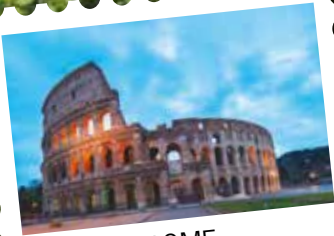




Accademia del Tartufo nel Mondo

The World Truffle Academy

His Majesty is back!



ROME



MONFORTE D'ALBA



POLIGNANO A MARE



DUBAI



THE TRUFFLE WORLD TOUR

truffle land

by
URBANI



COLTIVIAMO IL FUTURO

Piante micorrizate per la coltivazione di tartufi

AN ENVIRONMENTAL SENTINEL

Truffles grow only where the surrounding environmental balance is perfect. If there are polluting factors or temperature ranges outside the norm, truffles disappear. That's why they're excellent sentinels! When discussing land where once truffles were found and where they are nowhere to be seen today, it's easy to understand how the ecosystem has been damaged by some factor or other. Moreover, thanks to their symbiotic characteristics, truffles can give new life to uncultivated land which otherwise would not be used to the fullest. But of course, as the years go by, the tradition risks fading and the resources running out.

It is to avoid this scenario that **Urbani Tartufi's** project, named **TRUFFLELAND**, was born, aiming to give life to new truffle grounds through the cultivation of mycorrhizal plants.

"Truffleland monitors its clients' truffle growing projects from the embryonic stage to full production, developing a cultivation protocol based on years of experience and on several hectares of cultivated truffle grounds, which it makes available to anyone who doesn't just want to buy plants, but wishes to be guided and advised on how and what to do in the various stages of the truffle ground's life," says Olga Urbani from the Urbani Tartufi Group.

A project which allows to diversify activities - and therefore the income - of a farming business and which has the great advantage of being able to be installed both on first-rate agricultural land and on mountainous or foothills land no longer suitable for traditional crops with modern farming methods. An economic choice but also an environmentally-friendly one: the plants produce oxygen and their ordered cultivation allows the areas concerned to be kept clean and under control, to the advantage of fire prevention and the fight against hydro-geological instability.

From the point of view of the product, i.e. the truffle, it should be emphasized that, if on the one hand the market demand is gradually increasing, on the other hand the natural production is in sharp decline for various reasons, among which the most important are certainly climate change and rainfall trends, the abandonment of mountain areas, and in particular the thickening of the woods due to the disappearance of sheep farming and the excessive exploitation by man of truffle grounds. In light of all this, it is therefore correct to say that the future of truffles lies in truffle farming: each truffle grower, by caring for his or her truffle ground and private interest, contributes to building something higher in terms of sustainability.

The plants produced by Truffleland are all regularly certified by accredited bodies throughout Italy, with very high percentages of mycorrhizal roots, often up to 90%.

Choosing Truffleland means having unique guarantees such as the experience developed on their lands, the purchase of truffles collected in the customers' lands by Urbani Tartufi with payment on delivery, the willingness to monitor the development and state of health of customers' plantations on request. In addition, there is also the support of some credit institutions which allows for easy amortization in the first years of investment at advantageous interest rates, with financial solutions designed specifically for those who are entering the world of truffle farming for the first time.





Accademia del Tartufo nel Mondo
The World Truffle Academy

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ITALIAN TRUFFLE

The first cultural, scientific and gastronomic magazine dedicated to the truffle. Now also available in English.

A quarterly periodical, in both printed and digital versions

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Cover photo:
from the archive of the Association of Cities for
the Truffle

REGISTRATION

Urbino Tribunal 04/2021, 08.04.2021

YEAR I NO. 2 - August 2021

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Giuseppe Cristini

EDITORIAL

Gian Marco Centinaio

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Massimo Bompreszi
Antonella Brancadoro
Mario Palenzona
Giuseppe Rosati
Augusto Tocci
Davide Tonti
Angelo Valentini

GRAPHICS AND PRINTING

Publishing house - Tipolitografia Guerrino Leardini

- Online magazine www.accademiadeltartufonemondo.it
- Printed magazine
- Digital magazine
- Weekly newsletters
- Social networks

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Thinking about Dubai: Italian chefs among the protagonists at the Universal Expo

di Gian Marco Centinaio



Gian Marco Centinaio
Undersecretary for Agricultural Policy,
specialising in truffles and wine

Truffles are extraordinary ambassadors of the Italian spirit in the world.

The goal towards which I have worked in recent months, having the relevant responsibilities in the sector, was to enhance our heritage, which is unique and cannot be reproduced.

First of all, we need to have new truffle-related guidelines. In the Senate, a draft law is under way, uniting a number of political parties. Our commitment is to quickly get the answers within the purview of the Ministry of Agriculture.

The goal is to have maximum traceability, protecting the supply chain from the invasion of products passed off as Italian and that instead come from Eastern Europe

or from countries like Iran or Turkey.

It is also important that there are equal rules for everyone and that proper fines are placed on those who, without any respect for the countryside and interested only in making a profit, leave the woods in shambles.

Following the example of what has been done for other supply chains, I believe that it may be useful to promote projects capable of giving proper answers to the issue and allowing further impetus to such a product of excellence.

In the meantime, truffles will now be back in the spotlight from 9 October thanks to the 91st International Alba White Truffle Fair, with an edition that will focus on the theme of sustainability. The Dubai Expo will also open in October, and as all major international showcases, this event will offer strategic opportunities to Made in Italy products.

Among the protagonists at the Universal Expo there will be Italian chefs and products from our agri-food sector, which is one of our most prestigious symbols in the world.

Italy will promote a vast program of multilateral forums and high-level conversations in line with the slogan of the Italian Pavilion, "Beauty unites people".

Taking place between October and March, the goal is for the Dubai Expo

to make our products known to ever wider markets and launch interest for foreign direct investments in our businesses and tourist flows for all Italian regions.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gian Marco Centinaio". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

Truffles tell a story of love, peace, and appreciation for the territory

di Giuseppe Cristini



Giuseppe Cristini
Artistic director
of the World Truffle Academy

Truffles tell a story of love, peace, sharing, and appreciation for the territory. Where truffles grow, man also lives better, and all its peculiarities lead to sharing a unique cultural, sensorial, and human message.

