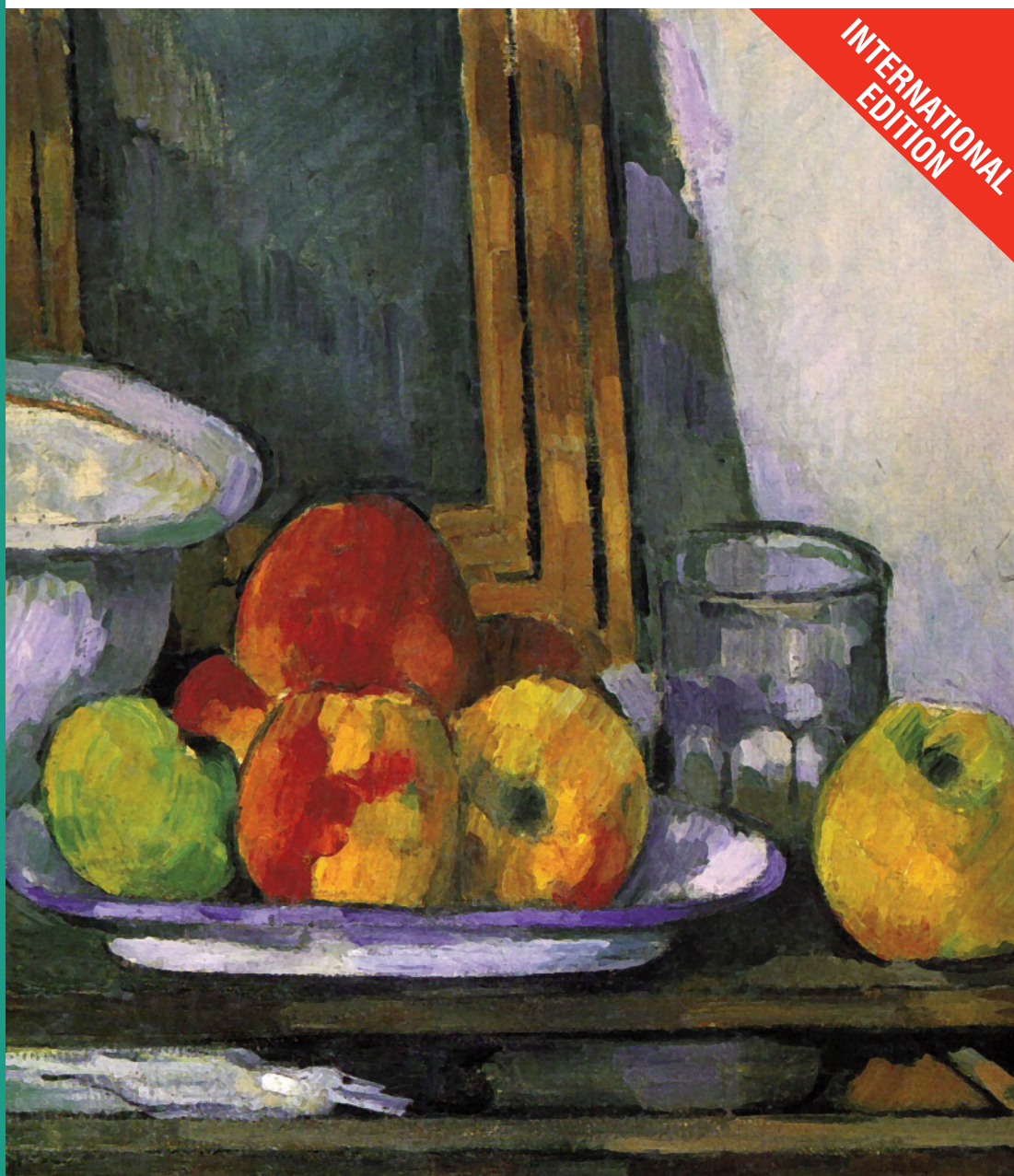


CIVILTÀ DELLA TAVOLA

ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA



ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA

A CULTURAL INSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ITALY
FOUNDED IN 1953 BY ORIO VERGANI

www.accademia1953.it





L'ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA

FOUNDED IN 1953 BY ORIO VERGANI
AND LUIGI BERTETT, DINO BUZZATI TRAVERSO,
CESARE CHIODI, GIANNINO CITTERIO,
ERNESTO DONÀ DALLE ROSE, MICHELE GUIDO FRANCI,
GIANNI MAZZOCCHI BASTONI, ARNOLDO MONDADORI,
ATTILIO NAVA, ARTURO ORVIETO, SEVERINO PAGANI,
ALDO PASSANTE, GIANLUIGI PONTI, GIÒ PONTI,
DINO VILLANI, EDOARDO VISCONTI DI MODRONE,
WHIT MASSIMO ALBERINI AND VINCENZO BUONASSISI.

CIVILTÀ DELLA TAVOLA

ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA

INTERNATIONAL EDITION

JANUARY 2015 / N. 267

EDITOR IN CHIEF
GIOVANNI BALLARINI

COPY EDITOR
SILVIA DE LORENZO

LAYOUT
SIMONA MONGIU

TRASLATOR
NICOLA LEA FURLAN

THIS ISSUE INCLUDES ARTICLES BY
Giovanni Ballarini,
Elisabetta Cocito,
Gianni Fusaroli,
Antonio Gaddoni,
Paolo Petroni.



PUBLISHER
ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA
VIA NAPO TORRIANI 31 - 20124 MILANO
TEL. 02 66987018 - FAX 02 66987008
presidente@accademia1953.it
segreteria@accademia1953.it
redazione@accademia1953.it
www.accademia1953.it



MONTHLY MAGAZINE
REG. N. 4049 - 29-5-1956
TRIBUNALE DI MILANO



Rivista associata
all'Unione Stampa
Periodica Italiana



TABLE OF CONTENTS



DEAR ACADEMICIANS...

- 2 Writing in the Magazine
is the duty of
an Academician
(Giovanni Ballarini)

FOCUS

- 4 Tradition and innovation:
a false problem
(Paolo Petroni)

CULTURE AND RESEARCH

- 6 And now even fruit
(Elisabetta Cocito)
- 8 "Donkey-nose" eel
(Gianni Fusaroli)
- 10 The beauty of the *piada*
from Romagna
(Antonio Gaddoni)



On the cover: Graphic depiction of Still Life with Open Chest (1877) by Paul Cézanne. From the collection at the Orsay Museum in Paris.



Writing in the Magazine is the duty of an Academician

