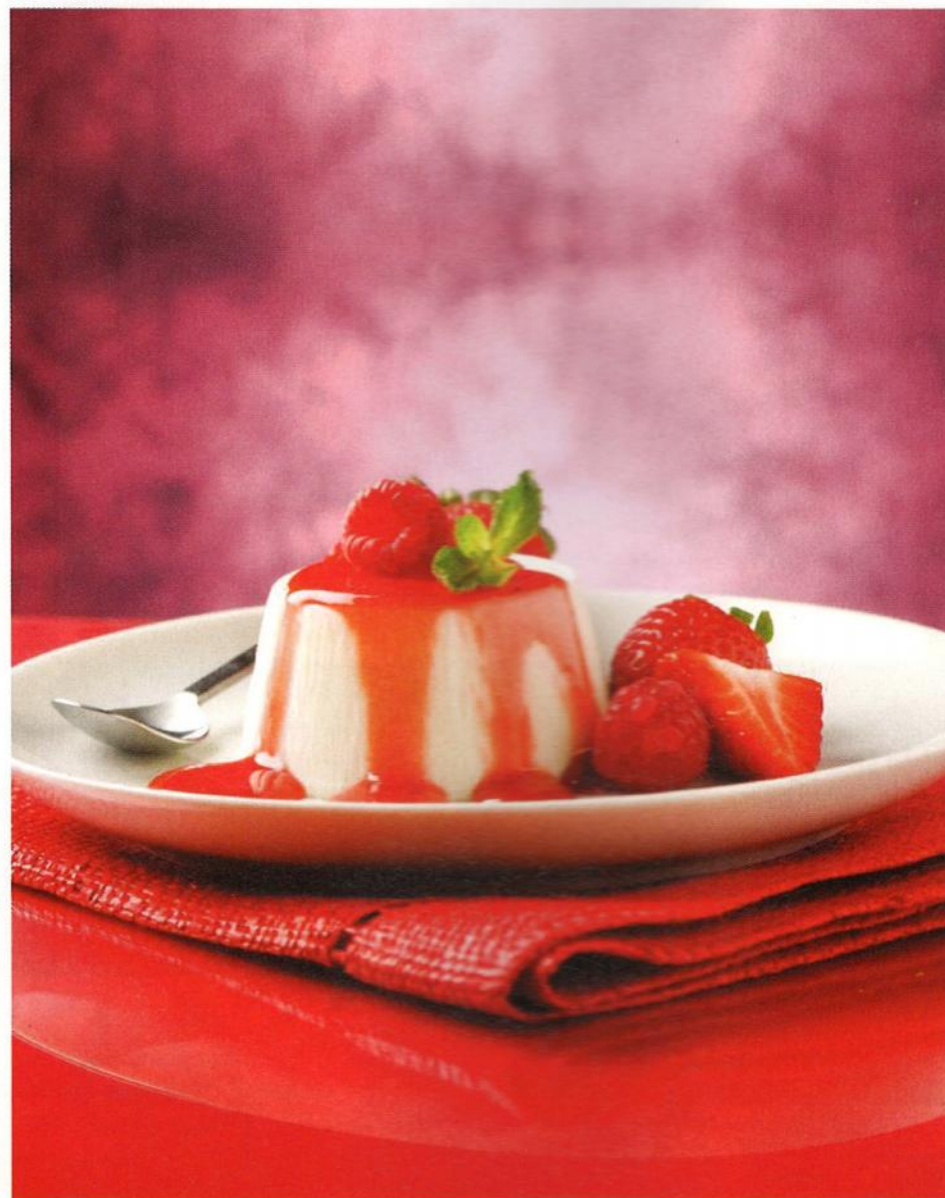
Pound the chops to an even thickness with a meat mallet. Beat the egg with a pinch of salt in a shallow dish. Spread out the bread crumbs in another shallow dish. Melt the butter in a skillet. Dip each chop first in the beaten egg and then in the bread crumbs, pressing with your fingers if necessary. Fry the chops over low heat for about 10 minutes on each side until golden brown. Remove with a slotted spatula and drain on paper towels. Transfer to a warm serving dish.

Makes 4 servings.

## Scorpion Fish In Wine

Scorpion fish, scorfano, are also known by their French name, rascasse. If you can't find it in your area, you may substitute a firm white fish.

- 2 (11-oz.) scorpion fish (or other firm white fish) fillets
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 3 large tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 cups dry white wine
- Salt and pepper to taste



Place the fish and olive oil in a pan. Sprinkle the tomatoes over the fish. Season with salt and pepper and add the garlic cloves to the pan. Pour the wine into the pan. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer over medium heat for 15 to 20 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and let the fish cool in the pan. This dish may be served cold. Top with the wine sauce before serving.

Makes 4 servings.

-Recipe adapted from *The Silver Spoon* (Phaidon Press, 2005)

## Panna Cotta with Raspberry Sauce

- 2 cups whipping cream
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest
- ½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise, seeds scooped out
- 4 coffee beans
- 1 envelope plain gelatin
- ½ cup cold water
- 4 tablespoons seedless raspberry jam

In a medium saucepan, combine whipping cream, sugar, lemon zest, vanilla bean seeds, and coffee beans. Cook on medium to just under a boil. Meanwhile, sprinkle the gelatin into the water and let sit for 3 minutes.

Strain the cream mixture through a fine-meshed sieve, then pour into a bowl and stir in the gelatin mixture. Pour into four ramekins. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours.

To serve, fill a medium pan with 1 inch of water and bring to a boil. Using a knife, loosen the sides of the ramekins. Place the ramekins in the boiling water for 5 seconds, then invert to unmold.

Heat the raspberry jam in a microwave oven for 10 seconds, then let cool. Drizzle over the panna cotta and serve.

Makes 4 servings.