The Academic College with the best truffle experts and scientists is born. The “truffle platform” is born, with a full work agenda that will last over years.

Starting from the forest and from Mother Earth, through the expertise and the knowledge of a large group of world experts, we will bring the truffle on the pedestal of the best loved, most precious things in the world.

We will start with a national and international tour that will tell the world about the beauty and uniqueness of this Italian specialty all year round, in all seasons and in all areas.

This is the task of the World Truffle

Academy; this is the task of the great masters of truffle that we are going to award in the coming weeks, as a universal cultural heritage.

The recovery of the Italian economy starts from the truffle: from the great prized, black and white, to the more democratic varieties.

We want to charm all cuisines and all Italian and world restaurants: with this goal, we will speak to the world on October 13 in Rome, to tell you about the truffle season 2021/2022, and reassure the world that the Italian truffle is the best.

We can also satisfy our guests with uncinatum truffles, brumale truffle, and smooth black truffle, perfect for the dedicated and satisfying, subtle and seductive cuisine that Italian restaurants at home and abroad are specialized in.

After Rome, where we will speak to the world, we will move to Sant’Angelo in Vado to honor a “Truffle Pioneer”, Don Giovanni Balsamini.

A truffle icon, a pioneer, a truffle artist in the Marche, but I would say also in Italy and in the world.

Through his knowledge, wisdom, art, and spirituality, he has managed to make the Italian truffle beloved in the world, together with Sant’Angelo in Vado.

In mid-November we will be in Alba, at the headquarters in Monforte, where we will do a 180 on our knowledge of truffles and where the Academic College of the best truffle

experts will be born. Together with the French we will then discuss and create “The truffle platform”.

Each time we will prepare a mother report on the state of the Italian and European truffle to talk about the present and the future of this noble nugget, since protecting and safeguarding the truffle means safeguarding our life.

We will also dedicate part of this autumn and winter season to young people. At the end of November we will be in Polignano a Mare in the beautiful Puglia, where many hotel institutes will try to combine an Italian must in the world: fish and truffle in combination with the great Apulian wines. This too is a pioneering and fascinating project.

This project was born in Puglia, but it wants to include all the regions of Southern Italy that, through fish and truffle, want to present to the whole world their cultural, tourist, and food and wine appeal.

And then Dubai, where we will enchant the rich emirs.

Through truffles we will make them love Italy because when you talk about truffles, you are talking about Italy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Giuseppe Cristini', written in a cursive style.

ROME



Accademia del Tartufo nel Mondo
The World Truffle Academy



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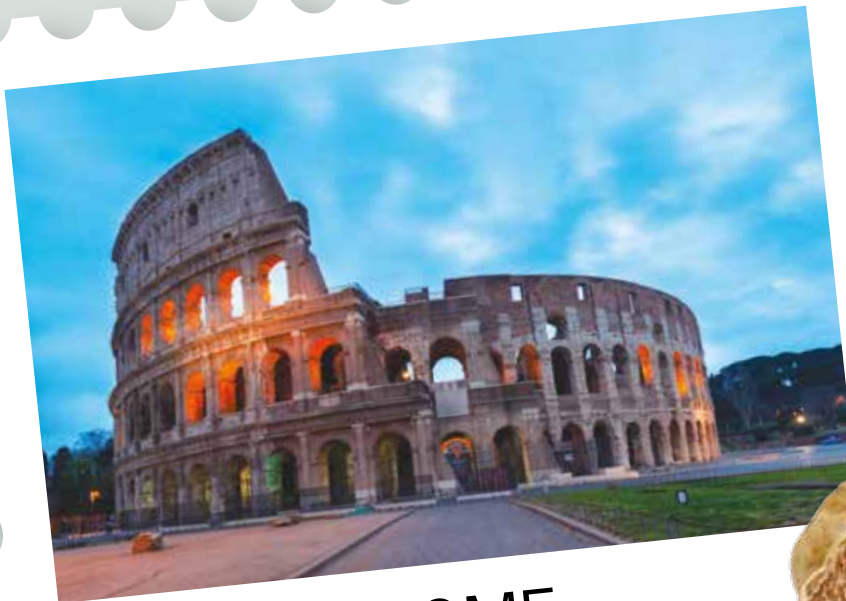
present

The World premiere of the 2021 white truffle season

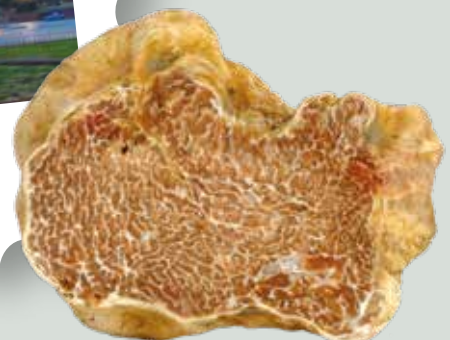
The Italian message to international catering

Rome, 13 October 2021 10:30 am

Cia Auditorium



ROME



A DIRECT LINE WITH THE MINISTER



Accademia del Tartufo nel Mondo
The World Truffle Academy



ministero delle politiche
agricole alimentari e forestali

A friendly conversation with the Undersecretary for Agricultural Policy

Gian Marco Centinaio

The first objective is the defense and promotion of Made in Italy products, which I believe still has enormous room for growth.



Gian Marco Centinaio

by Giuseppe Cristini

Gian Marco Centinaio, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture (MIPAAF) responsible for truffle, tells us of his passion for this precious gift from Mother Earth Italy.

“In addition to being a product that represents a real experience in terms of taste, the truffle embodies the essence of our biodiversity. We aim to preserve this integrity”.

From his words we can perceive the will to give a strong impulse to the world of truffle, with clear and far-sighted goals.

A friendly conversation

The forest, an intact environment, is where truffles grow: an Italian miracle of nature. Extremely important is the role of the caretaker when it comes to defending the forest.

