



Mondo - Domenico Locantore and his creation Sole Mio Bangkok, a window on the world of flavors and emotions

Dal nostro corrispondente a Bangkok - 01 mag 2022 (Prima Notizia 24) Sole Mio Bangkok Italian Restaurant is an oasis of intimate tranquility in the pulsating and phantasmagorical heart of the Thai capital, but it is also a treasure chest full of unpredictable

artistic surprises.

Nomen Omen: it is no coincidence that the founder of Sole Mio Bangkok Italian Restaurant, Domenico Locantore, is also an artist, plays the guitar and sings. The Sukhumvit District teems with voices, noises, sounds, the sidewalks are crowded with foods vendors, if you use the BTS skytrain line, get off at the Thonglor stop and you are immediately hit with proposals for massages, there are stores of all kinds, 7Eleven (which are never lacking, they are everywhere), along Thonglor Road you will also find pubs, breweries, chic clubs and with more popular fittings, colorful cabs whizzing by, skyscrapers soaring towards the sky of Bangkok, often changeable and iridescent, sun, rain, hot, humid, sunny again. If you go into Soi Akkaphat, suddenly everything becomes quiet, near there are embassies of foreign countries, villas whose vegetation, poorly held back by the walls that protect them from view, extrovert towards the outside and color Soi Akkapat in various shades of green. At the entrance of Sole Mio Bangkok, the first to greet you are the cats that are now part of the "family", since the employees, the collaborators, coming from various corners of the world, not only from Thailand, have been working together for a long time, they are more than a professional team, they tell each other about their daily lives, most of the time, shared by working at Sole Mio Bangkok. "I spend more time here at the restaurant than with my own family," says Domenico Locantore "But, at the end of the day, as you can see, this is now also a family for all of us". Regarding the age-old querelle about cream in carbonara, a solution that is sometimes adopted abroad but that -in Italy- is considered an open violation of traditional Italian culinary rules, what do you think? Over time, I have come up with my own answer. When I prepared it with cream, I was asked for traditional Carbonara, that is, without cream. If I prepared it in the traditional way, some customers asked me specifically for it with cream. Well, today, in the Sole Mio Bangkok menu, carbonara is offered in both versions, with and without cream. It is the customer who decides. This is the same argument that is generally made about Spaghetti with meatballs, a recipe that in Italy is considered borderline, that is not part of the typical Italian cuisine, but abroad is considered an Italian recipe and is evaluated as a dish that identifies the Italian spirit. As a matter of fact, if we move south in Italy, in Sicily, for example, spaghetti with meatballs are not at all a rarity in the menu of families. And right from the South of Italy, from Sicily, this dish started to travel all over the world and today it is practically a must of Italian restaurants in every corner of the

planet. Also in this case, this recipe is included in the menu of Sole Mio Bangkok. Simply because it is one of the most requested dishes. I know of fellow restaurateurs who -in the field of traditional combinations and ingredients- love to experiment, both in terms of combinations of ingredients and in the preparations, in the layouts, for example by breaking down and reassembling the ingredients, introducing choices in terms of visual and styling completely personal, believing in this way to characterize their individual offer in the field of catering. Personally, I start from a different approach, in terms of respect for Tradition. Returning to the example of Spaghetti alla Carbonara, when even the five-star hotels began to regularly offer this dish, let's say that it was completely "cleared through customs" and therefore today, all over the world, you can ask for it without receiving any particular anathemas. But the evolution of a dish and its adaptation or readaptation according to variables that are gradually introduced in different contexts and times, are quite different from the proposal to be an "ambassador" of Italian tradition in the field of Cooking. Let's say that I have chosen a middle way. And today my clientele, made up of Japanese, Germans, Americans, English, Koreans, Thais and Italians - among the many others who come here from Sole Mio Bangkok - shows me that all they are happy, this is the most important aspect for me. As journalist and writer Gianni Brera, a native of Oltrepò Pavese, used to say, "Cùnt i gàmb sùta al tàul" one thinks better. With one's legs under the table, eating good food, tasting good wines, it is possible to have a peaceful conversation, relax, live in wellness, in well-being. This is another component on which I thought a lot. One day a diplomatic representative of the Himalayan State of Buthan came to see me with one of his collaborators, he had the bright face of a man pervaded by a sense of gratitude. I was seized by a doubt, I thought I had seen his face somewhere, some magazine or in some television program. It is also true that some time ago I had read about the Prime Minister of Bhutan who, in speeches given all over the world, called for a redrawing of the wealth of countries no longer or not only based on the Gross Domestic Product but also evaluating the Happiness Index. It is possible to live poorly with a lot around you, but at the same time, it is possible to live well, taking advantage of the resources of your country in a balanced way. Bhutan, for example, is the first country in the world that has freed itself from dependence on coal as a primary source of energy. Well, when I openly and frankly asked that diplomat if he was the one I had seen proposing the Happiness Index instead of the GDP, he confirmed that he was indeed the Premier of Bhutan. In that case, Sole Mio Bangkok, as well as a restaurant, was our happy island, good food, smiles, a shared sense of gratitude, the feeling of having both contributed to building the happiness of our communities, as well as ourselves. In what way and for what reasons did you create a space inside your restaurant, a stage, for singing events, live music shows, literary readings? Actually, my love for music dates back to when I was a young boy in Turin and before doing my military service, I had the opportunity to work for Good Music, a company that organizes concerts where I had the opportunity to collaborate in all phases related to the preparation of the stages for artists of great fame from Bruce Springsteen to Michael Jackson, just to name a few. I played in many bands in my youth including "Lavori in Corso" which played mainly Italian music and "Kita gilar", more devoted to Fusion, Modern Jazz, Funky and Blues. All of my youthful experience then waited for the time when I would open my own restaurant in Bangkok and this would offer a new opportunity to my

artistic and musical vein. I like to think that my customer can taste Music and Art, can taste emotions and not only good food and good wine. On the other hand - as it is well known - emotions circulate better with wine.

di Francesco Tortora Domenica 01 Maggio 2022