

Try this at home

Risotto with peas and bacon cream by Enrico and Roberto Cerea

1. In a large pot of water, blanch **300g fresh peas**, then drain and chill in iced water.
2. Blitz 150g of the chilled and drained peas in a blender with **500ml beef stock** and **6 mint leaves** until smooth.
3. Finely chop **50g pancetta** or **bacon** and add to **100g double cream**. Bring the mixture to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Pass through a sieve, squeezing with the back of a spoon to ensure all bacon flavour remains in the cream. Pour into a soda siphon and set aside.
4. In a saucepan, fry $\frac{1}{2}$ a **chopped**

- onion** in **1tsp olive oil** until soft. Add **320g Carnaroli risotto rice** and stir with the onion until the rice is toasted. Add **120ml white wine**, stirring until evaporated, then add **500ml beef stock** a little at a time.
5. When the rice is three quarters cooked, add the pea, stock and mint blend. Stir constantly until the mixture develops a thick and creamy texture.

6. Drain the remaining peas and stir in with **50g butter** and **60g Grana Padano cheese**.



7. To serve, divide equally between 4 serving plates and squeeze over some of the **bacon cream**.

Enrico and Roberto Cerea are chefs/proprietors of the three-Michelin-starred Ristorante da Vittorio near Bergamo, Italy. Tel: 00 39 035 681024. www.davittorio.com

Good Taste

Edited by Chloe Scott goodtaste@ukmetro.co.uk

Italians are

The culinary new wave:

For the past decade, Spain has been at the cutting edge of world gastronomy. But the Italians are shaking off their traditional image and challenging the world's finest for their crowns **BY ANDY LYNES**



At L'Atelier des Chefs cookery school in central London, chef Davide Scabin of Michelin-starred Combal.Zero in Turin is serving sushi to a crowd of press and foodies. But there's not a grain of rice in sight. Instead, Scabin serves slices of raw fish on large shells of high-quality Selezioni Monograno pasta. An Italian chef dishing up fusion food? It's only one of many eye-opening events of the recent Identità International Chef Congress that showcased some of the biggest names in modern Italian cuisine.

'There is no one Italian cuisine,' says chef Massimo Bottura from the Identità demonstration stage at Vinopolis near London Bridge. 'Ciccio Sultano of Il Duomo is cooking his own stuff in Sicily as Davide Scabin is doing in Piemonte. So we have a very interesting mixture: our past and our experience projected on the future.'

Bottura (inset bottom) is poster boy for the Italian new wave; his two-Michelin-starred Osteria Francescana restaurant in Modena has recently been voted No.6 in the San Pellegrino World's 50 Best list, which includes a further four Italian restaurants – Le Calandre, Combal.Zero, Dal Pescatore and Il Canto – that were all new or rising entries this year. While clever PR has doubtless played its part in bringing the restaurants to the notice of the list's judges, it's unquestionably an exciting time for Italian food.

'It started in the past ten years or so,' says Identità organiser and food journalist Paolo Marchi. 'We had our own food, of course, but fine dining was always French. In the second half of the 1990s, we saw how good the new Spanish cuisine was and realised it is possible to do good food without it being French.'

Marchi (bottom right) staged the first Identità Golose congress in Milan in 2005, modelled on the Madrid Fusión culinary summit, which helped put cutting-edge Spanish chefs such as Ferran Adrià of El Bulli and Andoni Aduriz of Mugaritz at the forefront of global cuisine. Since then, the line-up of international chefs has grown from 18 to 54, and this year Marchi took the format to London and Shanghai.

'It was the right time to create the congress, a theatre to allow Italian chefs to explain their ideas,' says Marchi.

Bottura needs little

prompting to explain a new dish. Known as an iconoclast, Bottura often looks outside the world of cookery for ideas, citing legendary jazz musician Thelonious Monk and German artist and sculptor Joseph Beuys as inspiration for dishes such as Snow Reflects The Sun, made with a dazzling array of ingredients including blended semi-raw potatoes, creamed Jerusalem artichokes, toasted hazelnuts, black truffle, ground coffee beans, snails and sweet garlic foam.