In addition to being a product that represents a real experience in terms of taste, the truffle embodies the essence of our biodiversity. We aim to preserve this integrity. We presented a bill in the Senate that found strong consensus also from other political parties; this included acknowledging the role of the farmer as guardian of the

environment. In the same way, the truffle hunter in Italy represents a keeper of the forest. The link with the earth, the relationship with nature and its fruits are what makes the difference. In a historical moment in which the issue of sustainability is central to all discussions, it is right to recognize the importance of these people for our country. In the past, for example, farmers were mistakenly accused of being enemies of the environment. For some time, however, it has been well understood that they are at the forefront of protecting it and fighting climate change, the consequences of which they are the first to pay. Indeed, if there were no farmers, many areas would have been abandoned, with negative consequences not only for the economy but above all for the ecosystem, such as hydro-geological instability or the abandonment of crops. As far as truffle is concerned, today we have to fight against thieves who have no culture and respect for the woods, worrying only about their economic gain, and on the other hand, against the unfair competition of those who import products from abroad, passing them off as Italian.

The “Pact of good taste” with the World Truffle Academy for a truffle narration: do you already see it as an internationalization program?

Precisely in the face of the picture just given, I believe it is important that there are training initiatives for those who in turn will be able to talk to consumers and increase their

awareness both in terms of quality certification and in terms of safety of the products they are using in their recipes.

An Italian combination that the world envies us is the relationship between the truffle in the kitchen and the role of the chef!

The Italian cuisine is appreciated and sought after internationally. Together with the truffle, our chefs are ambassadors of our best Made in Italy products in the world. Both make quality their strong point, which is what distinguishes many in our supply chains. Indeed, we do not focus on quantity, but on the goodness and uniqueness of our productions. And the role of our chefs is all the more important at a time when multinationals are waging a war against the Made in Italy brand, helped by labeling systems that aim only to condition consumers for the benefit of the economic interests of some countries that would like to occupy market segments.

Do you feel the responsibility as a sort of ambassador of Italian truffle?

In my opinion, those who work within the institutions must feel the responsibility of their role, especially towards the generations to come. Voters expect answers from us. As a minister first and then as an undersecretary, I have based my work on two fronts that proceed in parallel. On the one hand, the promotion of our Made in Italy agri-food which I

believe still has enormous margins for growth, especially now that the world is emerging from the difficulties caused by the pandemic in the last 18 months. On the other hand, the defense of the sector. And here I am thinking not only of the phenomenon of Italian-sounding names which every year steals tens of billions of euro from our economy but also of a whole series of policies - unfortunately also European ones - that damage our most famous products or try to pass instrumental messages like how wine is harmful to health or that it would be better to eat frozen foods rather than

typical products linked to a region and its history. We are and will always be for the Mediterranean Diet, recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage. And for authentic products, such as truffles.

What role can the Italian truffle play in the recovery of the Italian tourism economy?

The truffle is a product of excellence to be valued and appreciated. The spearhead is obviously represented by the white truffle of Alba, a natural heritage that others envy us so much that they are trying to replicate it but which identifies with our very specific geographical area. Indeed, in Italy we

are lucky enough to find truffles in many regions, all with their own characteristics and peculiarities. Italian and foreign tourists can therefore be accompanied in the discovery of this product, and in this sense our chefs and sommeliers play a central role.

Your favorite recipe with truffle and wine to match?

A plate of tagliatelle accompanied by a glass of Buttafuoco.



A direct line with the Minister



mipaaf

ministero delle politiche
agricole alimentari e forestali

Via Venti Settembre, 20
00187 Roma RM

Which are the ideal wines to pair with fine black truffle - we'll help!

by Giuseppe Cristini

Let's start with solid technical basis to understand the importance of the combination of wine and truffle, taking into account seasonality and regions.

We never think of pairing wine directly with truffle but with its final gastronomic preparation, according to the type of truffle and obviously to the final gustatory pleasure, where the truffle will have to enhance the dish and make it harmonious and balanced as a whole.

We will focus on colours and aromas as well as on the gentleness of the combination, where the wine must never overpower the truffle.

In the combination of wine and truffle, let us support the colors of the wine and of the truffle that suggest the best combination, so much so that the aromatic families of grapes love the sensuality of the forest that the truffle expresses.

In this particular occasion we chose an international dish: duck breast with red wine reduction and with fine black truffle, paired with the same red wine to create an explosion of flavors. I dare say that this is a gourmet dish.

Among the soft, frank, expressive, and persuasive Italian red wines, I can range from the north to the south of the peninsula

to find the perfect pairing between wine and truffle.

Picture the place of birth of a downy oak, an elm, a linden, a hornbeam or a willow, near the banks of a river, but also where a centuries-old oak shows off its beauty, with nearby a wonderful row of vines protected by the woods: there truffle and wine sublimate their combination.

Wine and truffle are always a marriage of love.

The winemaker and the wood keeper embracing: this is the future of Italy at the table and also of its narration.

Wine must enhance the dish, courting it and always making it elegant.

Where there is truffle, wine must accompany the final balance without ever overpowering the former, which in any case must leave that sensual and seductive trace that makes Italian truffle the most loved in the world.

Truffle is seductive, and wants wine just as capable of creating absolute ecstasy

and charm.

From north to south of the peninsula, we can certainly find great red wines to accompany our dish.

A Barolo or a Barbaresco in Piedmont all the way to a splendid Amarone in Valpolicella, up to a Nobile di Montepulciano or a Brunello di Montalcino in Tuscany, reaching the Marche with a Conero Riserva and going further south to find a great Taurasi in Campania or a magnificent Aglianico del Vulture in the splendid Lucania area. And we could go on with many other red wines from indigenous vines, perhaps less known but of great charm and absolute Italian character.

It takes a lot of cultural preparation, expertise, and experimentation in the kitchen and in the cellar. It takes the ability to have perceived the sensoriality and nuances of the truffle in its continued refined elegance that will reach heights of pleasure that only high-class palates and minds are able to rise to.



