

ai fiori altamarea group

THE RIVIERA BLOOMS IN NEW YORK: AI FIORI
IN THE GROOVE: FRENCH SERVICE, ITALIAN HEART
PRIVATE DINING: HAVE IT YOUR WAY
MEDITERRANEAN INSPIRATION: PLATING THE RIVIERA
FROM PROVENCE TO LIGURIA: MICHAEL WHITE'S TRAVELS



VIGNAIOLI SELECTION[®]



***Terroir** - "The total natural environment of any viticultural site, as defined in terms of climate, sunlight, geography, wind and soil/water relations."—Dino Tantawi*

www.vignaioliamerica.com



AI FIORI IS BLOSSOMING

When Michael and I first met, our personalities and our food vision instantly clicked. I am a businessman with a passion for food, and he is a great culinary mind with a passion for business. —Ahmass Fakahany

So when we started to come up with the concept for Ai Fiori, we looked at it from both a culinary and business perspective. Because the space was in a hotel, the new Setai Fifth Avenue, whose clientele is decidedly European, we felt this alone would mean we weren't confined to just Italian food—that it might just be the perfect opportunity to break out and try something new.

Our first love is Italian food, that is a given. But we also have a strong connection with food from the South of France, where Michael trained for several years and I have traveled extensively and even have a home. We are both drawn to the simplicity of the food—it's not old-school Parisian, but very accessible French that is also not brasserie. But for Michael to move beyond the common perception of the Italian chef, how could we make the transition to a credible French menu? That's when we both moved toward our second love: the French Riviera.

We started talking about the places we had been to, the villages we had visited, the hotels on the Riviera in which we had eaten. Then we thought

about a menu that could create a bit of excitement and still be original and different from what is already available and done so well in other New York establishments. We came up with our own niche—for example, including vichyssoise and bouillabaisse, but with a little twist to them. And wonderful main dishes—to create that feeling, if possible in New York City, of coming straight from *la plage* for seasonal food.

We also had to keep in mind the hotel's five-star ambiance. Ai Fiori couldn't be a rustic bistro. But a Riviera theme, with its romance and accessible elegance, was the perfect compliment. We also thought about our Marea guests—who would hopefully see this as a "sister" restaurant destination. And so it made sense on all counts. Plus, given the space, we now had a bar where guests could really enjoy an aperitif or cocktail first, which is very *la Riviera*. What's the hurry?!

Ai fiori is Italian for "with the flowers," but it also speaks to the flowers of the Riviera. There is a lot of marble in the restaurant, so we included flowers and now new curtains to add warmth. We did a

lot of research to convey this theme of accessible elegance, bearing in mind that you have a New York palate to please and a Michael White clientele. We have a deep pasta section on the menu for this reason. It is a reminder of our roots and gives all the restaurants something in common—fabulous Chef White pastas! As a group, we want to stress quality and consistency at all price points, but also create places to which anyone can come, be themselves, and enjoy an exceptional meal. Our menu is not complicated; its strength lies in simplicity and quality.

I think this has been a great experience for Michael too. He had to retune his French cooking skills, bringing back his taste memory. Right before we had finished our proposal for Ai Fiori, we were in the South of France thinking it through and discussing it carefully. We just knew that we were ready to do it for all the right reasons—not just because it was a good idea but also because it felt right. We thought: we love it here, we love this food, and, most important, people will really enjoy this kind of food too.

ALTAMAREA GROUP: OUR RESTAURANT LOCATIONS



Osteria Morini
218 Lafayette Street
New York, NY
10012
t. 212.965.8777



Marea
240 Central Park South
New York, NY
10019
t. 212.582.5100



Ai Fiori
400 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY
10018
t. 212.613.8660



Due Terre
107 Morristown Road
Bernardsville, NJ
07924
t. 908.221.0040



Due Mari
78 Albany Street
New Brunswick, NJ
08901
t. 732.296.1600



Al Molo
Shop G63, G/F
Harbour City, Hong Kong
t. +852 2525 9300

CAPOSALDO PROSECCO.



BUBBLY,
ITALIAN STYLE!



Three stars from *The New York Times*
One Michelin star
Zagat 2012's Best New Restaurant—New York
Esquire's Best New Restaurant 2011—New York

Chef Michael White wants everyone to know that he really loves French food too.

At Ai Fiori, he gets to do what he does best: present the food he is passionate about from regions in which he has lived and cooked. It's about reinventing the classics with a dazzling display of Mediterranean luxe, Provençal kitchen flavors, and Italian heart.

