

In memory of Emily Balducci Cardone

Anyone who was lucky enough to know Emily knew she was the kind of person who put her whole heart and soul into everything she did, and throughout her life and career, one of the many ways she shone brightest was through her writing. Emily wove her passion for food, family, and the business throughout everything she wrote. Though she was anything but proud, Emily shared her work with infectious enthusiasm, so in her memory, we wanted to share some of her work with you to enjoy, too. As you read through her articles and recipes, you'll find glimmers of her excitement, positivity, and personality in the way she described the people and the food that she loved. Through her words, her heart, and her joy, Emily created a legacy that will live on at Baldor and within everyone whose lives she touched.

I always appreciated how passionate Emily was about her writing and getting it just right. She taught me that romancing an item with its description did wonders for our brand and our products. She was a wonderful person and will be sorely missed.

Michelle Barricelli

Every time Emily and I would see each other in the office, she would look at me and say, "You crack me up, make it quick," and giggle.

Josephine Armenio

"If you have faith in the Lord, you have faith enough." - Emily. Thanks for helping me get through the worst times and being such an amazing listener and inspiration. I will miss our talks tremendously, but I thank the Lord for introducing me to such a wonderful soul like yours. I'll keep talking to you, and I'm sure wherever you are, you're still listening.

Daisy Escamilla

Emily was our Baldor Mom. Banana bread and samples of last night's dinner were shared secretly with a smile and "Don't tell anyone else you got some." Later on, seeing other goodie bags around the office, I chuckle knowing how much Emily loved spreading joy and sharing her love of cooking with all. She taught me how to cook cardones and spigarello, and that Calabrian chili is the only chili. Emily's passion for food was infectious, and her ultimate pursuit of deliciousness will be honored in our continued work everyday for all days. Emily will always be with us, and we will honor her in our work going forward knowing she is watching us and smiling from above.

Benjamin Walker

Emily was pure sunshine, our bright beacon of hope and ray of positivity. She'd be the first person to know when you weren't having a great day, and her hugs always made everything better.

Emma Berg

My Emily Memories: Things I Learned from Emily Balducci

- I can get anything I want as long as I work hard for it.
- Our kids will forget about us during their teen years, but then they will come right back to us.
- Cherish the time with my daughter, because they grow so fast and we never get that time back.
- Keep on fighting even when you think there's nothing else left in you.
- Never settle for less than I deserve.
- Never lose my faith.
- We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Michelle Caro



Emily B. was a very, special find
Sweet, dear, and always so kind
Enjoyed her career and loved her life
Was a wonderful mother and adoring wife
Tenacious and driven, bordering on stubborn
She never yielded until everyone's heads spun
Always hopeful, optimistic, and cheery
Committed, diligent even when weary
A dedicate foodie from the Balducci line
With a passion and flare for all food sublime
I remember her eyes would shine bright having seen
One of her favorites the humble cranberry bean

Patrick Ahern



I am grateful for all the stories Emily shared with me — from parenting advice, to family holidays, and work stories about her Balducci days and early Baldor days. I shared with her all the things my girls did to drive me crazy, and she would share stories of her daughter at that age. We compared special holiday dishes and traditions between both our cultures. I admired her work ethic, and her passion for her work was evident when you read it. Her positivity was infectious and really caused you to be more thankful for the good in your life. I don't think I'll ever be able to eat banana bread without thinking about her and smiling, because it was just a little bit left so she brought it just for you, meanwhile everyone in the office was snacking away on the same banana bread.

Kathryn Brador

When I joined the Baldor family, Emily took me under her wing right away and taught me everything about Baldor, our history, the business, and, of course, the food. One day when we were chatting, I asked Emily what produce she was excited for, and without hesitating, she told me about her love for Opal Apples — insisting they were the absolute best and I just had to try them. Though I had never eaten one before, I knew if Emily loved them, they really must be something special. A few months later, Opal Apple season rolled around, and I got to try them for the first time, immediately understanding why Emily loved them so much — they really are the sweetest. I reported back to her that, thanks to her, I had a new favorite apple, and we bonded over them ever since. When they were in-season, we'd get our hands on a case and split them, or Emily would find them in her local store after we had sold out, and she'd surprise me with one to enjoy. Any time I see those golden, sweet apples, I think of Emily and everything she went out of her way to teach me, all the time we spent telling stories and laughing, her sincere words of encouragement, and the chocolates she'd sneak over throughout the day. Opal Apple season without Emily will be bittersweet, but it will forever be a reminder that I was blessed to know Emily and witness her boundless love, positivity, and courage.

Jill Costa

Emily's passion for food was contagious, and her passion for life even more so. She truly LOVED food — cooking, learning and writing about it. Every day she came in to work sharing her knowledge, and I can say we all learned something new. Beyond her recipes and her foodie facts, I will always remember Emily Balducci and her determination for life. She was a fighter! The last few years we saw her come into the office, despite her pain and discomfort, always giving her best. Emily will leave a lasting legacy — her publications, recipes and heartfelt memories will be cherished by our Baldor Family.

Dianne Marques



Emily Grace Balducci-Cardone

December 11, 1955 - August 25, 2021

Saint Peter of Alcantara Roman Catholic Church

Port Washington, New York

Monday, August 30, 2021

Officiant: Father Anthony Rucando

Entrance Song	Pachelbel's Canon
First Reading	Wisdom 3: 1-9 <i>Chelsea Pratt, Emily's Goddaughter</i>
Responsorial Psalm	23: 1-3, 4, 5, 6a
Second Reading	John 14: 1-6 <i>Mary Grace Brennan, Emily's Goddaughter</i>
Gospel	John 6:37-40
Prayers of the Faithful	Form 1
Presentation of Basket of Flowers to the Mother Mary	"Hosea" (Come Back to Me) <i>Kai, Sofia, Valentina, Luke, EJ and Siena Emily's Nieces and Nephews</i>
Communion Hymns	"The Summons" "Ave Maria"
Words of Remembrance	<i>Anthony Cardone, Emily's Husband</i>
Incensing and Song of Farewell	"On Eagle's Wings"
Prayer of Commendation	
Procession to the Place of Committal	
Closing Hymn	"How Can I Keep From Singing" (My Life Flows on in Endless Song)

Emily Balducci-Cardone was born on December 11, 1955 in Queens, New York to Doctor Charles and Nilde Balducci. She was the second child after Mary, and was followed in short succession by Louis, Grace and Adriana. The siblings were first generation Americans to Italian immigrants who came to the United States for a better life and more opportunity. Emily's youngest brothers Charles and Marc Andrew completed the family when they were born.



Emily grew up surrounded by family and friends in the Queens neighborhoods of Bayside and Malba. She attended Saint Fidelis Grammar School, Mother Butler High School and Queens College. She discovered a talent for writing and a passion for cuisine that later manifested into a productive career.



At a young age Emily started working at Balducci's in Greenwich Village and advanced to writing beautiful and descriptive copy for the catalogue applying her colorful words and a deep knowledge of food. She remained with Balducci's until they closed in 1999. Afterwards, she brought her skills to Agata and Valentina in NYC working with her brother Louie, and in 2001 she started working for Baldor in the marketing department as a beloved part of the team. Emily was loved throughout all those years by so many of her colleagues.



In 1996, Emily met the love of her life, Anthony Cardone, and they married a year later. They shared a common Italian heritage, a love for food and an amazing combination of common interest and dissonance that served them very well in living an expansive, inclusive and adventurous life. They were just beautiful together. Always loving, always generous, and always genuine. They grew as a couple and supported each other over the course of their 24-year marriage and remained steadfast and unwavering in their love and best friendship for each other.



Emily gave birth to Amelia Marae Cardone on October 15, 1998 and it was love at first sight. Their beautiful daughter brought immense joy to her parents. Proudly raising Amelia through years of Blue's Clues, wonderful prestigious schools, and loving family and friends, this spring Emily attended Amelia's graduation from The College of William and Mary. In her final days, Emily lavished in knowing Amelia has become a confident, poised, and remarkable young woman who will have a fulfilling and rich life.



Together, Emily, Anthony and Amelia built a beautiful life at their home in Sands Point. Their family was completed with the addition of Coco and Skippy, their pampered puppies. They adored Emily fervently and the delicious foods she'd feed them. They were always right next to her, and she loved doting on them and taking them for long walks.



Throughout her life, Emily stayed in touch with those who were important to her, from childhood friends to new and dear friendships made while raising Amelia after they moved to Port Washington. She visited her mother's coffee clutch on Bleeker Street and kept up with the Baruzzo relatives in Genoa. Emily loved who she loved, and you knew it. She was a quiet storm of caring and genuine concern, and a great listener with insight she lovingly shared. She made you feel special whenever you were with her.



Emily enjoyed her brothers - Louie, Chuck and Marc and sisters - Mary, Grace, Adriana and Gina immensely. She was always present and welcoming as the family grew to include husbands, wives, and their children. Food was the center of the family life, bringing pleasure to everyone in the shopping and preparation, and in eating together with wonderful wines. Always a hint of burnt bread in the air bringing a smile to the family. And, there was always room for one more at the table!



Extended family was always very important to Emily. She had close and loving relationships with her nieces and nephews. A proud aunt to Richie, Adriana, Angie, Madeleine, Kailani, Valentina, Sofia, Luke, Siena, and great-nephew EJ, and a loving godmother, as well as aunt, to Marygrace and Chelsea.



She loved Anthony's family and first cousins like they were her own. She was always happy to see them and the love they shared. Emily loved her first cousins from her Zio Andy and Zia Nina, and Zia Grace and Uncle Joe. They shared many special times together as children and throughout their lives. Some she even babysat as a young girl creating a special bond.

Emily loved to entertain her family and friends. She loved to see and hear them enjoy her food and the happiness found in the conversation. She hosted many dinners, BBQs and holidays in their home with Anthony, and delighted her guests with the most delicious appetizers, world famous soups, salads, eggplant parmigiana and her Mom's homemade manicotti dishes that will live on. Emily always made everything wonderful and delicious, because it always mattered to her that the people she loved ate well. The joy she got from the pungency of a mushroom, the smell of a Sycamore honeydew or the perfect bite of crispy bread was contagious and electric.



Recently Emily said, "I've had a great life. My wonderful husband and remarkable daughter Amelia. My brothers, sisters and cousins, lifetime friendships, and new wonderful and loving friends who came into my life over the last 24 years. An enjoyable career writing about what I love, food. My Anthony who took me traveling to places in the world and created new experiences that I never dreamed possible and gave me my Amelia".

"Yes, I've had a great life".



“ I Love You All...”

With Gratitude

Please accept our deepest gratitude for your love, kindness, and generosity in joining us today to honor Emily, and for all the days of her life and our life as a family, that knowing you made Emily, Amelia and I know love, and to grow and become better people.

The last five years brought a challenge to our door. We are forever grateful to all those who rose to stand with us unconditionally, to make life seem normal and to open the doors that allowed us to fight and overcome. We forever will stand with you.

Love you,
Amelia and Anthony Cardone

BURIAL

Cardone Family Plot

Mount Saint Mary's Cemetery

172-00 Booth Memorial Avenue | Flushing, New York 11365

Balducci's Recipe

LINGUINE or PENNE with SPRING DANDELION & LEEKS

Domestic spring dandelion is in - the tender, wild variety that sprouts prickly and small in unpredictable spots throughout the country. It's appearance in this area is as much a harbinger of spring as the first frail crocus and forsythia blooms. This particular dandelion has a very strong, dark green flavor - bitter and earthy - but the leaves are soft and tender.

We've created a sauce that combines tiny cubed potatoes, julienne of leeks and pancetta with this lovely leaf. The finished pasta dish is a combination classic in the truest sense - a spring salute and simultaneous final winter farewell.

The potatoes and pancetta are heartier throwbacks for those sporadic frosty days while the pale leek strips and the delicate dandelion are botanical odes to spring.

Similarly, this dish can be enjoyed with a deep red chianti or a light and fruity Dolcetto d'Alba. It's the perfect dish to serve right now, during this season straddling moment.

- 3. tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 6 slices pancetta, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 leeks, julienned
- 2 bunch spring dandelion, approximately 1 pound, rinsed well and chopped coarsely
- 1 small boiling potato, diced
- 1/2 pound fresh linguine or dried penne pasta
- Salt to taste and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano (optional)

1. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium low heat for a minute and add diced pancetta. Cook 3-5 minutes until pancetta begins to crisp. Add garlic and leek strips and continue cooking another 5 minutes until leeks are totally limp and beginning to color around the edges.

2. In the meantime, bring large pot of salted water to a boil. If using fresh pasta, add potato cubes first and cook 3 minutes. Add dandelion and cook together another 3 minutes. Remove both with a slotted spoon and add to skillet with leeks. Sprinkle mixture with salt and pepper. When same pot of water returns to a boil, add fresh linguine. Cook 2-3 minutes until al dente, drain (reserving about 1/4 cup pasta water) and add to skillet. Gently combine ingredients, adding pasta water as necessary to lubricate sauce. Divide between 4 serving bowls. Pass the pepper grinder and fresh parmesan separately.

****If using dried pasta, add to pot of boiling water first. Cook 5 minutes and add potatoes. Boil another 2 minutes and add dandelion. Cook together another 3-4 minutes, drain in colander (again saving some water) and add to skillet with pancetta and leeks. Stir gently to combine, adding a little water if needed. Divide into separate serving bowls, again passing pepper and parmesan.**

Serves 2-3

Pasta e Piselli

Fresh English peas are coming in so lovely right now – the pods are bulging and their contents are easy to disgorge. The peas inside have a very “green” flavor and are the quintessential Spring treat.

Fresh peas are a natural match for orecchiette pasta – the “little ears” are scooped just enough to nestle one pea. In Southern Italy they are also combined with cavatelli – the tightly clenched pasta shells.

This recipe uses prosciutto and mushrooms for additional flavor, but you can omit them and still have a very tasty dish.

If you prefer rice over pasta as your starch of choice, you can spoon this pea melange over steamed Basmati rice. It would make a wonderful side for grilled or roast fish.

