

TASTES^{of} ITALIA

BASICS OF THE ITALIAN KITCHEN

SUMMER 2022

KEEP IT SIMPLE SUMMER

38 Great Ways To Enjoy The Season



AMAZING SALADS,
PASTAS, DESSERTS,
AND GRILLED
MEATS TOO!

Easy to make
Rustic Peach Tart
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SUMMER VERMOUTHS
Italian Vermouths Cool
Down The Heat

MASSIMO GOES GUCCI
Italian Chef Teams
With Big Fashion

MASSIMO DOES GUCCI

INSPIRED BY THE WORK OF A
FASHION ICON, AN AWARD-
WINNING CHEF TAKES HIS COLORFUL AND
CREATIVE MENU WORLDWIDE.

TEXT: LAUREN BIRMINGHAM PISCITELLI



Chef Massimo Bottura's
Gucci Osteria restaurants
are found in Florence,
Beverly Hills, Tokyo and
Seoul.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MASSIMO
BOTTURA/PHAIDON PRESS

NATIVE SOIL

Florence — the birthplace of the Renaissance, the Medici Family and the House of Gucci — celebrates Gucci Osteria da Massimo Bottura with one Michelin Star, and the newly opened Giardino 25, a small, extravagant cocktail bar.

Although Gucci needs no introduction, this Florentine fashion house has a long and interesting story.

Gucci was founded in 1921 by Guccio Giovannbattista Giacinto Dario Maria Gucci (1881–1953), an Italian businessman and fashion designer and son to Gabriello, a Tuscan leather craftsman. Young and courageous, he left Florence for Paris, then settled in London in 1897 where he worked at the luxurious Savoy Hotel as a bellhop and was fascinated by wealthy travelers

carrying very high-end leather luggage.

Following his London experience, he worked at Compagnie des Wagons-Lits, the luxury trainline offering on-train dining and sleeping cars, and the operator of the Orient Express. Following World War I, he took on a new role with Valigeria Franzi, an Italian manufacturer, where he learned the craft of leather bags and luggage that forever changed his life.

In 1921, he returned to Florence and bought his own shop at number 7, Via della Vigna Nuova, and started making travel bags and accessories. Soon after, he opened a small workshop to house the 60 leather artisans that he hired for his growing business. Gucci was a brilliant businessman who went on to create one of the most famous Italian luxury brands in the



Previous page: The interior of the Beverly Hills Osteria Gucci da Massimo Bottura. **Right:** Under Chef Bottura, Executive Chef Karime Lopez heads the Florence location, a rarity in Italy where male chefs usually lead.

PHOTOS BY
GABRIELE STABILE



world, synonymous with timeless elegance.

Eventually, Gucci divided the company among his three sons, Aldo, Vaco and Rodolfo, and the brand continued to grow into the icon of Italian Dolce Vita, including handbags, footwear, accessories, makeup, fragrance and home decoration. Today, the Gucci brand includes the Gucci Osteria da Massimo Bottura and Giardino 25, both part of the global luxury group Kering.

As I research and write about this great family's story, I am curious to revisit the Gucci Osteria da Massimo Bottura, as their menu changes with the seasons, and discover Giardino 25. I was fortunate enough to visit in 2019.

If colors set the mood and play a role in subliminally conveying information and influencing what shoppers purchase, including the clothes they wear and how they adorn their environment, then Gucci has hit the bull's-eye — think hot pink, chartreuse green and peacock blue.

Step into Osteria Gucci and experience antica Firenze with a gentle contemporary touch. The main restaurant is set with sleek black tables and chairs, minimalistic table décor and white

kitchen hutches displaying beautiful china. There's also an all-white outdoor dining space with a sprawling view onto Palazzo Vecchio and Piazza della Signoria. A private dining room, surrounded by Florentine tapestry and antique gilded mirrors, is the perfect setting for business lunches, cocktail parties and private meetings.

In addition to the Florence restaurant, there are locations in Beverly Hills (with one Michelin Star), Tokyo and Seoul. All share a culinary philosophy based on the rhythm of the seasons.

If you are fortunate enough to get a reservation, you'll be propelled into a dreamy emporium of designer food and wine under the tutelage of three-star Michelin Chef Massimo Bottura of Osteria Francescana in Modena.

Under Chef Bottura, Executive Chef Karime Lopez is at the helm — a rarity in Italy because male chefs rule. She breaks tradition with her take on flavor, finesse and exquisite cuisine. She was born and raised in Querétaro, north of Mexico City, where she learned how to cook at an early age beside her mother, selecting the freshest ingredients from the local markets.

During a sojourn in Paris while studying art, Chef Lopez was inspired by the art of food.