Each Academician must serve as a cultural, social and ethical reference point for Italian cuisine by contributing to the modernization and development of our Magazine.

BY GIOVANNI BALLARINI
President of the Academy

Dear Academicians, the role and visibility of the Academy is developed and carried out through our publications, especially in this magazine *Civiltà della Tavola* (*The Civilization of the Table*), whose 267th issue you are reading. This year the magazine will turn 25, celebrating its silver anniversary with the cuisine of Italy.

Since the turn of the century, *Civiltà della Tavola* has undergone many changes and above all, improvements, and will continue to do so throughout the future. At the same time it has borne witness to the activities of the Academy, especially in terms of cuisine in a changing society.

These activities involve all aspects of Italian society, and are extremely pertinent and linked to the cultural work of our Academy. As such they deserve special attention and should be de-

veloped and improved through the growing contributions of the Academicians.

Civiltà della Tavola should not only contribute to safeguarding and passing on the traditions of our past but it should also be the instrument of greater cultural, scientific and critical awareness and knowledge, not merely as a episodic chronicle of the present but in terms of building a future.

The thematic publications of the Academy alone cannot accomplish this. This monthly magazine, available to all via the Internet, provides continuous cultural contact, and examines the rapidly changing reality of Italy's thousand "individual cultures" each with its own unique interpretation of cuisine and gastronomy, presented in a single stylistic portrait.

Today every Academician's full participation in the magazine *Civiltà della Tavola* is more essential than ever before. The role of the Academy and the role of its Academicians constitute two equally important aspects of this participation.