- 2 pounds fresh pea pods
 - ¼ cup Sicilian extra virgin olive oil + more for drizzling
 - 1 large sweet onion, cut in half crosswise and thinly sliced
 - 4 oz. prosciutto (in one chunk) diced
 - ½ lb. small white or cremini mushrooms, sliced
 - ¼ cup chicken stock (use A&V's fresh stock in our reach-in fridge)
 - ½ lb. A&V's orecchiette or cavatelli pasta
 - salt & fresh ground black pepper to taste
 - 2 tbs. fresh chopped Italian parsley
1. Shell peas and put into a small pot. Add water only to cover and a dash of salt (which helps to keep them green). Parboil for 3-5 minutes and set whole pot aside.
 2. In the meantime, heat olive oil in a skillet over medium/low heat. Add onions, prosciutto and mushrooms and saute slowly until onions begin to wilt and become transparent, about 10 minutes.
 3. Add peas with their water and cook 10 minutes more. If mixture seems a little too dry add chicken stock.
 4. Boil pasta in plenty of salted water until al dente. Drain and add to skillet with vegetables and peas. Turn heat to low and let simmer another minute so pasta can absorb the flavor of the peas.
 5. Serve with pepper and parsley sprinkled on top. Drizzle with more olive oil if desired.

Serves 4

Fried Cardoons in Beer Batter

Cardoons are a domestic variety of the wild thistle in the artichoke family. Dirt is mounded around the base as the plant grows to facilitate the blanching that turns it silvery green. This is one vegetable that tastes the exact opposite of the way it looks. Scaly, rough and fibrous when raw, Cardoon chunks melt into dense, meaty pieces with an artichoke-like flavor.

Europeans also cook cardoons into casseroles, au gratin or soups, but we like them deep fried to serve as an appetizer with drinks, or as a side dish. They turn out warm and crispy outside, creamy-soft inside.

1 bunch cardoon, with about 5-8 stalks

To Prep Cardoon:

Separate stalks from the bunch, selecting the innermost, whitest ones. Cut off rough bottom and tops and slice sideways down the outside length of each to remove all the jagged, bitter-tasting leaves. Start peeling each stalk with a sharp knife to remove all stringy stands, just as you would with celery. (You can also slice off any small patches that look extra thick or discolored). Be sure to peel away as much of the fibers as possible. Cut each stalk crosswise into 1-2 inch chunks. Purist would drop the pieces into acidulated water to prevent browning, but we find it unnecessary if the cardoon is fresh. Boil the pieces in a large pot of salted water for about 20 minutes until they are soft and pliable (stick a fork through to test). Drain the pieces on several changes of paper toweling to dry as much as possible.

Prepare Beer Batter:

¾ cup unbleached white flour

¼ tsp kosher salt

1/8 tsp black pepper

2 eggs, room temperature

¾ cup Belgian beer (or any beer), at room temperature.

1 tbs vegetable oil

Put flour in a bowl, add salt and black pepper, and mix well.

In a separate bowl, whisk 2 room temperature eggs. Add ¾ cup Belgian beer (better if opened for a while and at room temp) and oil. Whisk to combine and pour into flour mixture, mixing well with a large fork until batter is somewhat smooth.

To Fry:

Heat cooking oil to 375 in a deep fryer or deep pot. Dip cardoon chunks in beer batter, letting excess drip off. Drop gently into oil and cook until light gold, about a minute. Don't overcrowd fryer. Lift pieces out with slotted spoon and drain on paper toweling. Sprinkle with good quality sea salt and eat immediately.

Alternatively, if you need to fry ahead of time, you can reheat cooked pieces on a hot baking pan and heat in 500 degree oven for about 5 minutes to crisp up. Keep sea salt grinder handy. The nutty sweet flavor of fried cardoons jumps to life under a fresh sprinkle of sea salt.

PIZZOCCHERI

Serves 8

2 pounds cabbage, spinach, or Swiss chard,
chopped

½ pound potatoes, cut into small cubes

1 pound pizzoccheri pasta

Salt to taste

½ cup (1 stick) butter

2 leaves fresh sage, minced, or ½ teaspoon
dried sage

3 cloves garlic, chopped

1 large red onion, chopped

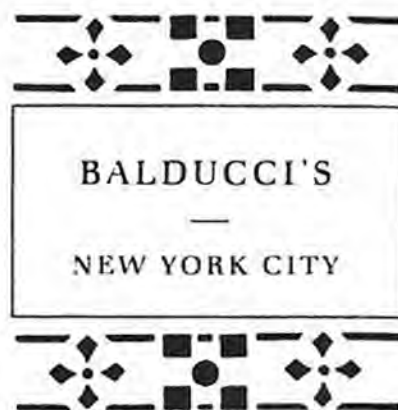
⅓ pound Taleggio cheese, cubed

¼ pound Parmesan cheese, grated

Put the chopped cabbage, spinach, or Swiss chard with the potatoes into a large pot of boiling water. Boil it for 5 minutes and add the pasta. Salt the water to taste and continue cooking for 12 to 15 minutes.

In a separate pan, melt the butter with the sage, garlic, and onion. With a skimmer, transfer one third of the pizzoccheri mixture to a large bowl. Toss it with one third of the cheese and the butter mixture. Repeat until all ingredients have been mixed. Serve hot.

NOTE: Any kind of fettuccine may be substituted for the buckwheat pizzoccheri.



The Balducci family has been serving New Yorkers with fine foods from around the world for more than forty years. By now their Greenwich Village market is an epicurean landmark in New York City, selling fine produce, meats, baked goods, and all manner of carry-out dishes.

Emily Lasagna Bolognese

For Sauce:

1 lb chopped beef, veal and pork
Chopped onions, carrots and celery
Imported tomato paste
Cup of White wine
Bay leaves
Cup of milk
S & p to taste
Chopped parsley at the end

For Bechamel:

Adriana's recipe doubled

For assembly:

3 boxes Barilla no boil lasagna noodles or A&V fresh spinach noodles (preferred)
1 fresh mozzarella, shredded
1 cup blended grated Parmigiano & Incastrato cheeses

Emily's Farro Soup

Cook 1 cup faro separately according to package directions and set aside (ancient Roman wheat, available in better grocery stores – North Shore Farms & Grace's both carry it)

Have homemade vegetable stock on hand (or use store bought – Kitchen Basics is pretty good brand)

Saute chopped onion, carrots and celery in little olive oil. Add sliced cremini mushrooms and chopped dried porcini mushrooms (which have been soaked in hot water about 15 minutes. Remove mushrooms, slice and add to pot while reserving the liquid – strain first as there might be a little dirt at the bottom).

After about 10 minutes of sautéing all of the above ingredients add combination of vegetable stock and water (about 8-10 cups in all). Add cut up spinach, string beans, 1 cup frozen peas and shelled cranberry beans if you have. (you can add all or some of the above veggies). Can also add 2 cracked dried bay leaves if you have – remember to remove before serving soup.

Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium and cook about ½ hour. At this point add a few halved pear or cherry tomatoes and chopped basil and/or parsley. Add pre cooked faro.

Simmer about 10 minutes more – can remove lid at a certain point to thicken if you like your soup a little thicker.

Divide into serving bowls and sprinkle with freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, freshly ground black pepper and a little extra virgin olive oil right before eating.

Emily's Famous Banana Bread

Preheat oven to 350

Into a large bowl combine wet ingredients:

- 4 ripe, peeled bananas (I've used 4 ½ if bananas are on the small side)
- 2 tbs extra virgin olive oil (or 1 tbs ev oil + 1 tbs lighter avocado oil)
- 1 beaten egg, lg
- 2 tbs plain or vanilla yogurt (any kind will do, I usually use Fage)

Blend all ingredients well with a potato or rice masher (no electric mixers used in this recipe)

Add dry ingredients into this mixture:

- 1 cup King Arthurs Whole Wheat Flour
- ½ cup Kings Arthurs White/Whole Wheat Flour

Start to gently stir these ingredients into wet ingredients with a fork at this point (still no mixer used). Should be dry and stick-ish. When it's a little mixed together add:

1-2 tbs toasted ground walnuts (smashed all the way if you don't like chunks of walnut pieces like me)

- 2 tbs black Chia seeds
- 2 tbs Bob's Red Mill ground flax seeds
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp Kosher salt

Stir in 1/3-1/2 cup mixed Callebaut chocolate chips (I use half dark chocolate chips and half semi sweet Callebaut chips, ordered from Amazon) or any really good quality chocolate brand (not Hersheys).

(I actually blend in ¾ of the total amount of chips I'm using into the mixture and save the rest for dotting the loaf on top once it's in the pan.)

Line a loaf pan with parchment paper. Push mixture into pan - first with a fork, then scrape the bowl with a rubber spatula, making sure you get all the mixture out. Even the top only slightly as you want a bumpy looking surface after it's cooked. Add remaining chocolate chips (if you saved any) wherever you see gaps (a bite of chocolate in every bite of banana bread is important).

Bake for 45 -50 minutes in convection oven, probably 55-60 min in a conventional oven.

Remove from pan and let cool. (I prefer slices cold so I always keep bread wrapped first in plastic wrap, then foil and store in fridge)

Nina's Chicken Soup

For Broth:

- 1 3-4 lb. roasting chicken
- 10 cups cold water or to cover
- 1 large carrot, cleaned and left whole
- 2 celery stalks with leaves, cleaned and cut into 1 inch chunks
- 1 medium - large onion, quartered or halved and stuck with 3-4 cloves
- 1 leek, washed very well to remove all sand and roughly chopped
- 1 small turnip or 1/2 large one, (cleaned but not peeled)
- 1 parsnip, (cleaned but not peeled) and quartered
- 1 large, ripe tomato, seeds squeezed out and roughly chopped
- 3 large garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 Idaho potato, peeled and halved
- 8-10 stems Italian parsley with leaves, roughly chopped
- 12 black peppercorns
- 1 teaspoon salt or to taste

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1. Place chicken in large stock pot or dutch oven. Cover with cold water and bring to a boil over high heat. Skim off and discard whatever scum rises to the surface then add all vegetables except potato (carrots through parsley). Reduce heat to medium/low, just so that soup barely simmers, and cook for 40 minutes. Add potato, peppercorns and salt and continue cooking (over same heat) 20 minutes more. Remove chicken and set aside to cool. Continue cooking broth for 30 minutes more.
2. When chicken is cool enough to handle, remove skin and pull off breast meat. Shred meat by hand and reserve (separate dark meat and set aside on a platter to be served as a separate course with a bracing horseradish mustard, if desired). Strain soup into a large stove-top casserole and discard all vegetables except potato and carrot. Cube potato and slice carrot into coins and add to casserole with broth. Add reserved shredded white meat and cover casserole to keep warm. Leave on top of stove while preparing Stracciatella.

For Stracciatella:

- 4 cups water
- salt to taste
- 1 cup orzo
- 1 pound spinach, cleaned, chopped and parboiled separately
- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup Romano cheese + 2 tablespoons more for garnishing servings
- 2 tablespoons fresh Italian parsley, chopped
- freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 teaspoons cold water

1. Bring water to a boil over high heat and add salt. Add orzo, reduce heat to medium and boil until orzo is al dente, about 5 minutes (if there is excess water in pot, tip and pour water out; don't drain into colander). Add cooked orzo to soup along with parboiled spinach. Bring soup up to a gentle boil over medium/low heat.
2. In the meantime, combine eggs with 1/2 cup cheese, parsley, pepper and cold water in a bowl. Beat with a fork until ingredients are incorporated. Slowly drizzle egg mixture into gently boiling soup in a very thin stream, stirring slowly all the while. When eggs start coagulating remove casserole immediately from the heat and divide contents into serving bowls. Pass remaining Romano cheese and peppermill around.

Yields 6-8 generous servings

P.S. Nina asked if somewhere in your copy you could say that she is a grandmother. She's very proud of it!



Antipasti

Corn Fritters - small fried patties of corn kernels, flour, eggs, milk and grated Parmigiano cheese **6 for \$6.00**

Mini-Arancini - tiny fried Italian rice balls made with grated mozzarella, Parmigiano, eggs, prosciutto, parsley and butter (approx 16 per pound) **\$7.50 lb.**

Jumbo Shrimp Oreganata - sprinkled with our own herbed breadcrumb mixture, drizzled with white wine and baked (approx 12-15 per pound) **\$24.00 lb.**

Calzone Barese - our own savory olive pie made with oil-cured black olives, scallions, anchovies and golden raisins pressed between a flaky "pasta frolla" crust (whole pie only; feeds 8-10) **\$14.00 ea.**

Minestre (Soups)

Wild Mushroom and Barley - pearl barley, mixed wild mushrooms, sherry wine and shallots **\$4.50 pint**

Lobster Bisque - lobster and crayfish meat, leeks, scallions, roasted peppers, clam juice, brandy, sherry and cream **\$6.50 pint**

Pane (Breads)

Cornbread - slightly sweet, small rectangular loaf made with white flour, cornmeal, sugar, whole eggs, margarine, vanilla extract (approx. 6-8 slices) **\$3.00 each**

Breakaway 8 - raisin-walnut/pumpkin loaf baked into a daisy shape that breaks off into 8 individual rolls **\$5.50 ea.**

Assorted Dinner Rolls - crisp, white bread dinner rolls **\$4.80 dozen**

Pane di Casa - rustic, thick crusted Italian peasant bread with light and airy dough **\$3.00 ea.**

Entree

Bell & Evans All-Natural Roast

Turkey

8-10 lbs. (feeds 4-6) **\$40.00 ea.**
12-14 lbs. (feeds 6-8) **\$55.00 ea.**
16-18 lbs. (feeds 10-12) **\$70.00 ea.**
20-22 lbs. (feeds 14-16) **\$85.00 ea.**
24-26 lbs. (feeds 16-18) **\$95.00 ea.**
28-30 lbs. (feeds 20-22) **\$100.00 ea.**

Balducci's Roasted Free Range, Organic Turkey

8-10 lbs. (feeds 4-6) **\$48.00 ea.**
12-14 lbs (feeds 6-8) **\$66.00 ea.**
16-18 lbs. (feeds 10-12) **\$84.00 ea.**
20-22 lbs. (feeds 14-16) **\$102.00 ea.**
24-26 lbs. (feeds 16-18) **\$118.00 ea.**
28-30 lbs. (feeds 20-22) **\$130.00 ea.**