I like to say I went to Italy to learn flavor and to France to learn technique, and here at Ai Fiori I have the opportunity to apply these two together. During my time in France, I worked at Roger Vergé's Le Moulin de Mougins, right outside of Cannes; Jacques Chibois's Michelin-starred La Bastide Saint Antoine, in Grasse; and Christian Morisset's La Terrasse, in Juan les Pins. As I traveled throughout the region, what I noticed was this amazing connection between the cuisine of the Riviera and the cuisine of Sicily—olive oil-based with plenty of olives, tomatoes, and capers. You can trace it back to trading routes and the waves of European invaders. Looking beyond Sicily, you see Morocco, and then you can put your finger on how the use of spices or the importance of lamb moved to specific parts of Italy and the French ports, like Nice and Marseille. Take the olive, for example, and the connection between the Niçoise from Nice and the Taggiasca from Liguria. Suddenly, the *livornese* dishes from the port town of Livorno share the same flavors as *à la Provençal*. And so I started looking at the cooking of the South of France through an Italian lens.

When I first came back to the States, I was able to use the French techniques I had learned, but not necessarily the ingredients. Here I get a chance to really open up my canvas. Avocado is not classically Italian but *crabe à l'avocat* is a staple in the Riviera, and so we do an interesting version of that, slicing the avocado very thin and mixing the crab with olive oil and a bit of crème

fraîche instead of mayonnaise. Using butter and bone marrow in a different way, with red wine; offering a caviar service; taking a spice like coriander, which is not common in Italy; making a broth with Serrano ham, which is not French—all of this really opens up the playbook. Even the lamb en crepinette, another classic Italian dish, takes on some Moroccan influences with our spice rub before being ramped up with French technique.

The Riviera is all about ultraluxe, and this extends into our dining room, which, given the space we have to play with, rare in New York, sets the tone with spacious tables placed well apart. And in the kitchen, this “anything goes” attitude in the South of France—the excesses of caviar, sea urchins, and oysters—finds its place between the Provençal flavors and the Italian technique of making really great pastas. When I worked in France, we used cream, tomatoes, and Sauternes with lobster shells to make a delicious lobster bisque; here, we apply thin slices of raw lobster with hot cream and really take things to the next level, at the same time using ingredients from Liguria. Traditional pasta shapes like trofie, which is usually cooked with pesto or string beans, is paired here with squid ink, grated lemon, and bread crumbs to reflect the importance of the lemons of Menton. Oysters are poached in a lemon beurre blanc, where the butter has been infused with seaweed to more strongly take on the flavors of the sea.

I really want people to know I love French food, in its purest sense. I feel food needs to be respected, and part of that respect is representing the classics that are slowly going away. French or Italian—it's easy as a chef to get tired of the cuisine, continually searching for something exotic. And that's fine, but then where do you find something authentic, like a lobster bisque or a duck on a rotisserie in front of a fire with Armagnac and prunes? What we have done at Morini is really represent the Italian trattoria and hold on to those defining dishes—and that's my goal here. I love what I do, I have a lot more to do, and, bottom line, I feel that food really needs to be respected. And that's what we do at Ai Fiori.





IN THE GROOVE

JOHN PAULUS, GENERAL MANAGER AT AI FIORI

While we had a strong idea of what we wanted to happen here at Ai Fiori, we all needed to let the space speak to us and listen to our clientele.



After a year here, we feel we are starting to find our niche. We are fortunate to still have the majority of our opening team. The type of service we offer can't be achieved unless everyone is on the same page. We are constantly polishing our service and looking for ways to improve. The kitchen has settled into its space, and our dining room now feels like home to our staff. Because of this, our team can move about their space with ease and grace.

Our guests receive service they'd expect in a fine-dining establishment, and it is warm and genuine. Our service team is traditional in that there is a team of three in each section of the dining room. While we don't feel we are providing customary French service, we have inherited many details from other houses that are French that have become second nature to us.

The culture we have created is unique, and a direct link to Michael White and Ahmass Fakahany. This is a touch you don't get everywhere. They have set

a high standard and really treat every person—employee and guest alike—with a tremendous amount of respect. The kindness they have for the individual transfers into a product and a group that creates an enjoyable experience for the guest.

I feel like Michael and PJ have created a menu that blends the regions on which we focus in a really clever way. One of the things we think is so important is to present their food in such a way that we don't interfere with what works so

well. There are no instructions, no right or wrong way to enjoy a meal here. If we can be invisible, our goal has been accomplished. We have such

a great space, great support, and delicious food to serve.

The biggest compliment I can get from a guest is when they want to come back because they thought the food was outstanding and they had a great time, but can't quite put their finger on why. If the service isn't intrusive, if tables are marked and cleared without them noticing it, then we've really done our job.

for every season. Hospitality is a great passion of mine and I hope to translate that to our guests through our service at Ai Fiori.