A cultural contribution from each Academician for the Silver Anniversary of the Magazine

The role of an Academician, especially today, is to examine, analyze, evaluate and express opinions and criticism about the Italian cuisines that are undergoing an invasion by publications of all types, often with little



or no value, as well as the advancement of pre-cooked, pre-packaged industrially produced foods that are stored in the freezer only to be briefly heated in the microwave oven before being served, that are supplanting thousands of our traditions.

As part of this picture, all Academicians, members of Italy's "thousand cultures" spread across the variegated Italian landscape, must provide their contributions or risk being accused of lack of interest in or even betrayal of our principals.

In 1927 the book *La trahison des clercs* (*The Treason of the Intellectuals*) by the French philosopher Julien Benda was published. In it he accused the intellectuals of betraying their vocation as pure and impartial researchers and abandoning their ru-



le as dispassionate guides of humanity, able to keep themselves apart, or above, the mix of turbulent factions. Even today we can speak of the betrayal of the intellectuals, in our case gastronomic Academicians, with reference to another and more serious degeneration of their cultural mission: their abandonment of their natural obligation to provide cultural points of reference, both social and ethical, thereby risking becoming poor custodians and teachers of a body of knowledge in which everything, including all foods prepared

all ways, are considered of equal value and in which man does not see the limits of any cultural horizon. Without overestimating the potential for our Academy or individual Academicians to intervene in the heart of society, we can note that those who should constitute the ideal guides for society have often self-regressed to the role of spectators, or at most, witnesses to an ever increasing crisis, by resorting to bemoaning the glories of a long lost past or raising a chorus of fear mongering voices. The materialist says that man "is what

he eats". But man also hungers for something more, for culture and spirituality, and if he manages to nourish himself with good food, rich in culture, he can also achieve health of the soul.

In keeping with these thoughts, I ask every Academician not to be a traitorous intellectual but to make a small but valuable contribution to the Silver Anniversary of *Civiltà della Tavola* with an up-to-date contribution to be published in the magazine, using the format "an idea in 5,000 keystrokes".

GIOVANNI BALLARINI



GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MAGAZINE

Academicians' contributions to the magazine are not only welcome, but essential. However Academicians should keep in mind some important guidelines so that their contributions, which are the fruit of their passion and dedication, are expeditiously published.

- **Articles:** it is essential that the **text of articles be sent via email**, in MS Word format (not pdf) to the following address: redazione@accademia1953.it

- **Article length:** it is important that articles are **between 3,500 and 7,000 characters** (including spaces); this is the best way to avoid cuts that are bothersome for both the editors and those submitting the texts. All computers should be able to provide character counts..

- Each issue of the magazine is printed one month ahead of the cover date so that it can be delivered to the Academicians by that date. Those submissions that are time sensitive should be sent in ample time.

- **"From the Delegations" Section:** In order to facilitate reading, please **limit articles to a maximum of 2,500 characters including spaces**.

- Please remember that in the "From the Delegations" section as well as elsewhere, **descriptions of meetings held outside the territory of the Delegation or in the homes of Academicians, unless they are associated with an important event, will not be published**. Also, **please do not include a list of dishes and wines**. Such listing should appear on the appropriate rating form regarding convivial meetings.

- **Rating forms for convivial meetings:** should be sent to the Secretariat (segreteria@accademia1953.it). It is also important to limit remarks in the "notes and comments" section of the form to **800 characters** (maximum 1,000) spaces included in order to avoid cuts. Rating forms that reach the Secretariat more than 30 days after the event will be discarded.

- We also request that you not submit reports on convivial meetings held **outside the territory of the Delegation**, or that take place in the **homes of Academicians**, or are otherwise not held in restaurants or public venues, as they will not be published.

DEAR ACADEMICIANS...	
2	Cuisine and the foodblogger network (Giovanni Ballarini)
FOCUS	
9	Laying the table (Alessandro Perini)
11	The state of the restaurant business (Alfredo Pelle)
13	The origin of a phenomenon (Teresa Perissinotto and Roberto)

Tradition and innovation: a false problem

Even tradition changes imperceptibly to adapt a dish to today's needs.