Photo by Jeff Siepman on Unsplash

Massimo Bompreszi

Massimo Bompreszi is the creative chef and experimenter of the World Truffle Academy: “the forest and the truffle are my home”.

Max Bompreszi is a chef and teacher at the Alfredo Panzini professional hotel school in Senigallia.

An expert in catering, he also works in the training sector and as a consultant for restaurant and hotel openings.

He has held specialization courses all over the world, representing Italy.

Cooking fish and truffle is a great passion of his, and one where he stands out for the creativity and versatility of his recipes, both in Italy and in the world.

He has recently published the book “La ricetta giusta, gusto, passione e tradizione” (“The right recipe, taste, passion and tradition”) which was popular with critics and the general public alike.

An all-round experimenter, a creative truffle user, an experiential truffle hunter who knows how to bring this precious product from the woods to the table, embellishing a dish with the story of that particular oak tree that generated the truffle while it releases its enchanting aromas. Fish and truffles is the grand Must of the future of cuisine: from the summer truffle to the fine white variety, everything is possible in the kitchen

when it comes to preparing incredibly fascinating and never-before-seen dishes.

“I feel like an elegant experimenter: I love new combinations while daring beyond measure, I like modern creativity,” he says.

And as restaurant manager, Max can make a young married couple's dream come true as easily as he can provide emotions to a catering service of a thousand people.

Max is a social media phenomenon, always an experimenter, world navigator and globetrotter, and it is he who will create the new truffle proposals for our Academy.

Talented and eclectic, Max has always been a truffle hunter: “I have a visceral symbiosis with truffles,” he says.

“I hunt for truffles because it gives me great pleasure, it relaxes me and helps me to find myself again. It allows me to enjoy nature, to appreciate it in all its forms, its colors, its smells, and its slow variation from season to season.

Seeing the joyful frenzy of my dogs as they are searching excites me and strengthens my relationship with them, an empathic relationship made up only of looks and caresses, and perhaps for this very reason more authentic than many human relationships. As a professional chef, of course, I generally appreciate what this wonderful underground mushroom

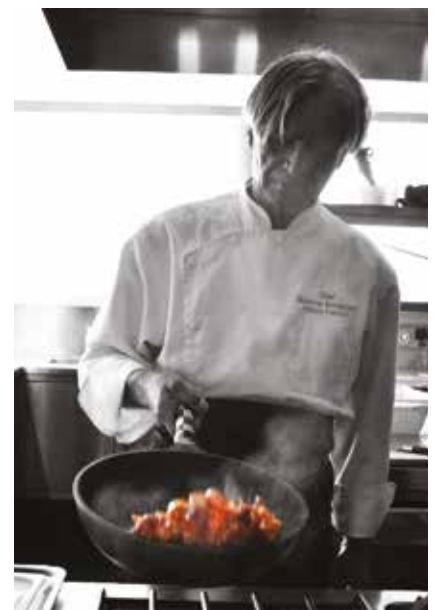
can give, but the dishes I prepare with truffles I collected personally feel even more ‘mine’, as I observe the satisfied reactions of those who taste them.

Indeed, I am reminded of the smell of the earth dug up by my dogs, their wagging tails, their waiting for my approval. Even the expression ‘hunting for truffles’ warms my heart: it has something archaic, solemn, magical.

In Senigallia, where Max works as a teacher, hospitality is the byword.

Luca Santini, President of the Italian Federation of Chefs of the Marche Region, in his Hotel Turistica, is another great master of local hospitality when it comes to food.

The Panzini Institute produces talents; it is a school that trains great Chefs, who then travel around the world.





Knife-cut beef steak tartare with white truffle and traditional vinegar of Modena

Ingredients for 4 people

600g of beef fillet of Marchigiana breed
Salt to taste
Freshly ground pepper to taste
150g of paccasassi (wild sea fennel)
Traditional balsamic vinegar of Modena to taste
100g of extra virgin olive oil
40g of Acqualagna white truffle

Directions

Work the meat with a knife until thin. Season it with salt and pepper. Hold it together with the help of a food ring mould to set up the dish. Garnish with slices of white truffle, paccasassi, a drizzle of traditional balsamic vinegar from Modena and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

The Marchigiana is a cattle breed typical of the Marche region. Once used only for work, the type and characteristics of the meat make this breed one of the best in Italy.



Calamarata pasta with "Pecorino di Fossa" cream, poplar mushrooms, and white truffle

Ingredients for 4 people

300g of Pietro Massi calamarata pasta
150g of "Pecorino di fossa", grated
150g of fresh cream
150g of poplar mushrooms, cleaned
40g of white truffle
One head of garlic
10g of parsley
Salt and Pepper to taste.
100g of extra virgin olive oil
Edible flowers
1g of edible gold

Directions

Clean the truffle and wrap it in paper. Place it in the refrigerator. Clean the mushrooms and wash them well. Cook them in a pan with the oil, garlic, and parsley. Cook for 10 minutes on low heat and adjust to taste. Over low heat, combine the cream and grated pecorino in a saucepan, mixing until creamy. Add some freshly ground pepper. Cook the pasta in abundant salted water, drain it *al dente*, and toss in with the mushrooms and sauce.

Serve and garnish with truffle slices, edible flowers, and edible gold.



Spelt risotto with porcini mushrooms, chestnuts, cream of cabbage, and white truffle

Ingredients for 4 people

600g of spelt
10 chestnuts
10 cherry tomatoes
200g of cabbage
50g of leeks
Herbs
200g of extra virgin olive oil
40g of white truffle
10 leaves of wood sorrel
20g of pistachio, chopped
600g of porcini mushrooms
3l of vegetable broth
200g of Parmesan cheese, grated
Salt and Pepper to taste
3 cloves of garlic
Vegetable broth to taste

Directions:

Clean and rinse the mushrooms, then sauté them in a non-stick pan with oil, whole garlic, a bay leaf, and parsley stalks. Adjust to taste.

Clean the truffle and wrap it in paper. Place it in the refrigerator. Cook and peel the chestnuts. Make a tomato confit. Blanch the cabbage and add it to a saucepan with oil, leek, and chilli pepper. Sprinkle with vegetable broth, add the aromatic herbs, and adjust to taste. Cook for about 20 minutes, blend with a hand-held immersion blender, and filter with a chinois strainer.

