



Global food journey

By Jessica Pedemont,
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Good food on the dinner table can send you on a journey around the world. Taste sensations give us the urge to travel abroad to experience other cultures first-hand, or to find the closest home soil equivalent. I find myself yearning for the authentic feeling that good food brings, the roots of where it all began. Through flavours and environment, I want these experiences to assault my senses.

What is fast food doing to our edible world? We live in an automated 'in and out' society, with high demand and increasing time constraints. How far and for how long will this continue? Microwave meals, instant powders and 'just add water' attitudes, 'Would you like to upsize and drive through, please?' In today's society, so many people are living in a hurry. But not everything is a 28-second pressure-pull espresso deliverance of euphoria.

We each have our own rich food culture history, and digging through mine took me back to my Italian heritage. The Italian family table can be filled for hours on end with course after course of good food, all prepared with the love, care and time necessary for it to be enjoyed at its best. I was recently had the pleasure of participating in an authentic Italian food experience when I joined the Tomini Foresti family at Pino's Dolce Vita at Kogarah, Sydney, for dinner.

The special occasion was to celebrate the launch of their new school, which I was about to join as a chocolate teacher. As soon as I walked through the door I was immediately made to feel a part of their family as they shared their food with me. "Food is the gateway to your soul. You don't eat because you're hungry, you eat to survive and feed the soul," I was told by a community-oriented family that shares their passion through their food.

It was hard to top such an incredible dinner, but my world food journey soon broadened further when I travelled to San Francisco to continue my education as a student at the San Francisco Baking Institute (SFB). There I played with bread all day with the best of the best, studying the art of a good crust as well as dough extensibility. It can be a rare opportunity to be a student when you spend a lot of your days teaching, but there is nothing more riveting. I noticed some little and big differences within the operation. Everything from the quality of their notes, tuition, 'meet and greet', emails, lunches and how a great teacher will adapt to each student and class constantly. It was a true pleasure.



Good food at Pino's Dolce Vita at Kogarah, Sydney. Photo Rhyees Wedes

Along the way I found many other truly inspiring schools, restaurants and venues that I hope to share with you in future issues. I visited schools in Las Vegas, as well as the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in the beautiful Napa Valley. The possibilities are endless.

Returning to Sydney, I taught my first class at Pino Dolce Vita in April. For me, education needs to bring back the fundamentals, and my first class was about enjoying life's guilty pleasures. It was a chocolate special extravaganza class, with Easter eggs and nougat. The Easter class was only the beginning, with many sweet Italian inspired and Italian classic foods lined up.

Regardless of the culture, your business should feed people to the best of its ability. Finding time to prepare food properly is a

priority, and I always use quality produce and product. Food does not have to be complex. As much as I like to play with food, we don't have to do too much to it. Treat it with love and respect, from the earth to the belly.

Seasonality is the personality of the produce and its environment. Not all things should be the same. We have dry months, wet years, better crops and sometimes you don't catch much. Think about sustainability and aesthetics. Ask yourself where your last meal came from Can you locate all the ingredients and the origins?

Teaching people how to make great honest family food and enjoy it – now that's a blessing of a job and a passion that inspires me to keep sharing with others. ■