



LA CUCINA ITALIANA

Chef Davide Lombardi returns to his roots and primary passion—the kitchen.

Chef **Davide Lombardi** is a full time **Chef Instructor** at the **Center for Culinary Arts (CCA)**, Manila. Having managed many authentic Italian restaurants since his graduation in 1981 from culinary arts in his hometown of Milan, Italy, his bosses at the CCA invited him to set up an authentic Italian restaurant in the Philippines that they would name Lombardi.

AN ITALIAN FEAST

The first Lombardi opened last November in the popular new mall these days, **Magnolia Robinsons'** in Quezon City. This 80-seater restaurant in the mall's second floor offers both indoor and 'al fresco' dining. Chef Lombardi's classic menu is a representation of the best Italian cuisine from both the northern and southern regions of

Italy. He explains that northern Italian cuisine is richer because of the colder climate. They use more butter and cream in their cooking. A typical example is the popular Osso Bucco, a specialty from Milan. In Italy, since veal is widely available, this is used instead of beef shank, which is more common in the Philippines. The northern cuisine also boasts of its risottos, Parmigiano, fresh pastas and lasagna. The southern cuisine on the other hand includes more Mediterranean fare resplendent with olive oil, seafood, vegetables and a great variety of pizzas. Chef Lombardi likes to maintain the freshness of all his ingredients and produce them from scratch. You will not see any ready-made ingredients in his kitchen!

Since Lombardi's opening late last year, the new Italian restaurant has attracted a good mix of clientele, many of them coming

back on a regular basis. This has encouraged Chef Lombardi to continue his personalized supervision of the kitchen as well as the restaurant proper. He does all the kitchen training of his cooks and orients the service staff on the ingredients, manner of cooking and history of each dish they serve. Lombardi's current favorites include their Gelato della Casa, a classic Panna Cotta del Piemonte, and their Focaccia bread with rosemary flavoring. Apart from their authentic dishes, Lombardi's offers a wide array of Italian wines from different regions.

SPREADING LA VIDA ITALIANA

I asked Chef Lombardi if the apparent success of this first Lombardi would be replicated anytime soon. The good news is that as of press time, their second store is being finished at the new Shangri-La Mall annex in Mandaluyong City, which will have a seating capacity of 60. The third Lombardi's outlet is being planned late in 2013 in Salcedo Village, where a location has already been identified.

Chef Lombardi also informed me that they would be opening another Italian restaurant in **Hotel Celeste**, a first class boutique hotel in Pasay Road, Makati City. This restaurant will be called Lucia, in honor of Chef Lombardi's mother. Lucia's cuisine will also be authentic Italian with more meat offerings and a wider range of premium Italian wines, served in a semi-fine dining environment. Lucia is expected to open this April.

THE HEART OF GREAT COOKING

Chef Lombardi, married to a Filipina, has a very high regard for our Filipino cooks. He happily states that it is not very difficult to teach them even the intricacies of the cuisine's authenticity. However, having the sincere interest to learn and a deep passion to cook are the minimum qualifications for anyone who wants to be under his tutorage. He goes further to say that his crew at Lombardi's now cook just like him, which makes him even happier. He disciplines his cooks to practice everyday, to make each day as if they were just learning to cook for the first time.

After three years of academic teaching experience in CCA and now returning to his real love which is running a kitchen, Chef Lombardi looks forward to growing the Lombardi's brand the Philippines and occasionally returning to CCA classrooms to again share his over 30 years experience of cooking authentic Italian cuisine!



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