

MONOCLE

Drinking & Dining Directory

ⓧ AFFAIRS: Tasty hijinks abound on the US-Mexico border **BUSINESS:** Food entrepreneurs **ESSAYS:** Opinions on tap **DESIGN:** Dining details **ENTERTAINING:** Back to the buffet **SCOOPS:** Biscuit barons and South Korea's Chicken Alley+

Starter's orders

Serving a spread of tasty tales, The Monocle Restaurant Awards, plus the (not so) skinny on global good living. Cin-Cin!

Launch
issue!



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+ REPORTS: Schooling the chefs of tomorrow, food for thought from **MADRID'S** 'taberna' culture, **WATERING HOLES,** wines to buy and high spirits in **TASMANIA.** Plus: **COFFEE** across continents and **RECIPES** with a global twist



This old house

With the mountains above and Lake St Moritz below, the views from Chesa Veglia's sun-dappled terrace are an alpine marvel. The 17th-century farmhouse (its name means "old house" in Romansh) is a gem of Engadin architecture. Thanks to Hans Badrutt, owner of Badrutt's Palace hotel next door, who restored the building in 1936 as a haunt for superlative food and even better company, its rustic charm is as alive as ever. Hollywood icons and European aristocracy have dined here, and today the intimate spot hosts three distinct restaurants and two bars (boasting a highly respectable 15 Gault Millau points), as well as the Chesa Veglia Club Privé, which is only accessible to members.

RUSTIC ROMANCE

Pizzeria Heuboden

Serving its wares fresh from a wood-fired oven, Pizzeria Heuboden can be found in the old hayloft of the Chesa Veglia (*heuboden* means "hayloft in German"). Start with an aperitivo at Bar Carigiet (note the paintings by the bar's namesake, Alois Carigiet) then try the house speciality: Dama Bianca is a delicate and delectable balance of taleggio, buffalo mozzarella, parmesan and black truffles.



Patrizier Stuben

This graceful restaurant treads perfectly between chic and cosy. Both locals and visitors flock here for hearty Grisons fare in a relaxed but elegant environment and you can expect a refined twist or two on the menu. The house take on capuns is a particular hit: savour hearty spätzle pasta with vegetables wrapped in chunky Swiss chard—a must-try.



Grill Chadafö

The finest among Chesa Veglia's medley of restaurants sets the mood early with its traditional alpine stove oven, found at the entrance. Classics such as the chateaubriand with sauce béarnaise are a fine choice but the grilled Bresse chicken, a plump variety from eastern France, is not to be ignored. With tastebuds sated, head to the pleasantly cavernous Polo Bar for a nightcap or two.



Food photography: Pia Grimbühler

CHESA VEGLIA

BY: *Laura Rysman*
PHOTOGRAPHY: *Andy Massaccesi*

TOQUE OF THE TOWN

Want to become the next great Italian chef? Then head to a palace in northern Italy that's training the next generation of star cooks.

(1) First-day nerves



(1) Alma director Matteo Berti (2) Calm before cooking up a storm (3) Professional quantities (4) Andrea Sinigaglia, Alma's general manager, on the grand staircase to the garden

"Italian cooking, together with French, Japanese and Arab cooking, is one of the fountainhead cultures of cuisine," says Matteo Berti, director of Alma cookery school's curriculum, as the scent of simmering onions wafts through the kitchen classroom where he sits in a pristine white tunic. "Every chef needs to understand Italian cooking – it's the foundation of so many dishes and philosophies."

Berti's statement is grand but fitting for the setting. He's sat inside the grandiose, golden-hued Ducal Palace of Colorno – the so-called "Versailles" of the Duchy of Parma – which was built in the 17th and 18th centuries as a 400-room royal estate. Today its Renaissance-style topiary garden, cobbled inner courtyards and fading frescoed passageways house a rarefied school that counts some of Italy's

In a few short years, Alma has become perhaps the most prestigious place in the world to study Italian cuisine

top chefs among its alumni. The school's mission? To pass on the country's rich patrimony of cookery and abundant range of ingredients.

The Alma school, founded in 2004, has taken over most of the palace as it is today. The rooms where aristocrats were once entertained are now white-walled kitchens lined with stainless-steel cabinets, appliances, pans and skillets.

The school launched with a class of just 17 but in a few short years has become perhaps the most prestigious place in the world to study Italian cuisine: it is training chefs from more than 60 different countries during five months of immersive lessons followed by a five-month internship at a top Italian kitchen. Upon completion, nine in 10 graduates are employed in their field, either launching their own venture or taking to the top ranks of restaurants around the world.