Turkey Breast with Orange Sauce - Bell & Evans turkey breast marinated overnight in orange juice and seasonings and oven-roasted (2 pound minimum) **\$12.00 lb.**

Raw Turkeys

Wild Turkeys **\$4.99 lb.**

Bell & Evans Turkeys **\$1.79 lb**

Organic, Free Range Turkeys **\$2.79 lb.**



Dressings

Giblet Gravy - made with turkey giblets, stock made from browned veal and beef bones, carrots, onions and celery **\$6.00 pint**

Wild Rice & Chestnut Stuffing - wild rice, scallions, chopped chestnuts, chicken broth, herb stuffing and seasoning **\$12.00 lb.**

Chestnut Stuffing - scallions, white wine, Chablis, chestnuts, chicken stock and herb **\$9.00 lb**

Sausage and Cornbread Stuffing - sweet pork sausage, celery, scallions, chicken broth, corn stuffing, Chablis wine and seasonings **\$9.00 lb.**

Cranberry Pecan Relish - a chunky, rich relish made with whole, fresh cranberries, roasted pecans, aged French brandy, orange peel and sugar **\$5.95 pint**



Contorni

Butternut Squash - chunks of squash sautéed in butter and sprinkled with parsley **\$8.00 lb.**

Green Beans with Pignoli - fresh garden beans sautéed with garlic and parsley in olive oil **\$9.50 lb.**

Potatoes al Forno - new potatoes cut in wedges and roasted with olive oil, garlic and rosemary **\$6.50 lb.**

Sweet Potato Praline - freshly mashed sweet potatoes, eggs, brown sugar, orange juice, spices, walnuts and butter **\$10.00 lb.**

Yams with Apples - sliced yams and sliced apples sprinkled with brown sugar and baked **\$8.50 lb.**

Broccoli di Rape - sautéed in olive oil with garlic and a pinch of crushed red pepper flakes **\$8.50 lb.**

Roasted Autumn Vegetables - fennel, baby carrots, parsnips, new potatoes, zucchini, peppers and red onions tossed with olive oil, rosemary and herbs and roasted until caramelized **\$11.00 lb.**

****No cooked foods will arrive warm.**



Dolci

Apple Pie - a flaky pastry dome filled with tender, caramelized apples; enjoy with a chunk of cheddar cheese or vanilla ice cream

\$9.95 (8" serves 6-8)

Pecan Pie - very rich and buttery, topped with whole caramelized pecans **\$12.95 (9" serves 6-8)**

Pumpkin Pie - made in our own kitchens; very smooth and custard-y; serve chilled with fresh whipped cream **\$9.95 (9" serves 6-8)**

Mince Pie - fresh apples and pears with lots of dried fruit, figs, raisins, dates, currants, apricots, spices, sherry and brandy; serve warm with hard sauce, lemon or orange curd or vanilla ice cream **\$15.00 (9" serves 6-8)**

Cranberry/Apple Walnut Pie - fresh cranberries and sliced apples in a butter crust **\$12.95 (9" serves 6-8)**

Recipe of the Month

Brisk, brilliant Sundays in fall spark the urge to cook a one pot meal that's rich, rib-sticking and sensuous. We can think of nothing better than classic Osso Buco. These hefty veal shanks become meltingly tender with 90 minutes of gentle braising; the pink meat falls away from the bone at the poke of a fork. Instead of resting them on the usual bed of risotto we simmered up a pot of French flageolets. These are one of our favorite, often-overlooked legumes; they have a buttery texture, sweet-tart flavor and an appealing mint-beige color.

This dish can be an elegant main course at a fancy dinner party or can be served family-style from the pot as a one-course meal.

For do-ahead convenience, each component can be made ahead and frozen separately.



FOR OSSO BUCO

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 5 celery stalks
- 4 carrots
- 1 large onion
- 2 bay leaves
- 3/4 tablespoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1/4 cup chopped Italian parsley
- 10 ripe, plum tomatoes, chopped
- 6 cup chicken stock
(preferably homemade)
- pinch of saffron threads (optional)
- 4 veal shanks
- flour for dusting
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil

Gremolata

2 lbs. chopped Italian parsley
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
2 cloves garlic, minced
Combine in a bowl

Heat olive oil in large, deep-sided skillet over high heat for 2 minutes. In the meantime, finely dice celery, carrots and onions in a food processor, or by hand. Add to skillet with bay leaf, salt and pepper. Cook about 6 minutes, stirring to prevent vegetables from sticking. Add white wine, cook 1 minute and then add parsley. Cook approximately 3 minutes more and add tomatoes, chicken stock and saffron, if desired. Let come to a boil, reduce heat to medium and let simmer while preparing veal shanks.

Heat vegetable oil over high heat in another wide skillet. Dust each shank with flour, shaking off excess. When oil is very hot place shanks in pan and sear until brown on all sides. Add shanks to pot with the sauce, making sure they are completely covered. Turn heat down to medium/low, cover pot and simmer for 80 to 90 minutes. Check occasionally to see that meat doesn't stick to the bottom and that shanks are covered with liquid. (Add more chicken stock if necessary). Meat should be fork tender and separate easily from the bone.

**The marrow inside the shank bone is a creamy delicacy to be savored after the meat. Because it's rather strong in flavor, it is best enjoyed with a pinch of gremolata - garlic, parsley and lemon peel mixed together. Stir a little into the marrow once you've scooped it from the bone. It cuts right through the gelatinous fat.



FOR BEANS

quick soak method:

Pick through beans, discarding any broken or discolored one. Put into deep pot and cover with cold water. Cover pot and bring water to a boil. Turn off heat and let beans sit one minute.

Drain beans and set aside.

Heat olive oil in same deep pot over high heat for 1 minute. Add onion and cook 1 minute, stirring. Add garlic and cook 3 minutes more, stirring frequently, until onions just begin to brown around the edges. Add reserved beans, 2 cups of chicken stock, all the water and bay leaves.

Cover pot and bring to a boil. Turn heat down to low, so beans are just simmering and cook for 1 hour. Remove cover and add last cup of stock if necessary. Cook approximately 20 minutes more, until liquid thickens and beans just break against the roof of your mouth.

- 1 pound dried flageolets
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 large Spanish onion, chopped
- 3 large cloves garlic
- 3 cups chicken stock
(preferably homemade; try Balducci's own, located in the sauce case by our fresh pasta display)
- 3 cups water
- 2 fresh bay leaves, cracked in half
(dried bay leaves can be substituted)



Wine recommendation:

An aged, complex red wine with full body, such as a dry Amarone della Valpolicella, is the choice to ennoble the succulent Osso Buco. The regal Amarone is made from partly dried grapes and long-aged to ensure an amply structured wine which is long on the palate.

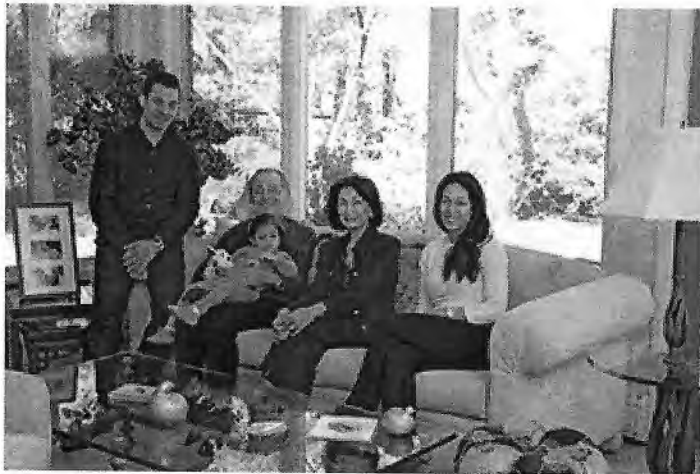
06/23/2016

Lifetime Achievement Award Winner: Andrew Balducci



ANDREW BALDUCCI

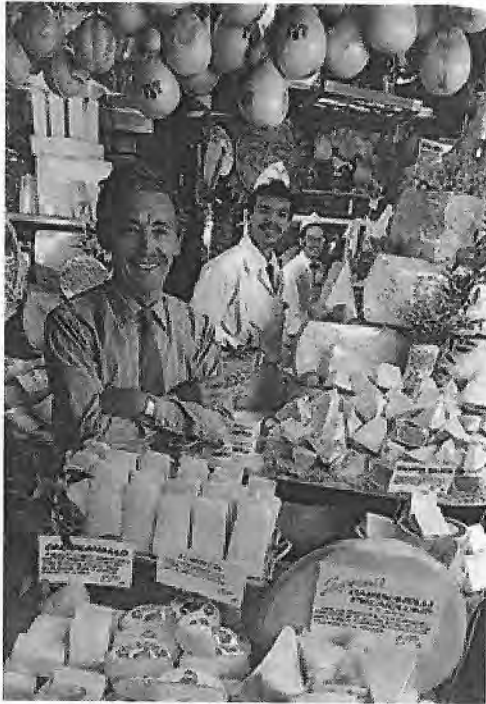
Andrew Balducci was born in 1925 in Corato, Italy. He came to America at the age of 14 and started working at his Uncle Frank's small produce store. During WWII, Andy enlisted in the US Navy, participating in the invasion of Normandy and earning a Purple Heart.



In 1946, Frank and Louis Balducci, Andy's father, purchased a fruit stand in the heart of Greenwich Village, and Balducci's was born. The store was open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and a family member was always present. It was a simple, rustic, open-air fruit stand with a bathtub in the back for washing produce. In 1972, they

were forced to leave the location they had occupied for 26 years. Andy negotiated a new spot on 9th Street and expanded the business to include specialty foods like salumi and charcuterie, fresh cheeses, cooked foods, breads, pastries and gourmet groceries.

The timing couldn't have been better. Andy was one of the first direct importers of Prosciutto di Parma, is credited with introducing Broccoli Rabe to California farmers, having mozzarella made fresh, and enlisting the services of artisan bread bakers. He continually expanded, adding Cheese, Pastry, Seafood and a Butcher shop.



In 1978, Nina Balducci launched the first mail order catalog. By 1984, that little pamphlet grew into the 70+ page, full color magazine featuring entrees like Stuffed Veal Roast and Chicken Scarpariello. Balducci's catalog became the window through which people throughout the country learned about the famous Greenwich Village store and about specialty foods in general.

Andrew Balducci was born in 1925 and raised in the small town of Corato, Italy, a suburb of the city of Bari, since 2 months of age. He came to America in 1939 at the age of 14 and started working for his Uncle Frank who owned a small produce store in Flushing, Queens. He stayed with his uncle 4 years learning the business firsthand. When WWII started Andy enlisted in the US Navy at age 18. His naval duties involved participating in the invasion of Normandy where he suffered injuries that earned him a Purple Heart, but also put him in the naval hospital for 6 months.

When he became well enough to leave it was already 1945 and the war had ended. Andy went back to help his uncle in the fruit stand doing whatever odd jobs were required. Around that time Uncle Frank found a fruit stand for sale in the heart of Greenwich Village in 1946 and recommended that his brother, Louis Balducci (Andy's father), purchase it. That is the year Balducci's of Greenwich Village was born.

It took a lot of TLC to make that 900 square foot plot, at the intersection of Christopher St. and Greenwich Avenue, profitable. The store was open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and a family member was always present. It was a simple, rustic, open-air fruit stand with a bathtub in the back for washing produce. In spite of its diminutive size, Balducci's of Greenwich Village became renowned for having the highest quality, consistently available produce year round and gained many devotees from the culinary world including cookbook author and teacher, James Beard.

Andy Balducci married Nina D'Amelio in 1952 and took a 15 year hiatus from the produce world. He went to work in his father-in-law's stone yard located in Great Neck, N.Y. During his tenure there, Andy's instincts for marketing and sales flourished. He was one of those people who, without a formal education, had an uncanny ability to know what the public wants and how to grow a business. His wife Nina says "It was a feeling he had in his fingertips and his bones. Andy had the ability of a bloodhound to sense new opportunity and knew how to manage people. It was a gift." Andy took his father-in-law's business to the next level. He enrolled in architecture, geology and blueprint rendering courses at Farmingdale College on Long Island. He started importing quality stone from Italy and installed a fabrication facility on the premises. It wasn't long before North Shore Masons grew to become the #1 stone yard on the east coast, landing contracts to provide marble and granite for several exhibitions at the 1964 World's Fair.

When he rejoined his father's business in 1968 Andy was no longer a young kid, "wet behind the ears", as Nina says. The business acumen he developed during his stone yard years served Balducci's particularly well when, in 1972, they were forced to leave the location they had occupied for 26 years because of a quadrupling in rent. Andy negotiated a new spot caddy corner across 6th Ave on 9th Street and expanded the business to include specialty foods like salumi and charcuterie, fresh cheeses, cooked foods, breads, pastries and gourmet groceries. He would tell reporters "It was time to sell some prosciutto with our melons".

The timing couldn't have been better. New Yorkers were traveling more, learning about new foods and ways of eating from Europe and around the world. There was a heightened curiosity about all things genuinely Italian and Andy was very happy to educate customers and make imported specialty foods readily available. He was one of the first direct importers of Prosciutto di Parma, is credited with

introducing Broccoli Rabe to the California farmers, having mozzarella made fresh in front of customers, and enlisting the services of many artisan bread bakers in Brooklyn and Queens. The new Balducci's was a hit right from the beginning but Andy knew it had to keep on growing to stay successful.

He brought in several category specialists over the years to advise and teach department heads and managers the minutiae of their particular field. Two years after the new store opened he saw an opportunity to take over a space next door on 9th Street that was being vacated by a Beauty Parlor. That is when the Cheese and Pastry Departments were expanded and a new walk-in refrigerator was built. Two years later, the Japanese import store on the other side was closing, giving way to Balducci's fresh Fish counter and a Butcher shop.

In 1978 Nina Balducci launched the first mail order catalog which was a small hand-sketched booklet featuring a few non-perishable items like vinegars and jams. They were packaged in the store and walked over to the post office around the corner. By 1984, that little pamphlet grew into the 70+ page, full color magazine featuring entrees like Stuffed Veal Roast and Chicken Scarpariello, gorgeous desserts, breads, fruit baskets and selections from every department in the store. By now there was a Balducci commissary in Long Island City churning out fresh pastas, bread products, vegetable antipasti and cooked dishes to sell at the store and through Mail Order. Balducci's catalog became the window through which people throughout the country learned about the famous Greenwich Village store and about specialty foods in general.

