

# Restaurant Forum

**CHEF'S PROFILE**  
Lucy Martin,  
Executive Pastry Chef



Seafood  
**Sustainable Fish**  
Navigate Rough  
Economic Waters

World Food Delivers a  
Palette of Taste and  
Nutrition to Central  
Florida's Hotels  
and Restaurants

## Strong Passions and Good Chemistry

Vinito Ristorante,  
Prime Outlets International, Orlando

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# Mezzacorona

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PHOTO BY JOE BROOKS PHOTOGRAPHY

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Three Berry alla Gritti — strawberry, raspberry and blueberry layered with sponge cake and Mascarpone cheese and whipped cream



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## from the publisher

This issue profiles Vinito Ristorante in the Orlando Prime Outlets as our cover story.

Vinito Ristorante is an Italian concept that focuses on the Italian heritage of Chef Raffaele Marsilio and managing partner Joseph Palladino. They both shared the desire to bring a true Italian experience to Central Florida. We've also profiled our chef of the month, Executive Pastry Chef Lucy Martin with the World Center Marriott in Orlando. Chef Martin shares with *Restaurant Forum* her roundabout path to a career in culinary. Also in this issue, we've skimmed the top of the ever-expanding topic of sustainable seafood. We would love to hear your views and efforts in moving toward sustainability. Contact us at (407) 620-0718 or [ehutter@restaurantforumfl.com](mailto:ehutter@restaurantforumfl.com).



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Look for these upcoming issues of *Restaurant Forum*:

- December 2009 — desserts and coffee and our annual industry buyers guide. Contact us today to participate. It's only \$250 for full-color business card advertising! The deadline is November 21, 2009.
- January 2010 — a look ahead, 2010 forecast and women in foodservice. Please nominate outstanding women in foodservice; e-mail nominations to [ehutter@restaurantforumfl.com](mailto:ehutter@restaurantforumfl.com). The deadline for nominations is November 30, 2009. In this time of Thanksgiving, I'd like to thank all of our advertisers, new and old, who make this publication possible.

Cheers!

Ellen Hutter  
Publisher

## Restaurant Forum

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**Publisher:** Ellen M. Hutter

**Photographer:** Joe Brooks Photography  
**Contributing Writer:** Alicia Callanan Mandigo  
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### Contact Information

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# Sustainable Fish Navigate Rough Economic Waters

By Alicia Callanan Mandigo

When our children reach adulthood, our oceans will be barren. It's a bleak, science fiction type of scenario that seems difficult to fathom as a reality. Yet, some warn that it could happen. Greenpeace International, for instance, cites studies that say 90% of all large fish have disappeared from the world's oceans and that 75% of the world's fisheries are either depleted, at risk of being depleted or are working to recover from depletion.

Chefs found they were positioned to be first responders, so to speak, when it came to protecting the world's seafood population. It became fashionable to promote sustainability. Then, chefs, along with the rest of us, got slammed with the September 2008 economic meltdown. "Sustainable seafood is off the top of the priority list these days as more chefs are cost conscious," says Gary's Seafood's Mitch Rice.

Luma Executive Chef Brandon McGlamery is an avid sport fisherman whose passion for sustainability earned him an invitation to the Monterey Bay Aquarium's upcoming Cooking for Solutions event, which brings together renowned chefs to explore sustainability. "The economy has really streamlined our focus," says Chef McGlamery, "I believe you can be sustainable and do it economically." While he admits buying from day boats, considered a sustainable practice, is easier when you live in a state surrounded by water on three sides, he says sustainability is difficult because it's multifaceted, always in flux and downright confusing.

There are two sides to sustainability — wild populations and farmed populations. Making sustainable choices from either population means understanding specific fish species and how they get to your restaurant. Mahi, for instance, is considered a sustainable choice because Mahi reproduces so quickly that wild populations are able to keep pace with fishing practices. Other fish populations fluctuate so radically that they might be on the "safe list" one month and off it the next. The manner in which fish are harvested also plays a role. For example, small day boats are

easier on fish populations than large commercial fishing operations. Those are just a few components in what is literally a sea of information that chefs need to monitor if they want to make sustainable choices.