BY PAOLO PETRONI

Secretary General of the Academy

Quite often there is talk of traditional cuisine as antithesis to innovative cuisine. In reality, what is traditional cuisine? According to the dictionary, “**tradition**” is the complex of memories, news and habits and transmitted from one generation to another through example, testimonials, and teachings, both oral and written. The word comes from the Latin “*tradere*”, that is to consign, to transmit, to hand down. The adjective “**traditional**” means “homage to the customs of the past”. The issue seems very clear, then. However, is passing a habit from one generation to the next, that is to say in about twenty-five years, enough to create a tradition? The European Community thinks so. We do not. Certainly, in order to define a traditional dish, being constant habit for such a short period is not enough. How long should this period be? Two generations perhaps? Half a century? It still does not appear sufficient, even though it may suffice in some cases (think of the “*scialatielli*” of from Amalfi coast that came about in the 1960s.) Let us go back even farther in time: three or four generations. We have gone back a century, so perhaps it will be enough. That places us at the outset of the twentieth century, in full “artusian” period, after the great Artusi. Let us stop here! I suspect that nobody would call a medieval or renaissance course “traditional”. The dishes by Plàtina, Messisbugo and Scappi are part of history more than tradition.

With good reason we can state that gastronomic tradition is in fact the sum of a lot of small good innovations that became strengthened over the course of many years. Yet, the dichotomy

“tradition-innovation” confounds the mouths of many gastronomy adepts who deal with cuisine and in particular, with Italian eateries. Many believe that this subject is off limits: it is a non-issue! Only the good cuisine exists and the dividing line between the two concepts is unstable and subjective. Innovation is often subtle, almost imperceptible. Today, when we speak of innovative cuisine, we think of truly strange dishes and other ones that have achieved success: risotto with coffee powder or licorice, cooking in a vacuum at low temperature, thrice cooked pigeon, stockfish in three dimensions, shrimps in egg powder and caper ash. What is overlooked here is that in reality no dish is prepared just like it used to be. The yellow Milanese risotto that appears perfect and traditional today is something quite different when compared with the way it was cooked in the past. At that time, a small sausage (called *cervellato*) was used, with a lot of onion, and the final product was quite liquid. The Genoese pesto had so much garlic that it would be unwelcome on today's table. In addition, it contained *prescinseua*, acid curd made from whole milk. Tomato “*pappa*” was produced with garlic, sage, and tomato paste. Even Bolognese ragout has changed. Moreover, spaghetti “*allo scoglio*” (with shellfish and the like) did not exist and fish soups were different, and very bony. The cooking methods and the ingredients were different, not to mention quantities. If we had two simple spaghetti and tomato dishes in front of us, in the style of 1950 and of 2014, we would be amazed by the difference, obviously in favor of the new millennium's version.





And now even fruit

From an edible raspberry produced on a 3D printer to pizza delivered by a drone, the human race risks becoming increasingly isolated.

BY ELISABETTA COCITO
Academician, Turin Delegation



A lonely and unsettling future, at least from this writer's point of view, seems to await those of us who maintain that everything that revolves around food also involves pleasure, from the acquisition of just a few fruits or vegetables to the convivial sharing of the meal. A lively local market with its noises, odors and colors where we can wander around and choose the products that our senses lead us to or the best bargains, constitutes a rite that those of us who love cooking dedicate ourselves to joyfully. And yet perhaps the future will even manage to deprive us of this small pleasure.

We recently learned that in a manmade raspberry was produced on a 3D printer in a laboratory in Cambridge. The process was inspired by molecular cuisine and can briefly be described as follows: when the juice of a raspberry is added to alginic acid it produces gelatinous globules which are immersed in a cold solution of calcium. This in turn is inserted into a "printer" that produces the fruit in just a little more than a minute. Those who tasted the product confirmed that it was good, and had the same flavor as the fruit made my Mother Nature. According to its developers, this invention will create an entirely new scenario not only in the restaurant world but also in home cooking: It constitutes a new concept of

"fruit on demand" that will improve culinary creations. And this raspberry was certainly not the first food that was "printed" in 3D. While there have already been experiments conducted with pizza, chocolate sculptures and cakes, this is the first time a natural product has been reproduced. In fact, the inventors of the 3D raspberry maintain that in the not too distant future we will be able to create "personalized" fruits and vegetables that do not even exist now with new shapes, consistencies and flavors, right in our own kitchens.