My family has a natural sense for hospitality. My dad comes from a family of butchers and dairy farmers that owned several dairy farms in New Brunswick, New Jersey. They enjoyed entertaining, and family affairs were always important. My mom has a knack for entertaining—so natural that my parents hosted parties



Michael White on Chef de Cuisine PJ Calapa and the Team

"I like to say that we have the equivalent of the Yankees in the team assembled at Ai Fiori. PJ has a wide base of experience with different methods and techniques. He has a deep knowledge and technique in French from Bouley and Eleven Madison Park, and Japanese from Nobu 57. But having no specific Italian experience was a great advantage because he had no predisposed ideas, and no bad habits to break! The way we do pasta here is unique. I have a solid team in the kitchen and beyond; it's just layer after layer of great people."



PLATING THE RIVIERA

PJ CALAPA, CHEF DE CUISINE AT AI FIORI

From the beginning, the core success of our menu has stemmed from sticking to strictly northern Italian and southern French cuisine.



Using the ingredients from both northern Italy and the South of France defines us. The taggiasca olives from Liguria are so special that you can see the variants in each oil. This is indicative of Liguria, as well as each farm and estate they come from. This is what makes the food so special. The handcrafted work is something we are proud of as well. We are working with a new pasta shape called a *corzetti*, or round stamp. On a trip to Italy,

Michael found these rare wooden stamps that traditionally feature a family crest; each piece of pasta is impressed with its design. We decided to use this pasta to create a free-form lasagna. It is filled with a hen of

the woods mushroom ragu and it sits on lemon ricotta, which makes it very light and creamy. We build five layers of pasta and ragu, and sage, brown butter, and lemon finish the sauce. The

corzetti has classic flavors, looks beautiful, and is traditional to the region.

This is a veritable Mediterranean restaurant because you can have a beautiful Ligurian pasta followed by a classic French bouillabaisse. We feel like this is the best of both worlds. The style of cuisine at Ai Fiori gives us the ability to bring back old-world methods and dishes and make

them our own way. It's all about taking a traditional dish and creating a progressive version that takes you back to a certain point in your life. My uncle is from France and recently had the ratatouille here; he

said it took him back to his childhood. We serve it with a crispy tempura squash blossom, and this is our interpretation of a classic dish that doesn't compromise its original flavors.

“The style of cuisine at Ai Fiori gives us the ability to bring back old-world methods and dishes and make them our own way.”



CORZETTI

Corzetti are a kind of fresh pasta typical of the Ligurian cuisine of northwest Italy and Provence, France. Traditionally made of flour, water, and salt—sometimes with the addition of egg and white wine—they are cut into discs and embossed on both sides using a pair of cylindrical fruitwood stamps hand carved with a delicate pattern. *Corzetti stampae*, pressed or stamped corzetti, were traditionally stamped with a family crest and served at festive meals. Now all forms of decoration are used. And while corzetti are decorative pasta, there is functionality to the shape: the embossed pattern helps the pasta to better hold sauces.

SWEET CONFESSIONS

Bob Truitt oversees the pastry program for the Altamarea Group's properties, where he seamlessly crafts the dessert menus to coincide with specific regional themes, ensuring Michael White's attention to authenticity is matched in the desserts.

At Ai Fiori, the techniques Bob has learned from all of his culinary experiences culminate in a well-thought-out menu with a Riviera flare.



What was your approach in creating the dessert menu at Ai Fiori?

My goal with Ai Fiori's menu is to reach each part of the Riviera. Being such a region-specific restaurant, it was important to look at all the flavors and traditional dishes of the area. I looked through books and menus at existing restaurants. Of course, Michael White is a great source of information, and our relationship with Michael is very collaborative. I bring a strong French background, and it's very refreshing to have his extensive knowledge about Italian and French cuisine to pull from and help guide the team.

What are some ingredients you are enjoying working with right now?

I really enjoy using fresh stracciatella cheese from Puglia for gelato—something that I was familiar with prior to being here but am very happy to be using. Fresh bergamot oranges are another great ingredient that we love having around.

Tell about your baba au rum.

Baba au rum has always been a favorite of mine and a French Riviera classic. My approach in giving new life to this dish was a real challenge, but we are very pleased with the results. I took the sweet, syrupy, rum-spiked bread and looked at it through the flavors and richness of dark rum. Instead of using white-sugar syrup, we substituted muscovado sugar, spices, citrus peels, molasses, and condensed milk for the soak. Then we caramelized it with clarified butter and honey. By doing this, we transform it into a buttered rum-caramel bread, served with a carefully composed tropical fruit salad or *exotique*.



