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Colagreco: my 10 years of freedom

A video-interview with the Argentinian chef, celebrating a decade at Mirazur. Plenty about Italy...

31-05-2016



Rubriche - Carlo Mangio

An outdoor trip or a journey to the other side of the planet?

One thing is for sure: the destination is delicious, by **Carlo Passera**



by
Carlo Passera

journalist born in 1974, for many years he has covered politics, mostly, and food in his free time. Today he does exactly the opposite and this makes him very happy. As soon as he can, he dives into travels and good food. *Identità Golose's* editor in chief

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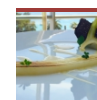
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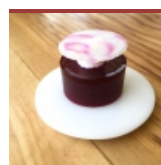


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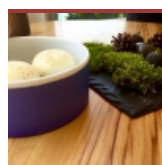


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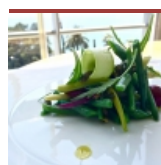
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One could sum up the composed, serene satisfaction of a respectable man such as Mauro Colagreco (<http://www.identitagolose.it/sito/it/6/473/chef-e-protagonisti/mauro.html>) – a true person, before being a great chef – with three numbers: 25 thousand («The euros invested to launch Mirazur (<http://www.guidaidentitagolose.it/it/62/11242/ristoranti/mirazur.html>)



31-05-2016

Colagreco: my 10 years of freedom

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/14623/carlo-mangio/colagreco-my-10-years-of-freedom.html?p=0>)

p=0&hash=5), it seemed a hopeless venture», 1 (his is the first French restaurant according to the 50 Best (<http://www.theworlds50best.com/list/1-50-winners/Mirazur>), 11th in the world) and 10. That is to say the anniversary he's celebrating in Mentone in its latest version (it was built in the Thirties), a stone's throw away, literally, from the Italian border, where this great Argentinian man with three Italian grandparents and a Basque one is dishing out marvellous recipes since 2006.

«It was very hard at first. I had worked with the greatest French chefs, but I had never been a chef myself. I jumped into this adventure, in a place that had been closed for 4 years, an immense building far away from the city centre, on the French Riviera where there's plenty of competition and people only come in the warmer months. We were 3 in the kitchen and 2 in the dining room. And I opened with 25 thousand euros in my pocket, without being able to borrow money from the banks as a foreigner... It could be a case study on how not to open a restaurant».



It was a success, though. How did you make it?

«I was very determined. These 10 years have been full of sacrifices but fun too. I had a bit of luck, meeting the owner of *Mirazur*, English Michael Likerman – today he's like a father to me – who betted on me, asking me a very low rent at first. I arrived in France at 16 having only the phone number of a friend. I wanted to stay 2 or 3 years. I'm still here, next to the sea. A dream come true».

Your greatest satisfaction?

«Firstly, when my two children were born. And the acknowledgement as *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres*, a sort of consecration in France. My relatives came from Argentina just for the occasion. I'm so proud! Look around: the sea, the mountains, a beautiful vegetable garden, two culinary cultures such as the French and Italian ones. And an Argentinian in between, who enjoyed a complete freedom of expression. I had the chance to present the territory as never before, because I didn't have any pre-set model, I move from one territory to the next without borders».

Is the this freedom of combining many influences and make a personal synthesis the future of cuisine?

«I believe so, yes. Of course, I love tradition. I've recently visited *Dal Pescatore* of the Santini family. I ate their ravioli, made there and then: fantastic. I'd like places like that to always exist. I think we must treasure tradition, respect it and then make it evolve. And I also believe that in this globalised world it is right to have a syncretic vision. You need an intelligent freedom to present a modern cuisine based on territory»



04-12-2015

Delicious Athens in 32 photos

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/13516/carl-mangio/delicious-athens-in-32-photos.html?p=0>)



30-11-2015

In Athens there's now more then Funky

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/13403/carl-mangio/in-athens-theres-now-more-then-funky-.html?p=0>)



19-11-2015

There's a turning point at Al Mercato

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/13238/carl-mangio/theres-a-turning-point-at-al-mercato.html?p=0>)



18-11-2015

Visiting the alchemist-cheese producer

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/13222/carl-mangio/visiting-the-alchemist-cheese-producer-.html?p=0>)



12-11-2015

3Quarti in memory of Stefano

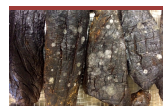
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10-11-2015

The truth about insects on the plate

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/13159/carl-mangio/the-truth-about-insects-on-the-plate-.html?p=0>)



11-09-2015

Katsuobushi... made with veal

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/12525/carl-mangio/katsuobushi-made-with-veal-.html?p=0>)



30-07-2015

The restaurant serving pinecones, mushrooms and herbs

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/12044/carl-mangio/the-restaurant-serving-pinecones->

According to the *50 Best* you're the best in France. Do you consider it a responsibility, an honour, a source of anxiety...