Nina and Andy sold Balducci's in 1999 to Sutton Place Foods, based in Washington D.C. By then they were both in their early 70's and spent most of their retirement years between the Bahamas and their home in Roslyn, Long Island.

Balducci's

GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK

Where the Stars Shopped

Even before Balducci's of Greenwich Village became a famous food store, it attracted celebrities from all walks of life looking for exceptional foods. Family members were always there servicing customers themselves, especially in the early days.

Here is a collection of star studded memories by a few of the Balducci's.

James Beard

James Beard was a devoted customer in the 40's, 50's, 60's and beyond. He was one of Balducci's first famous foodie customers and good friends with all the Balduccis and Dorias. He LOVED raspberries above all else and they used to go in the back to get him the biggest and the best whenever he came in.

Nina tells us that when Andy brought a fresh white truffle home for the first time in the early 1980's, she had no idea what to do with it. She called "Mr. B" on the phone for advice. This is the recipe he gave her that night and the one she still uses to this day:

Cook noodles in salted water – drain and save some of the cooking water. Melt unsalted butter in a separate pan, adding grated Parmigiano cheese and cracked black pepper. Add the cooked noodles to the butter, swirl around and plate in warmed dishes. Generously shave truffle on top.

Nina tells us she didn't know how to "shave" a fresh truffle then, and certainly didn't own a truffle shaver. She pushed it through her mouli cheese grater, pretty much massacring it.

Meryl Streep

Meryl Streep lived nearby and had a growing family in the 80's. She came in frequently, usually with no make-up on, looking very nondescript. She had just broken onto the scene with *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *Deer Hunter*. Emily remembers her coming in with her first born child in a Bjorn-like carrier, nuzzling the baby as she waited to be served at the pastry counter, looking - to the unobservant - like any other new Greenwich Village mom.

Perry Como

In 1983, the producers of the annual Perry Como Christmas Show were scouting in Manhattan for a location to shoot a show featuring an Italian family in the food business. Manganaros on 9th Ave was under consideration but Greenwich Village Congressman, Bill Passanante (a good friend of Andy and Perry Como), suggested the Balducci family. It was a perfect fit. The Christmas special started out with Michelle Lee and Perry Como shopping in Balducci's for the ingredients to make the traditional Seven Fishes Christmas Eve dinner

(actual filming had to be done overnight when the store was closed). The featured scene had them arriving at Andy and Nina's house on Long Island in a horse drawn sleigh to join the entire family for Christmas Eve dinner. Mamma Balducci said grace first and 22 people were seated around the table. Carolers in 19th century dress arrived singing traditional Italian Christmas songs in the middle of dinner. It was a classic Sunday night Christmas special-- very traditional with fireplaces crackling and all the classic songs sung by the stars.

Nina Balducci, however, remembers the scene a little differently. The film crew turned her house upside down. Andy says it was great exposure for Balducci's, but their house stayed trashed for weeks.

Andy Warhol & Jean Michel Basquiat

Louie Balducci (Andy's nephew and Pop's grandson) was closing up the store at the end of the day, right around the holidays. He had completed a wild Russian caviar buy that afternoon (thirty 4.4 lb tins!) and had just packed them away in the special caviar fridge. Cashiers were closing out their registers when Louie heard a knock-knock on the glass front doors. He peeked through and saw a familiar face – some guy with bleached white hair and round black glasses. He was accompanied by another guy wearing a hat that looked, in Louis' words, like a babalouch (Italian dialect for a snail basket). A group of about four or five garishly dressed characters huddled behind them. He unlocked the door and in they all filed. Andy Warhol and Jean Michele Basquiat wanted to buy caviar and, though the store was closed, who was Louie to turn the famous artists away? He led them over to the cheese counter where he'd arranged four tins of the newly purchased Caspian Beluga. As was the procedure for any formal tasting, he brought out plastic spoons and let the buyers taste from each of the four tins. All were numbered, indicating which sturgeon that particular roe came from.

Warhol's posse, in the meantime, was busy playing catch with oranges in the produce department. After Warhol and Basquiat made their decision, they asked "how much?" After a quick calculator consult, Louie came up with a price tag of \$4,800.

Warhol, without blinking, reached into his pocket, pulled out a thick wad of crisp \$100 bills and started peeling off forty-eight of them, just like that. Louie put the tin in a signature Balducci's caviar bag with an ice pack and the whole entourage pranced out into the Greenwich Village night.

Cher

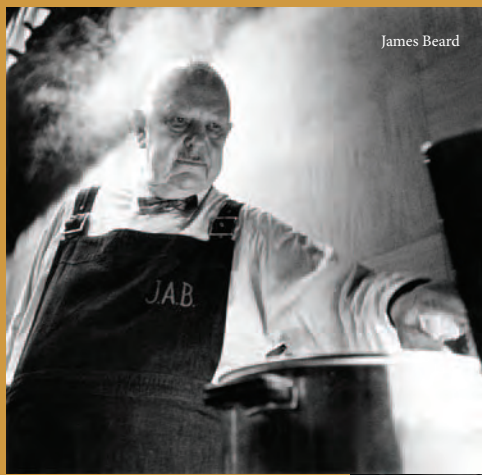
Cher owned a brownstone in Greenwich Village during the 80's and came in to shop a couple times a week. In her inimitable way, Cher made friends with everyone. She would come in bold and blazing, kidding with the Italian produce guys – always chatting, in particular, with Charlie Balducci. They actually became friendly. Around the time of "Moonstruck", a promotional video was being made featuring a typical day in the life of Cher. It included a scene of her shopping in Balducci's. Mario Spina, a curly haired produce guy in his 20's, was a part of the scene. When Cher kissed his cheek on camera, there was no calming young Romeo for weeks; he's been moonstruck ever since.

Charlie remembers one Cher incident in particular. Balducci's always kept Idaho potatoes piled in wicker baskets underneath the produce stands. Cher was bending way down rummaging through to pick out her potatoes one by one. Noticing that "everything was sticking out", as Charlie puts it, he offered to reach down and get them for her.

"Why?" she asked.



"I thought you wanted to see my tattoos."



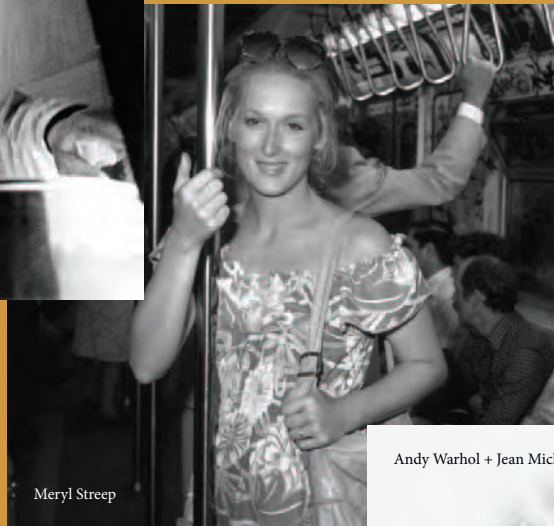
James Beard



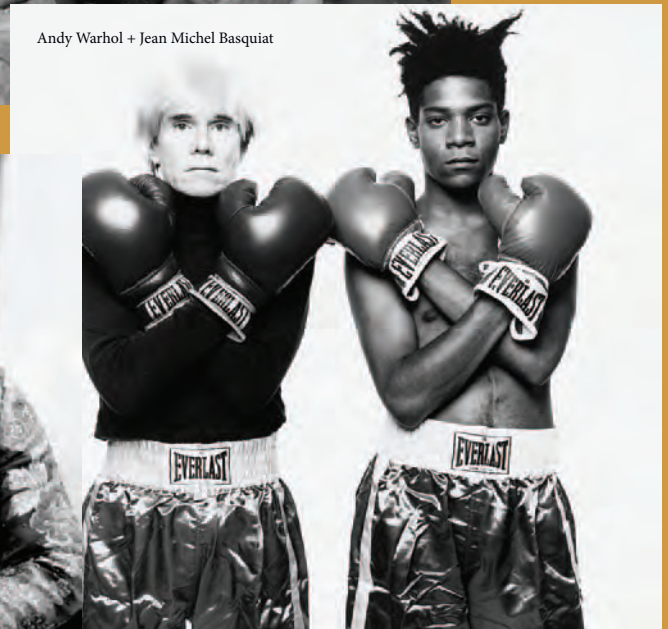
Perry Como

Liberace

Liberace surprised everyone the day he pulled up in a white limo and came bursting into the store like royalty, dressed in a white lamé pantsuit trailed by a long white cape. He chatted loudly to everyone, showing off his diamond ring shaped like a baby grand piano, then headed straight for the pastry department. After buying a boatload of sweets, he asked Andy Balducci and Joe Doria to give him a personal tour of the entire store.



Meryl Streep



Andy Warhol + Jean Michel Basquiat

Lauren Bacall

Lauren Bacall used to love to kid with Charlie Balducci, who was an irrepressible flirt in those days (and still is). Whenever she came in to shop, Charlie would meet her at the check-out to tell the cashiers not to charge for home delivery. One day, Andy was standing near the registers and heard Ms. Bacall say, "Charlie, are you a married man? I'm alone now you know." Andy was quick to quip, "After Humphrey Bogart, what could you possibly want with Charlie?" Ms. Bacall snapped back, "Whatever Humphrey had, he took with him when he left ..."



Liberace

Barbara Sinatra

During the mid-80's, Frank Sinatra kept an apartment in the Waldorf Towers and would send his wife Barbara, his bodyguard Jillie, and his cook Andrea to shop for dinner. Frank absolutely loved food but would never come in himself for fear of people crowding him. Barbara once asked Nina if Mamma would share her recipes for Eggplant Parmigiana and Meatballs – Frank's two favorite foods from Balducci's. Nina was only too happy to oblige.



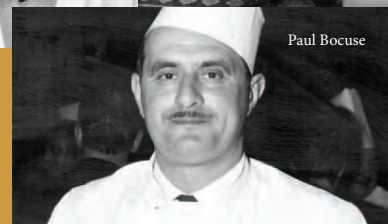
Barbara + Frank Sinatra



Lauren Bacall

Paul Bocuse

Paul Bocuse was invited to New York from Lyon, France to prepare a special meal for the Johnson & Johnson family who were hosting a member of some royalty. He came into Balducci's to buy everything for the meal and Andy had to find an interpreter – tout suite – to answer all Chef Bocuse's questions.



Paul Bocuse



Late Winter/Early Spring 2006

Il Nostro Giornale



ECCOLO!

Agata & Valentina Food Bar & Restaurant

The new Agata & Valentina Food Bar & Restaurant is finally a reality - now open everyday and offering full service during lunch and dinner and during our popular Sunday brunch. Semi-self-service is in place for breakfast Monday through Saturday.

The handsome neo-classical structure, on the Northwest corner of 79th & 1st, was originally constructed by Manufacturers Hanover Trust in 1915. It is now reborn as a casual, family-friendly restaurant that opens early and closes late. The decor is

modern Italian - elegant but comfortable - and the food is distinctly Mediterranean with a strong Sicilian accent. Customers may sit in the back or on the mezzanine for a relatively serene dining experience or, for a more convivial atmosphere, can choose a seat near or at the sinuous, 22-foot walnut bar. The ambience by day is relaxed and the clientele, eclectic. Food lovers of all ages commune over the simplicity of freshly prepared Mediterranean dishes in generous portions. Evenings bring on a lively wine-bar crowd, the glow of candlelight and more elaborate entrees and desserts.





Both day and night, the A & V Food Line prevails as the restaurant's central nervous system, a winding open kitchen where food is fired up and sample dishes are assembled, then displayed for the customer's perusal. One can't avoid passing this hub of culinary activity while he or she is being seated. The menu comes alive in this moment, with wonderful aromas emanating from beautifully prepared plates of food. Rather than relying solely on a menu to navigate your choices, you engage more of your senses in the selection process.

A & V Food Bar & Restaurant opens everyday at 8:00 AM for breakfast, which is semi-self-serve. Here you can enjoy a beautiful bowl of fresh fruit with yogurt or mascarpone and a topping of our homemade granola. Customers order hot dishes such as pancakes, eggs and sausages and, after paying at the registers, seat themselves with their tray.

Alternately, you can stop by our cappuccino bar and order, among other things, a ciambella, biscotto, or fennel poundcake to enjoy with your fresh-brewed coffee. All of our muffins, cakes, croissant and pastries are baked in-house during the early morning hours. Coffee can be ordered from the Cappuccino Bar just like it was in the store. You can either be seated or enjoy a quick coffee and pastry at the bar. Breakfast ends at 11:00 AM, while our kitchen prepares for lunch.

Waiter service is introduced at lunchtime. The Food Line is in full operation by then with pizza, grilled panini and pasta stations all in high gear. The wall-sized rotisserie is turning chickens, ducks and Cornish hens a lovely mahogany and heaping salad plates are being assembled from bowls of crisp fresh greens and assorted condiments. Our *pizzaiolo* is crafting crisp-crust,

fragrant pizzas by this time. In addition to fresh tomato sauce and house-made mozzarella, various toppings include Parma prosciutto, baby arugula, goat cheese, truffle oil and similar specialty ingredients. Once seated you receive a menu which details additional dishes not displayed on the Food Line. Fresh-pressed panini made with artisanal bread, hearty soups and satisfying pastas are lunchtime highlights. Bar seating is also available for customers.

Lunch hour ends at 3:30 PM every day when our kitchen closes to prepare for the transition to dinner. Both the Cappuccino Bar and Gelato stations remain open for business during this interim. The entire restaurant reopens at 5:00 PM for dinner, with a more sensuous look and feel. Lighting is more subdued and golden, the music is softer and more elegantly plated entrees queue up at the Food Line. Reservations are accepted for dinner.

