

# From the Farms of Venice



There is no coyness to the ethos of Local, a modern new restaurant in Venice — it's right there in the English-

language name. Everything that Local serves originates nearby, or at least has a Venetian twist, including the chef, Matteo Tagliapietra, who is from the nearby island of Burano.

He worked at international standouts like Noma in Copenhagen and Locanda Locatelli in London before returning home to help “reinvent” Venetian fare, said Benedetta Fullin, who owns Local with her brother, Luca. Theirs is a third-generation restaurant family: her grandmother, Ms. Fullin said, opened the canal-side restaurant Wildner in 1960, and it's still going strong, serving traditional Venetian cuisine. Think of Local as its 21st-century update.

Eating locally (or regionally) is, of course, the foundation of great Italian cooking, but in Venice, where the ristoranti and trattorias are more likely to cater to tourists, it's hard to find a menu that ventures beyond the usual pomodoro e mozzarella, especially a short stroll from the hordes and grandeur of Piazza San Marco. Local, which opened in the summer of 2015 in nearby Castello, has already



made waves on the Italian slow food scene, attracting other chefs with ingredients like violet artichokes, from the lagoon island of Sant'Erasmus, and moleche, a variety of soft-shell crab.

“Normally, you think that Venice is all about the main islands, but the lagoon is actually quite big — there are farmers that produce vegetables in the lagoon, and fishermen that follow really old, old techniques,” Ms. Fullin said. “It's good not to

Ravioli with guinea fowl, coconut, lime and red shrimp.

forget them.”

The décor highlights the area's specialties, too, with tables handmade by a local artisan; a classic Venetian terrazzo floor inset with modern Murano glass; and a copper-topped bar made from wine barrels.

The menu changes with the seasons, but a recent visit started with a marinated sardine presented on toast with homemade pine nut butter — an unexpected and delightful reinterpretation of a Venetian cicchetto (anchovies and buttered bread).

A deconstructed starter of sole with potato cream was topped with microgreens and vibrant flowers, painterly and delectable. Spaghetti incorporated murex, a type of sea snail; dessert winningly paired chocolate and kelp.

The wine list, which runs to 250 labels, is all natural and biodynamic, Ms. Fullin said, and mostly from small producers; often her brother has scouted the vineyard. The Fullin siblings greet diners, even steering some toward visits with farmers. That's hometown pride, on full display.

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Local, Salizzada dei Greci, 3303; 39-041-241-1128; ristorantelocal.com A five-course tasting menu is 65 euros (about \$70); three courses à la carte, €48.