

His curriculum is testimony to the extensive experience he has gained both in Italy and at an international level that has enriched his style of cooking. But we'll let him talk about this evolution.

My first and most important work experience was in Florence at the Enoteca Pinchiorri, where I really learnt the meaning of "Italian haute cuisine". It was thanks to this experience that I had the opportunity of working in the East, first in Tokyo and then in Singapore, where I learned about Asian cuisine, their particular way of considering an ingredient, whether fish or vegetables, and I found it totally fascinating.

It seems that your passion for experimentation has taken you to far-off places where you've discovered traditions of other countries very different from those of European culture. From this you've created a cuisine that tries to combine Mediterranean flavours enriched with elements from Eastern traditions.

I don't think that Italian and Asian cuisines are all that different and that's why I've managed to create a fusion between sought-after Mediterranean products and oriental techniques. The basis of my cuisine is predominantly Italian, but I've tried to lighten it with not too lengthy cooking techniques and I concentrate on how the ingredient is handled, giving primary importance to the integrity of the flavours.

You appear to use very little fat in your cooking, but without forgetting the taste contained in each dish.

I try to use natural, fresh, seasonal products, often raw and dressed with extra virgin olive oil. Nowadays it's important to count the calories. For example, one evening when I was working in Rome at "La Terrazza", I had to prepare a "steamed John Dory with vegetables in soy sauce" for Michelle Pfeiffer, and for the following week that's all she ate. It was also an experiment that I was trying out at that time ...

There's that word "experiment" again.

Cooking means experimenting, research, imagination, and I have based my philosophy on their harmony.

Your cuisine could be defined as a mélange of Italian, Asian and.... French culture. The close attention I pay to the presentation of a dish harks back to my stay in France, where I learned new techniques for preparing ingredients. As well as pleasing the palate, a dish also has to please the eye.

My cuisine is full of international influences, but it is still firmly rooted in the Mediterranean tradition. It considers the ingredient in all its aspects and exalts its purity, which is why I love using fresh and seasonal produce: in spring, asparagus and peas; in autumn I can run riot with pumpkin, pomegranate, black and white truffles, chestnuts and of course all kinds of mushrooms....

So what should a visitor of your restaurants and promotions expect?

Mediterranean cooking with international references, evolving from respect for the seasons of flavours, with the ingredient as the primary player, exalting in the entirety of defined elements in all their aspects. But words can't describe what only the palate has the power to tell...