Apart from the strictly nutritional aspects, such a prospect leads me to question its social impact. The prospect of creating foods "at home" would inflict yet another blow to one of the values that is declining in our society: sharing food with friends. As supporters of the culture of food in the broadest sense of the term, we Academicians are noticing with discomfort how current social models and new technologies are increasingly driving us toward self-sufficiency. We may underestimate the fact that, at times, this can lead us toward loneliness and the loss of human contact that is a fundamental characteristic not just of human beings but of all creatures: socialization.

Even today we still can enjoy the pleasure of having a drink or a sandwich with friends, but the food often comes from a machine (fortunately in Italy we still have the habit of "taking time to chat" at a bar). But what of the new generation of supermarkets, where we select the product, put a label on



it, scan it and pay for it directly at an automated cashier? It is done entirely alone, from the choice of the product to the printing of the receipt. We can even use a computer to place an order directly with the kitchen of a restaurant without wasting time discussing the qualities of the food or wine with the server or other diners. And while we wait for the food to be served (and even while we are eating) instead of conversing with our dining companions, perhaps discussing the food, we continue to carry on our work with the assistance of our cell phones.

If you want to, you can even do your grocery shopping online, and find your bagged groceries on your doorstep when you get home from work. What is more, in the United States the service Amazon Fresh, tested in Seattle and now available in some parts of Los

Angeles and San Francisco allows clients to order complete meals or a selection of foods (meat, fish, side dishes etc.) online including organic and zero-kilometer products delivered at a predetermined hour that can be eaten immediately. The slogan is “delivered to your door” along with “freshly baked bread” or “milk direct from the farm”.

In the not too distant future if we want to stay home in the evening and have a pizza delivered, we will be able to avoid the risk of exchanging a few words with the delivery boy: the pizza will arrive by drone. In Mumbai, India, the owner of an “Italian” pizzeria has experimented with the home delivery of pizza using GPS and a remotely piloted drone. It takes ten minutes as opposed to the thirty minutes required for delivery in traffic. It was just a first attempt, hampered by restrictions on the use of drones and necessary technological improvements, but the pizza store owner insists that within four or five years drone delivery will be the norm. A similar experiment was conducted in Great Britain by the Domino’s pizza chain, using a remote

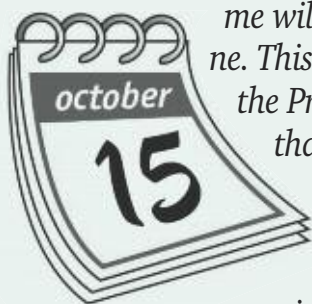
controlled “pizzacopter” to deliver an insulated bag bearing hot food.

It is undeniable that these examples represent, or could represent, a great leap forward from the point of view of convenience and time management in a society that moves as quickly as ours. It allows us total autonomy. We need not depend on anyone, and can create our own personal space that is free from unpredictability or surprises, perhaps able to “freshly bake” a tailor made raspberry suited to our individual taste. But life in general, especially in terms of cuisine - our particular area of interest - is characterized by comparisons, experimentation, and sharing. Denying ourselves the pleasure of joining together around the table, of selecting our foods while shopping, of exchanging opinions and information with others is to deny ourselves of an additional joy in our daily lives. Relying only on algorithms, statistics and the eventual elimination of culinary errors based on attempts and experimentation in the choice or preparation of a food is, in my opinion, both a gastronomic and human tragedy.

