

Forget Ice Cream, We're Talking Gelato Here!

Natasha Lardera (April 14, 2014)



WHEN ICE CREAM MAKING BECOMES AN ART AND A MISSION Francesco Realmuto, from Sicily, made his American Dream come true when he decided to bring the best Italian artisanal gelato to NYC. His product is simply incomparable. "Gelato making is an art. Our mission has been to build a community of people around gelato, from producers of raw materials to Italian gelato craftsmen, to give that authentic feeling that gelato can give, just as I remember from my childhood."

"I grew up in Baucina, a small village not far from Palermo, where gelato is an everyday treat. I remember long walks with my friends and my cousins, especially after Sunday Mass, while enjoying an artisanal gelato made with fresh ingredients by locals," says Francesco Realmuto, artigiano



gelatiere (an artisan gelato maker), and owner of L'Arte del Gelato, a chain of shops and stands scattered across the coolest spots in NYC.

"At 19, I realized there were no job opportunities in Sicily, so I decided to follow in my relatives' footsteps. I landed in NYC, looking for the American Dream," Francesco explains. "I was working in the Diamond District, but then one day when I was visiting the International Restaurant Show at the Jacob Javits Center, I ran into a line of people in front of a gelato display. It impressed me in a way I can't explain.

I decided to change my life and take up a career in something I felt close to—meaning, food—especially healthy, traditional Italian food. Later on, I left to train in Italy, to learn everything about the old art of gelato." Francesco traveled all around Italy for six months to learn the secrets of the most renowned gelato makers. "I've studied everything about gelato. One of the classic flavors that impressed me was the Crema Zabaione.

Our grandmas used to prepare this beloved dessert by whipping egg yolks with their hands. Us kids were allowed just a taste, since it contains an aromatic wine called Marsala." After this enlightening experience, Francesco decided it was time to put into practice what he had learned. He opened his elateria in Chelsea Market, and seasonal locations soon followed: at Lincoln Center Plaza and on the popular High Line (10th Avenue & 15th Street).

Francesco and his team are scrupulous not only in choosing the best spots, but also in their search for the finest natural ingredients. While hewing close to tradition, they have created a method for preparing gelato all their own to ensure their product is unmatched. "The technique for making gelato has been improving for over 500 years in Italy. During my training, I discovered it is not only a craft," explains Francesco, "it's an art. Our mission has been to build a community of people around gelato, from producers of raw materials to Italian gelato craftsmen, who can work together to give that authentic feeling that gelato can give, just as I remember from my childhood. In this society, which puts a premium on profits, we feel privileged because we are free from that cage. We can express ourselves. That's what makes us unique." At L'Arte del Gelato they offer only the simplest and most beloved Italian flavors.

"You will never see anything like Bubble Gum or Smurf. Those bizarre flavors don't fit with our mission," Francesco jokes. "Yet we like to come up with new flavors. One of our last ideas involved olive oil. The flavor was sort of an experiment. I melted milk and oil together. It's quite a strange union, but the result was amazing, a special mix of softness and milkiness. Think it's worth a try? I bet I can persuade you!

Check the website for the flavor of the month: www.lartedelgelato.com [2].

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