

DE GUSTIBUS TOURS & CULINARIA BISTROT: KITCHEN ARTISANS, ENOGASTRONOMY PROFESSIONALS



After years of accumulated experience in the organization of original events dedicated to wine & food, the guys of the De Gustibus Network, Andrea and Tommaso, have opened in Piazza Tasso, in Florence, a genuine and whimsical bistro of Mediterranean cuisine: the Culinaria Bistrot. And, also, a tour operator company to make the work complete.







De Gustibus Tours & Culinaria Bistrot: kitchen artisans, enogastronomy professionals

The story of De Gustibus Tours and Culinaria Bistrot begins in 2003, with four friends: Donato, An-

drea, Tommaso and Stefan, whom had a common passion for the genuineness of food and for a more respectful tourism. Stefan, a friend of Andrea, introduced him to Tommaso who worked in the tourism sector and immediately said the possibility of developing the project.



De Gustibus Network Association

In 2004, they began with knowledge on a variety of topics all focused around lowering the ecological footprint and creating a tour focused on the naturalness and freshness linked to the territory as an alternative to mass tourism; they have started to weave a network of very small family-run businesses operating in the natural food sector – from dairies to oil and pasta producers, to wine companies, of course – to be able to propose to the future associates a variety of food and wine events with a different approach, a different DNA: the cultural association De Gustibus Network was born.

The first years, a phase that they called the “garage” (as Steve Jobs would say), when they stored the raw materials purchased from small producers, who were a reference in their respective areas, in a private cellar in Florence to resell them in a wider market than the one that other companies could reach.



In that first period, among the strong ideas, there was also a cycle of events that was called “Divine Places”, in which the members, a couple of times a month, were invited by the various producers to get to know the company and its products through convivial events and the carrying out of various activities: for example, making cheese in a dairy, participating of bakery workshops, etc...



Original Tuscan experience

These first years were not easy, they worked hard to turn the initial cultural association into a tour company, De Gustibus Tours. From this moment, all the enogastronomic itineraries [present on their website were born](#): 8 linked to wine, plus many experiences regarding food, about 15 in all, managed by 3 collaborators. But attention, from 2018 there is an absolute novelty: the [tours in sidecar](#) (also selected for the Airbnb Experience, a proposal that immediately seemed very original to us).

The next season the vehicles (Ural) will be 4, for a total of 8 people: all vintage Ural sidecars. Customers have already turned out to be transversal, men and women, from families to singles, and the customers' attention is even more focused on the Riding Experience than on the enogastronomy itself.

Among the tours, the [Byodinamic Brunello of Montalcino Wine Tour](#) has exploded in the last years, largely exceeding the Chianti one. The food-experience tours are also growing, as those of Chianina and

Vernaccia, especially cheese and EVOO, but you can find out more just visiting their website ([de Gustibus](#) Tours).



“What if we opened a restaurant in Florence?”

After a long associative period, dedicated to the organization of events and tours in Tuscany, they thought that it was time to create a restaurant for the project. The first time that Andrea, a professor of Environmental Education and passionate about bicycles, entered the back of that property, he was moved by a 30-year-old aluminum balilla bike hanging on the wall, and only after he paid attention to the potential of the place to house a restaurant.

After overcoming many obstacles of design and technical and structural realization, the kitchen was built in a very long and torrid August, giving then place for a more creative and artistic phase of the decoration, that gradually assumed the endearing appearance that it shows today.



Culinaria Bistrot

A brick ceiling, a beautiful “artistic” counter, made up of vertically positioned steel kitchen top, a wooden counter obtained from a chestnut section of the Casentino, a shelving for the bottles obtained from the Aurea section of the Fibonacci series, a nautilus, a wave, a fractal where wine is the number one! SO the love for the PHILOSOPHY, the BIODYNAMICS and the aesthetics come together in an interesting mix between the countryside and the avant-garde, between warm wooden tables and the minimalism, between millenary wisdom and imagination that immediately welcomes whoever comes in.

Their cuisine, which differs – rightly, we add – from the typical traditional food of the district of Oltrarno, where, in Piazza Torquato Tasso, is located Culinary De Gustibus Bistro, is the result of a long sum that brings together many different travel and work experiences, willing to promote and value small quality producers, safeguarding the territories and the Mediterranean culture.



Eat local, beat global

Here begins our experiential phase with a great variety of appetizers and elegant dishes, to which the guests – Tommaso Baldassini, our glorious publisher, the other Tommaso, partner of the bistrot, Reiko, a young Californian here for an internship, and myself – respond with joy. Among the delicacies, the “affettati” (sliced meat) of the Conti butchery – which selects its own farmers and slaughters the animals itself – *soprassata* (an Italian dry salami), mortadella from Prato, Pratomagno ham, salami.

There is hummus with Gattai’s vegetables. There is an artichoke sautéed with salt, pepper, lemon and olive oil from the San Casciano farm, the same from where the Chianti we are drinking came, and Sardinian Parmesan. And, finally, an artichoke and Jerusalem artichoke flan, bringing a sweetness in contrast with the artichoke, and velvety *marzolino* cheese. All delicious.



Dinner at the Culinaria Bistrot

"Hummus is Middle East, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel" - says Tommaso - "la tajine, North Africa, Marocco, to where I travelled so many times. At the beginning, perhaps there was more a French approach, I remember the cocotte, for example, but we are actually in San Frediano, and we don't do nouvelle cuisine, not even Tuscan cuisine, it's our reworking in logistics key, let's say, and with this I mean the network of producers that we have created at km 0. The totality of the experience is a closed circle: at the table we taste the final product, with the tour we see the raw material."

There is also an idea to expose, at least once a month, the products of a company, in order to publicize it in loco. Once, the dinner was made at the producer, from now on they will do it at the Culinaria Bistrot instead, exposing the products.



First dishes

The first dishes arrive, a spiraled carrot sautéed in a pan with Tropea onion, yellow tomato, taggiasca olives, on a broccoli cream. The carrots, very delicate, look like pasta, but gluten-free, vegan and light.

For our Tommaso, instead, a Moroccan tajine of boiled vegetables with cous cous. A highlight for the glazed terracotta container composed of two parts: a lower one, flat and circular with low edges, and a top, conical, which is placed on the plate during cooking, a typical derivation of the Greek lekanis.

Mediterranean cuisine in the center of Florence

At first the main dish was the tajine of vegetables, of chicken, of meatballs, but the place was assuming the reputation of Moroccan restaurant in spite of its true connotation that is, however, Mediterranean, so the Tuscan part was enhanced along with the fish. A strong focus is on gluten-free, vegetarian and vegan, also because the creativity and flexibility of the chef can make each dish double-face for the benefit of those who want to make a free meal, without limitations of any kind.



Proof is that the same table can put together a celiac, a vegetarian, a vegan and a carnivore (as once in the jokes were together an Englishman, a Frenchman, a German and the inevitable Italian) each satisfied according to their own needs.

"Many of the reviews" – says Tommaso – "appreciate the network of local producers brought to the table. The most pleasing ones are the reviews that come from a cultured, selected tourism, used to travel and to great restaurants, which perhaps esteems us as the best venue of the whole trip. I must say that even a couple of important specialized bloggers, with two good ratings on their sites, have boosted our number of contacts and customers".



Culinaria Bistrot is many things: it is authenticity, local internationality, it is friendship, Mediterranean, inspiration, art, innovation, courtesy. Culinaria Bistrot is savoir-faire, and healthy products, km 0, for all tastes and for all needs, from vegan to carnivore.

What more can you expect?

We have been there, and you?



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