Cooking and truffles in history

by Monsignor Davide Tonti



Monsignor Davide Tonti

Episcopal vicar for culture and the protection of cultural heritage, for the Diocese of Urbino, Urbania and Sant'Angelo in Vado

And then they'll bring the truffle, if it's spring, and the welcome thunder will have done its job to make dinners better.

Juvenal, Satires, II century

In the contemporary artistic setting, research open to new sensorial horizons has been ongoing for some time now and experimental cuisine sees a dish as the result of a creative process in which truffle continues to be the undisputed protagonist after centuries. Speaking of contemporary cuisine, the horizon opens up to that part of it that *"investigates the limits of the culinary art, experimenting with new cooking methods, new combinations, new presentations, and applying all kinds of experience to synthesize new sensations and new flavors"*. For centuries, by nourishing itself mankind has learned from nature to produce what it eats through agriculture and breeding, following values which not only ensure its livelihood but fulfill

the irrepressible search for beauty and goodness. Through the palate, food merges different cultures and customs, and overcoming barriers is made possible by sharing bread and by simple gestures, an attempt to cultural integration. Even wild boars, dogs, and other animals appreciate this precious underground mushroom, but they cannot enjoy the ecstatic significance of food reaching the palate and the mind, creating imaginary visions and journeys in which food takes us to the very soul of creation: the vision of a divine beauty. Francesco Petrarca, in his *Canzoniere*, Sonnet IX, sings the beauty of truffle and, to accompany the gift made to a friend of his, mentions that the precious gift of the underground mushroom, born at the end of April/early May and found when the sun enters the constellation of Taurus, is just as good as the riot of colours in the river banks and hills covered in flowers. As emphasized by the poetry of Petrarch, truffles are able to stimulate the soul. *When the heavenly body that tells the hours/has returned to the constellation of Taurus,/ power from the burning horns descends/ that clothes the world with new colours:/ and not only in that which lies before us,/ banks and hills, adorned with flowers,/ but within where already the earthly moisture/pregnant with itself, adds nothing further,/so that fruits and such are gathered.../.*

The Truffle, "diamond of the table" as the gastronome Brillat-Savarin defines it, exceeds the scientific definition of *Tuber magnatum*. Not a tuber like a potato but an underground mushroom, a magical mushroom, the fruit of myth which grows underground and knows how to surprise your palate. The "trifola", as the Langhe area call the white truffle from the beautiful land of Alba with great pride, reaches the wild lands of

Massa Trabaria, where the Vadesi people see this underground mushroom as a heavenly blessing of the Earth. A scent that unites Italy and its culture, from Montefeltro to the Umbrian hills with their impenetrable woods, to the gardens of San Miniato in Tuscany, like an ancient secret that sprouts to enchant us all. This culinary secret survived the Renaissance in the courts of northern Europe as well as in those of central Italy, and the truffle was mentioned in both court cookbooks and in those of the Roman ecclesiastical seats. The underground mushroom has always been a popular food, initially used as a dish in itself and then used to flavor soups, sauces, and meats, making them tastier. The use of truffle in the medieval tradition was confined to the medicinal cabinet because it was seen only for its "magical-alchemical properties". Because of this, it was used sparingly in the kitchen, and sometimes with suspicion. Although the properties of the truffle were known, due to the fear of its aphrodisiac consequences, it was not used in the kitchen of monasteries or mentioned in recipe books, even if it was recommended in the books of apothecaries and ancient pharmacies. The underground mushroom was particularly appreciated at the tables of the high-ranking Church officials, who, like princes or any other rich notable, allowed themselves everything. Old European cuisine saw the truffle as the "garlic of the rich" precisely because of it being widespread in the kitchens of noble houses. In Piedmont, the custom of using this precious mushroom was thanks to its proximity to French culinary customs, which already made great use of it around the 17th century. The truffles used at that time weren't the black ones, used to flavor meat and fish, but the white variety, which was widely consumed. And



right from the tables of the 17th- and 18th-century courts, recipe books were enriched with real delicacies that would later constitute that Italian tradition, open to contemporary cuisine and its innovations. But it is clear that it was since the Renaissance banquets that a taste for truffle was recovered, as described by writers and poets. And even in the Middle Ages, the search and trade of truffles were practiced with lucrative earnings. From Casale Monferrato, delicious truffles were delivered to the court of the Gonzaga of Mantua, while the lands of Tortona constituted

the market for the lords of Milan, the Visconti and the Sforza. The chronicles of the time effectively narrate that, from the lands of lower Piedmont such as Monferrato, Casalese, Alessandria, Acquese, Asti, Langhe and Roero, came the best and most fragrant production of truffles, capable of supplanting those coming from France. On the other hand, it is known that Caterina de' Medici in 1500 brought the white truffle from the Medici Castle of Cafaggiolo in Barberino di Mugello to the court of France, making it clear to the her new countrymen how delicious and more refined the Italian

truffle was. From the courts of the Savoia to the families of central Italy such as the Montefeltro, the truffle was considered quintessential to charm guests, and truffle-based banquets became a symbol of pomp and political power. It is known that 18th-century noble families started the practice of the "diplomatic gift", a consolidated and effective practice for the Savoia court which sent truffles all over Europe. So we must now hope that the *diamond of the table* will return to being that ambassador of Italian beauty and goodness all over the world.



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The parameters that decide the production of truffle

by Giuseppe Cristini

The Master Truffle Hunter and Guardian of the Woods reveals to us his secrets on truffles and what are the parameters that outline the trend of the white truffle season.

The ongoing climate change also affects truffles.

Everything starts with the formation of the white truffle mycelium which progresses from May/June to July and can vary depending on the site, exposure, and whether the soil is sandy or not.

Indeed, it all starts from the progression of the mycelium: these ninety days are decisive, even if the starting mechanisms of the mycelium are still largely unknown.

