

Follow the New Wave of Italian Trattorias From Piedmont to Sicily

Chefs across Italy are reinvigorating the classic restaurant format — with delicious results.

By **Marco Bolasco** Published on June 15, 2025



Credit: Courtesy of Lo Stuzzichino

Many years ago, after touring some of Europe's most revered restaurants, Alberto Bettini decided to shake things up at his family trattoria back in Savigno, in the hills outside Bologna. He didn't turn the place into something pretentious. Instead, he took the painstakingly high standards of fine dining that he'd witnessed on his trip and applied them to every aspect of his restaurant — the suppliers, service, kitchen, and communication. But the core remained untouched: fresh pasta made in-house, housemade ragù, the best meats and seasonal specialties, and a strong connection to the region around it.

In 1998, Da Amerigo dal 1934 (Amerigo was Bettini's grandfather) received a Michelin star. It has held it ever since. And to this date, it's the only authentic trattoria to claim one. That's not because no other trattoria is worthy, but rather because Michelin keeps disregarding the genre. Luckily, the realm of trattorias doesn't need that sort of validation at all. It's doing just fine on its own.

In 2008, several years after Da Amerigo shot to fame, Andrea Gherra and Pietro Vergano, two young friends, opened Ristorante Consorzio in Turin. It quickly became a cult destination, thanks

to a deep selection of natural wines, a love for offal, and the two friends' extensive research into niche ingredients, all presented with a certain "I know you're skeptical, but I'm going to win you over" attitude. Consorzio has been the home of many talented chefs (including Valentina Chiaramonte, who is currently at the helm), but it has never put its chefs' fame first — proof that a true trattoria is also equal parts front-of-house and kitchen.

A Local's Guide to Italian Dining Etiquette

In Italy, the term trattoria traditionally refers to a specific type of restaurant — less formal than a ristorante, more substantial than an osteria. Typically, they are small, casual, family-owned places that focus on regional dishes. But lately, they've been enjoying an extraordinary renaissance, and Da Amerigo and Consorzio have seen many others following in their footsteps, resulting in a countrywide movement of contemporary trattorias.

These aren't cliché-heavy spin-offs of highbrow formats, nor soulless corporate trattorias, but instead places that write their own language using an original vocabulary. Yet the bedrock is still a marriage of specific, quintessentially Italian tastes wrapped in a very democratic box because a trattoria should also be an inclusive, convivial place, not an elitist hangout. High spenders, low spenders, the young, the old, traveling salesmen, truck drivers, food critics, moguls: Everyone should be welcome, and everyone should be able to afford eating there.

Most of the time, the inspiration behind these new-wave trattorias comes from people (whether second-generation owners or first-time restaurateurs) with strong entrepreneurial chops and some mileage from traveling the world. Menus sometimes feature a lighter take on classic dishes; other times, they're more creative — using tradition as a point of departure rather than the destination (though something in the dish should always feel familiar). What never changes is how ingredients are sourced. A carefully curated selection of local products, crafted by a strong network of artisans — this is the treasure of any trattoria worthy of the name.

11 Food and Drink Rules Italians Live By

Above all, a trattoria is about experiencing the nuances of Italian flavor through various degrees of tradition, but also about the nature of the place itself. The table at a trattoria is a place where life is lived, as much the lives of clients as those of the staff, be it the *oste* (literally, "the host"), the wine director, the waiter, or the owner (often the same person wearing different hats).

From north to south, Italy is reclaiming the idea of the trattoria, playing with it, and falling back in love with it all at a moment when fine dining is recalibrating and people are comfort-deprived. This new trattoria movement is writing some of the most interesting pages in the book of Italian dining today.

01 **Reis Cibo Libero di Montagna (Chiot Martin, Piedmont)**



Courtesy of Reis Cibo Libero di Montagna

After leaving a career in fine dining, Juri Chiotti opened this rustic, cozy space in one of the valleys that separate the Monviso peak from the Maritime Alps. The menu at [Reis Cibo Libero di Montagna](#) relies on efforts from local cheesemakers, fresh game, wild greens, and the fruit of beautifully tended gardens nearby.

02 **Ristorante Cacciatori (Cartosio, Piedmont)**

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The apricot crostata at Ristorante Cacciatori in Piedmont.
MATTEO CARASSALE

This country inn has been reborn under the loving care of Federica Rossini and Massimo Milano. [Ristorante Cacciatori](#) still uses the original wood stove for dishes like egg tajarin with tomato and parsley (Piedmont is the land of tajarin, local dialect for tagliolini), chicken cacciatora, and a phenomenal crostata.