Farmed products bring in a whole new wave of confusion. Initial reports labeled farm-raised fish as bad. "The farming that came out first was not looking at long-term environmental impact," says Ravenous Pig Chef/owner James Petrakis. Early farmed fish were found to be swimming in swill, fish were escaping and corrupting wild populations, feeds reportedly contained contaminants and so on. However, technology and research have changed aquaculture. Farmed products available today are, in some cases, even better than wild caught. Again,



you have to know your source, and information on good farmed sources is constantly changing. Chef McGlamery and Chef Petrakis look to the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch program as a key guide.

"My job as a chef is to find out who's giving

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Veal Marsala: sautéed veal medallions in a Marsala mushroom wine reduction, served with spaghetti Geraldina, al dente spaghetti sautéed with its own fresh tomato and basil sauce (named after Chef Marsilio's mother)





**Mediterranean Grilled Salad: a Sicilian salad made with fresh spring greens, grilled eggplant, roasted bell peppers, goat cheese, cherry tomatoes and balsamic virgin olive oil dressing**

PHOTO BY JOE BROOKS PHOTOGRAPHY

Hills, where he owned his own restaurant. He acquired enough of an international reputation that when Vinito Ristorante came into being, Chef Marsilio was recruited to help build it into an Italian restaurant of note. Managing partner Palladino was also recruited, having built a solid reputation for himself in the Orlando market. Once Palladino and Chef Marsilio began working together, they realized they were a good team. “Both of us try to cater to what the guest is looking for. A lot of restaurants have forgotten that the guest is the most important element, but we’re both focused on that,” says Palladino.

That focus means marrying true Italian flavors and cooking techniques with dishes that are familiar to both Americans and international travelers. In that category, the Chicken Francese may be Vinito Ristorante’s biggest success. Two thin chicken breast filets are sautéed in a delicate egg batter and coated in a parmesan crust that adds both a wonderful depth of flavor and a nice texture. The filets are fanned out over a neat pile of pasta, making for a visually engaging dish. The chicken is tender, light, lemony and so delicious that your server cannot over-hype this dish.

Likewise, the Veal Marsala cannot be over-hyped. Full of deep,

rustic, country flavors and accompanied by an indulgent portion of sliced mushrooms, the marsala is so spot on that one particularly well-traveled food critic declared Vinito Ristorante’s Veal Marsala the best he’s ever had.

As is frequently the case with new properties, Vinito Ristorante is tweaking the menu with which it started. Chef Marsilio, for instance, is looking to clean up some of the menu’s terminology to bring it more in line with the terminology that is found in Italy. He would also like to change the menu twice a year to provide a more seasonal approach to his food. Palladino, in a move that is based on sheer fun, is looking to add a signature drink or two. One possibility is a Peach Bellini. Palladino’s plan is to take the traditional Venetian cocktail and put a Florida spin on it by serving it frozen. His delightful blend of wine moscato, peach schnapps and peach nectar is neither frilly nor sweet. It is, instead, refreshing, flavorful and perhaps almost a little too easy to drink. Consider starting the evening with a Bellini, and then switching to wine during dinner. Chef Marsilio hand selected the wine list, which exclusively features the wines of Gruppo Mezzacorona Cellars. His choices were designed to



**Atlantic Salmon Arrostato: oven roasted salmon served with fresh herbs with seasonal vegetables**

**Chef Raffaele Marsilio of Naples, Italy (left) works with restaurant managing partner Joe Palladino to bring a true taste of Italy to Vinito Ristorante with authentic dishes and a warm, welcoming ambiance.**



PHOTOS BY JOE BROOKS PHOTOGRAPHY

reflect the best in Italian wines and to complement his dishes.

You won't have to wait for any menu changes to enjoy a great dessert. While you might be tempted by familiar favorites such as tiramisu and New York cheesecake, the Three Berry alla Gritti is a house favorite. A bright mix of berries is layered with sponge cake and Mascarpone cheese in a fresh, house made dessert that is festive and inviting.

"Everything Marsilio does, he does with a lot of love," explains Palladino. "He makes sure every dish is perfect. Every sauce is made to order; everything is fresh." Many are surprised to find such superior food at an outlet mall. What is equally surprising is that it's exceptional food that is value priced. "People who come to this mall are looking for a great value, and this menu is priced to be in line with that," explains Palladino.

Palladino and Chef Marsilio may have also been a bit surprised to learn that they had so much in common when it came to Italian food. They are, after all, from different worlds. However, their passion for true Italian is the same, and their working chemistry is building the foundation for an outstanding restaurant.