In keeping with Alma's emphasis on swift immersion in the craft and traditions of cookery, students are dressed in chef's whites and toques from day one and thrown into honing their preparation



Student profiles

Caterina Geppi

Age: 19
Hometown: Biella
Goal: "I just finished high school and I want to do something for other people."

Roberto Ghezzi

Age: 23
Hometown: Bologna
Goal: "I worked as a head chef in Toronto but I came back to study so I can move up into a top-notch Italian kitchen."

Filippo Gemignani

Age: 25
Hometown: Viareggio
Goal: "I studied viticulture and oenology but I'm ready to start cooking on cruise ships."



or Matteo Berti (2) Calm before storm (3) Professional quantities

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(1) Pastry in the ma
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rabbit (5) 'Needs mo



(1) Pastry in the making
(2) Tools of the trade
(3) Checking on progress
(4) Preparing a rabbit
(5) 'Needs more salt'



'Stop it. We can't ask her to take her toque off to give us a better view'

'Are you going to say something or shall I?'



'Stop it. We can't ask her to take her toque off to give us a better view'

'Are you going to say something or shall I?'



Previous spread: (1) Too many cooks?
This page: (1) The 'Versailles of Parma' in which the school is housed (2) Commencement day

“For today’s chefs, cooking is more about thinking than physical labour but you have to create something impressive to get noticed”

techniques. They are also encouraged to eat well. Trips to some of the country’s finest restaurants are complemented with visits from chefs from throughout Italy: usually bearing local products for the students to taste and acquaint themselves with. There are expeditions to visit producers too, where the young chefs learn how to prepare ingredients. Recently they found out how different ricotta made from Sicilian sheep’s milk tastes when served fresh from the farm.

“Travel is an ever-bigger part of our curriculum,” says Berti, who believes his students will work harder to source their own ingredients in the professional world if they’ve been properly introduced to and enamoured by them at the school. “If not for the products, you could do this course by Skype,” he says, flashing a grin.

At the heart of the school is a slightly haughty restaurant where minimal dark-wood chairs surround thick, white cloth-clad tables. It’s here that the students put their new skills to the test by serving as many as 40 guests at a time in restaurant conditions.



Alma International School of Italian Cuisine

Location: Ducal Palace of Colorno, near Parma
Student body: 1,200 per year
Advanced course cost: €16,400
Advanced course duration: 5 months on site, 5 months placement
Modules include: Italian cuisine; pastry-making; sommelier training; restaurant management

On the opening day of the academic year Paolo Lopriore, chef and owner of Il Portico near Lake Como, prepares the semester’s first meal. He’s a board member here and also teaches twice a week. He trained with Gualtiero Marchesi, a celebrated architect of modern Italian cookery and the first non-French chef to earn three Michelin stars; he also served as Alma’s dean until he died last year.

As one of the star teachers at the school (which collaborates with chefs including Carlo Cracco, Enrico Crippa and Davide Oldani), Lopriore feels duty-bound to “simplify the problems of starting out in the kitchen”, as he puts it. “For today’s chefs, cooking is more about thinking than physical labour – there’s more technology in the kitchen, restaurants have fewer tables – but you still have to create something impressive to get noticed.” As he speaks he’s stood facing the rows of neatly clipped hedges spanning the palace garden. “I just want to teach our students that our work is still manual. It’s not about painting plates, it’s about exalting the flavours.” — (M)

THE TOAST OF ITALY

Cultivated along the foothills of the Alps, Ferrari Trentodoc sparkling wines are globally recognised for finesse and elegance. The wine’s brilliant character serves as an ambassador for what the company calls ‘the Italian art of living’ each time it is sipped, and pairs perfectly with life’s most significant moments.



1 HERITAGE

Founder Giulio Ferrari established his mountain estate more than a century ago in Trentino, northern Italy, and sold it to friend Bruno Lunelli in 1952. Three generations of Lunelli have looked after it since, upholding Ferrari’s legacy in its pursuit of viticultural excellence.

2 RENOWN

Ferrari’s prestige among sparkling-wine producers has led to it being crowned sparkling wine producer of the year at the 2017 Champagne & Sparkling Wine World Championships and European winery of the year at the 2015 Wine Star awards by *Wine Enthusiast*.

3 BALANCE

Served at top restaurants around the world, Ferrari Trentodoc’s versatile sparkling wine is the drink of choice for celebrating special occasions. The bubbles pair perfectly with the sublime food, sterling service and elegant atmospheres of fine-dining establishments.



FERRARI
TRENTO 1902