03 | **Trattoria La Brinca (Ne, Liguria)**

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Trattoria La Brinca, in the Ligurian hills, is known for regional specialties like cùniggiu magro.
COURTESY OF TRATTORIA LA BRINCA

Iconic [La Brinca](#) lies on the thin, hilly strip between the sea and the sky where Liguria concentrates so much of its wilderness and flavors. The wine selection is impeccable, as is the stuffed lettuce in broth and prebugiun, a braised wild mesclun used in savory tarts, frittatas, and pansoti (heavenly Ligurian dumplings).



Courtesy of Al Resù and Germano Fedriga

Between Lake Iseo and Valtellina is [Al Resù](#), another family trattoria imbued with fresh energy thanks to young Greta Gemmi, who during a double apprenticeship — one under her nonna Angela and one under the late, great chef Vittorio Fusari — learned to look at the typical products of this part of Italy with playful creativity.

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Caffè La Crepa (Isola Dovarese, Lombardy)



Courtesy of Caffè La Crepa

The local specialty of pumpkin ravioli is almost always on the menu at [Caffè La Crepa](#), but the main draw at this award-winning family restaurant between Cremona and Mantua is traditional proteins — goose, capon, rabbit — along with a lot of glorious charcuterie and freshwater fish, the latter thanks to the restaurant's proximity to the Po River.

06 **L'Ostreria Fratelli Pavesi (Podenzano, Emilia-Romagna)**

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This [ostreria](#) (“tre” as in the three brothers behind it) near Piacenza is the perfect marriage of serene contemplation and rowdy celebration: great wine, prosciutto, and cheese, all the meats of the *cascina* (the low farmhouse typical of Northern Italy), and the restaurant’s iconic dish, a Baroque *bomba di riso* stuffed with pigeon.

07 **Osteria la Campanara (Galeata, Emilia-Romagna)**

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Osteria la Campanara in Emilia-Romagna.
COURTESY OF OSTERIA LA CAMPANARA

In the Apennines, close to the Parco Nazionale delle Foreste Casentinesi, intimate [Osteria la Campanara](#) (which also has rooms for travelers) serves fresh herb soups and tortelli sulla lastra, thin dough pockets stuffed with potato and vegetables, cooked on a hot stone.



Courtesy of Vecchia Marina

[Vecchia Marina](#) is a great seafood trattoria! The no-frills approach, fantastic primi, and extensive research by Gennaro D'Ignazio on low-impact fishing practices and into lesser known (but no less tasty) species of Adriatic fish have won the love of many, as well as a stamp of approval from Slow Food Abruzzo.

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Lo Stuzzichino (Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi, Campania)



Courtesy of Lo Stuzzichino

At Mimmo De Gregorio's über-popular hangout near the Amalfi Coast, the vegetables are grown in a dream of a garden nearby. Everything at [Lo Stuzzichino](#) is effortlessly elegant: stuffed escarole, local prawns, a pasta mista tossed in a perfect sauce made with just-picked tomatoes. It's heaven.

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Antichi Sapori (Montegrosso, Puglia)



Courtesy of Giuseppe Tricarico for Antichi Sapori

At Pietro Zito's place in rural Puglia, it's all about the vegetable garden: A board lists the day's fresh picks. Also, Zito's sustainable philosophy extends to the well-being of his staff; Antichi Sapori is closed on Saturday nights and on Sundays to allow them time at home, a radical choice in the hospitality business.

11 **Locanda Pecora Nera (Albi, Calabria)**

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Inside Locanda Pecora Nera.
Courtesy of Beatrice and Andrea Canino

Rugged Calabria deserves days of exploring, but even if you're in a hurry, make time to stop at Locanda Pecora Nera. You'll receive an immersion in the unique ecosystem and flavors (perhaps some fresh pasta with bitter herbs and still-warm ricotta?) of Sila, the Italian equivalent of California's sequoia-filled Giant Forest.

12 | **Caro Melo Osteria Rituale (Donnalucata, Sicily)**

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Courtesy of Carmelo Chiaramonte for Caro Melo

After years of wandering, chef Carmelo Chiaramonte landed at this joyous osteria near Ragusa, where he offers a playful, often irreverent take on the island's traditions. No Sicilian gastro-clichés at [Caro Melo](#): instead, dishes like a clam and almond soup with basil or seared tuna with strawberry peperonata.