What is your favorite savory dish on the Ai Fiori menu?

Definitely the Trofie Nero. I find it to be a beautifully flavored dish that best represents one of Liguria's signature pasta shapes.



PANNA COTTA

Serves 4

GREEN APPLE–CELERY SORBET

1 kilo green apple puree (10% sugar added to the purée before proceeding with the recipe)

195 grams sugar
75 grams glucose powder
30 grams dextrose powder
4 grams stabilizer
200 celery juice
1 each juice of half lemon

METHOD

Combine half the apple puree with the sugar and cook to 80°C. Add remaining sugars and stabilizers and cook to dissolve. Strain and chill, then add celery juice and lemon juice. Reserve for 12 hours and process in a gelato machine.

LEMON PEEL PUREE

200 grams Meyer lemon peel, blanched three times
200 grams water
200 grams lemon juice
160 grams sugar
6 each star anise, toasted and placed in a spice sachet or cheesecloth
15 each black peppercorn
1 each vanilla

METHOD

Combine everything into a sauce pot and cook on low until Meyer lemon peel is tender. Strain and puree immediately, chill, and place in squeeze bottle.

PANNA COTTA

1% gelatin
700 grams heavy cream
500 grams milk
4 each vanilla beans
190 grams sugar
375 grams honey
pinch salt
7% (~220 grams) balsamic reduction
1400 grams crème fraîche

METHOD

Bloom gelatin in ice water. Combine heavy cream, milk, and vanilla in a sauce pot and boil, adding sugar and honey. Add salt, reduced balsamic, and gelatin, and dissolve. Chill to 50°C and add crème fraîche. Set in molds.

WHITE SESAME SABAYON

3 liters heavy cream
450 grams sugar
600 grams white sesame seeds, toasted
600 grams egg whites
10 sheets gelatin

METHOD

Combine heavy cream, sugar, and toasted sesame seeds in a sauce pot and bring to 60°C. Add egg whites and cook to 80°C. Add gelatin, dissolve, and chill immediately. Let rest for 12 hours. Whip in Kitchenaid mixer until it forms medium peaks.

SESAME ESPUMA

300 grams sesame milk (made with 150 seed/1 part milk)
300 grams heavy cream
200 grams sugar
3 sheets gelatin

METHOD

Combine sesame milk, heavy cream, and sugar in a sauce pot and boil. Add gelatin and chill. Place in iSi siphon and charge twice with NO₂ gas. Reserve cold.

BRETON

160 grams egg yolks
320 grams sugar
320 grams pomade butter
450 grams all-purpose flour
30 grams baking powder

METHOD

Place yolks in Kitchenaid mixer with whisk attachment and whip on high.

Add sugar slowly and, once at ribbon stage, whip in pomade butter until fully incorporated. Sift dry flour and fold in gently by hand. Bake at 325°F on a sheet for 7 to 10 minutes. Let cool. Powder in a food processor and reserve in cool dry place.

FIG SOUP

500 grams Black Mission figs
300 grams water
100 grams sugar
200 grams berry base
20 grams ginger
2 pieces chopped lemongrass
1/2 fruit orange peel

METHOD

Place all ingredients in sous-vide bag and cook at 90°C for 20 minutes. Chill and strain through fine mesh sieve. Season with lemon juice, lemon zest, and lemon oil.

GARNISH

Glazed figs
Blackberries
Cape gooseberries
Green apple wedge
Red apple slices

Autostrada dei Fiori

The highway that runs along the Mediterranean connecting Italy to France begins as the A10 along the French Riviera and crosses into Italy to become the Autostrada dei Fiori, or Highway of Flowers, for the beautiful flora lining the sides of the road on both sides of the border.



TRAVEL WITH MICHAEL WHITE FROM PROVENCE TO LIGURIA

ST. REMY/NOVES

La Maison Domaine de Bournissac

Montée d'Eyragues
Paluds de Noves
Tel. +33.4.90.90.25.25

The dishes at La Maison Domaine de Bournissac are full of the rich flavors and colors of Mediterranean cuisine. Chef and owner Christian Peyre works with local produce that he often combines with fruit and vegetables from his own garden.

NICE

Cours Saleya Market

Between Place Massena and Vieux Nice in Old Town
Tel. +33.4.92.14.48.00

Every day is market day here, from the flower market and fruit and vegetable market (Tuesday to Sunday) to the antiques fair (Mondays) and the arts-and-crafts market on summer evenings. Blooms of every color and shape burst to life; row after row of spices beckon. There are grapes the size of golf balls and olives glistening in the sun. Fresh fish are stacked in icy display cases.