You can savor the true taste of Sicily in dishes such as Involtini alla Norma, Risotto al Prosecco, Brasato of Short Ribs or Spaghetti alla Bottarga along with many other Mediterranean classics. Antipasti offerings cover the spectrum from Insalata di Mare (seafood salad - made with truly fresh seafood - on toasted country bread) to Insalata Rustichella (mixed fresh bean salad with mint, crispy shallots and fig vinaigrette). The menu is full of fresh vegetable antipasti - grilled, roasted, marinated and stewed - and smoked fish, cured meat and cheese tasting plates with inspired garnishes such as dried cape gooseberries, raisins-on-the-vine and San Marzano-variety sundried tomatoes.

Soups are always seasonal and include both the classic and some not-so-familiar selections. Butternut Squash Soup is tweaked with Calvados and our Minestrone is the true Genovese version with lots of pesto, green beans and zucchini. *Macco* is a signature Sicilian Fava Bean Soup enriched with Parmigiano Cream and *Tortellini in Brodo* has cheese-filled tortellini afloat in a rich veal & chicken broth studded with shreds of braised veal.

Salads also become more substantial in winter with offerings like Insalata di Finocchio ed Aranci (fennel, red onions, black olives and citrus vinaigrette) and Insalata Mista (mixed baby greens, grape tomatoes, red



onions with shaved Parmigiano and Balsamic vinaigrette). Our curvaceous Cappuccino Bar transforms into a wine bar at night. You can linger over a drink or enjoy your entire meal there. We offer an excellent selection of predominately Southern Italian wines, many of which are offered by the glass.



The dessert selections at the A & V Food Bar & Restaurant, available during lunch and dinner, are the inspirations of our Sicilian trained chef, Eileen Guastella. Eileen is a long-time resident of this neighborhood and trained for a time in Sicily under the auspices of chef Corrado Assenza from the renowned Caffè Sicilia in the city of Noto. Some of Eileen's masterpieces include:

Trio of Panne Cotte – 3 rounds of Italian custard – vanilla, chocolate and pistachio – flavored with quince and golden raisins poached in red wine and spices.



Gelatina – a delightful, refreshing, no-fat dessert made with a white wine gelatin layered with fresh fruit.



Chocolate Hazelnut Cake – chock full of chopped hazelnuts and served with ricotta cream, orange supremes and orange sauce



Homemade Gelati and Sorbetti – Agata herself pronounced these house-made gelati and sorbetti the "real thing" – as close to the Sicilian version as you can get.

Gelato Flavors include:

coffee, vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, *Gianduja* (chocolate/hazelnut) and *Nocciola* (hazelnut)

Sorbet flavors include:

Lampone (raspberry) and *Limone* (lemon)



Homemade Biscotti – sink your teeth into these ultra-satisfying twice-baked cookies, richly studded with dried fruit and chopped nuts. They are

dense and crunchy, devoid of the floury, bread-y quality that makes commercial biscotti boring. **Flavors include:** *Dried Cranberry with almonds; Chocolate/Hazelnut; Dried Apricot/Pistachio.* The newest variety, *Polenta Anise*, is light and chewy with just a hint of licorice in a soft, yet grainy crust.



Eileen's Manhattan pedigree and her subsequent training in Noto combine to produce desserts that are classically inspired yet sparkle with contemporary creativity and wit.

All of the dishes, including desserts, are available for take-out.

Call your order in (212- 452-0691) and come to pick it up at the Cappuccino Bar.

Agata & Valentina Food Bar & Restaurant is also available for private tastings and parties for groups up to 30. Our second floor mezzanine area sits above the main restaurant and, though quieter, is still aglow from the buzz below.

Call 212-452-0691 for reservations and information.

Cappuccino Bar Stars

Our pastry chef, Eileen, also designed these lovely Sicilian cookies and cakes, perfect for nibbling with morning coffee. Their uneven shapes and toasty finish tell you that they are hand-made in small batches. Their tender, melting texture tells you they are made with the finest, freshest ingredients. Enjoy them anytime of day!

Cookies

Baci di Giulietta – chocolate almond cookie with a chocolate cream filling.



Pistachio Jam – butter cookie with chopped pistachios in the dough and a center of apricot or raspberry jam.



Paste Nuove – dices of candied citron and semi-sweet chocolate are nestled inside an almond paste/ground almond casing. A tiny almond paste moon and star garnish the top of each. These cookies are traditional convent sweets created by Sicilian nuns.



Cakes

Fennel Poundcake – made with almond flour and toasted fennel seeds, this is lighter and fluffier than traditional poundcake



Lemon Polenta Poundcake – dense and buttery, this cake has polenta mixed into the dough which gives it an interestingly chewy texture. A lemon/honey glaze is applied to the top, helping to keep the cake extra moist

Apple Walnut Poundcake – this chunky cake is almost *all* apples and walnuts with a just a little batter holding it together.



Hazelnut Poundcake – traditional buttery poundcake filled with *lots* of chopped hazelnuts.

Orange/Olive Oil Cake – moist and light made with the zest and juice of fresh oranges and olive oil; dusted with confectionary sugar.

Chocolate Espresso – moist chocolate cake flavored with espresso.



Store Windfall

The transfer of our Cappuccino Bar to our restaurant across the street has meant many gains for the store. Our produce department has grown by a third and now has a huge, dedicated Organics section. Look for regular offerings such



as organic broccoli (much tastier than conventional broccoli), garnet yams (intensely flavored, lush and creamy), bunch spinach (no pesticides whatsoever!), golden beets (so rich-tasting, they are a meal in themselves - and don't forget to saute those yummy beet tops), purple bunch carrots (full of beta carotene), Lacinto Kale (time to get into this beefy, crinkly, nutrition-packed green), red & green dandelion, fingerlings, mesclun and much more.

Abutting "Organic Produce" is our much-expanded Bread Department which, along with coffee, has taken over the front of the store. Our window displays now feature stacks of crusty fresh-baked bread, delivered every morning. The tri-state area has access to some of the best breads in the country due to the profusion of wonderful Mom & Pop bakeries still operating out of Brooklyn, Queens, Jersey, the Bronx and Manhattan. In addition to these tried-and-true ethnic bakers, there is the wave of young native New Yorkers (Amy's Bread, Sullivan Street, Tribeca Ovens, Pan d'Avignon for example) making authentic, European-style, old world bread. These younger artisanal bakers have spent time in Italy and France apprenticing with master bakers and the result is a stunning array of crusty, gnarly, delectable bread you can construct a meal around.



Some of our own house-baked bread products are also being featured in this new section. Look for A & V Focaccia Toasts, made from our sheet pan focaccia, and our herbed Sardinian flat bread. Both are wonderful with cheese and cured meat plates, with salads and for snacking.

Our coffee department has also been upgraded with new display bins to showcase our excellent selection of fine roasts. We will also have bigger displays of Torrisi Sicilian espresso roast, an Agata & Valentina exclusive.

Another boon for customers is our new "Promozione Alley". A discount counter is now tucked into the old coffee department featuring floor-to-ceiling stacks of reduced grocery products. Look for great prices on bottled water, pasta, olive oil and other imported items.





Fabulous Fregola



Chances are you are unfamiliar with Fregola, the signature pasta of the island of Sardegna. These are pasta beads made by hand-rolling a mixture of durum semolina wheat and water in between the fingers until the dough comes together into little pebbly beads. The beads are first dried in the sun, then oven-baked. Authentic fregola is still made today the

way it was centuries ago – entirely by hand. If you have ever tried machine-made fregola, you will know the difference instantly. Hand-rolled fregola has a toothsomeness that is unique. The two-step drying process (first in the sun, then in the oven) results in dense, hard pasta "pellets" that remain al dente regardless of how they are cooked. This means that you can add them to a pot of soup that might sit for hours, to a pasta casserole that will sit in the oven or use them for pasta dishes that must undergo reheating. Handmade fregola also has a distinct nutty, "oat-y" flavor that is delicious with shellfish, vegetables, salads and legumes. Another distinction is that each fregola bead is uniquely shaped. Some are bumpy, some are smooth, none are perfectly round - the result of being individually hand-rolled.

We have experimented extensively over the years and now offer you one of our favorite recipes. While this preparation is tailored for cold-weather dining, fregola is also wonderful served at room temperature in warm weather. It can be the base of a pasta salad with roasted vegetable and dices of San Marzano-variety sundried tomatoes. It can also be added to leafy salads for heft, much like cooked wheat berries.

We carry Fregola *media*, which is the pellet sized variety, perfect for pasta preparations. The smaller piccolo variety (millet-sized) is usually cooked into soups.

Baked Fregola Casserole with Sausages & Mozzarella

- 1 15 oz. can San Marzano tomatoes
- 1 tbs. extra virgin olive oil
- 8 oz. sweet Italian sausage
- 1 tsp. chopped garlic
- 1 tsp. dried oregano (preferably the Sicilian dried oregano blossoms we sell at our meat counter)
- Pinch crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 lb. Fregola *media*
- 4 oz. fresh mozzarella, diced
- 2 tbs. grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- 1 tbs. fresh breadcrumbs
- Chopped fresh Italian parsley to taste

1. Strain liquid from canned tomatoes and reserve. Pass half the tomatoes through a food mill to remove seeds; cut the remaining tomatoes in half and squeeze gently to remove seeds. Chop coarsely and reserve.
2. Heat olive oil in large saute pan over medium heat.
3. Remove sausage from the casing and using a fork, crumble into the saute pan. Cook until meat turns opaque, but doesn't quite brown.
4. Add garlic and reserved chopped tomatoes and toss.
5. Add the reserved tomato liquid and tomato puree. Add the oregano and red pepper, bring to a boil and simmer until sauce starts to thicken.
6. Meanwhile, bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the Fregola until *al dente* (about 15 minutes - fregola takes a long time to cook), strain, and add to skillet.
7. Take pan off the heat, add mozzarella cubes and half the Parmigiano cheese to the pan and toss with the pasta.
8. Spoon the mixture into a medium-sized terracotta dish (or other baking dish) and sprinkle with breadcrumbs, parsley and remaining Parmigiano cheese.
9. Bake in the oven for approximately 15 minutes or until golden brown on top.

recipe by chef Alan Tardi

Serves 6-8





Kenny's Spicy Shrimp Salad

Our Seafood Department displays the most delicious Spicy Shrimp Salad every morning. They make it behind the counter using fresh shrimp boiled until just tender, flavored with Masago - the spicy Japanese caviar, a little mayo, chile oil and a Japanese seasoning blend. It is a most unusual, zesty and exotic seafood salad that can be presented in countless ways.

You can make a great appetizer with these shrimp by spreading a little ripe avocado on a toasted baguette slice, placing 1 shrimp on top and topping with a single cilantro leaf. It is simple, unusual and wonderful with champagne.



We enjoy this salad at lunch by spooning some into a cup of Boston lettuce leaves or onto a bed of mesclun first sprinkled with grapeseed oil and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice. You can also create a yummy dinner entree by rolling 5 or 6 shrimp into a warm, low-carb, Flaxseed wrap (available in our Bread Dept) with cooked brown rice and sauteed greens. The flavors and textures marry beautifully, with a little spiciness (from shrimp), nuttiness (from rice & wrap) and moist tender greens melding every bite.

Be sure to try Kenny's Spicy Shrimp Salad for a quick-fix starter, a light lunch, or a satisfying sandwich or dinner wrap.



Berkshire Pork

From Heritage Breed Pigs – Pork the Way It Used to Be

Anyone who loves the rich flavor of pork laments the day pork turned in to "the other white meat". Around the late 80's we saw the luscious marbling that once made pork so delectable completely disappear. Breeders began raising pigs to be 30% leaner at slaughter to satisfy consumer demand



for a chicken alternative. The marketing and breeding campaigns were so successful that pork selling in markets from coast to coast actually looked and tasted like chicken breast. Gone was the ruddy color and webs of fat that once made pork a mouth-watering feast.

The business of breeding heritage pigs, however, was quietly thriving all along. One of these traditional breeders turns out to be our current supplier, Eden Natural Certified Berkshire Pork. Berkshire pigs are also called "black pigs" or "kurubota" in Japan, where they are highly prized. Eden Natural raises their Kurubota pigs humanely, provide them with fresh air, pure spring water, good feed, room to roam and the warmth of natural bedding.

Berkshire pigs produce small litters that are very slow-growing. They are kept a full 7 months before slaughter, enjoying a corn and soybean feed that is totally free of additives and they are never given antibiotics or growth hormones. (Commercially-raised crossbreeds are often pushed to market within 5-6 months and their feed is regulated to keep them lean.)



Berkshire pigs yield cuts that are well-marbled and consistently sweet, tender, juicy and rich. Once you try Berkshire pork you will celebrate the return to old-fashioned tasting, full-flavored pork, enjoying even the luscious crusts of fat and meaty, delectable bones.

Agata & Valentina 1505 First Avenue at 79th street Tel. 212-452-0690 Fax. 212-452-0694
Store Hours: Mon-Sun 8am-8:30pm

Agata & Valentina Food Bar and Restaurant 1513 First Avenue at 79th street Tel. 212-452-0691
Restaurant Hours: Monday-Thursday 8am-10pm Friday and Saturday 8am-11pm Sunday 8am-10pm

*Written and Edited by
Emily Balducci*

AGATA & VALENTINA

Giornale

AGATA & VALENTINA TURNS **15**
15% STOREWIDE **PROMOZIONE!**

15 YEARS AGO, IN APRIL OF 1993, Agata & Valentina opened its doors for the very first time. To celebrate this milestone anniversary and to thank our wonderful customers for their consistent patronage over the years, **we will be offering a 15% discount on every item in the store from Wednesday, April 30 – Sunday, May 4!**

When the store opened for the first time in 1993, it was about half the size that it is currently. Amazingly, all of the departments we have now, except Sushi, were somehow squeezed into the space between our entrance and the current Cheese/Sushi/Deli corridor. Despite the obvious spatial challenges, Joe, Agata, and Louie put their passion for food to work and created something very special. Their vision was of a food store like no other, where open kitchens and work spaces allowed customers to see the prepa-

ration of everything that was offered for sale, where the appetite-inspiring aromas of bubbling sauces, roasting meats, and baking pastries would leave no doubt as to where their food was coming from. Not only did the Agata & Valentina team realize that dream, but they were so successful in doing so that they decided to double the size of the store in 1997. As anyone who has shopped in the store can attest, we had no trouble filling the additional space with expanded departments, more bustling

kitchens, and glorious product displays, all to our customers' delight.