ELISABETTA COCITO

2015 ECUMENICAL DINNER

The convivial ecumenical meeting that brings together all the Academicians in Italy and around the world at the virtual table, will take place on October 15 at 8:30 pm. This year’s theme will be Condiments: Sauces and Gravies that characterize regional cuisine. This topic, chosen by the “Franco Marengi” Study Center and approved by the President’s Council, is aimed at recapturing, through cuisine, traditions that are undergoing great changes today owing to our passage from home and family cooking to artisanal and finally industrial foods. And if at one time the use of condiments was determined by neighboring cultures, today the field is a global one and is in a state of constant and rapid change. Delegates are entrusted with ensuring that the ecumenical dinner is accompanied by an appropriate presentation of a cultural character that illustrates this important theme and that the dishes served are relevant to the topic.





“Donkey-nose” eel

A delicious fish soup with the classic product that has made Comacchio famous around the world.

BY GIANNI FUSAROLI
Academician, Ferrara Delegation

Comacchio is famous for contributing 99 soldiers to the troops of Garibaldi, as well as for helping save the life of that “Hero of Two Worlds” during his historic landing on the Adriatic shores under pursuit of the Austrian navy, and for helping him and his dying wife Anita find shelter in the Romagna region. Another reason for its fame come from the sensational archeological discoveries from the ancient necropolis of Spina made in and around its environs during the 1950s. These artifacts have made the Archeological Museum of Ferrara even richer than the one in Athens. But above all, Comacchio is known world wide for its lagoons and its eels. Born in the Sargasso Sea, these fish complete their metamorphosis in a six-year voyage that leads them to take refuge in the brackish waters of

the region’s lagoons where, in another seven to eight years they reach maturity. At this point their instinct leads them back to the sea to complete the reverse journey (in far less time) to reproduce in the deep waters of the Atlantic, at a depth of almost one mile. The habitat of Comacchio, which already existed around the 8th century A.D., is located within a vast complex of lagoons of almost 400 square kilometers (250 square miles). It was only natural that the inhabitants of the area would gain sustenance from these waters, and with their rudimentary tools (harpoons and small nets) take from them eels and other fish.

As far back as the 14th century chronicles describe a certain man named Guidi who came up with a system of blocking off the waters with obstacles made of wetland cane, or reed wattles,





to keep the fish from swimming back toward the sea when they sensed it was time to reproduce. This system made large scale fishing possible, even as much as 10,000 quintals per year.

This ingenious system of gates, known as “*lavoriero*” was actually mentioned by Torquato Tasso in his *Jerusalem Liberated*, as a simile comparing the heartache of love felt by Armida for Tancredi to the “*lavoriero*” that “amazingly was open when you wanted to enter but closed when you desired to leave”. That brings us to the modern age: toward the end of the 1700s a parliamentarian from Comacchio by the name of Antonio Buonafede (known as Agatopisto) staged a long and memorable “sit-in” at the antechambers of Milan. In so doing, he managed to obtain, from Napoleon in person, the definitive ceding of ownership of the lagoons to the city of Comacchio. Thus the rational and organized commercial exploitation of the waters of the area began, and apart from a small amount of fish set aside to satisfy the hunger of the families of the local harpooners, so did actual industrial management of the fishing. During the autumn harvest, the immature fish were released and allowed to reach maturity, and only those suitable for consumption were put on the market.

There were numerous varieties of eel: from the smallest, suitable for frying, to the largest (*capitone*) that were exported - by sea - as far as Naples in ships expressly for that purpose. The bulk of the catch was comprised of the “*buratelli*” weighing approximately 350 grams each (12 ounces) that lent themselves to being cooked on skewers on the grill, then packed in seasoned oil in small wooden containers (*zangolini*). Today they are packed in metal ones.

The process starts when the eels are brought to the processing center in Comacchio. Once the heads and tails have been removed they are preliminarily cooked on skewers in “fire ro-



oms”. Today there are still twelve large functioning hearths with ten spits each in a square shape overlaid in such a way that the fat from the eels can be collected at the bottom of the hearth, and subsequently used to fry other fish, like porgies, before marinating and packaging.

Once the skewered fish had finished cooking (they have discovered traces of pictures depicting the process from ancient Pompei) the eels, cut into 10 cm (4 inch) pieces were placed in containers and covered with a marinade. After a few days the marinated eel was ready to be sold commercially. Thus was born the typical product

that has made Comacchio famous around the world.