This is the most beautiful part that surrounds the mystery and aura of the truffle; this is the most unknown scientific part that we are still studying as experts, as connoisseurs, and as enthusiasts and gourmets.

The mycelium starts in these 3 months and changes from site to site, and from there the carpophore is formed. This is initially invisible and small but with time and with rain it grows and matures.

Everything is settled over 90 days, even until the following February and March, even for the other species of truffles and not only for the prized white variety. The fate of the Autumn, Périgord, Moscato, and even of the albidum varieties are also affected.

What happens in the summer deeply affects all types of truffles.

The truffle calendar does not run from January to December but from May, when it starts as mycelium, until April of the following year.

The parameters to be taken into

consideration are many and varied: first of all rain at the right time.

The wind must not blow too much or it might lead to the evaporation of the rain, which instead should occur every 4 or 5 days. Due to climate change, unfortunately, it is not always possible today.

With the arrival of rain, the earth must smoke and the so-called hot-cold is no longer a mystery but a reality that produces truffles.

Another important element, certainly unwelcome to winemakers but loved by truffle hunters and guardians of the forest, is hail.

There is this well-established rumor that hail encourages truffles. Truth be told, hail does only damage, but the fact that the hail that falls in the woods melts slowly and then penetrates and permeates the ground slowly and completely is very positive. Still, I believe that 20mm of rain would be better than 5 cm of hail.

Many people say that hail causes a sudden change in temperature and helps to give birth to truffles but that's not accurate - it's just an old rumor.

Climate change is also damaging the truffle as the average temperatures have increased considerably in recent years: this is certainly not a healthy thing for an underground mushroom. Indeed, what we need are not too high temperatures in order not to disperse this unique heritage.

Climate change and partial desertification are also affecting our lands, and all this will also weigh heavily on the production of truffles.

The increasing drought in summer only damages the ripening of the mycelium; we will definitively not lose the truffle completely, but large specimens and high-ranking weight will be increasingly difficult to find.



The forecast is not positive except in certain areas where there have been 40/50 mm of rain in half an hour: there we could find excellent truffles, in areas where we have sand and tuff.

In the Apennine ridge with clayey soil, on the other hand, the ground cracks and the rain runs off quickly.

This is the situation in Central Italy while there have been many storms in lower Piedmont, the streams are full, and this means that there have been from 80 to 100 mm of water. It will certainly be a very good year there.

My prediction is not the rosiest even if I hope I'm wrong, because we are always learning.

A gut feeling about where we might find a good specimen? I think in Piedmont, where they have soil rich in sand which is a rarity in Italy. But we always find truffles "where water has hit us".

Finally, a truffle-related mystery that Pino wants to reveal to us: it is not true that lightning brings truffles! What is true is that when there is lightning, there is rain - it's that which ensures an abundance of truffles.

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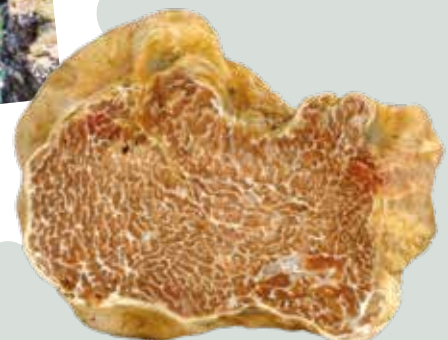
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Truffle hunting: Unesco heritage? The verdict in December

by Antonella Brancadoro



Antonella Brancadoro
 Director of the National Association of
 Cities for the Truffle

In thirty years of life, the National Association of Cities for the Truffle has experienced substantial development, linking 62 Italian Municipalities, Unions of Municipalities, Parks, and Study Centers of the 14 regions dedicated to the production of truffle.

Over time, the Association has upheld its statutory mission relating to the integrated promotion of the truffle areas by promoting and supporting initiatives ranging from the regulatory sector to territorial marketing, involving and empowering the various players in the supply chain in order to protect environmental, cultural, historical, traditional, and food&wine resources that this precious mushroom enhances.

In the towns, in particular, the autumn period is full of events and market exhibitions related to truffles and typical products that enliven and enrich the overall tourist offer. Unfortunately, the persistence of the pandemic and the

constant and necessary call for caution, albeit in the application of shared rules, has not allowed towns to plan the events to date or, at least, not as they would be useful to promote tourism. This is why we will continue to update visitors through our website (www.cittadeltartufo.com) and our social channels (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @cittadeltartufo) that have characterized and made associative life active and possible in the last year. Indeed, we have been engaged in initiatives that, albeit remotely, have been shared with a huge audience through social networks and platforms, offering webinars dedicated to topics such as the sensory analysis of truffles and animal welfare related to the special relationship that is established between man, dog and nature during the search for the underground mushroom.

These are important issues at the center of the common work that has engaged all actors of the supply chain. The collaboration among all these actors, by investigating more thoroughly the scenarios that see the truffle as a protagonist, has brought out and documented the knowledge and practices of truffle hunters, and their work for the benefit of the communities in which they live must be recognized. Creating this community work and proposing it to UNESCO so that it recognizes the Italian truffle hunting as an intangible cultural heritage was the project that saw the Cities of Truffle engaged in the coordination necessary for the putting together of the dossier, in compliance with the 2003 Convention on Intangible Assets. In December 2021 we will know if our work is to be rewarded with the prestigious award but, regardless, we will continue as a truffle community to enhance the heritage handed down to us orally, made up of knowledge, gestures, and words, and shared so far with the older generations. Heritage that today requires an active safeguarding that relies on the practitioners and holders

of this knowledge. A world that, in the rapidity of transformations, must also be safeguarded.

While waiting for our registration among the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the Cities of Truffle are preparing, as far as allowed, their autumn festivals, well aware of how much only visiting these areas, looking at the woodland and river landscape of the valley floor with curious eyes and minds, visiting natural truffle grounds in the company of truffle hunters and their dogs, and tasting wonderful dishes full of scents and aromas can give tourists the true idea of this heritage and its uniqueness.