Over the years, we have learned a great deal about what it means to be in the retail food business. We are pleased to have become, in many ways, a nourishing presence in our community. The relationships that we develop with our customers – both veterans and newcomers alike – are extremely important to us. Our singular passion is to delight our customers with the quality of our products and the level of service we strive to offer. It is our hope that this store-wide Promozione will go at least a little ways toward thanking those people who allow us to put our passion for food to work on a daily basis.

Windfall

The start of Spring is bringing many new wonderful developments to Agata & Valentina. Both executive chef and pastry chef from our old restaurant are now working at the store full-time, raising the caliber of A & V's take-out food even higher than it already was.

Agata & Valentina has always been an establishment that offers as many homemade foods as possible; our on-floor kitchen, pizza station and bakery tun out fresh foods, within full view of the customer, all day long. Our "market-as-working-kitchen" model is a veritable mission statement, and the sheer preponderance of fresh foods you see, as opposed to packaged, jarred items, is what sets us apart from other specialty stores.

Executive Chef RICHIE BIONDO is transposing a restaurant chef's passion for good ingredients onto the specialty store landscape. What better hunting grounds than the shelves of Agata & Valentina? To wander our aisles is to be newly inspired and Chef Richie regales us with new creations every other day.

Check out Richie's fabulous new contributions to our Prepared Foods selections, some of which were featured at the restaurant: **Eggplant Involtni**, **Arancini filled with meat ragu and peas**, **Vegetarian Chili** chunky with butternut squash, chickpeas and turnips, and **Fresh Mozzarella Sticks**.

Chef Richie uses only the *freshest seasonal vegetables, fresh-made mozzarella* and other quality ingredients to distinguish these and other signature dishes. His **Pate Campagna** will please the most ardent charcuterie-lover. Made in the traditional French style with *pork butt, uncured "guanciale" (pork jowls), pork liver, shallots, garlic, and red wine*, it is a true, country-style pate. Each pink slab reveals a mosaic of large-cut pork and fat cubes with a rich, lingering, liver-y flavor. Though coarsely-cut, the mouth-feel is velvety.



Eggplant Involtni



Pate Campagna

His **Chicken Liver Mousse** falls at the other end of the charcuterie spectrum. Ethereally light and delicate, it is made with *fresh chicken livers, eggs, cream, shallots and seasonings*. The finished mousse is silky-smooth with a clean, pleasant, mild/sweet flavor - and a very elegant finish.

Try the new **Mango/Chipotle Chutney** (in our Prepared Foods fridge). An amalgam of *thinly sliced red onions, grated mango, canned chipotles (along with their spicy sauce) and brown sugar*, it is the ultimate topping for a burger, grilled pork chop or hot dog. Spread some on your tuna burger, serve aside charbroiled steak - sweet, spicy and smoky at once.

Look for the new **Whole Wheat Vegetable Wraps** in our refriger-

Arancini



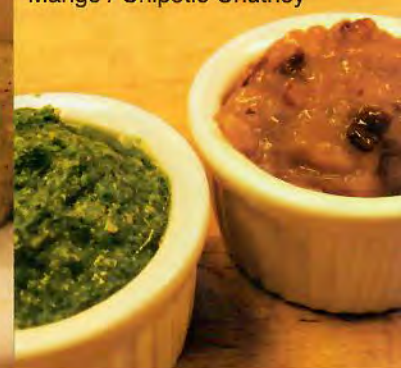
Vegetarian Chili



Fresh Mozzarella Sticks
made with housemade Mozzarella



Mango / Chipotle Chutney





Chicken Liver Mousse



Whole Wheat Vegetable Wrap

ated sandwich case. Tucked inside are layers of *homemade babganoush, roasted red peppers, pesto sauce and plum tomatoes*. It represents our efforts to turn out *healthful, eclectic, and very satisfying sandwiches*.

Open a container of the new fresh **Meyer Lemon Pasta** for a heady hit of bright lemon essence. These semolina noodles combine *grated Meyer lemon rind with their juice* and making a light, lovely bed for a "primavera-style" sauce of *asparagus tips, cipollini onions, Spring garlic, basil and olive oil*. How about a serving of Meyer Lemon Pasta stippled with peas, calamari and shrimp – all sautéed in olive oil with a little onion, garlic and white wine? *Magnifico!*

Try Agata & Valentina's other new fresh pasta flavors: **Porcini,**

house-made dried porcini powder, durum semolina flour & eggs; Saffron-Black Pepper, fresh eggs with saffron, black pepper and 100% semolina; yellow in color and coarse-textured, perfect with spicy seafood sauces.

Chicken Quesadillas are the newest nibble at our Capuccino Bar. *Shredded roasted chicken* is tossed with *tomatillos, cilantro, jalapeno and garlic* and given a melted *mozzarella* cloak. Grab one up for a quick pick-me-up at lunch.

Look for more of Chef's Richie's creations to pop up throughout the store. His classic French training, extensive restaurant experience (starting with a tour under chef Jean-Jacques Rachou at La Cote Basque in the 80's), his Sicilian/Neopolitan heritage, and unbuttoned cooking style promise many innovative dishes to come. This is high-end "take-out" you can proudly serve your friends, your family or yourself any day of the week.

Sicilian pastry wizard, **EILEEN GUASTELLA**, brings star quality to our Pasticceria. Before beginning her tenure at A & V Ristorante, Chef Guastella studied at the French Culinary Institute, apprenticed with Corrado Assenza (Sicily's foremost pastry expert), and held the position of Executive Pastry Chef at Felidia restaurant in Manhattan. Eileen excels at applying clever contemporary twists to classic Sicilian confections.

Look for her petite, elegant dinner cookies in "Eileen's Corner" (next to our Pastry dept.) and her gnarly, dense biscotti - all modestly sweet, full-flavored, toothsome treats.

New Treats
from Eileen's Kitchen:
Homemade Mini Éclairs & Homemade Cream Puffs

Cuddureddi is our newest Sicilian cookie -- a pinwheel shaped confection filled with dried figs, almonds, chocolate, cinnamon and honey encased in a delicate semolina/flour crust. The subtle and complex blend of spices in the dense paste and the enfolding tender cookie shell are inspired by the Greek/Arabic presence in Sicily during the Middle Ages. Serve cuddureddi with an aged Tawny



Saffron Black Pepper Pasta



Mini Eclairs



Cuddureddi



Handmade Truffles

Port, which is similarly figgy and rich.

When you want a dessert that is different, ethnically-inspired, is made with ingredients you can actually see and taste, and is truly fresh-made, take something home from Agata & Valentina's Pasticeria.

Handmade A & V Chocolate Truffles. Also the product of Eileen's handiwork, these hand-molded and rolled truffles use Belgian dark chocolate, butter or cream and are dusted in cocoa powder or crushed hazelnuts. Each is meltingly creamy - a tender, but solid ball of ganache that liquefies on the tongue leaving a whisper of bitter dark chocolate behind.

NOW AVAILABLE: Chocolate dusted with cocoa powder, Hazelnut (with a whole hazelnut in the center) rolled in crushed hazelnuts and Chocolate Espresso made with brewed espresso, also rolled in cocoa powder.

What's Else is New...

GROCERY

NEW WAYS TO GET YOUR OMEGA 3'S

These canned fish are caught off the north coast of Portugal. **Cole's Portuguese Sardines in Olive Oil** - tender, sweet, high in Omega 3's - serve as appetizer on slice of toasted peasant bread brushed with oil and topped with dices of our own Preserved Meyer Lemons...

Cole's Wild Mackerel in Piripiri Sauce - astoundingly tender, snowy, sweet meat in a mildly spicy sauce - eat as is, out of the can.

SALUMERIA

Serve these fabulous meat products at your next Special Occasion meal...

FROM SPAIN...

Iberico Ham. We've been waiting years for this delicacy to arrive - made from the cured leg of black hoofed pigs (pata negra - which have a higher fat content than other pigs) found only on the Iberian Peninsula - aged for 2 years. These pigs are free-roaming and forage for acorns for a short period of time before slaughter. The result is a mahogany-colored meat streaked with creamy fat. The

flavor is complex - sweet & nutty with mineral-y undertones. It is intensely "hammy" with only mild saltiness.

Paleta de Iberico de Bellota. This ham is made from the shoulder of Spain's free-roaming black-hooved pigs that feed only on acorns and grass (Bellota means "acorns"). The result is a ruddy, deep red ham lushly marbled with sweet pockets of fat throughout. It is so lush, it practically melts in your mouth - like eating a slice of quickly seared Kobe Beef. The flavor is sweet and wine-y, an incredible experience - enjoy with a light, crusty Portuguese roll.

Sauccion Sec. A handmade dried pork salami made in the French tradition - aged for 30 days; flavored with garlic, remarkable chewy yet soft, even juicy - a truly elegant, silky sausage - slice it very thinly.

Did you know we now have?...

Guanciale - dry cured pork jowl -
a must for making authentic Pasta Amatriciana.

SEAFOOD

Kindai Tuna

New to this country and only at Agata & Valentina! Low-mercury, antibiotic-free Farm Raised Bluefin Tuna - the first ever of its kind. This unique and pristine piece of fish is the only aquaculture Bluefin Tuna in the world and travels by air, every week from Japan. It arrives at Agata & Valentina later the same day.

The mercury count of Kindai averages .2 parts per million (one part per million is considered safe by the F.D.A.) and test results for each shipment are provided upon delivery.

Since only 1 forty pound loin comes to our shores each week, and is being divided between a handful of high-end city restaurants and Agata & Valentina, Kindai is still a rarity. Prices may drop in the future but, for now, it is a very costly luxury indeed.

Kona Kampachi, farm-raised yellowtail (hamachi) from Hawaii raised on sustainable feed from hatch to harvest in the oceans of Hawaii; chilled in ice slurry for maximum freshness and delivered within 48 hours.

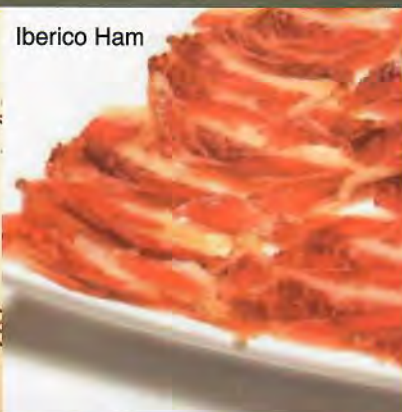
Kona Kampachi has buttery, rich flavor with notes of hazelnuts and firm, clean & crisp texture. Its oil content is very high so if you're cooking it, be prepared for a powerful aroma. Grill outdoors if you can....Especially delicious raw as sushi, sashimi or carpaccio. ●

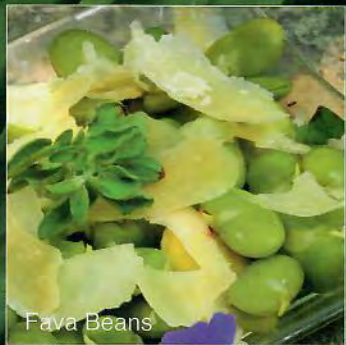
Farm Raised Bluefin Tuna

Sauccion Sec

Iberico Ham

Portuguese Sardines in Olive Oil

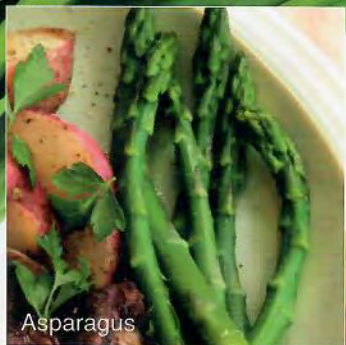




Fava Beans



Fiddleheads



Asparagus

SPRING PRODUCE

With the arrival of April, our hearts begin to flutter at the first signs of spring. At Agata & Valentina the increasingly warm weather has us rejoicing at the return of some of our favorite seasonal produce items. After the long, cold winter, dominated by bulky root vegetables and hearty greens, the brightness and delicacy of spring vegetables is a welcome change of pace (and taste!).

In the coming weeks, keep your eyes peeled for local asparagus, green garlic-y ramps, tender fiddleheads, baby dandelion greens, earthy morel mushrooms, zesty spring garlic and onions, the best fresh fava beans you'll find all year, tart rhubarb from the Pacific Northwest, meaty artichokes from Castroville, CA (the "artichoke capitol of the world"), fresh green peas and pea shoots, and much more. Our favorite thing about Spring produce is that it is so tender and flavorful on its own, it demands only minimal preparation. We recommend that you take advantage of the bounty of the season and let the quality of your pristine seasonal selections speak for itself.

minestra primavera

AGATA LOVES MAKING THIS SOUP in Spring, especially early in the season when domestic asparagus and artichokes first come to market. Fresh favas and English peas also start up on the West Coast. Combining them all in a wonderful bowl of soup is Agata's personal "Ode to Spring". The way each vegetable is introduced into the pot and the creamy ricotta garnish at the end yields a first course that is complex & satisfying, yet light and garden-fresh. As with most of Agata's one pot dishes, you can serve this over cooked pasta if you want a more substantive soup.

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 lb. fresh English pea pods
 1 1/2 lb. fava beans in pods
 1/4 lb. pencil asparagus, root end trimmed and cut into 1 inch pieces
 3 lbs. baby artichokes
 1 thick slice pancetta, about 1/4 inch thick
 3 tbs. extra virgin olive oil
 1 large white onion, chopped
 3 scallions chopped (include a little of the green)
 Sea salt, white pepper and freshly ground pepper to taste
 6 cups A&V homemade chicken stock or vegetable stock of your choice
 1 tbs. chopped fresh mint
 1 tbs. chopped fresh parsley

FOR GARNISH

1 cup fresh cow's milk ricotta
 1 tsp. extra virgin olive oil
 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
 4 oz. grated Parmigiano Reggiano

METHOD

Shell peas and fava beans. There should be about 1 cup peas, and 1 1/2 cups favas. Boil peas and favas separately in small pots of salted water for about 1 minute. Drain peas and set aside. Drain favas and submerge in ice water bath for 2 minutes. Take favas out and remove outer skin by pinching thicker end and squeezing tender, dark green bean out. Set peeled favas aside. Trim top from each artichoke and cut off stem. Peel down to its' tenderest inner core (don't be hesitant to peel away). Quarter each artichoke and drop in to bowl of water acidulated with lemon juice or a splash of vinegar. Set aside.