'My way of cooking is global, with your feet on the Earth and flying with your mind. Knowing everything and forgetting about everything: this is avant garde,' says Bottura. 'Knowing everything means to travel a lot and be open to all the different techniques, then bring them back and act locally.'

His latest creation is inspired by Argentinian installation artist Leandro Erlich's work Swimming Pool, which uses a layer of



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on the rise



Picture: 2010 Brambilla-Serrani

Master of fusion: Davide Scabin of Combal.Zero in Turin combines traditional with modern

acrylic to suspend water above an empty full-sized pool to create the illusion of people walking and breathing underwater. In Bottura's version, a layer of water is semi-frozen in the bottom of a serving dish then pierced and drained to leave a thin layer of suspended ice under which he injects oyster water. He arranges North Adriatic seafood on top in order to imitate the fish stands of the Riviera.

Scabin is equally innovative but hasn't completely turned his back on tradition. 'I work a lot with simplicity and in that simplicity you find Italian heritage,' he says, after serving up stripes of black and

white spaghetti with a sauce of confit tomatoes, basil, anchovy and burrata cheese (inset left) at his pasta demo.

'Pasta is usually drowned in sauce. I want to taste the pasta first. You pay more attention if there is less sauce. The same with salt: the maximum quantity of salt per litre of cooking water should be 2g.'

Before Scabin leaves to catch a plane back to Turin, he just has time to predict a bright future for Italian cuisine. 'The higher level of Italian gastronomy is having a magic moment. If all the Italian chefs can work together they can lead the world.'

Paolo Marchi's top five

■ Combal.Zero, Piazza Mafalda di Savoia, Rivoli, Torino. Tel: 00 39 011 956 5225. www.combal.org

■ Osteria Francescana, Via Stella 22, Modena. Tel: 00 39 059 210118. www.osteriafrancescana.it

■ Le Calandre, Via Liguria 1, Sarmeola di Rubano, Padova.



Tel: 00 39 049 630303. www.calandre.com

■ Torre del Saracino, Via Torretta, 9 Marina d'Equa, Vico Equense, Naples. Tel: 00 39 081 802 8555. www.torredelsaracino.it

■ Il Duomo, Via Capitano Bocchieri, 31, Ragusa, Sicily. Tel: 00 39 093 265 1265. www.ristoranteduomo.it

Best of the blogs

Julia Parsons, founder of the UK Food Bloggers Association, picks her favourite food blogs.

101 Cookbooks

'One of the more established blogs, with beautifully composed posts and original recipes,' says Parsons. Blogger Heidi Swanson says she focuses 'primarily on natural, whole foods and ingredients – good for you and for the planet'. www.101cookbooks.com

Around Britain With A Paunch

'A culinary adventure,' says Parsons. Couple Jonathan and Cowie blog their trips around Britain 'in search of a good meal or two',



which are often inspired by Diana Henry's *Gastro Pub Cookbook*. www.aroundbritainwithapaunch.blogspot.com

Cannelle Et Vanille

'Stunning photography and mouth-watering recipes,' says Parsons. Freelance food writer, stylist and photographer Aran Goyoaga blogs 'recipes, travels and life stories'. A recent post included recipes for fava and quinoa salad and a gluten-free plum, oat and rosemary crisp. www.cannelle-vanille.blogspot.com

James Ramsden

'I love James's videos and fun personality, which shines through on his

blog,' says Parsons. Ramsden describes himself as 'a hungry British guy exploring and sampling the edible bits of UK culture.'

www.jamesramsden.wordpress.com

Lucy's Kitchen Notebook

'This is one of the blogs I've been reading since the early days. Evocative stories and photographs of a life in France.'

Author and photographer Lucy Vanel's recent blogs include menu ideas for blueberries. www.kitchen-notebook.blogspot.com

Parsons blogs at

www.asliceofcherrypie.com. Her first book, *A Slice Of Cherry Pie*, is out later this year

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