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## Giro Gustando

by Annamaria Farina



Wanderer by profession and passion, opened wide eyes & mouth in 1969 & since then have not closed either.

Art and technical training at l'Istituto d'Arte di Monza, and then the Politecnico di Milano Facoltà di Architettura threw me into the unstable balance in design between the functional/technical and the beautiful/luxurious/ephemeral. Born in Italy of a Palermitano mother and a Veronese father I can only express the best synthesis our Bel Paese can offer.

Gourmet and insatiable glutton I delight in collecting the most moving experiences for stories and images.

## Ristorante Bracali

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I'm traveling across lush Tuscany to reach Ristorante Bracali. Across hills, through vineyards and woods, I brush by a myriad of towns which punctuate this splendid territory before finally reaching the heart of the Maremma, in the hamlet of Ghirlanda, where Francesco and Luca carry on the work begun in 1983 by the parents Manuela and Luciano.

"Unique," I think, a restaurant with such a long history and that today, among many accolades, boasts of the most prestigious Michelin Two Stars (the first dating back to 2009 and the second to 2011), is off the beaten track, almost isolated from all the renowned places which have made the region famous throughout the world and where the beautiful Tuscan life makes itself the center of conversation.

A building from the outside like so many others, whose appearance hides the treasure it contains: And yet, what a treasure!

A richness that today belongs to settings for which were chosen a neoclassical style, an important color scheme like gold and black, and even mirrors, columns, candelabra and Swarovski; to then move on to the luxurious offerings of the kitchen, completely opposite of current fashion of creating...

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a plate based on minimalism; and on to a professional welcome, without excess, which speaks of a long experience and complete devotion to the embraced profession which has its roots in a road house with telephone service.



Francesco and Luca, born into this art, if we can compare this service to art, defined from their youth their passions and preferences: Francesco for cuisine, Luca for wine, creating out of the latter a rich and opulent list where a multitude of international labels inspires both curiosity and avidity.

Turning to the cuisine of Francesco, hinted above, there are no requirements, no references to the most recent culinary decrees, but a response to a personal need to express himself, to the need to create a plate as though he were interpreting himself and his thoughts. Never following a straight line, sometimes twisting but always clear in intent: an approach which becomes clear in every dish, rich with ingredients (meat and fish mixed) where equilibrium plays a fundamental role in their coexistence and for exalting the individuality each ingredient brings by itself.

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A wide glass wall transforms the Bracali kitchen into a stage: the division between dining room and work area dissolves offering guests the possibility of watching the preparations that Francesco and his collaborators follow daily, from different “house-made breads” to the last bite of pastry.

Among the plates tasted is the indescribable equilibrium noted in the beginning with “Cappuccino di cipolla autoctona di Massa Marittima” (Creamed local onion of Massa Marittima) in which acidic bitter-sweet notes are built inside the very delicate mousse of onion covered with drops of balsamic vinegar and crunchy bits of pork cheeks, all accompanied by a crispy brioche. Interesting the first serving of

“Gnocchetti all’ortica su budino di fegato grasso, caviale di succo d’uva e pistachio” in which the perennial greens, humble in their natural state, are ennobled married to the precious rich liver pate.

Among the second servings is “Lingua di vitello con emulsion tiepida di parmigiano e gelatin di brdo affumicato” (Calf tongue with a warm emulsion of parmigiana and gelatin from smoked broth), and then for the finish the dessert “Lo yogurt incontra il mare” (Yogurt meets the sea) we find the defined the overall complexity of the Bracali, free of any doubt.



These are dishes which don’t turn their back on the region insuring the best qualities of the local are part of the creation and find their path in a gradual evolution, being polished, embracing elegance (often non existent in a traditional Tuscan dish), including a color spectrum, the play of textures, an articulation simultaneously complex and clean



information useful for travellers, the Bracali world does not end with cuisine: in the Palazzo Pannocchieschi, a few steps from the Cathedral of Massa Marittima, there are available to guests three rooms restored according to environmental sustainability criteria which allows for a rest-over for those who come from a distance.

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## *“Cappuccino” di cipolla maremmana, guanciale croccante e balsamico*

### Esecuzione:

L'idea è quella di voler racchiudere tutto il gusto deciso della cipolla maremmana in un antipasto etereo e avvolgente.

Ricetta per 6 persone:  
400 gr di cipolla maremmana  
30 gr di burro  
Brodo vegetale  
180 gr di panna fresca  
90 gr di albume  
1 pizzico di zucchero  
Sale e pepe  
1 carica gas per sifone  
6 fettine di guanciale di Cinta Senese  
Balsamico invecchiato almeno 25 anni  
6 fette di pan brioche

Tagliare la cipolla uniformemente per garantire una cottura omogenea. Rosolare la cipolla con il burro a fuoco lento, portare a cottura aggiungendo se necessario del brodo vegetale. Frullare, setacciare il composto e unire panna e albume, aggiustare di sapore con sale e zucchero. Caricare un sifone da 500 gr con una carica di gas per panna. Mantenere al caldo a bagnomaria.

Guanciale: Mettere le fettine di guanciale in una padella antiaderente a fuoco basso con un peso sopra a lasciar soffriggere finché non diventano croccanti. Scolare su carta assorbente e frantumare in piccoli pezzi.

### Impiattamento:

Sifonare il composto caldo di cipolla per 3/4 in tazze da cappuccino, cospargere con il guanciale croccante e distribuire su ciascuno 5 gocce di balsamico invecchiato. Servire accompagnato a pan brioche tostato.