«All three together. It's the second year I'm the first in France; in 2015 someone turned up their noses, this year many colleagues sent their compliments, such as Alain Passard who wrote me a beautiful letter. Of course I don't believe I'm the best chef in France, the standards are very high here. But saying who's the first, second or third doesn't make much sense: it's like comparing *Celler de Can Roca* and *Mugaritz*: they're both great, they both convey plenty of emotions, though differently. Or Alain Passard and Pierre Gagnaire».



Mauro Colagreco at *Identità Milano* 2011 presented by Paolo Marchi

Had your restaurant been 30 more metres to the East, you'd be the number two in Italy, after Bottura... What comes to your mind, if I say "Italia"?

«Tradition, products, modernity, but most of all diversity: North, Centre, South... I adore diversity, it's a treasure we must preserve. Italy is the country that's most ready to historically absorb the influence of other cultures. It's a traditionalist country but it must always evolve».

Is it evolving already?

«Yes. For instance with Massimo Bottura, who's a friend: he did very good to Italy, because he's opened and continues to open doors, so that people can understand cooking is evolving: tradition is the moment society is experiencing».

Today the chef is expected to have a social role too. What's your opinion?

«We must all pay attention to environmental sustainability. As chefs, we're public figures, we have a strong responsibility, we must convey the right message. Think of wastes: we should all make a small gesture to limit them. In our kitchen, there are photos of poor kids from South America hanging on the wall, as a memo not to waste food. Then there's the *Orígenes* project with Virgilio Martinez and Jorge Vallejo. We visit the poorest areas in South America, spend some days with the tribes, discovering products, techniques, but most of all their relationship with nature. It's a social and cultural heritage that must be preserved, perhaps these people are destined to disappear, we must not waste their knowledge».

mushrooms-and-herbs-.html?p=0)



27-04-2015

Ciccio Sultano triples

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/10155/carmangio/ciccio-sultano-triples-.html?p=0>)



24-04-2015

Nordic cuisine is dead. Italy, in the meantime...

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/10144/carmangio/nordic-cuisine-is-dead-italy-in-the-meantime.html?p=0>)



22-04-2015

Fresh ricotta for monsieur Genin

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/10051/carmangio/fresh-ricotta-for-monsieur-genin.html?p=0>)



07-04-2015

Pizza with bubbles at Da Ezio

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/9823/carmangio/pizza-with-bubbles-at-da-ezio.html?p=0>)



28-03-2015

Israel, a mosaic of aromas

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/9756/carmangio/israel-a-mosaic-of-aromas-.html?p=0>)



23-03-2015

Tel Aviv, the taste of peace

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/9724/carmangio/tel-aviv-the-taste-of-peace-.html?p=0>)



17-03-2015

Tickets and Pakta, unlimited flavours

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/9701/carmangio/tickets-and-pakta-unlimited-flavours-.html?p=0>)



16-03-2015

The new life of the Adria brothers

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/9695/carmangio/the-new-life-of-the-adria-brothers.html?p=0>)



Colagreco and Bottura (photo by peregrinagourmet.com
(<http://peregrinagourmet.com/>))

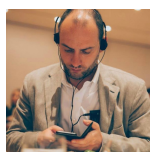
Where would you like to dine in Italy?

«At Niko Romito's: he's from Abruzzo, my family also came from there but I've never been. Plus many more: Bottura, or Don Alfonso. Walking inside Enoteca Pinchiorri's cellar together with Annie, the first Italian woman-chef to get 3 stars, is beautiful. I also like having someone as crazy as Davide Scabin as a friend. As well as Paolo Lopriore, with his bitterness. Italy is great!».

In order to celebrate "his" *Mirazur's* 10th anniversary, **Colagreco** has created an original format: a series of dinners called *M10*, throughout 2016, featuring 10 among the most acclaimed chefs in the world. They will create a tasting menu for just one night, on dates scheduled until 28th October, right before the restaurant's winter closure.

The team of chefs to participate in the 10-year celebrations at *Mirazur* is formed by **David Kinch** (last Saturday, we will feature it on [identitagolose.com](http://www.identitagolose.com)), **Rene Redzepi** (last Monday), **Alex Atala** (the next event, on 28th June), then **Yoshihiro Narisawa**, **Andoni Luis Aduriz**, **Virgilio Martinez**, **Emmanuel Renaut**, **Sebastien Bras**, **Jorge Vallejo** and **Massimo Bottura**, on 27th October. Info here.

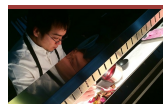
On all the other days, there's a special menu available, tracing the great dishes of this decade at *Mirazur*: something not to be missed (see the photo gallery).



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03-03-2015

Tokuyoshi, no ifs, ands and buts

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/9641/carlomangio/tokuyoshi-no-ifs-and-ands-and-buts-.html?p=0>)



22-02-2015

Lopriore: I'll work by myself

(<http://www.identitagolose.com/sito/en/132/9609/carlomangio/lopriore-ill-work-by-myself-.html?p=0>)



05-02-2015

Sweet Italy works as a team and wins

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