



Riccardo was born in Bologna 33 years ago. He discovered his passion for cinema in his early childhood, but it was at the age of fourteen that he finally decided to become a director. At that time, in fact, he met Steven Spielberg at the [Venice Cinema Festival](#) [2] and asked him advices on a good school of cinema to attend in the US. He never forgot what the famous director told him and at the age of twenty he moved to New York to attend the [Tisch School of the Arts](#) [3] at NYU.

During his career Riccardo worked with important directors, one of them being Spike Lee, and in 2001 he founded an entertainment company, [Blitz Entertainment](#) [4], of which he became co-chairman. Today he also teaches Italian and Italian cinema in two schools, and he cultivates many hobbies as well. Well, he is such a really hyperactive guy...

However, the one thing that will soon give him fame is still another one: his good cuisine. He is in fact among the three finalists of the [Ultimate Recipe Showdown](#) [5], a TV show broadcasted by [Food Network](#) [6]. "My participation to the show is fortuitous: some students at my cooking classes (oh yes, I also teach that!) acknowledged me about it and convinced me to participate. I had to send three recipes and a video to the network to be selected. After a phone interview, they told me I was finalist in the comfort food category. It was a pretty long process, divided into different steps. Since the final part of the competition is coming up soon, I am going to practice everyday. I am thrilled! ", Ricky told me during our interview at Central Park, both enjoying a sunny day after so much rain, laid on the green dump grass.

And when he told me about the recipe he will prepare for the great final on September 28, it was easy for me, being Italian, to understand what comfort food means and why he is running for that category. The recipe's name is Uccelletti Scappati (escaped birds), a typical dish from the Emilia Romagna region, originally prepared when hunters came back home empty hands. Riccardo explained that: "Uccelletti was a dish cooked by hunters' wives to comfort their husbands in those cases. It is not very light, in fact it consists in diced mortadella, pork and emmenthal cheese shish kebabs dipped in béchamel sauce and then fried."

With his open smile and a good dose of pride, he tells us about his passion for cooking, grown after several years of careful observation of his grandma, a traditional Bolognese socialite who used to organize big collective meals. But the merit goes to the whole family, all very passionate for cuisine: "Since 40 years ago, everyone of us at Christmas time writes on the libro del tortellino, a notebook where we report our comments on the tortellini we eat in order to finally modify the recipe to perfection!"

With such a good background, it was expectable that Riccardo would become a very good chef (even though not by profession) and literally fell in love with the art of cooking. Yet, it is necessary to point out that he only loves to cook Italian dishes, better if they come from Bologna and the surrounding areas. "I don't prepare any recipe that is not truly Italian. This is my own philosophy as regarding to cuisine. I also pay a lot of attention to the ingredients and I always look for Italian brands. Being an authentic Bolognese guy, there are two things that are never missing in my fridge: pork-derived products, and parmigiano reggiano. And I always have chocolate in my cupboard as well!"

For all the things Riccardo told me, and for his nice attitude, I decided I would have another interview with him, but this time with a kitchen on hand! I am sure that, even if he is a "pork-oholic", he'll find among his recipes something light and tasty to cook for the always-on-a-diet women and men (that should diet, but who eat whatever they find on their way) of I-Italy's staff !

Source URL: <http://newsite.iitaly.org/magazine/focus/life-people/article/ciaklets-cook>

Links

[1] <http://newsite.iitaly.org/files/editcibo1253299397.jpg>

[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venice_Film_Festival



[3] <http://www.tisch.nyu.edu>

[4] <http://blitz.com>

[5] [http:// www.foodnetwork.com/ultimate-recipe-showdown/index.html](http://www.foodnetwork.com/ultimate-recipe-showdown/index.html)

[6] [http:// www.foodnetwork.com](http://www.foodnetwork.com)