

■ BY MOTHER MARTHA

My October “Food for Thought”: “At Last Rome’s ‘Il Tuo Vissani’” was about chef Gianfranco Vissani’s new restaurant near Rome’s Piazza Navona. As usual I needed five photographs to illustrate my story. Instead the PR agent sent me over 200, all by the same photographer. I looked him up on Google, and his website (www.albertoblasetti.com) was so impressive that I contacted him.

A few days later we met at another restaurant he’d photographed, *L’Osteria di Birra del Borgo*, at Via Silla 25a, a 10-minute walk from the Vatican Museums. Clearly stated in its name, this spacious beer hall specializes in a vast selection of artisanal beers all explained on large black boards, with an extensive menu of burgers, large salads, typically Roman fried antipasti, and imaginative pastas. It’s especially renowned for its *pizzataio*, or pizza chef, Luca Pezzetta (awarded 3 *toques* [the top rating] by the magazine/guide *Gambero Rosso*).

Blasetti, whose first memories of food are his maternal grandmother’s vegetable soups, was born and bred in Massa D’Albe, a tiny town near Avezzano in Abruzzo, of a Roman mother and *Abruzzese* father. Although he studied philosophy, he’d always wanted to be a photographer and travel the world. After a year in England and then moving to Rome, Blasetti’s lucky break came when he was introduced to two famous photographers in the movie world, Swiss-born Philippe Antonello and Stefano Montesi, and became their assistant. They filmed on set, but also created movie posters. After three years with his mentors, so around 10 years ago, Blasetti began to take photographs of food for the agency *Cibando* (literally, “Fooding”), thus becoming one of the first Italian photographers to specialize in food and brochures for restaurants. A dream come true! The perfect combination to bring together his love for travel and gastronomy! Soon his career took off thanks to additional freelance commissions and then meeting six years ago Annalisa Zordan, a writer for *Gambero Rosso*.

Blasetti’s photographs have been published by Rizzoli International, Giunti Editore, De Agostini Editore, *Food & Wine*, *Cook Inc.*, *Fortune*, *RFood*, *La Repubblica*, *Gambero Rosso Magazine*, *Marco Polo Viaggi*, *Gola Magazine*, *Tabloid Panorama*, *Rivista 11*, *Il Venerdì di Repubblica*, *Donna Mod-*

FOOD AND CHEFS THROUGH A LENS

erna, *Robinson* and *La Cucina Italiana*.

Besides *L’Osteria di Birra del Borgo*, Blasetti has collaborated with many hotels and restaurants: Drink

Kong, Aldovrandi Villa Borghese, La Pergola, All’Oro, Fud Bottega Sicula, Sofitel Villa Borghese, The St. Regis Venice, Barrique by Oliver Glowig, Lume Milano, Cannamela, Hotel Hassler, The Jerry Thomas Project, The Pantheon Hotel, The St. Regis Rome, and Liquore Strega.

In addition to a brief bio and how to contact him, his website is divided by topic: Food, Drink, Portraits and Tearsheets. Each photo has a caption, which includes where it was published.

With his Canon 5 d mark 4 in hand, Blasetti has five books of drink and food photography under his belt: the cover and some shots in Matteo Zed’s *Il Grande Libro dell’*

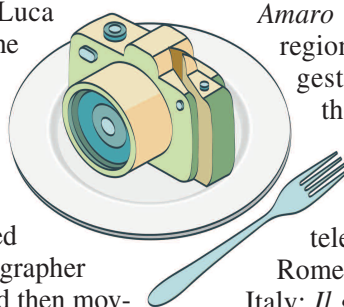
Amaro Italiano, organized in alphabetical order by region with additional chapters on bitters and digestives from other European countries and on

those used in cocktails; *Twist on Classic* about Rome’s very famous bar “Jerry Thomas” modeled on American speakeasies;

Washoku about classic Japanese cuisine by television star chef Hirohiko Shoda, who lives in Rome and is the ambassador of Japanese cuisine in

Italy; *Il gioco della pizza: le magnifiche ricette del re della pizza* (*The Pizza Game: Magnificent Recipes by the King of Pizza*) by *pizzataio* Gabriele Bonci and food journalist Elisia Menduni; and *100 Piatti da assaggiare una volta nella vita* (*100 Dishes to Taste at Least Once in Your Life*) by one of Italy’s youngest food critics, Lorenzo Sandano. A sixth in English and forthcoming in March, *The New Cucina Italiana: What to Eat, What to Cook, and Who to Know in Italian Cuisine Today* is by the award-winning journalist and prolific author of culinary books Laura Lazzaroni. Her aim is for Americans to discover that today Italy’s most special cuisine is found in the kitchens and restaurants of young chefs. Few are known abroad and all are worth a visit!

Like Lazzaroni, Blasetti’s second great passion is discovering new restaurants, so I asked him for suggestions: near Vatican City: “Tordomatto” and “Off Taki”; elsewhere in Rome: “All’Oro” and “Marzapane”; outside Rome, “Trattoria Trippa” in Milan; “Osteria Caro Melo” in Donnalucata, Sicily; and “Osteria Mammara’ssa” in Avezzano. ○



Riccardo di Giacinto, chef of “All’Oro,” and his Roche; Alberto Blasetti; and Apreda’s *salimbocca* at “Idyllo”