

EX.IT

EXTRAORDINARY ITALIAN
THE CULINARY MAGAZINE BY ALFREDO RUSCHI

MAY 2018



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TRADITION AND INNOVATION

FABIO DATTERONI

CASTELLO DEL NERO

Picture-perfect landscapes with olive groves and vineyards provide a memorable backdrop for this 12th-century castle, located in the celebrated Chianti wine region. The former home of an Italian nobleman, the Castello del Nero. Whimsical details include restored original frescoes, vaulted ceilings, 'cotto' floors and a gorgeous collection of antique furniture.

EX.IT catches up with Tuscany born Fabio Datteroni who was named the 2017 General Manager of the Year in Luxury Travel Advisor's Awards of Excellence...

What can guests expect from your room and suite offerings?

Our room and suite offering reflects what we are, an authentic Tuscan experience as most of our rooms do have wooden beams and terracotta floors, some of the suite do also feature original frescoes from the 16th-18th century. Attention to details, gorgeous views of the Tuscan countryside, a lot of natural light, large bathrooms with either walk in shower and bath tub or built in showers. Nicely appointed, contemporary and fresh style, each room and suite is different from each other in terms of colors, shape, form, location, each one is a unique experience in itself.



FABIO DATTERONI



DELUXE SUITE



DELUXE SUITE

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DELUXE SUITE - LIVING ROOM

Clients' needs have changed as a consequence of the increasing use modern technology and the search for tailor-made experiences. What do clients expect when booking your hotel?

We have been working in the past 6 years in order to make our hotel a destination into the destination itself. Booking a stay with us is a return of the investment made as our caring attitude of our guests needs is our top priority. We are people who love looking after other people and make sure they are very happy as this is the best reward we can expect, a smile and a thank you from those recipients of our service and quality delivering. At our hotel we offer so many on site and off site experiences, from pasta making cooking class with our Michelin star chef to hot air ballooning, from driving a vintage Fiat 500 to experiencing a ride through the gentle rolling hills of Tuscany, discovering that the best experience is to simply enjoy the property itself, the dolce vita of doing nothing allowing our staff to pamper our guests, de-connecting from the daily routing and re-connecting with themselves.

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FABIO DATTERONI



ANTIPASTRO

use it for bread and pasta making, we selected the best of the local producers to both support the local economy and to have the best of the most fresh food, to be sustainable in every way possible.

The success of our project allowed us to reach the First Michelin Star in 18 months later, the hotel guests demanded us more food experiences so that we had to open a second restaurant more based on the Tuscan cuisine, another great success.

More than ever before, cuisine expresses itself in hotel restaurants. What kind of experience do you offer? What adjectives would you choose to describe your cuisine?

We have since ever a strong beliefs that most of the best food & beverage experiences are now available in hotel restaurants.

In 2012 we started a new project for the F&B offering at our hotel, we wanted to create an experience more and more on the farm to fork model, we have developed an organic vegetables and aromatic herbs garden, we make our own wine with our estate grown grapes, we make a superb extra virgin olive from our olives groves, we just started to have our bee hives to produce the best honey, we planted ancient grains to make flour and

Today we offer a Tuscan Lounge food experience open from 12 noon to 10 pm where a dinner menu is offered starting from 6pm at the Tuscan La Taverna, at the same time we also offer the Gourmet candle light experience at our La Torre Michelin Star, lots of choices for our guests that do not want to explore the area that much as they find in house all the best pairing their food choices from a wine list that counts 1200+ different labels, having a drink and aperitivo at The Bar where our excellent Bar tender will mix the spirits creating hand crafted cocktails accompanied by tasty bites. In the summer our F&B offering also provide an 'under the sun umbrella' dedicated menu so that our Guest can also have lunch or a snack relaxed on the sun chair.

Our cuisine is Italian Contemporary and Local typical from the Tuscan area.

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CAPPELLETTO



DESSERT

What are your thoughts about Italian cuisine around the world?

For so long the Italian cuisine abroad Italy has been adapted to the taste of the people living in the country where it was offered, in most of the cases because of a lack of the same quality same origin of the ingredients, it really still makes me smiling when finding in a menu the spaghetti meatballs, the Bolognese ragout or the fettuccini (we write it with an E at the end and not with an I) Alfredo or the pasta with a Marinara sauce, pretending to sell the Italian sounding and making the dish a real once. This creates the idea that when in Italy and ordering these dishes can make the clients ordering the most typical food experience while instead we do not have this the same way as it is abroad.

During the last years the general culture of the nowadays travellers and united the borders making the people more knowledgeable about food allowing the chefs to not interpret a dish but instead to cook it the original way, also in terms of high quality Italian ingredients that are now much more easy to be supplied directly from the Italian producers.

Step by step the Italian cuisine around the world is slowly moving towards the respect of the tradition while there is still a lot of food offered as Italian or Tuscan just by adding an Italian noun. A few weeks ago in an American highway I have seen a big truck advertising for the best Tuscan vegetables soup! This says it all.

What solutions do you propose to the clients who long for spiritual and physical well-being?

We are a holistic Spa, we offer high quality treatments for the best well-being possible. We have signature treatments offered with our extra virgin olive oil (estate produced) with an infusion of sun dried lavender seeds (also grown on our estate) to offer both a gentle scrub and a perfect nourishing of the skin. In partnership with ESPA we launched a special package to promote a good sleep, the Re-Connect package that has been so successful so far. It includes treatments, selected food & beverage to enhance the sleep, and lots of other pampering attentions.

We also offer yoga class and the best spiritual opportunity: relaxing watching the gentle Tuscan rolling hills, the olives groves, the vineyards, the cypress trees lines, the sunflowers with a good book, a good glass of red wine produced on our estate, leaving behind the cell phone to de-connect and to re-connect with ourselves.



THE BAR



LA TORRE



To have a high attention to details, walking the property every single day several times during the day.

To have a very good F&B culture in order to raise the bar of the quality offered.

To be a visionary but also to be able to understand the finance and the cash flow, to promote the investments needed to support and to better the business life of the property, to measure the customer and the staff satisfaction, supporting the operation, taking all the responsibilities and sharing the success.

From my predecessors I have learnt that having a family and taking very good care of them is more important than the career which needs to be taken very good care as well, being a happy father and a happy husband helps in a great way to be an happy GM and to be hungry every single way to create new experiences to be delivered to the hotel Guests.

I have innovated and elevated the Guest experience at Castello del Nero first of all empowering my team, to make each one feeling part of the whole picture, each one to be responsible of the success, each one to feel good and to reflect this feeling into the Guests in a very genuine and caring attitude, attention to details, to the best quality possible, the best service possible, attentive but not intrusive, people for the people, people with the people.

I do not like to make fireworks as they are yes beautiful but they do not last, I'd rather prefer to slowly make a star that once carved and proved will remain in the sky forever.

You belong to a new generation of General Managers, what makes a successful GM today? Do you need to be more of a generalist? What have you learnt from your predecessors and what have you innovated?

What make a GM successful today is to be 120% part of the picture, you have to be present in every aspect of the business you run, speak to the Guests and listen to them, speak to all of your Team members and listen to them. A GM nowadays has to have the ability to be the best PR and Sales person, travelling the world and attending the industry events and again listening and watching and trying to bring back home something new to be implemented in your hotel do make the service and the quality delivered the best as possible.