The Lucciola restaurant in New York: an Italian sign of love

by Giuseppe Rosati



Giuseppe Rosati

Man of Relations. Facilitator of both commercial and image relationships, influencer, communicator, and observer of the world as it changes

Walking around New York, we meet chef Michele Casadei Massari: “the most important thing when it comes to customers is to be able to communicate and never be commonplace”. His news is the “absolute ravioli”.

Talking with Michele means being overwhelmed by so much passion and desire to do things and do them well. Lucciola is the restaurant that he opened almost 4 years ago with his longtime partner and schoolmate, Alberto. NYC is a tough place for any chef: difficult, competitive and requiring total commitment. Michele and his business partner are not new to NYC: indeed, they had already tried their hand at the Big Apple with the Piccolo Caffè chain, 4 restaurants that for over a decade enlivened New York's food scene.

Born from the experience of Piccolo Caffè and from the desire and passion of the two partners, Lucciola is located in the Upper West Side, a multifaceted and lively neighborhood that is not snobbish like the Upper East Side but with the

energy, art and culture that reigns in one of the neighborhoods where many ethnic groups and many types of people live together. Just think of Columbia University and Lincoln Center which are one the beginning and one the end of the neighbourhood.

Michele and Alberto decided that this was the right place. After years of wandering from one place to another,

they concentrated their energy on a single project: Lucciola. Lucciola is not simply a restaurant but a new and different idea. After all, now more than ever we need inspiration to start over.

So I thought that having a chat with Michele Casadei Massari, chef and energetic manager, was the right thing to do.

Interview

Has the post-Covid clientele changed in its requests and needs?

Unfortunately, this moment was useful to observe and understand even more where we were going. Since its reopening, Lucciola has chosen to focus even more on quality, and on seasonal and local products. It wants to offer a cuisine that starts from tradition but which is interpreted by the best available in NYC:

A menu that changes continuously, a wide choice of always fresh pasta, and the eager search for the various facets of the same product. An example is caviar, available in 14 varieties, with regular customers who return to try one or two new varieties every time. But the important thing is knowing how to communicate without ever being commonplace.

How is your relationship with suppliers, their choice, and procurement?

At first, the suppliers themselves struggled to understand our work. We are not interested in the best price; we are interested in having constant quality. If an ingredient is not of the standard we expect, we do not look for

an alternative. We prefer not to offer it rather than accepting compromises. We are in NYC and people are open and know how to recognize quality when they meet it, but they also know how to judge if you change direction and we don't want that to happen.

I heard that even in the USA it is difficult to find staff; unemployment benefits are influencing the return to work of many restaurant workers.

Even before Covid, we had a direct and rewarding approach with our collaborators, who are the first to be involved. Here we have a minimum wage, a minimum hourly rate which is about \$15. We immediately offered \$23/hour, which gives us the opportunity to retain employees and motivate them.

How did the restrictions that occurred in NYC change Lucciola?

Four years ago, Lucciola had about 50 seats and 200 types of wine but today the situation has been reversed: We have half place available but 500 types of wine, and our goal is to reach 1000.

Indeed, our cellar is increasingly guiding the customers' choices and

therefore of the kitchen's. After all, we are a restaurant that makes wine a strong point, And we only have Italian wines, ranging from Valle d'Aosta all the way to Sicily.

Some of your favourite wineries?

The Gavi of Villa Sparina, the wines of Elisabetta Geppetti, the Amarone of Tommasi or the Montiano of the Cotarella family. Obviously the great Tuscan and Piedmontese wines too, but our mission is to make the whole wine peninsula known, as the whole country has excellent products. One thing we are creating and that is very popular is the Wine Building Category: having more vintages of the same label but above all more formats. This

thing drives Americans crazy, as they discover a wine in 0.75; then they come back for an anniversary or a birthday because they know that they can find magnum or double magnum bottles of the same wine they discovered maybe two weeks before.

What are you working on now?

On the absolute ravioli! I'm having olive wood molds made to make special ravioli.

We never stop. Now we are thinking about the filling and will probably include truffle as the protagonist, which is an ingredient that I love and which, thanks to a partner like the Urbani family, brings the best from Italy and beyond.



Truffles in nutrition and beyond

by Augusto Tocci



Augusto Tocci

Video journalist and scholar of Italian historical cuisine.

Former founder and director of the Centre for Research on the Truffle of the Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry.

Among the food products of the forest, truffles occupy, without a doubt, the place of honor, especially for the delicacy that earned them the title of diamonds of the kitchen.

They have always been a tasty and sought-after dish.

According to the records, the Babylonians already knew truffles and the Romans loved to eat them in their sumptuous banquets; they were also certainly part of the fabulous banquets of the Renaissance courts. Even today, being able to offer truffle-based dishes to guests is a sign of refinement and prestige. And to think that it is a shy and mysterious mushroom that doesn't look like ova or porcini, but that hides underground with the reluctance typical of sleepers.

The truffles that botanically are ascomycetes and belong to the *Tuber* genus are presented in various shapes, colors and sizes. If the season allows it,

we can delight in fresh truffles throughout the year since there are different moments in where edible species are collected.

On foggy autumn days, nothing warms up the heart more than the intense scent of white truffle, the *Tuber magnatum*.

On cold winter days there is nothing better than a warm dish with black truffle, sweet like *Tuber melanosporum* or strong like *Tuber brumale*. In spring you can count on the strong and penetrating scent of *Tuber albidum marzuolo* while in the heat of summer nothing is better than the faint and delicate scent of the *Tuber aestivum*. Then at the end of the summer, before returning to intoxicating ourselves with the intense scent of the fine white truffle, we can prepare our palate with the pleasant flavor of the *Tuber macrosporum*.

What makes truffle the king of the table is its intense aroma that strongly impregnates both raw and cooked food even more than its flavor, but also its high nutritional value and the fact it's easy to digest.

So use it without parsimony: the truffle is an aperitif, digestive and, if you like, an aphrodisiac.

