

805 LIVING

DECEMBER 2010

OUR FAVORITE

Season
OF THE YEAR

PLUS:
festive and
fabulous gift
ideas for
everyone

Tra di Noi Ristorante, Malibu

A Gift From Italy



Tarcisio Mosconi and Antonio Alessi, owners of Tra di Noi Ristorante in Malibu, love to source fresh produce and fine wine from the farms and vineyards surrounding their restaurant. But no one in Malibu is currently curing prosciutto or making fresh mozzarella cheese from buffalo milk.

"So," Alessi declares, "if we can't get it next door, we'll get it fresh via next-day air from Italy." Enter Giuseppe Ariola of **Ariola Imports** (ariolaimports.com). The restaurateurs won't trust anyone else to bring in high-end products like prosciutto San Daniele that's been aged 18 months, mozzarella di bufala from Campana, and white truffles. Ariola's family has been producing olive oil in Italy since 1850. Giuseppe came to America at his father's bidding to check on restaurant accounts here. Eventually that, and a serendipitous purchase of a \$400 van, led Ariola to create his own importing company. Ariola relies on longtime relationships with food producers in Italy, including his father and that special extra-virgin olive oil. For every product he brings in, Ariola says, "I know the manufacturers. I come from Napoli where they make the buffalo mozzarella. My friend produces the San Marzano tomatoes. I'm famous for these tomatoes in Los Angeles." And now Ariola is delivering those peeled, canned, amazingly flavorful Italian tomatoes to restaurants and markets all over Los Angeles County, Orange County, Ventura County, Santa Barbara County and San Diego County.

Cured meats like Guanciale Baciato (pork jowl), Felino Salame (soft salami), and aged cheeses like Pecorino Toscano, Parmigiano Reggiano, and Ricotta Salata are delivered to Rome by their makers. Then they're flown on an Ali-

talia plane to LAX. Ariola explains, "We pick it up at the airport and start delivering it the minute we receive it. Wednesday morning it leaves Italy; Wednesday night it's in the restaurant." Less-perishable goods like dried pasta, olive oil, canned tomatoes, wine, and artisan beer come over on containers every 10 days.

Francesco Velasco, executive chef of Tra di Noi, is like a kid in a candy store when visiting the Ariola Imports warehouse in Duarte. His eyes light up when he talks about getting Italian products fresh from their source. "Once you know the real thing" he begins dreamily and then can't even finish the thought before he spies some dried pasta and begins detailing what he does with it in the restaurant. "There's pasta—candele—artisanal pasta from Naples: We cook it in a really big pot, cut it, stuff it, and bake it." The candele are very long tubes, not as wide as cannelloni rolls but slightly bigger than ziti. Velasco stuffs the candele with a ricotta-basil mixture. Then he creates a sauce using Ariola's tomatoes and guanciale along with sweet onions. This dish, topped with breadcrumbs and olive oil, is called Macaroni Ripieni and it's a gift from Italy.

Tra di Noi and Ariola Imports are teaming up to bring even more gifts from Italy this month. During December, gift baskets of imported Italian products will be for sale at Tra di Noi. The Napoli basket, stuffed with foods from Naples and the region of Campania, costs \$300. The Toscana basket, full of items from Florence and the region of Tuscany, costs \$200. And The Sicily basket carries gifts from the island of Sicily for only \$100.



Introducing: Ariola Foods, Pasta, Olive Oil, etc.

"So," Alessi declares, "if we can't get it next door, we'll get it fresh via next-day air from Italy."

- Antonio Alessi

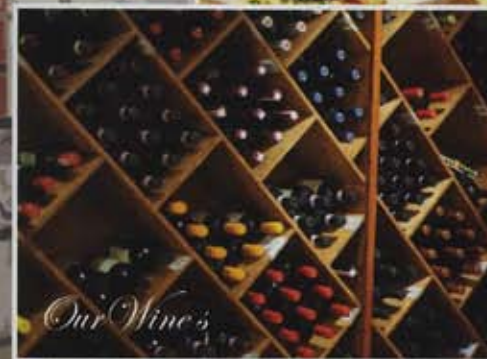


Giuseppe Ariola, Francesco Velasco, and Tarcisio Mosconi at Ariola Imports in Duarte.

"A Gift from Italy"

- Tarcisio Mosconi

Tra di Noi brings artisanal Italian products to Malibu.



"One of Malibu's Best!"

- Zagat Restaurant Guide

Tra di Noi Ristorante
3835 Cross Creek Road
Malibu, CA 90265
(310) 456-0169