NATIVE SOIL



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Above: Dishes at Osteria Gucci include the Emilia Burger and Patatine Fritte. **Opposite Page:** From the Florence menu, Gadus, Gadus, Gadus is made with crispy cod and Mediterranean flavors

She was also inspired by the beautiful French pastries and Parisian salons de thé, and the French way of *l'art de vivre* (the art of living well). She learned how food can be appreciated as an art form. Still a twenty-something at the time, she took a detour from art into the culinary world.

Chef Lopez's culinary interest took her around the world, starting with a position at Santi Santamaria's three-Michelin Star Can Fabes in Spain. She worked under the wing of the late avant-garde Catalan chef who taught her local techniques and a new approach to traditional, bourgeois Spanish- and French-influenced *uisine*.

After other assignments, she dedicated six years

working with Peruvian Chef Virgilio Martinez at Central in Peru. In 2014, during a culinary visit to New York, she met Chef Takahiko (Taka) Kondo (Chef Massimo Bottura's sous-chef at Osteria Francescana in Modena). They became close friends and married in 2016.

Chef Massimo Bottura was so impressed by Chef Lopez's talent that he offered her the position of Executive Chef at Gucci Osteria in Florence. It was the crown jewel of her career.

She thanks Chef Massimo and gives him credit for teaching her that cooking is an art form. She also believes in the importance of building a responsible and motivated



NATIVE SOIL

THE WINE CELLAR IS INTERESTING
AND EXTENSIVE WITH SPARKLING,
ROSÉ, WHITE, RED AND SWEET WINE.



team that is fully involved in all creative decisions and credits this philosophy to the success of Gucci Osteria.

Chef Lopez uses the bright colors of high-quality ingredients and the flavors from Italy and beyond, transforming them into poetic cuisine. The menu is inspired by her own culinary travels and her passion for art and music. She challenges the traditional perception of Italian cuisine, creating playful takes on the classics.

I call her menu “Food poetry for the appetite.” Choose from Gigliosole, scallops, bisque-Thai and Siracusa lemon; Sea Deepness, ditalini and squid broth; Tortellini with Parmigiano Reggiano Cream; the Birth of Venus, sea scallops, tarragon and celeriac; Come to Noto with Us, risotto infused with citrus fruits, almonds and red prawns; Gadus Gadus Gadus, crispy cod and Mediterranean flavors; and Almost Midnight, a medley of sweetbreads, lentils and cotechino.

Desserts are dear and a must-try: Bloom and Re-Bloom, blackberry meringue and violet ice cream; Forrest Burr, Montblanc, pear and Cassis; Charley’s Dream, chocolate, hazelnut and cacao ice cream; Bolle Mille Bolle Affogato, meaning drowning with coffee and fior di latte ice cream; and Snow Throughout the Window, truffle vin brulé and polvoron.

The wine cellar is interesting and extensive with sparkling, rosé, white, red and sweet wine. My favorites are: Trento Alto Adige Rivera del Fondatore Giulio Ferrari Trento DOC Brut 2007; Vermentino Vavagino, Colli di Luni

Left: Intimate tables and bright, open spaces are part of the dining experience at the Beverly Hills location.

PHOTO: GABRIELE STABILE



Above: Chef Mattia Agazzi leads the Beverly Hills location of Gucci Osteria. “My cuisine is essentially Italian, but also very much the result of teamwork, collectively conceived and collectively created, thanks to the contribution of everyone involved. And for this reason, it is a continually evolving cuisine, in perpetual movement,” he says.

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DOC 2018; Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo DOC 2019; Chianti Gran Selezione San Lorenzo DOCG 2017; Castello di Ama; Barolo Rivera DOCG 1895; Marchesi di Barolo and Vin Santo del Chianti Classico DOCG 2009. Splurge, sip and swirl on a bottle of Barolo Riserva Monfortino DOCG 2014 at 1100E per bottle.

At the Beverly Hills location, Chef Mattia Agazzi leads the team. A native Italian, he duplicates the magic found in the flagship restaurant in Florence.

"My cuisine is essentially Italian, but also very much the result of teamwork, collectively conceived and collectively created, thanks to the contribution of everyone involved. And for this reason, it is a continually evolving cuisine, in perpetual movement," he says.

Dining at Osteria Gucci is an experience that is simply otherworldly. Learn more at gucciosteria.com.

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Top: Mattia Agazzi and Tamara Rigo in the kitchen at the Beverly Hills restaurant. **Left:** A chef puts the finishing touche on Spaghetti Splash Works. **Right:** The "Room of Mirrors" is a popular spot for diners in the Florence restaurant.

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