Indeed, the truffle, with its subtle aroma, has awakened both greedy and erotic desires. There are many anecdotes about it but we won't mention them all: just think about how Napoleon was amazed

at the amorous performances of one of his officers who, every time he returned on leave, got his wife pregnant. One day the officer gave the emperor a basket of truffles and exactly nine months later, they swear in Périgord, Maria Luigia gave him a son, the king of Rome.

The confirmation of the truffle as an aphrodisiac is published in the magazine "Recherche", which clarifies the mystery Thanks to the work of German researchers from the Institute of Physiology of the University of Lübeck.

These have shown that truffle contains, among the odorant substances, a volatile alcohol with a musky smell, derived from androstane, very close to testosterone, which could be considered a human sexual pheromone or in any case a chemical messenger that has a stimulating effect. However, people are unable to accurately identify the underground location of mature truffle and must resort to an animal with a very sensitive smell.

Today, we all know that the hunt for truffle is carried out with the help of trained dogs, while in the past sows were used, which are capable of discovering a truffle up to one meter deep. Unfortunately, their impetuosity in digging leads to the deterioration of the mycelium, and that is why dogs are used today; another reason is the ease in moving from one place to another.

However, today the sow's impetuous attitude is explained with the animal's inability to resist the smell of truffles.

Truffle as an aphrodisiac

Indeed, it digs to unearth truffles because it reacts to their aroma as a sexual mating behavior, recognizing in the smell of the mushroom that exhaled by the boar, i.e. an uncastrated male pig. In the pre-cupulative period, the boar's saliva contains a mixture of molecules belonging to the group of non-androgenic steroids, with 19 carbon atoms with the double bond in C16, deriving from androstane, to which this volatile alcohol belongs, which is a sex pheromone for swine.

It is also a human sex pheromone, since the same mixture of molecules that is synthesized in men's testicles migrates into the axillary sweat glands, where it is secreted with sweat. The erotic effect of this musky-smelling volatile alcohol was theorized by the experimental results obtained by researchers at the University of Birmingham. This alcohol

therefore stimulates erotic desire in men and therefore truffle becomes a chemical stimulant. One could worry about health issues due to possible intoxication, but this damage is very unlikely since its concentration is 50-60 nanograms per gram of fresh truffle.

If anything, the only big drawback, with the conceivable consequences that an abundant consumption of truffle would have on people's love lives, is represented by a heart attack, not so much due to an increase in love activity but rather due to the restaurant bill.



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Tidbits of knowledge about truffles gathered in half a century by an old Piedmontese man

by Mario Palenzona



Mario Palenzona
former Director of IPLA, Turin

Part III: from the *Tuber maculatum* and *albidum* to the “blacks”

Acquired knowledge and responses, described in the previous December and April issues, on the symbiotic capacity of the *maculatum* and *albidum* varieties and on the morphology of their ectomycorrhizae produced on the Eastern white pine, together with the positive results obtained in the controlled synthesis experiences between the arboreal and fungal partners, which led, in the third year of development from seed, to the production in container of mature *maculatum* fruiting similar to those originally used for inoculation, pushed me to extend the experiments to other species of *Tuber*. Since in those years I was dedicating part of my attention to a serious form of hazelnut decay known as “dryness”, which affected many areas in Piedmont where hazelnut growing was spreading, I had a lot of propagation material of this shrub species for study purposes. This was always considered the host-symbiont of many truffles and elective in particular for those with dark peridium, at the time still little considered in Piedmont, where only the fine white variety (*Tuber magnatum*

Pico) was celebrated by consumers and restaurateurs alike. By virtue of an effective scientific collaboration between the Institute in which I worked (INPL) and the French National Agronomic Research Institute (INRA), in the person of Gérard Chevalier, researcher in the mycology section of Clermont Ferrand, I focused on the *Tuber melanosporum*, acclaimed beyond the Alps as “Truffe du Périgord” and in central Italy as “Norcia black truffle” and, as comparison, on the *Tuber aestivum* and *brumale*, known respectively to the markets as “Scorzone” and “Invernale” (Winter Truffle).

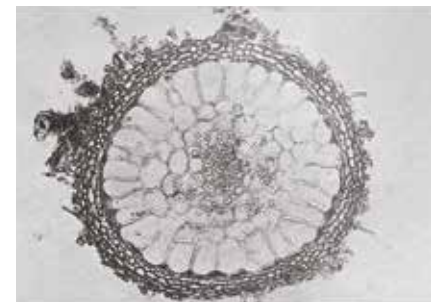
During the controlled synthesis tests, I adopted the same techniques already followed for the *Tuber maculatum*. The seed kernels, germinated and grown in vermiculite up to the second leaf stage, I placed on a mixture of marly earth and Astian quarry sand, sterilized in an autoclave, inseminating them upon transplantation with inocula prepared from gleba fragments taken from ripe truffles of the three species considered, dispersed individually, after homogenization in a mortar, in portions of the same culture medium.

With the bud closed, at the end of the first vegetative season and after seven months from inoculation, I verified not without surprise the flaring that the seedlings, with the exception of the uninoculated specimens that featured a more contained development, were carriers of a widespread and homogeneous mycorrhiza that, already from the first stereoscopic binocular checks, showed great affinity in appearance with those described for the *albidum* and *maculatum* varieties: markedly swollen apices, almost devoid of peritrophic mycelium, of common amber color with shades ranging from light to dark in relation to the age of formation. Under the microscope, through crushed preparations or through thin microtome sections, I ascertained that the mycorrhizae of the three truffles

showed a very similar basic structure. However, I also highlighted some peculiar aspects, useful to place their specific belonging, concerning above all the ornamentations (spinule hyphae or in agglomerates) which differentiated the juvenile infungation apices. I obtained further confirmation of the outcome of the experiment in the fact I could observe and document, without precedent, the inoculated ascospores in active germination, the formation of mycorrhizae with the capillice of hazelnut trees.

This was the first “stone” from which the “modern Truffle-culture” developed, thanks to the numerous technical-scientific improvements made over the years by qualified national and European research centers.

See you on the next episode...



*Cross section of mycorrhiza of
Tuber brumale*



*Mycorrhizae on the core of
Tuber melanosporum*



Germinated ascospores of Tuber aestivum



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