CANNES

Marché Forville

Forville Market is located on the west end of Rue Meynadier, which is one of the Côte's best gourmand streets. For a spectacular food experience, whether for eating or viewing, no other market in Cannes beats this for scale and variety.

L'Oasis

6 Rue Jean-Honoré Carle
Mandelieu-la-Napoule
Tel. +33.4.93.49.95.52

The cooking of the Raimbault brothers offers a true gastronomic experience at this prestigious culinary institution. Come here for a rare combination of Asian and Mediterranean flavor influences set amid a neo-Gothic villa.

CAP D'ANTIBES

Hôtel du Cap Eden-Roc

Boulevard JF Kennedy
Antibes
Tel. +33.4.93.61.39.01

The food here is good and the service attentive, but you must have lunch at the Eden Roc for the captivating views of the Mediterranean—as well as for celebrity sightings!

Restaurant de Bacon

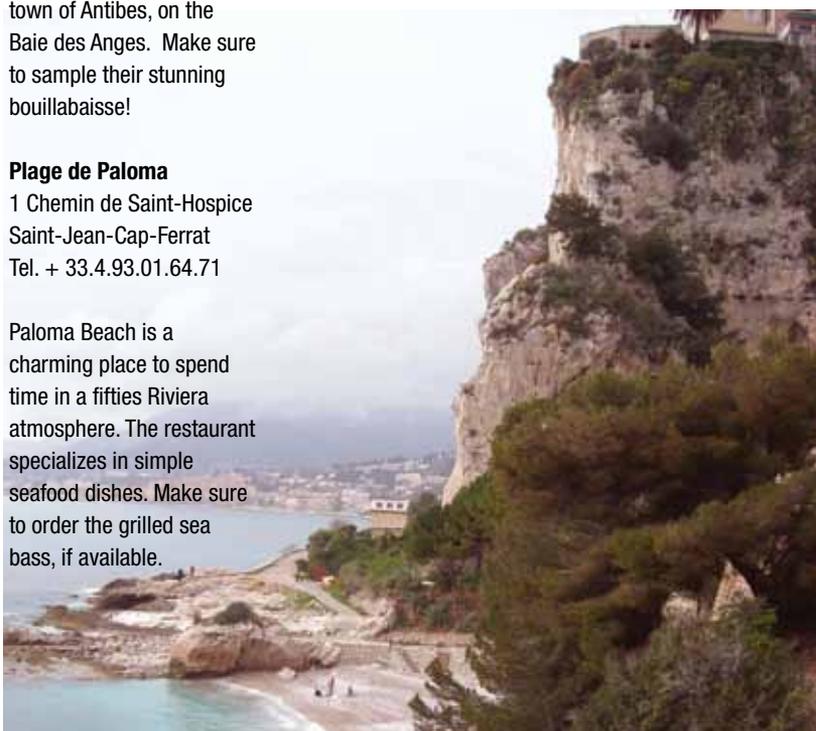
Boulevard de Bacon
Cap d'Antibes
Tel. +33.4.93.61.50.02
restaurantdebacon.com/uk/

Michelin-starred Bacon is one of the most renowned fish restaurants in France, sitting across from the old town of Antibes, on the Baie des Anges. Make sure to sample their stunning bouillabaisse!

Plage de Paloma

1 Chemin de Saint-Hospice
Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat
Tel. + 33.4.93.01.64.71

Paloma Beach is a charming place to spend time in a fifties Riviera atmosphere. The restaurant specializes in simple seafood dishes. Make sure to order the grilled sea bass, if available.



VENTIMIGLIA

Balzi Rossi

Ristorante Balzi Rossi
Piazzale A. De Gasperi
2 Frontiera San Ludovico
Tel. +39.0184.38132
ristorantebalzirossi.com

Smack on the Franco-Italian frontier, the restaurant Balzi Rossi offers a sneak preview of Italy, with its two Michelin stars, fashionable clientele, and cuisine that combines the best of Liguria with French formality. Don't miss the Ligurian seafood specialty *cappone magro* that comes as a pretty bouquet of baby shellfish laced with a tangy sauce of olive oil, vinegar, and anchovies.

MONTE CARLO

Le Louis XV

Hôtel de Paris
Place du Casino
Tel. +37.7.98.06.88.64
hoteldeparismontecarlo.com

The menu, a Mediterranean and seasonal symphony of a style that Alain Ducasse qualifies in one word—"essential"—suggests a wide pallet of exquisite dishes. The wine cellar, filled with 400,000 bottles, is a wine aficionado's dream. But above all, the chef has ensured that every detail reveals the magic of this incomparable place. A timeless enchantment.