Naturally, over time the home kitchens came up with many other recipes for the “queen of the lagoons”, largely depending on its size: the most popular and widespread was the *brodetto*, or fish soup “donkey nose” style.

Setting aside the obscure origin of this name it should be said that this *brodetto*, which can be prepared year round using eels that are smaller and less

costly than those destined for marinating or grilling, has become famous as the classic dish of the lagoons. The following ingredients are necessary to make this delicious *brodetto*, to be served with yellow polenta: an eel weighing no more than 250 grams (9 ounces) (ideally the “*vallina*” variety) cut into 4-6 cm (1.5 -2 inch) pieces, vinegar, a little water and (if desired) a drop of white wine, enough chopped onion to cover the bottom of the pan as well as scatter over the eel, tomato paste, salt, pepper, and a bay leaf (never use oil because the fat is supplied by the fish itself).

GIANNI FUSAROLI

E-mail addresses of Italian Academy of Cuisine



President:

presidente@accademia1953.it

Secretary General:

segretariogenerale@accademia1953.it

National Secretariat:

segreteria@accademia1953.it

Editorial office:

redazione@accademia1953.it



The beauty of the *piada* from Romagna

It went along on the NASA-Soyuz mission and it recently achieved Igp status from the European Union. The traditional recipes still come from the seven sisters of the Romagna region.

BY ANTONIO GADDONI
Imola Delegate



In Romagna, and only in Romagna, wherever you go you will find a different kind of piada. After having traveled the seven sister cities (Imola, Faenza, Lugo, Ravenna, Forlì, Cesena, Rimini), from Imola to Riccione-Cattolica, one realizes that the hands that make the dough change style and technique and make every last bite unique. From a plain ball of dough come the thin, medium, large, small, long or thick variations of this food that covers our plates so abundantly. And therein lies the beauty of the *piada*: from a base of water, flour or grain with a bit of lard or extra virgin olive oil, a sprinkling of salt and a few grams of yeast the result is always satisfying. There are some who even add milk, and if they like it that way, why not? The *piada* is eaten as soon as it is made, after a quick heating on a *terracotta* pan, it can be filled with myriad combinations. It can be rolled up around a *Dop squacquerone* soft cheese from Romagna, but it also marries well with a variety of salami. And who could forget the half-moon shape it takes when filled with a variety of the wild greens of our childhood like watercress, and other things, including tomatoes, potatoes and mozzarella, and folded in half. With the Adriatic at the region's feet, the *sarago* sea bream is a singular must in some local *piadas*. At any rate, their success is guaranteed by the accomplished hands of many rolling pin wizards and by the economic return, as evidenced by the thousands of *piada* stands spread across Romagna, from the plains to the rolling hills to the beaches of the Adriatic. In addition to the passion, the ability and the handing down of the culture of their

preparation there is a new chapter opening in the story of the *piada*: new industries that justly seek to generate work and wealth from this product that, if not going back to Etruscan times, has existed through good times and bad at least since the Roman era. Thus we have arrived, with a few modifications, to the conferral by the European Union of the Igp designation for the *piadina romagnola*, which in the coming months will cross numerous borders so that others may enjoy its goodness.

There are strict guidelines (no preservatives, flavors or additives) that must be followed now in order to bear the legitimate designation *piadina* or *piada romagnola*, which can only be produced and marketed in Romagna. It is an important step considering the presence of so many imitations and false copies - in the past year 61,000 tons of *piadine* of various types were produced. And now the *piadina romagnola* is not content with orbiting the earth in outer space, which seems to be an ideal habitat. As the astronauts of the recent NASA-Soyuz mission demonstrate with their fundamentally Mediterranean diet, their "flying *piada*" is compact enough to compete with the force of gravity. But not everyone was in favor of the arrival of the Igp designation, which was so suited for industrial consumption that a manifesto has been published to help offset standardization. In fact, both versions have a right to exist, as long as we remain aware that the traditional or real version (be it *piè*, *pièda*, *pji*, *pida*, *pjida* or *piada*) with its innumerable recipes, will remain a unique item to be protected and defended in all seven sisters of the Romagna region.