



Mondo - Mio Food&Art, the bright ideas of Antonio Marelli and his work in spreading Italian taste and design

Dal nostro corrispondente a Bangkok - 06 gen 2023 (Prima Notizia 24) Manager and hospitality professional Giulia Bonaso, introduces us to the stylistic world of Mio Food& Art's owner and explains the cultural implications behind the stylistic and

Italian Cuisine choices that have been adopted in this beautiful Italian restaurant in Bangkok.

Nowadays, you can detect that certain "Italian" touch in the graphics, in the color combinations as well as in the quality of the ingredients that you perceive when you sit at the table in a restaurant, you can fully experience "Made in Italy" in its fullness, even when you are in Bangkok, the Thai Capital. A Maserati whizzes by you just a few steps away, you pass by a café and smell its coffee, you look at a sign and it shows you a plate of Spaghetti alla Carbonara, you get together with friends for a drink and the evening opens with a Spritz, perhaps followed by a Prosecco. This is Bangkok today (but also much of Thailand frequented by International Tourism), a kind of global crossroads of tastes, colors and different cultures. The same feeling of emotional cross-over, in feelings and sensations is what you experience in Mio Food& Art, an Italian restaurant that, however, hides and reveals -at the same time- many curiosities. The venue is also a kind of space/time gate, outside the chaos of Bangkok traffic, its imperious light, the hubbub of people; inside -instead- everything becomes more suffused, intimate, especially the style of the furniture allows you to travel in Time and take you to the 1970s, those of a certain Italian design that contributed to make famous the Italian genius in the World, that stylistic "figure" of Ettore Sottsass, Gio Ponti, Bruno Munari, Marco Zanuso, Piero Fornasetti, and Achille Castiglioni, to name but a few names that pioneered the design stylistic features that have become the all-Italian stylistic identity and that then spread -with great respect- to every corner of the Planet. On the walls, paintings, prints, silkscreens, in the downstairs room there is a cuckoo, typical seats made of translucent 1970s plastics and the tables are placed next to neat, crisp slicers with that typical red livery that you would recognize from a mile away, especially if you are Italian and have tasted freshly cut mortadella, before seeing it placed inside a fragrant freshly baked bread. All this mixture of ingredients, space/time elements, richness of flavors and fragrances, the taste of beauty in each of its signatures is what Made in Italy in the World today is all about. Mio Food&Art Restaurant is a space/time capsule as well as a restaurant. "The task I have given myself is precisely to help create for the customer a true multisensory experience"-explains 25-year-old Giulia Bonaso, originally from Monza, a hospitality professional whose studies that determined her training took place in Switzerland. Her smile lights up her face, soothes the dialogue and makes the listener confident. "The concept behind Mio Food&Art -continues Giulia Bonaso- is to place side by side the original identity of Italian

Cuisine and the forms of Art and Design that distinguish Made in Italy internationally. About the products and ingredients that make up the Mio Food&Art Menu, the main assumption is to select high quality ingredients and products, from restricted, targeted productions that focus precisely on the final quality and typical Italian taste. The clientele that frequents Mio Food&Art is high-end, predominantly Thai and affluent, so they have very good knowledge of Italian Cuisine. However, some aspects are not yet known. Myself. For example, I have a few times set up, practically in real time, actual presentations and led tastings of the Oils. Here they are not only used in the kitchen but also placed for sale in special showcases where, as in a boutique of pastas, preserves, oils, and of course also wines of special care in selection, they are available on view to customers. Each wine has its own story to tell, just as each oil has its own specificity and even recommended use. Here, in these aspects, much work can still be done in spreading an appropriate Culture of Italian Cuisine. So, in this way you also contribute to customer loyalty? Of course, -Giulia Bonaso continues, -the customer is constantly learning things about Italian Cuisine that maybe he had never heard before. But I can also give another example: puntarelle. They are not always known in Italy, being a typical product spread in a particular region of Italy, so you can imagine how little is known about them here in Thailand. And I explain to the customer that it is not a whatever vegetable or salad but that it is a vegetable grown in Italy and is used for some particular preparations. The customer, therefore, is not only satisfied as far as lunch or dinner is concerned but also in having gained some extra elements of knowledge. Very often, this very thing leads the customer to talk about it with the circle of friends, acquaintances and invites all the people they particularly care about, to share this experience that goes beyond the dinner but becomes a convivial moment and cultural exchange." "The products are of high quality and for the most part imported, there is no shortage, however, of Thai products that are thought of with an Italian twist," interjects owner and founder Antonio Marelli. A strand of graying beard, like hair, frames a sunny smile and a beautiful light emanating from his gaze, a look that is seemingly shy but hints at a great conviction in his own ideas. "Meats, for example-continues Antonio Marelli-in some cases are not imported but processed in Thailand. Angus meat, for example, comes from slaughtering animals raised in Thailand but on a farm owned by an Italian, who has Thai staff next to him. The methods employed in the breeding, the very structuring of the stables and the type of products with which he feeds the animals on his farm mean that at the end of the production chain we get a specific type of meat that I adopt in my Kitchen. Well, customers find it hard to believe that this is meat obtained from farming conducted in Thailand, that is, obtained from Thai meat. This is my idea of Italian dining that I have adopted in Mio Food&Art. The chef is Thai but he has worked for ten years in Italian restaurants, he has undergone training with some of the most renowned Italian chefs in the world, and he himself, after trying experiences in other restaurants, then decided to come back and continue working with me. The staff of Mio Food&Art, today, is quite well established, the staff is made up of Thais, they understand each other, they support each other and they are more than a team, today they are a group of friends, a family, who share work which means a large part of their life time, every day. They are employees who feel secure, who get substantial extras in terms of compensation and who work in a comfortable place where it is pleasant to work together. For me, the human

factor is important, not only in the relationship with customers but also with the team of professionals and employees who collaborate in the life of Mio Food&Art." How come you combine Art and Food, here in Mio Food&Art? In some cases, in the restaurant business, Art, Design are only considered as factors pertaining to the fittings and nothing more "I come from the world of Design, as soon as I arrived in Thailand my idea was precisely to devote myself to the creation of Art and Design outlets, a pioneering work, in a way, quite difficult to conduct in another geographical area, in a different Culture and where the design styles were very close to the local tradition. Today, Thailand, the whole of Southeast Asia, are more open to the World, to the forms of visual communication and in design coming from the Western world, and Italy, a long-time pioneer in all this, is certainly an important point of reference in Design and Art more generally, as well as in the forms derived from it such as clothing, furniture, painting, even the stylistic choices adopted in the automotive world, to name but a few. Giulia Bonaso accompanies us to the upper floor, where there is a large space for the catering clientele, a large display case with functions of an open cellar where high or very high quality wines from various corners of the Planet, including those from different Italian regions, tower over, and finally, she leads us to a reserved room, intended for private parties and where the ambience is absolutely amazing: a 1970s living room, with its own private bathroom, equipped with all comforts, with paintings, lamps, carpets in an atmosphere dictated by great privacy, refinement and intimate quiet. Mio Food&Art is one more Italian treasure chest full of surprises in the heart of Bangkok. Mio Food&Art, 155 Sukhumvit Rd. Soi 53 Klongtoei-Nua, Wattana, Bangkok 10110, Bangkok, Thailand, Bangkok, Tel.: 080 734 5323

di Francesco Tortora Venerdì 06 Gennaio 2023