Mince pancetta – you should have about 2 tbs. Set aside.

Heat olive oil in soup pot over medium/low heat. Add pancetta and let render about 3 minutes. Add onion and scallions together with the artichokes and cook, stirring frequently, for 5 minutes more. Add stock and bring to a boil over same flame. Season with a pinch of salt and white pepper to taste and let boil gently for 10-12 minutes.

Add asparagus pieces and cook for 2 minutes. Then add reserved peas and favas and cook another 5 minutes. Add parsley and mint, stir around and spoon into serving bowls.

For garnish: Blend ricotta with olive oil and black pepper. Spoon a dollop of this into each serving along with a generous sprinkle of Parmigiano cheese.

*** For a more robust dish, pour this minestra over ditalini or tubetti pasta cooked al dente.*



THE PRODUCE N

Vol. 110, No. 29

COVERING FRESH PRODUCE AROUND THE GLOBE SINCE 1897

Fancy food show draws exhibitors from far and near with more produce than ever

By CHRISTINA DiMARTINO

NEW YORK — The one-and-a-half pound *Summer Fancy Food Official Show Directory* was the first indication visitors got of the size of the annual National Association for the Specialty Food Trade event, held July 8-10 at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, here. Separated by countries, regions and categories, exhibitors consumed the entire 675,000 square feet of facility exhibit space.

Each year the show features more produce and produce-related exhibitors. And with ancillary products like nuts, dried fruits, dressings, sauces, spreads, premium juices and other items taking up more shelf space than ever in produce aisles, choices were abundant for purveyors.

Baldor, headquartered in the Bronx, NY, presented its usual elaborate exhibit of fresh produce, and packaged and



Alain Chartrand of CSM Source Marketing of Terrebonne, Quebec, chats with Peter Vermeulen, general manager of SkylarHaley about the company's 'Stoneridge Orchards' line of premium dried fruits.

(Photo by Joel Gebet)

processed gourmet items, with an emphasis on "Baldor Local," the company's line of locally grown produce.

Baldor representatives on hand offering samplings and greeting visitors were Rania Abboud, director of specialty foods, Kevin Murphy, chief executive officer, Michael Muzyk, president, and Emily Balducci, director of marketing. Ms. Balducci explained that the locally grown category continues to grow tremendously.

"Baldor issues 'Baldor Local' stickers

Continued on page 16

Withdrawal of grape shatter proposal perplexes growers

By TIM LINDEN

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service recently withdrew a proposal to revise the table grape shatter standard at destination, a move that greatly perplexed and disappointed California growers who had petitioned for the change.

"I'm very disappointed," said Barry Bedwell, president of the California Grape & Tree Fruit League, based in Fresno.

The league, in conjunction with Western Growers Association, had petitioned for the change in late 2005. The growers asked AMS to change the grape standard to reflect changes in the industry with regard to

Continued on page 13



Barry Bedwell

Dried fruit processor Mariani Packing enters fresh strawberry market

By BRIAN GAYLORD

MONTEREY, CA — Mariani Packing

Inc., based here. U.S. Fruit & Veg Inc. handles the growing and sales. Having the growing and sales operations in-

THIS WEEK

Colorado taps into ready-made workforce

A pilot program put into play by Colorado Rep. Dorothy Butcher (D-Pueblo) and several area farmers supplies inmates from La Vista Correctional Facility to farmers in need of labor in what is considered a win-win program for all involved.

Page 2

Fancy food draws exhibitors from far and near

Continued from page 1

for producers within the 150-mile locally grown range we service," Ms. Balducci said. "We can truck product from these growers who otherwise could not service the wide distribution range that Baldor covers. We are working with about 75 local growers currently, and the



Baldor Chief Executive Officer Kevin Murphy and Director of Marketing Emily Balducci at the Baldor booth during the fancy food show.

list continues to grow. Our major local suppliers include the Vineland co-op in New Jersey, Satur Farms in Cutchogue, New York, and Flying Rabbit Farms in Otego, New York."

The "Baldor Boston Local" operates the same service from the company's recently opened Chelsea, MA, operation.

The company sampled Black Velvet apricots, a plum-apricot mix from Kingsburg Orchards in Kingsburg, CA, which is known for its high-quality stone fruit.

"Kingsburg is developing a certified-organics line, which fits perfectly into our 'Baldor Organics' line of branded products, said Ms. Balducci. "This year it has organic yellow and white peaches, yellow nectarines and Flavor Rosa Pluots.

kitchens, but they find that buying all the ingredients tedious," said Mr. Schueller. "This kit includes two avocados, one Roma tomato, one shallot, two garlic cloves, one lime and one jalapeño pepper, enough to make two cups of guacamole in 10 minutes."

Mr. Schueller noted that cilantro, which is often added to guacamole, is purposely left out of the kit because people either love it or they dislike it, thus leaving the option to consumers' taste.

"The 'Melissa's Salsa Kit' contains three Roma tomatoes, one shallot, two garlic cloves, one lime and one jalapeño pepper," he said. "The result is a tasty salsa to pair with chips or to add to Latin dishes."

Mr. Schueller added that the company is currently gearing up to add mangosteen from Thailand to its

list of fresh produce. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is scheduled to approve imports of the product on July 24, and Melissa's will add it to its line as soon as shipments start arriving.

Melissa's is also expanding its processed product line. On display was its "Good Life Food," line, including the new agave syrup, a shelf-stable organic syrup used as fruit topping, in beverages and even on top of pancakes.

duce some of the finest quality fresh fruits and vegetables, including citrus, Tropea onions and other produce items. We invite interested professionals to contact us to explore the possibilities that exist between our countries."

Mr. Pirillo was also on hand at the Italian Trade Commission booth at the show to meet and greet visitors.

The first of India's mango distributors in the United States, Hafoos Mango Fruit Exports Pvt. Ltd., headquartered in Borivali, India, also exhibited at the show and offered samples of in-season varieties of its "Om Mangos" brand.

In March 2006, talks between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and India's government resolved long-standing issues regarding potential pests and diseases. The discussions led to a framework outlining requirements for bilateral trade of commodities treated by irradiation, and provided a



Banu Sinar, Joel Ginsberg and Anna Abbatiello of Setton International Foods Inc. with its new three-shelf display for its organic and all-natural line of dried fruits and nuts. The company, which is one of the larger growers and processors of pistachios in the United States, also serves...



DEW DROP CABBAGE, WHITE BEAN & POTATO SOUP

Emily Balducci | Feb 5 , 2018

Caraflex (cone or tear-drop shaped) cabbage has long been favored by Europeans and is now growing in popularity here. It's been specially cultivated to have a more tender texture and sweeter flavor than standard cabbage varieties. Small-farm, locally-grown Caraflex crops were sometimes available at Baldor but, as a commodity vegetable, it was never consistent and never year-round. Until now.

Tanimura and Antle (familiarily known as T & A) in Salinas, California, is growing petite sized Caraflex heads called ***Dew Drop Cabbage*** - exceptionally easy to source, store and prepare. Because they are small, they fit nicely in your produce crisper. Because a whole head fits in the palm of your hand, you can slice or shred them easily. The curved configuration gives you leaves that peel off neatly in one curved sheet - making the perfect wrap enclosure. And, finally, Dew Drop cabbage has a shelf life of at least 21 days.

For a hearty, bitter-free cabbage soup in the European tradition, try this cold weather comfort soup featuring T & A Dew Drop Cabbage.

¼ cup Barbera Sicilian e.v. oil
2 oz. Lioni pancetta, chopped
2 slices La Quercia American prosciutto, shredded
1 lg. sweet onion, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
1 cup Italian parsley, chopped
Sea salt to taste
4-6 small potatoes, (any combination of marble potatoes, fingerling, or small new potatoes) cut into ¼ inch chunks
1 pint ripe grape, pear or cherry tomatoes, halved
2 heads Dew Drop Cabbage, coarsely chopped
2 bay leaves, cracked in half
2 cans (15.5 OZ) cannellini or kidney beans, drained
freshly ground black pepper
freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano to taste

Heat olive oil over medium heat in large Dutch oven. Cook pancetta until it just starts to color. Add prosciutto, onions, carrot, celery, parsley and a sprinkle of salt and cook, stirring occasionally until softened, about 5-10 minutes. Add potato chunks and let saute 2 minutes more. Throw in cabbage and add water (or any combination of water, chicken/vegetable/beef broth) to cover ingredients by 3 inches or so (pot should be about three quarters full). Add bay leaves, stir, and bring contents to a boil. Lower heat slightly until bubbling and gently cook soup about 20 minutes more. Add canned beans and continue simmering 15 minutes more until soup is thickened and flavors are blended. Taste for seasoning, adding salt and peppers.

Ladle into heated bowls, sprinkling with more grated pepper, Parmigiano and a little extra virgin olive, if desired. Serve with toasted or grilled slabs of crusty peasant bread. Yields 8-10 servings

*** If you want a heartier version of this soup, you can leave out prosciutto and substitute with chorizo. Slice 3 small chorizo links into ¼ inch thick slices and add to pot together with onions, carrot and celery. Let cook and color with other ingredients before you throw potatoes in.*



FROM THE BALDUCCI VAULT: MANDARINQUAT MARMALADE

Emily Balducci | Jan 18 , 2017

Meet the mandarinquat. Much larger than the typical kumquat, it has a sweet peel and tart flesh, both of which are usually chopped up together for tangy marmalades and chutney. Our in-house recipe guru, Emily Balducci, shared her sweet and tangy marmalade recipe with us.

*Yields 1 Cup.

10 soft-ish [mandarinquats](#), scrubbed well (any spots on skin sliced off). Halve, seed and remove thicker strips of white pith, then chop coarsely.

Place in skillet (along with any juices that collected) along with all the chopped sections from 4-5 seedless sweet [mandarins/clementines](#).

Add 1 tbs unsalted butter, juice of ½ lemon, 1 tbs sugar and water to cover.

Bring to simmer over medium/low heat and add small splash of [Tondo Aged Balsamic vinegar](#).

Continue to simmer about 15-20 minutes, stirring now & then to prevent sticking. (Cook the fruit down to thicken but don't let mixture stick to bottom of pan).

While the mixture is still warm, add 2-3 tbs of your favorite tart orange marmalade (McKays Scottish or Trader Joe's Seville Orange marmalade are good options - we also carry this [one from Darbo](#)) & blend to combine.

Once mix is cooled & thickened, scrape onto plastic cutting board and chop finely. There should be no big chunks of rind as they will taste too bitter; rind pieces should be small but visible and the marmalade should be spreadable.





ALL ABOUT SPIGARIELLO

Emily Balducci | Apr 19 , 2017

We know there's confusion out there concerning the differences between Spigariello, which is referred to as an heirloom kale variety, and Broccoli di Cicco which is an heirloom broccoli.

The confusion lies in the fact that Spigariello can look like broccoli rabe and tastes more like a sweeter broccoli cousin. It may even be a milder genetic forbear to broccoli rabe. Like so many of the bitter greens we grow and enjoy in this country today, Spigariello is a southern Italian native. Though it is on the lighter end of the bitterness spectrum, it shares the hearty, full-bodied flavor that is so typical of greens in this region. Farmers in California first imported the seeds from Naples and Apulia in the 90s. The variety continues to be uncommon commercially, but has gained a cult following among chefs and small farmers.

Actually a cross between broccoli and kale, Spigariello has long edible stems with curled green leaves like rabe. It produces tiny edible flowers that are not quite florets. While broccoli rabe blossoms are the most desirable part of the bunch, Spigariello blossoms are either very small or not there at all. The stems, however, are much tenderer; they don't need peeling at all, just a small snip across the bottom.

Toss the whole bunch right into the skillet, chop and add to soups or enjoy raw in salads. Spigariello does taste like broccoli but even better – some say it has a mild broccoli sprout-like flavor or that it tastes like a broccoli/kale hybrid.

Spigariello is a cool season crop that can take some frost. It peaks mid-winter and last through spring.

Broccoli di Cicco looks more like broccolini and is a hardy annual heirloom broccoli. An old-fashioned variety, it produces a main head along with smaller florets. It is harvested when the main head is no more than three inches across, which encourages numerous smaller heads and side shoots.

The variety was first introduced in Italy in 1890 and, if you've ever eaten it there, you know why it's revered. It has an earthy-sweet, broccoli-like flavor with a juicy, deeply satisfying chew. It's great steamed, stir fried or braised. It can also be frozen without much change in texture or taste.

Its large, lobed leaves are totally edible and cook up soft as Swiss chard. The stems are narrow and tender. Chefs often chop the stems and leaves and cook them together with the loose looking heads all in the same pan.

The upshot is that both Spigariello and DiCiccio have flavor nuances of sweet broccoli, yet they taste different from each other. Texture, mass and shape would be the deciding factor when featuring one or the other for a special dish.



OCEAN MIST ARTICHOKE

Emily Balducci | May 15 , 2017

In 1924, Daniel Pieri, Amerigo and Angelo Del Chiaro, Alfred Tottino and James Bellone launched the California Artichoke & Vegetable Growers Corporation, renamed Ocean Mist Farms in January of 1995. The five partners set up business in a wood and tin shed at what was then called Del Monte Junction. They leased some land about a mile south of Castroville - right where the Pacific Ocean coast meets the Monterey Bay - and began raising artichokes and Brussels sprouts. In those days and through the late 1930s, many ranchers had no electricity or telephone service. Business deals were sealed with a handshake or through contracts sent in the mail.

Today, 93 years later, Ocean Mist Farms is owned by four different grower- families but the Del Chiaros and Tottino's are still involved in operations. The company is headquartered in Castroville, California and has expanded to become the largest producer of fresh artichokes in North America, supplying 90% of the country's crop. They grow more than 30 premium fresh vegetables year-round in multiple growing regions throughout California, Yuma, Arizona and Mexico and have become leaders in food safety initiatives. Ocean Mist's Heirloom Artichokes are an early spring treat that grow not from seed, but from the original root stock brought here from Italy 100 years ago. They take longer to grow than regular artichokes, have fleshier petals and a more pronounced artichoke flavor.