*Alicia Callanan Mandigo is a freelance writer in Winter Park. ■*

# A Shared Philosophy

Nothing pairs better with Chef Raffaele Marsilio's authentic Italian cuisine than the wines of Gruppo Mezzacorona. With over a century of experience, Gruppo Mezzacorona is proud to offer its wines as accompaniments to the traditional flavors of Vinito Ristorante.

Dedicated to the history and tradition of the families and places that produce these fine wines, Gruppo Mezzacorona's wines transcend the typical characteristics of Italian wine with unique, complex aromas and distinct flavor profiles that showcase the personality of the rich and varied regions of the Italian peninsula.

Aware of the energy it takes to preserve the identity of an Italian region, Gruppo Mezzacorona was immediately attracted to Chef Marsilio's determination to maintain the integrity of his family's recipes and traditions over the years and the ocean. As a fellow guardian of Italian customs, Gruppo Mezzacorona was inspired to share in the Marsilio family vision by giving Vinito Ristorante full access to Gruppo Mezzacorona's extensive cellars.

From crisp Mezzacorona and Rotari wines from the heart of the Italian Dolomites, to the rich Tuscan wines of Castello di Querceto, to the concentrated Sicilian wines of Arancio-Stemmari, every varietal is expertly grown in order to produce top-quality wines that reflect the essence of their regions.

While all of Gruppo Mezzacorona's wines are excellent accompaniments to Chef Marsilio's Tuscan flavors, the wines of Castello di Querceto are produced with Tuscan cuisine in mind.

Just like Chef Marsilio's cuisine, the wines of Castello di Querceto are as intertwined with family tradition as the vines that grow the grapes. The Francois family was a principal presence in Chianti wine-making even before the appellation was given an official boundary. Through generations of hard work, the Francois family has carved out its niche in the wine world, earning the reputation as a producer of wines of unique character and excellent quality. As a partner that shares in the philosophy of Gruppo Mezzacorona, the Francois family places tradition and excellence at the heart of every bottle of wine from Castello di Querceto.

Both Gruppo Mezzacorona and Vinito Ristorante believe that forward thinking with an appreciation for the past is the key to carrying fine winemaking and culinary traditions into the future. By examining the core principles of both trades with a modern eye, today's winemakers and chefs can bring new life to proud techniques, evolving each process to please today's diners while staying true to the people and the land from which these renowned traditions came.

In that spirit, Vinito Ristorante and Gruppo Mezzacorona have come together to share generations of experience with each guest. It is their hope that by sharing their collective traditions, memories and inspirations, each meal at Vinito Ristorante feels like a relaxing dinner at a Tuscan dinner table filled with family, friends and laughter. ■

## Mezzacorona

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# Tragedy Tomorrow, Cake Tonight

Lucy Martin, Executive Pastry Chef,  
Orlando World Center Marriott Resort

By Alicia Callanan Mandigo

It started off Broadway as neither a tragedy nor a comedy. It began as a diversion. “I was an actress in New York, pursuing work in the theater and such, and I decided I wanted to change careers, but I didn’t know what I wanted to do,” says Orlando World Center Marriott Resort Executive Pastry Chef Lucy Martin. The career path may not have been clear to her, but her friends could see it. She liked baking and had even done some wedding cakes, so it seemed pastry school was the obvious choice.

“I decided to enroll in the Institute of Culinary Education in Manhattan, but I still wasn’t sure if I wanted this for a career because it was something I really loved, and I didn’t want it to become a job,” says Chef Martin. At the time, Chef Martin was working front of house at the Marriott Marquis in New York. She started picking up shifts in pastry there and found she was really enjoying it.

In 1995, Chef Martin decided to leave New York and headed to Florida because she had family here. That led to a job with Arthur’s Catering in Altamonte Springs, but after a few months, she decided she wanted to rejoin the Marriott Corporation and began working at the Orlando World Center. “I was able to progress at this property and moved into the Executive Pastry Chef position about six years ago,” says Chef Martin. “I haven’t regretted the decision once.”

If her adult life sounds colorful, it’s perhaps because her life has always been colorful. Her mother is a Floridian and her father is Colombian. As a child, she lived in Colombia, Peru, Italy, Barbados and several U.S. cities. “My heritage definitely comes out in my baking. My staff is from many

different countries, and I always encourage them to bring forth their cuisines, this way we all learn and come up with some new twists to our more traditional American fare,” she says.

