

Created by: Debra C. Argen

## Michelin Cuisine Meets Art

With innovative and bold presentations by [Michelin](#) chefs creating gourmet cuisine that dazzles the eyes and borders on art, I have always pondered the age-old question, which came first, the chicken or the egg, or in this case, did the recipe evolve first, or the plate it would be served on?



I had the opportunity to look at this riddle on April 16, 2008 when I met with Pier Bussetti, Executive Chef/Partner of Michelin-star [Locanda Mongreno](#), and Alfredo Russo, Executive Chef/Co-Owner of Michelin-star [Dolce Stil Novo](#) in Torino, Italy, hosted by the [Italy-America Chamber of Commerce](#) at [Ciprani 23rd Street](#) in New York for a unique evening of "Piedmont: Food and Design Made in Italy."

Over the course of this interesting evening, which combined the talents of the students at [The Institute of Applied Art and Design \(IAAD\)](#) and the creative culinary minds of Chef Bussetti and Chef Russo, I learned about this special project of collaboration by seeing and then tasting a series of high-profile culinary recipes featured in the hippest, and most contemporary of art designs.

The evening progressed much like a new gallery opening where each exhibit was kept secreted behind a screen until it was time for it to make its debut to the invited guests, only at this showing the guests actually had the opportunity to dine on the exhibits. It was an evening of surprise as guests were lead to each unveiling of a design paired with culinary delights from Chef Bussetti or Chef Rossi, with collected "oohs and aahs" and an occasional "oh my" from the guests, as was the case of a design entitled Sukkio by Design Student Federico Luxardo for Chef Russo's "Mousse di cioccolato bianco" a white chocolate mousse that was designed to be eaten from a latex dome that was definitely a conversation piece among the guests.



There were several highlights of the innovative designs of the evening including the Puz Wave (Puzzle Wave) created by Design Student Domenica de Maio, which featured black and white ceramic interconnecting puzzle pieces as the presentation for the recipe "Uovo mandarino" a delectable confection by Chef Alfredo Russo which consisted of a mixture of mandarin orange, orange, and grapefruit jelly in the

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shape of a yolk, and a vanilla sauce that represented the egg white. The combination of black and white with the sharp contrast of bold color of the "yolk" dessert was visually appealing and tempting on the palate, however, it was only when Chef Russo saw me holding the dessert that I learned of its true design. He took the dessert from me, turned my left hand palm side up and slid the "ring" onto my ring finger. When I realized the design was actually a ring, I turned the ring over on my hand so that it looked like a giant power ring on my finger, and jokingly asked him if that meant that we were engaged, to which he smiled and laughed. It was definitely a fun piece where art meets cuisine, and I could imagine how interesting it would be at a cocktail party.

Another clever design was Fever by Design Student Emanuela Vaglio that resembled a metal lipstick case to showcase Chef Pier Bussetti's "Involtino di peperone" which was a red pepper and tuna roll that you ate by pushing the tuna up the length of the case with a little lever.



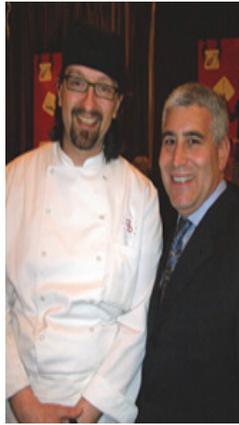
Other intriguing designs were Lince di Luce "Lines of Light" by Design Student Mariangela Deiana to showcase Chef Russo's "Frittata" which was a scrambled egg mousse with artichokes and garnished with croutons; and Windin' by Design Student Noemi Gorgoglione which looked like crumbled aluminum foil that held Chef Bussetti's cold dessert, "Semifreddo agli amaraetti."

Design students clearly had some fun with the concept including Alessandro Bulletti's Sottobosco "Forest Floor" which reminded me of a cute little boxing ring that held Chef Russo's "Insalata russa;" Sara Coutandin's Ovalotto



"Large Oval" for Chef Bussetti's "Guscio di cioccolato fondente ripieno;" Michela Antonioli's Disco Volante "Flying Saucer" paired with Chef Russo's "Ravioli croccianti" which were puffed and crisped ravioli; Emiliano Macagno's Glug paired with Chef Bussetti's updated Italian classic "Risi & Bisi" (Rice and peas with Carnaroli puffed rice and garlic olive oil); Antonella Marzedda's Breath for Chef Bussetti's "Yogurt con petali di grano e uvetta sultanina" (yogurt with raisins, muesli, and extra virgin olive oil); Sonia Narducci's Toffee for Chef Russo's "Torta di nocciole e noci"; and Letizia Toscano's design Pinball for Chef Bussetti's "Scrunchies."

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Speaking with Chef Bussetti, when I asked about his approach to cuisine, he replied, "It is a new world where being a chef and a designer are so similar. I feel like a designer trying to do something new."

It was a very tasty evening that provided an inspired and sometimes playful look at art design meets gourmet cuisine, and certainly had the guests buzzing among themselves, which is exactly what you want at a cocktail party, is it not? As to finding the answer to the question of which comes first, sometimes it is the recipe, and sometimes it is the design. Buon Appetito!

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