ALONG THE MEDITERRANEAN WINE ROUTE

**HRISTO ZISOVSKI, BEVERAGE DIRECTOR
CHEF SOMMELIER AT AI FIORI**

Coming to Ai Fiori, I was excited to bring my knowledge of French wines to the table and have a chance to explore some of the regions in Italy that are my personal favorites but I had yet to work with. Guests tend to associate Michael White with Italian cuisine, much the same way they do with Jean-Georges and French cuisine. Now I get to delve into both worlds. But I don't want our guests to limit themselves here; the food is extremely wine friendly, and you do not need to drink around it.

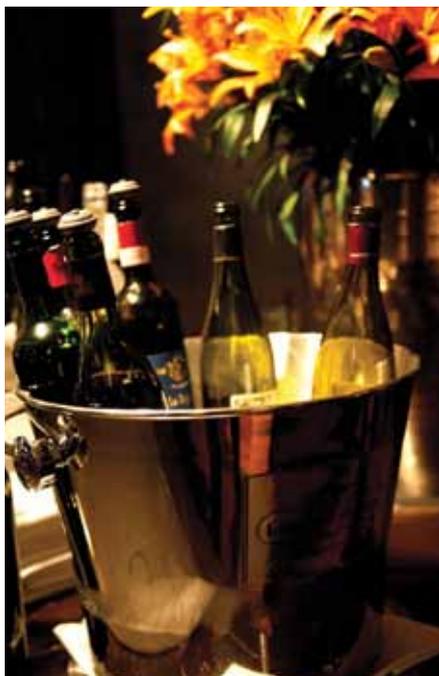
My goal at Ai Fiori is to have something for everyone. When we first opened, the wine list featured 500 bottles, and that number has steadily grown to about 900. Because of the cuisine's focus, I started with the French and Italian Riviera, concentrating on the wines from Liguria, Piedmont, Provence, Rhône, and the Languedoc-Roussillon region. Using that as my core, I put together the rest of the list to complement it. So we have a great selection of wines that are not necessarily from Italy and France, including a

Mediterranean selection of Spanish, some Greek, even Croatian and Portuguese.

In the kitchen, P.J. Calapa has a great touch for comforting, well-put-together food. He is very creative in his use of classic ingredients from the Riviera, which allows us equal creativity with the wine pairing according to how much leeway guests allow us. The seafood dishes, ceviches, and crudo conjure up briny, mineral, fragrant pairings that call on all the whites from

Liguria with a very beautiful sea breeze kiss to them without being aggressive. Our more gamey meat dishes, like the lamb, work well with Châteauneuf-du-Pape grenaches because of their bruising quality.

Ultimately, I want to enhance our guests' dining experience by providing them wine with a style or flavor they are looking for, or by encouraging them to be a little experimental and go off the beaten path to discover something new.



ON THE LIST

LIGURIA

Liguria is known for its graceful, coastal white wines and light reds and rosés. The white wines from this region are grassy and also full of sea breeze minerality with notes of hard pit fruits. Some of the grapes responsible for this are vermentino, pegaso, and moscato. The red wines are light and floral, made from rossese, dolcetto, and sangiovese.

Perfect Pairing with the Whites

Vichyssoise: potato, leek, Beausoleil oysters, chorizo, Ligurian lemon oil

Hristo's Recommendations

Riviera Ligure di Ponente Pigato "Cycnus," Poggio dei Gorleri 2010

Colli di Luni Vermentino "Ithaa," Tenuta La Ghiaia 2008

Ligurian Red Wines Call For

Agnolotti: braised veal parcels, pignoli, sylvetta, black truffle sugo

Hristo's Recommendation

Granaccio Syrah "Çericò," Walter de Battè per Prima Terra 2006

A more earthy but lighter take on juicy Côtes du Rhone.

PIEDMONT

Piedmont includes the Langhe, where the two most famous DOCG wines, barolo and barbaresco, are produced. These great reds are made from the nebbiolo grape and the flavor profiles vary on the three main grape varieties, with dolcetto being easy drinking and plush; barbera having dry, crisp red fruits on the palette; and when consuming nebbiolo, one may call to mind tar, roses, smoke, chocolate, and truffles!

Hristo's Recommendations

Colli Tortonesi Timorasso
"Derthona," Claudio Mariotto 2007

Barolo, Prunotto "Bussia" 2004

VALLE D'AOSTA

Known for its craggy Alpine landscape and light, aromatic reds and whites made from unique native varieties, Valle d'Aosta is the smallest Italian winemaking region. Whites range from light Müller-Thurgau to full-bodied to sweet moscato. Reds run the range as well and are usually blends of many indigenous varieties.

