

A U S T R A L I A N

# GOURMET

## TRAVELLER

### The Italian issue

Bold new takes on the classics

Top chefs' favourite dishes

Sweet tarts and cakes

Beautiful beans

**BELLINI  
O'CLOCK**  
24 HOURS  
IN VENICE

MASSIMO  
BOTTURA  
WILD MAN  
OF ITALIAN  
FOOD

**TUSCANY  
ON A PLATE**  
THE WORLD'S  
GREATEST  
STEAK



NO COOKBOOK?  
ASK YOUR RETAILER



Tomato and  
basil lumache

PP255003/00548  
05  
MAY 2010 \$8.95 NZ \$9.40  
9 31306 001003





of white beans. Or you could opt for the "garganelli alla cinta senese", curls of pasta sauced with a tomato-less braise of wild boar flecked with fresh rosemary. Most main courses clock in well under the \$30-mark, defying Tuscany's rip-off reputation.

One of only eight artisan pasta-makers in Italy today, Giovanni Fabbri has pasta entwined in his DNA. His family roots here stretch back generations. The family "pastificio", or pasta factory, has stood on the square at Strada since 1893. Back then, the wheat fields hemmed the town; today, it's harder to find, but Fabbri says the quality of the organic Tuscan wheat he buys (at no small cost) is one of the keys to making truly great pasta.

"The art of handmade pasta is an integral part of Italian culture, but with the passing of the years, the pasta product has become more industrialised and has lost that particular quality, which you can only find when you produce it at very low temperatures and dry it over a very long period of time," he explains.

You've probably read that the Teflon-coated dyes, which factory operations push their pasta through, don't make for great product, but seeing the chunky bronze dyes used here – some of them more than a century old – really drives the point home. Fabbri is adamant that after the quality of the raw materials, the key reason artisan-made pasta is superior to its industrially produced equivalent is drying time. Where the factories blast their pasta with heat to dry it in 10 hours, at the Fabbri pastificio it's done over the course of two or even five days, and it's this step that results in pasta with a richer flavour and fuller texture, and which holds the sauce much better.

Some observers claim Italy is in danger of becoming a museum, a victim of its own adherence to tradition. Chianti, though, provides examples of customs which enrich and enliven not only the region but the whole country and, yes, perhaps the world beyond with their grace and good sense. There's nothing musty or elegiac about the way of life here in the place where *La Divina Commedia* retains as much vigour as the vines, where art and agriculture, intellect and passion are one, where the landscape itself is as powerful a symbol as the buildings on it. This is Tuscany – this is Chianti.\*

**More than meat**  
Giovanni Fabbri is one of only eight artisan pasta-makers left in Italy (above right). The beautiful countryside surrounding Panzano in Chianti (opposite).

## THE FINE PRINT

### Getting there

**Emirates** offers 70 flights per week to Rome, Milan and Venice via Dubai. Economy return fares from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane to all Italian cities start at \$2278. Fares from Perth start at \$2050. 1300 303 777, [emirates.com/au](http://emirates.com/au)

Chianti is a half-hour drive from Florence, which is easily accessed by train from Rome.

**Rail Europe** offers Italy rail passes from \$292. [raileurope.com.au](http://raileurope.com.au)

### Stay

**Villa il Leccio** is a 13th-century tower-house that became a villa in the 1700s and has now been transformed into a tourist attraction, complete with 20th-century electricity and plumbing and a pool. However well you eat in Chianti, the simple pleasures of enjoying a tomato omelette for supper at the vast kitchen table, or a bowl of pasta while overlooking the olive groves will surely number among your most memorable meals.

• *Via Casa Sparse, Strada,*

Chianti, +39 55 8586103, [agriturismoilleccio.it](http://agriturismoilleccio.it)

### Eat

#### Da Padellina

Corso del Popolo 54, Strada, Chianti, +39 055 858388

#### Mangiando Mangiando

Piazza Matteotti 80, Greve, Chianti, +39 055 8546372

#### Mac Dario, Officina

**Bistecca and Solociccia**  
Via XX Luglio 11, Panzano, Chianti, +39 055 852020

### See & do

#### Antica Macelleria Cecchini

Via XX Luglio 11, Panzano, Chianti, +39 055 852020, [darioceccchini.com](http://darioceccchini.com)

#### Antica Macelleria Falorni

Piazza Giacomo Matteotti 71, +39 055 854363, [falorni.it](http://falorni.it)

#### Le Cantine

Le Cantine di Greve, Galleria delle Cantine 2, +39 055 8546404, [lecantine.it](http://lecantine.it)

#### Pastificio Artigiano Fabbri

Piazza Emilio Landi 17, Strada, Chianti, +39 055 858013, [pastafabbri.it](http://pastafabbri.it)