**If her adult life sounds colorful, it’s perhaps because her life has always been colorful. Her mother is a Floridian and her father is Colombian. As a child, she lived in Colombia, Peru, Italy, Barbados and several U.S. cities. “My heritage definitely comes out in my baking. My staff is from many different countries, and I always encourage them to bring forth their cuisines, this way we all learn and come up with some new twists to our more traditional American fare,” she says.**

What’s begun to surface in her baking in more recent years is competitiveness. She began entering pastry competitions in 2005, and is currently slated for a Food Network Extreme Rollercoaster Challenge, tentatively scheduled to air around Valentine’s Day. “I like the challenge; I like the rush; I like to push myself. Doing competitions is exactly that, and every competition I come out

more knowledgeable. It teaches you better organization; it forces you to think out of the box, to work faster and cleaner,” she says.

The mother of two girls, 5 and 8 years old, Chef Martin says her oldest daughter Sophia is her biggest supporter when it comes to competitions, and even offers up ideas for Chef Martin to try. She says chocolate is proving to be her favorite medium, which should be helpful for the upcoming Food Network Challenge, but she also really likes doing plated desserts.

While Chef Martin isn’t contemplating another career change, she does think down the road as we all do from time to time. “If I wasn’t a pastry chef anymore, I would probably dedicate myself full time to my family, teach, and maybe do theater on a part-time basis,” says the former actress. Perhaps a funny thing will happen on the way to the pastry shop, and a good Greek tragedy will be considered tomorrow. Tragedy tomorrow, cake tonight.

*Alicia Callanan Mandigo is a freelance writer in Winter Park. ■*



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me the right information. I have my fish guy, a salesman, saying one thing, the [Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch program] is saying something else, and so you have to be careful not to rely on one source for information,” says Chef McGlamery.

Craig Tremblay of the Winter Park Seafood Company has had a very unique opportunity to gain a true man-on-the-street perspective when it comes to sustainability. Prior to the build out of his restaurant, he began selling fish directly to the public at the Winter Park Farmer’s Market. People were quite clear in that they weren’t particularly concerned with sustainability; their concern was freshness and quality. For a lot of people, that meant no farmed products. “People are predisposed to the idea that farmed products are a badly farmed product and a wild-caught product offer the same quality, flavor and freshness, and in some cases, it’s better,” says Tremblay.

Don’t believe him? Then hit the Winter Park Fish Company, Luma or Ravenous Pig, and try the Laughing Bird shrimp. It is a CleanFish farmed shrimp and it is an outstandingly sweet, flavorful shrimp that will abruptly change anyone’s thinking on farmed products. “CleanFish has gone in, looked at some of those early farming efforts and found a better way to do it,” says Chef Petrakis. “With blue fin tuna, instead of just putting fish into a confined

area, they are taking eggs from a regular blue fin tuna, producing tuna from the egg stage, and then introducing them into the wild so it’s never really farmed. It’s just being introduced into an area that maybe didn’t have a blue fin population before. When it’s time to harvest, they know exactly where the fish are, so they’re not out trolling,” says Chef Petrakis.

Both Chef McGlamery and Chef Petrakis estimate that only 5% of their guests care about sustainability. That may start to change with corporate giants like SeaWorld and Busch Entertainment Corporation actively practicing and promoting sustainability. Tremblay agrees the public needs to be brought on board. “We’re working exclusively with Gary’s Seafood to ensure that a large percentage of our menu is sustainable. We want to help educate the public, particularly when it comes to farmed products, because ultimately, all farms will learn to farm properly,” says Tremblay. “It’s a huge discussion,” says Chef McGlamery. “We’re draining our oceans and everyone has to start finding other alternatives.” One alternative is CleanFish. “It costs a little more,” says Chef Petrakis, “but if we can raise the demand for sustainable fish, the cost may go down.” That would help all of us navigate rough economic waters and perhaps save our oceans.

*Alicia Callanan Mandigo is a freelance writer in Winter Park. ■*

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- Mediterranean Fussili With Ugly Ripe Tomato
- Mango Jicama With Creamy Coconut
- Red Quinoa With Orange Citrus Vinaigrette
- Smoked Salmon Blini
- Cucumber Sushi Rolls
- Southwestern Chicken
- Shrimp Ceviche
- Scallop Ceviche

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developed our menu by listening to our clients. Chefs know best what customers want — what will bring them back to their restaurant. If we don't have your menu item choice on our list, we will create it from your specifications," says Chef Tim Stottle, World Food Corporate Executive Chef.

This article would not be complete without bringing thanks to those who