Hristo's Recommendations

"Vini Estremi," La Cave du Vin Blanc de Morgex et de La Salle 2010

Fumin, Les Crêtes 2006

SICILY

Sicily is the largest island on the Mediterranean. It is known for its olive oil; rich whites that are floral, creamy, and nutty; and earthy reds that are concentrated of ashy flavors and dry red fruits. Wines are all medium- to full-bodied in style. The famous fortified wine marsala is from this appellation.

Hristo's Recommendations

Fiano "Cometa," Planeta 2008

Etna Rosso, Il Cantante 2002

SARDEGNA

Sardegna's wine industry has undergone a big modernization in recent decades, bringing more attention to the region's rosés and rich wines. The great age-worthy reds from Cannonau, with notes of ripe, hearty, roasted black fruits, are grown here, as are the full-bodied floral and peach-kissed white varieties of malvasia, moscato, vermentino, and vernaccia.

Hristo's Recommendations

"Bianco," Dettori 2007

"Turriga" Argiolas 2005

PROVENCE

They have been making wine in Provence for more than 2,600 years. Whites from Provence have a tropical richness to pair with lush seafood dishes, while dark, meaty, spicy reds with roasted fruits scream for a succulent lamb dish. Two great pairings from the Ai Fiore menu are recommended below.

Trofie Nero: *Ligurian crustacean ragout, seppia, scallops, spiced mollica*

Palette Blanc, Château Simone 2006

Agnello: *rack of lamb en crepinette, ratatouille, zucchini flower*

Bandol, Domaine de Terrebrune 1990

Vin de Pays des Bouches du Rhône, Domaine de Trévallon 2001



LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON

There is newfound pride from this region and great buys in the earthy, dark fruit reds and the honeyed and herbaceous full-bodied white dessert wines such as banyuls.

Hristo's Recommendations

Vin de Pays des Côtes Catalanes Blanc "Vieilles Vignes," Domaine Gauby 2007

Pic Saint Loup "Métairies du Clos Vieilles Vignes," Clos Marie 2008

SOUTHERN RHÔNE

While the mellow warmth of the grenache is found in most Southern Rhône wines, this region is in fact a blender's paradise, with a choice of up to 23 different grape varieties. The full whites of this region, dripping with stone fruit, are equally as good but less well-known than the famous spicy reds ranging from light côtes du Rhône to medium gigondas to full-bodied Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

Hristo's Recommendations

Côtes du Rhône Blanc "Clémentia," Domaine Les Aphyllanthes 2009

Châteauneuf-du-Pape Rouge, Henri Bonneau "Cuvée Spéciale" 1998

CORSICA

Corsica is *l'île de Beauté*, the Island of Beauty, known for its dark rosé wines. Very little yield comes from this lovely island, but of the grapes that do grow here, the white grape vermentino produce whites, light and dry, of a remarkably fragrant and floral character. The only red grape, nielluccio, produces wines full of fruit, round and clean with rustic charm.

Hristo's Recommendations

Patrimonio Blanc "Haut de Carco," Antoine Arena 2009

Patrimonio, Yves Leccia 2008





ALL WATERS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL.

S.Pellegrino® and Acqua Panna® are far from ordinary waters. S.Pellegrino flows from thermal springs in the foothills of the Italian Alps, while Acqua Panna emerges from the Tuscan Apennine Mountains. Their long journeys to the surface infuse each of these waters with its own special combination of minerals. The result? Great tasting waters that complement fine dining, refresh the palate and bring a myriad of flavors to life.



PRIVATE DINING AT AI FIORI

PATTY McAVOY, EVENTS DIRECTOR AT AI FIORI



Every event is about creating the perfect equation: finding out the needs of each client, using the space correctly, and working with the kitchen to deliver to a group's tastes. Every detail counts, and at Ai Fiori I really believe that our guests appreciate the thought put into this restaurant—from the shape of the pasta down to the way the marble floor is faced.

We offer two private dining rooms: one that overlooks 36th Street that can accommodate 12 guests, and the other, featuring a wine wall, that can seat up to 20. In the main dining room, we can create several semiprivate dining areas

using soft aqua blue curtains. And right along the windows on Fifth Avenue, we can have 75 guests seated at big round tables. For a restaurant buyout, we can accommodate 140 seated or 200 standing.

My goal is to excite people with not only the food and atmosphere, but also the ease of booking an event here.

For more information or to schedule your next event, contact Patty McAvoy at pmcavoy@altamareagroup.com or 212-613-8660.