No one would deny that Ocean Mist Farms is a huge commercial grower, but they operate with a small-farm mentality. They prioritize environmentally responsible farming methods, employing water conservation and integrated pest and soil management techniques. Ocean Mists is also recognized for providing excellent working conditions and benefits to employees. They are active in Salinas-based food charities and donate to statewide food banks. The California Association of Food Banks has honored Ocean Mist Farms for donating more than 1 million pounds of fresh produce.

In their on-going effort to build and maintain relationships, Baldor's buyers frequently visit Ocean Mist Farms. The owners themselves personally escort the Baldor team into the fields to survey crop progress and meet the harvesters. Workers are always welcoming, stopping to chat and even offer a taste to the guests. It's clear that Ocean Mist's 'love of the land' ideology is embraced by all who work for this passionate and conscientious family of growers.



MEET THE CARDOON

Emily Balducci | Jan 18 , 2018

Cardoons are a domestic variety of the wild thistle in the artichoke family. Dirt is mounded around the base as the plant grows to facilitate the blanching that turns it silvery green. This is one vegetable that tastes the exact opposite of the way it looks. Scaly, rough and fibrous when raw, Cardoon chunks melt into dense, meaty pieces with an artichoke-like flavor.

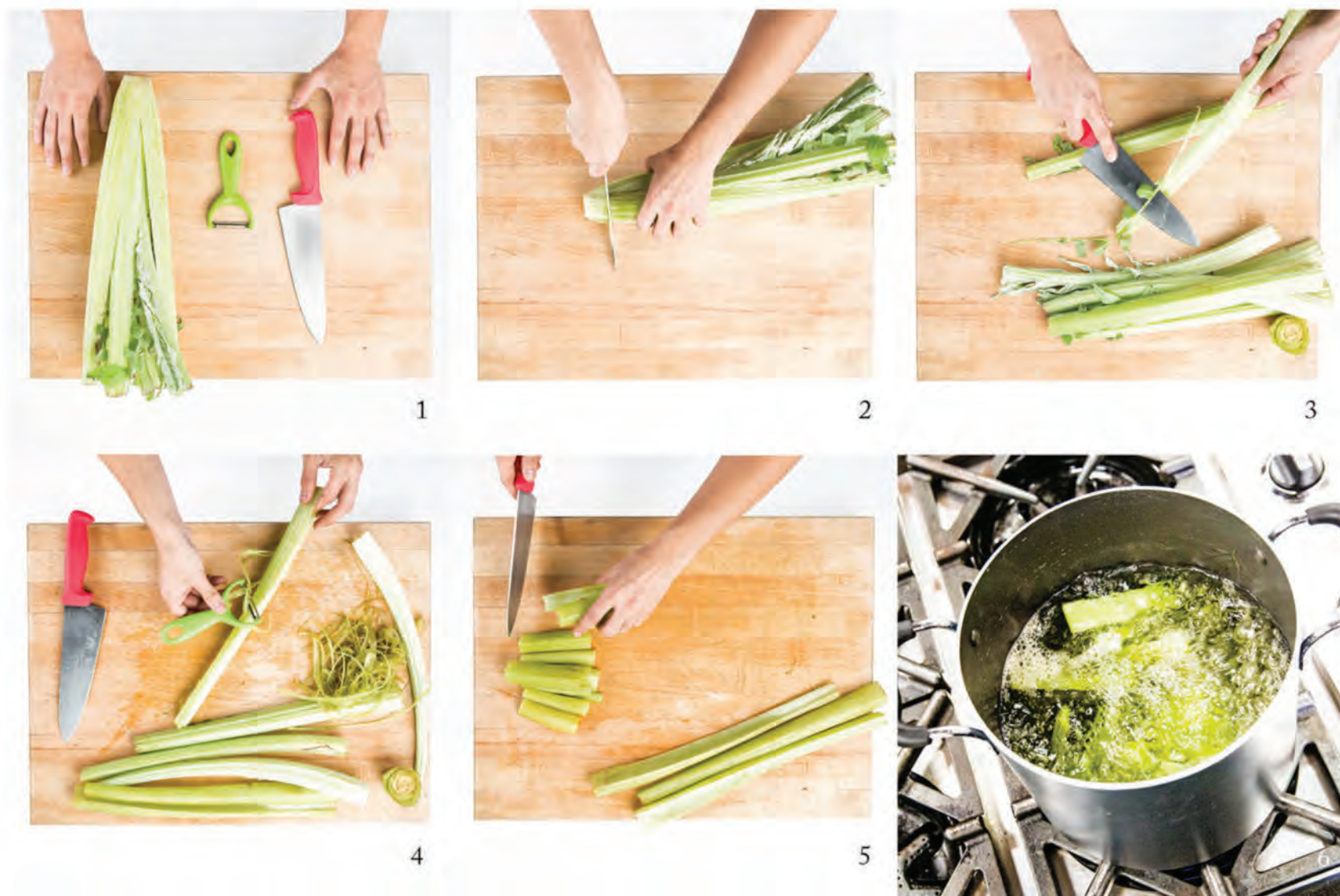
Europeans also cook cardoons into casseroles, au gratin or soups, but we like them deep fried to serve as an appetizer with drinks, or as a side dish. They turn out warm and crispy outside, creamy-soft inside.

For a delicious appetizer to serve with cocktails, we absolutely love cardoon dipped in a light beer or tempura batter and fried in canola or peanut oil. Cook until golden then drain well on paper toweling. Sprinkle with a good sea salt and serve with cold wine or champagne.

This original Baldor recipe was created specifically for the new-season cardoon grown by Ocean Mist Farms in central California. They have been cultivating cardoon for decades and are the largest, most reliable supplier in the country. Check out our recipe and prep instructions below!

FRIED CARDOONS

First, prep the cardoons:



Separate stalks from the bunch, selecting the innermost, whitest ones. Cut off rough bottom and tops and slice sideways down the outside length of each to remove all the jagged, bitter-tasting leaves. Start peeling each stalk with a sharp knife to remove all stringy stands, just as you would with celery. (You can also slice off any small patches that look extra thick or discolored). Be sure to peel away as much of the fibers as possible. Cut each stalk crosswise into 1-2 inch chunks. Purist would drop the pieces into acidulated water to prevent browning, but we find it unnecessary if the cardoon is fresh. Boil the pieces in a large pot of salted water for about 20 minutes until they are soft and pliable (stick a fork through to test). Drain the pieces on several changes of paper toweling to dry as much as possible.

Prepare Beer Batter:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup unbleached white flour

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp kosher salt

$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp black pepper

2 eggs, room temperature

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup Belgian beer (or any beer), at room temperature.

1 tbs vegetable oil

Put flour in a bowl, add salt and black pepper, and mix well.

In a separate bowl, whisk 2 room temperature eggs. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Belgian beer (better if opened for a while and at room temp) and oil. Whisk to combine and pour into flour mixture, mixing well with a large fork until batter is somewhat smooth.

To Fry:

Heat cooking oil to 375 in a deep fryer or deep pot. Dip cardoon chunks in beer batter, letting excess drip off. Drop gently into oil and cook until light gold, about a minute. Don't overcrowd fryer. Lift pieces out with slotted spoon and drain on paper toweling. Sprinkle with good quality sea salt and eat immediately.

Alternatively, if you need to fry ahead of time, you can reheat cooked pieces on a hot baking pan and heat in 500 degree oven for about 5 minutes to crisp up. Keep sea salt grinder handy. The nutty sweet flavor of fried cardoons jumps to life under a fresh sprinkle of sea salt.



CHRISTMAS EVE AT BALDUCCI'S, CIRCA 1985

Emily Balducci | Dec 21 , 2015

Christmas Eve at Balducci's in the 1980's was like a Greenwich Village flash mob. Customers queued up before we opened, not only to get last minute gifts and assemble their holiday feast, but to be part of the Christmas spectacle, Italian-style.

Food is the centerpiece of any Italian celebration and during the holidays, even more so. Garlands, wreaths and lights help set the stage, but serving your loved ones traditional Christmas foods is the height of familial regard.

In the retail world at that time, Christmas decorations appeared and holiday music cranked up the day after Thanksgiving. The only advance preview at Balducci's was the panettone shipped from Italy mid-November. Italians start baking the traditional Milanese springform cake in October. Andy Balducci discovered Muzzi panettone during one of his food trips to Italy and declared theirs to be the best. Employees who were feeling especially festive would work overnight to hang the newly arrived shipment across the ceiling. Shoppers entered the next day under a canopy of green and gold Muzzi boxes, a subtle announcement that Christmas was coming.

The store was only about 5,000 square feet and the lower level housed 3 offices, the main kitchen, two walk-in refrigerators and a freezer, the break room, employee lockers, bathrooms and all grocery and container storage. That didn't leave much room for assembling gift baskets and catering platters, but that's where production took place. Desk tops, counters and upturned milk crates were turned into workshop platforms with cellophane wrap, doilies and packing peanuts spilling everywhere. Cashiers became basket designers overnight, donning Santa hats and blow-drying their masterpieces while humming holiday tunes, enjoying the respite from the mayhem upstairs.

It's not enough to say everyone worked hard Christmas week and even harder Christmas Eve. We became one with the tsunami that was underway. Though it was hard to sleep the night before, the feeling of shared purpose was galvanizing. Workers arrived in the morning nervous but cheerful and customers responded in kind. They kidded with us, were kinder than usual, some even bought gifts for their favorite butcher or cashier. Balducci's had been a Greenwich Village outpost since 1946, and family members were always present, greeting shoppers and working alongside the staff. The energy was contagious.

There were deli guys – kids really, still in their teens - who were so into it they volunteered to stay overnight, sleeping on burlap coffee bags piled in the basement. Mama Balducci would make them an egg sandwich in the morning with spinach and bacon on peasant bread. After she passed, the kitchen ladies would do the same. The line at that counter never ended, yet each green & white package of sliced charcuterie, foie gras or smoked salmon opened like a sleeve of jewels when you got it home. That was the aesthetic of the original Balducci's.

The pastry counter was always packed with customers during the holidays. Though we didn't bake on premise, we carried the best the city had to offer. To keep the cases full, trays laden with fresh pastry from outside vendors sailed across the counter all day long, over the heads of customers. If they felt inconvenienced they didn't complain, at least not on Christmas Eve.

Christmas season brought out the fanciful desserts that were the essence of our holiday décor. There were gorgeous glass jars from Italy filled with orange slices, chestnuts or cherries submerged in Armagnac. Brightly colored mini marzipan fruits sat in the refrigerated pastry window along with buche de noel, marrons glace and tiramisu snowmen. Chewy torrone and panforte cakes were exotic, very European and came wrapped in bright colored foil depicting scenes from Siena in the middle ages. They were ornamental as well as delicious, made great last-minute gifts and were piled high everywhere.

Andy was an advocate of the abbondanza school of merchandising – massive displays in every department and the more the merrier. Abbondanza also referred also to an abundant table filled with specialty foods. He said Christmas was “the season of extravagance” - the perfect time for promoting triple crème cheeses, lush smoked salmon and the finest caviar.

Speaking of caviar, in those days it was still plentiful from the Caspian Sea. Since office work came to a halt on Christmas Eve (as all hands were needed on deck), the main office metamorphosed into the caviar room. Three pound tins of top Iranian and Russian caviar were divided here into small glass jars of several sizes to display in our appetizing department. Anyone could do this work – you wore latex gloves, were careful not to crush the eggs and not get caught tasting. Many caviar connoisseurs emerged at Balducci's during this free-wheeling food era.

Andy was adamant that all the traditional foods he remembered from his childhood in Italy be displayed for La Vigilia di Natale (the seven fishes Christmas Eve dinner). Our Tavola Calda featured Baccala Barese-style (dried cod with tomatoes) and Tomacchio (boiled eel marinated in vinegar with red onions and pickling spices). Mamma Balducci also grilled chunks of eel and threaded them on skewers with bay leaves. We didn't sell large quantities of these regional ethnic dishes but our Italian clientele loved them and Andy felt true to his roots.

The seafood case was brimming with fresh scungilli, baby octopus (polpetti), triglie, shrimp and clams in several sizes. We kept fish heads in the walk-in for customers making traditional Zuppa di Pesche. Scales flew like snowflakes behind the counter as fishmongers cleaned whole body fish for the La Vigilia feast centerpiece.

Check-out was a marvel of efficiency, considering that PLU's didn't exist at the time. Our cashiers must be immortalized for their memorization skills as well as their speed. Since fresh produce is a market-driven commodity, prices could change every day, sometimes twice a day. In the 1980's, Balducci's cashiers were mostly young ladies from the Joffrey Ballet School on 10th street and Italian girls from the neighborhood. They arrived for their shift and studied the produce prices for 15 minutes, jotting some down on a paper bag before manning a register. When the lines got crazy they moved at warped speed, gently flinging items onto the scale, punching in the right price, ringing and bagging in one fell swoop. Customers would express their amazement at such agility which motivated the girls to go even faster.

Refrigerated trucks were parked out front dispensing roast goose, suckling pig, rib roasts, lasagna Bolognese, pizza rustica, shrimp cocktail and more - all cooked overnight by the kitchen staff. The scene looked like a conveyor belt of human arms sliding food platters in one door and out the other. The catering choreography continued right through closing.

Amid the hubbub, Pop Balducci, by now in his mid 80's, could be found seated at the edge of the bread department, barking at the bread girls to “speed it up” while turning to greet his beloved customers warmly. He always wore his derby hat and wool sweater and the Villagers loved to see him so stolid and tough. His son Andy would make a beeline for the produce department garbage cans when he walked in Christmas Eve morning. Despite the crowds and the chaos (or maybe because of them) he felt compelled to investigate any possible produce waste. Though these two ran a very tight ship, they knew they had to be physically present on this busiest day of the year.

Back to that line curling around the corner of 9th Street--fire codes determined how many people were allowed in at once. Store managers stood inside the entrance letting 20 or so through at a time. How to keep those standing outside happy? Andy had the office crew passing panettone slices all day long to waiting customers. This little treat went far to assuage any agitation and spread Christmas cheer, Italian-style.