

La Cucina Italiana

Life as a Chef

The Star of Anacapri

Two restaurants, the most beautiful view in the world, a room full of wonders. Few hours of sleep per night, a vegetable garden...Andrea Migliaccio tells us how it is to cook in the blue waters of the Mediterranean

First of all, the team. Andrea Migliaccio, executive chef of the Capri Palace, oasis of hospitality with 69 rooms and jewel of Anacapri, is a master in managing 'his boys' as he calls them. Also, because he manages 3 restaurants, L'Olivo, (two Michelin stars since 2011), Il Riccio (one star since 2013) next to the famous Grotta Azzura, which also has a twin in Bodrum, Turkey, and the Assaje in Rome. "I dedicate a lot of time to my team, 28 chefs for the Olivo and 21 for Il Riccio and 20 for the Assaje, because for everything to work we have to be in-sync. Ours, is a hard job, we sleep maximum 5 hours a night". Andrea's day begins early in the morning with breakfast which he has together with his family (two boys, Luca and Davide 2 and 4) and a walk in Anacapri. His house is a five-minute walk to the Capri Palace, where he landed when he was 24. But he also worked in Paris for Alain Ducasse at the Plaza Athénée and for Michel Roth at the Ritz and then for Antonio Guida at the Pellicano in Porto Ercole.

Along the way he stops at the Pescheria (fish store) Reale on Via Orlando, an establishment for over 40 years, Antonino sells the best of the Mediterranean to the locals. "They are my allies, people who enter the kitchen and give me advice on how to bring out the best taste of their fish, based on the how deep the water was in which the fish was caught, to the temperature of the water", adds the Chef. They offer the best. A 5-kilo amberjack, a piece of art, with excellent meat, prawns from Crotone, important they say is to look at the prawns in the eyes, if they are fresh they will look round and turgid, without smell, if not a light scent of the sea.

As soon as Andrea arrives, he begins his rounds, starting from the bio vegetable garden, a novelty at the Capri Palace, which will almost entirely supply the hotel starting next season. Promises well with those eggplants and tomatoes.

Then there is the briefing with Salvatore Elefante, the resident chef of the Olivo and the other chefs. It is the moment to invent and then taste new dishes, like the cold tomato soup, with cuttlefish gnocchi, peaches and zucchini or to go over the classic dishes like lemon tagliolini pasta with burrata cheese, red prawns and sea asparagus. Before beginning the shift where he usually is together with Salvatore, I stop by Il Riccio to check with Giovanni Bavuso, the resident chef to see if everything is ok and I speak over the phone with the 'detached' chefs. Two steps away from the Grotta Azzura, one must try the raw fish plateau, the royal crab salad and spend a good five minutes in the Temptation Room, a space full of the local pastries where the pastry chef Mario Buonocore (by name and in

person) offers the best of the Neapolitan sweetness. A place where one loses one's mind (and waste line) without regrets.

Captions:

Andrea Migliaccio photographed in the Olivo restaurant in Anacapri. Below the view of the port of Capri and the Neapolitan coast: a feast of traditional sweets in the Temptation Room of Il Riccio.