AL MOLO

Michael White on Hong Kong

"We live in a globalized market, and there were so many reasons why opening in Hong Kong was a great decision. Believe it or not, we have a lot of people calling from the States to make reservations because they are about to head there. I am constantly amazed by how much people travel. I was just in Hong Kong, where a young lady who was dining at Al Molo approached me to tell me how great the Trofie Nero dish at Ai Fiori was! She had photos of the food on her phone and everything! How cool is that?!"

At his Hong Kong restaurant, Al Molo, Italian for "the Pier," Chef Michael White showcases his signature Italian culinary style in this spectacular space that overlooks the Victoria Harbour waterfront. The restaurant features three separate dining experiences: relaxed casual in the front, more opulent in the midsection, and al fresco tables on the outside terrace, facing a dramatic skyline.

In true Michael White fashion, he spent a lot of time in Hong Kong's local eateries prior to the opening and studied techniques from chefs in the area. White selected Jimmy Everett, formerly of Marea, as his executive chef to helm the kitchen. Seasonal fish dishes and hand-selected meats headline the menu, along with signature fresh house-made pastas and risottos. And unique among Michael White restaurants are Al Molo's thinly cooked pizzas, made in front of the diners and topped with the freshest market ingredients available.



HAUTENOTES

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HAUTETASTE



CORTEZ MULLET COMPANY AMERICAN GOLD BOTTARGA

Cortez Mullet Company is the only outlet producing American Gold Bottarga in the United States. Founder Seth Cripe does it all from start to finish: fishing sustainably, using hand-thrown cast nets, leaning the mullet, cutting out the golden roe, and curing the roe with kosher sea salt. When freshly grated, this golden bottarga adds a wonderful complexity to dishes with fresh seafood flavor and balanced salinity. Fishing according to the seasons and using sustainable methods, the Cortez Mullet Company is committed to supporting fishing that ensures the ecological health of our oceans and their marine life. It's no surprise that top American chefs like Thomas Keller, Daniel Boulud, Andrew Carmellini, and Michael White now consider Cortez Gold the finest bottarga on the planet.

HAUTECOCKTAIL

BRAZILIAN PRESIDENTE

2 oz. Leblon cachaça
1/2 oz sweet vermouth
1/2 oz fig liqueur
dash of grenadine

Shake all the ingredients on ice. Strain and serve up in a chilled martini glass. Garnish with a fig.

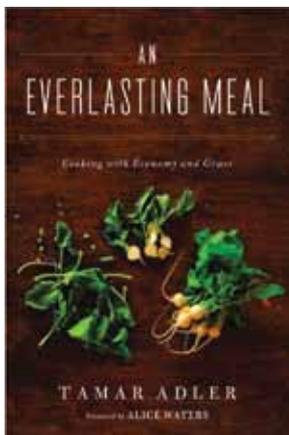


LEBLON

Cachaça is unique to Brazil, as it can only be made there. Like France's Cognac or Champagne and Mexico's tequila, cachaça has qualities that separate it from any other spirit. Cachaça is made from fresh-pressed sugarcane juice, which is then fermented and distilled. Distillation can be accomplished using two accepted methods: industrial column stills or artisanal alembique copper pot stills. The latter method represents the minority of the yearly production, but it can result in complex, interesting, and wonderful spirits.

Leblon, an artisanal cachaça, is made at Maison Leblon in Brazil's state of Minas Gerais. The distillery's mission is to show the world that cachaça can be a noble spirit. The result is a lively pure nose and a full-bodied liquor that exhibits a floral bouquet with light herbal and grassy notes and tastes of sweet sugarcane, crème brûlée, spicy vanilla, and white pepper. The spirit warms in the mouth and leaves a gentle sweetness in the middle of the tongue that flowers as it lasts, much like a refined tequila.

HAUTEBOOKS



An Everlasting Meal: Cooking with Economy and Grace by Tamar Adler

Through the insightful essays in *An Everlasting Meal*, Tamar Adler issues a rallying cry to home cooks. In chapters about boiling water, cooking eggs and beans, and summoning respectable meals from empty cupboards, Tamar weaves philosophy and instruction into approachable lessons on instinctive cooking. Tamar shows how to make the most of everything you buy, demonstrating what the world's great chefs know: that great meals rely on the bones and peels and ends of meals before them. She explains how to smarten up simple food and gives advice for fixing dishes gone awry. She recommends turning to neglected onions, celery, and potatoes for inexpensive meals that taste full of fresh vegetables, and cooking meat and fish resourcefully. By wresting cooking from doctrine and doldrums, Tamar encourages readers to begin from wherever they are, with whatever they have. *An Everlasting Meal* is elegant testimony to the value of cooking and an empowering, indispensable tool for eaters today.

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