CHEFS ARE MASTERS AT CAPTURING THE ESSENCE OF THE LAND THROUGH THEIR ART

Chefs&Travels

MAGAZINE

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Switzerland's Hidden Culinary Empire:

Urs Eberhard Reveals How Alpine Terroir and Cultural Diversity Create Europe's Most Underrated Food Destination

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Welcome

Welcome to the new issue of Chefs&Travels, where the passion for food and culinary art meets the spirit of adventure. Our itineraries are not just simple trips but carefully curated experiences designed to guide you through the discovery of authentic flavors and fascinating stories, narrated by renowned chefs and local communities. For food lovers looking to go beyond the ordinary, we take you to discover authentic encounters with locals. It's not just about tasting a dish but understanding its cultural significance and immersing yourself in the traditions that make it special. Here, authenticity is at the heart of everything. Nothing tells the story, culture, and geography of a destination better than its food and wine. A glass of local wine, a dish prepared with regional ingredients: every flavor is an open window into centuries of tradition and unique landscapes. It's a journey that begins at the table and extends to the soul of a land. With Chefs&Travels, you'll discover a world of unexpected flavors and places. Our itineraries take you beyond the usual tourist trails, offering original paths that reveal new facets of iconic destinations, showcasing them in surprising and fresh ways. By joining our tours, you won't just embark on an unforgettable journey—you'll also support small independent businesses that represent the beating heart of local communities.Every restaurant, winery, or market we visit is an essential piece of the local culture, and your support helps to preserve it. Every Chefs&Travels journey positively impacts local agricultural traditions, essential for maintaining ancient production methods and unique food varieties. Through these experiences, we not only uncover fascinating stories but also actively contribute to protecting and passing them on to future generations.

Whether you're a passionate gourmet or simply curious to discover the world through food, Chefs&Travels invites you to embark on a journey where every flavor tells a story, and every dish is a gateway to a culture. Join us and get ready to explore the world in a fresh, authentic, and delightfully unforgettable way.

Luigi Nappo

Chefs&Travels

VIT TRAVEL

A VIT Travel project celebrating Europe's culinary heritage through stories and journeys.

Guardians of Amalfi's Culinary Soul: A Conversation with the Team Behind Donna Emma

Perched dramatically on the Amalfi Coast, Ristorante Donna Emma stands as a testament to the enduring power of culinary tradition and innovation. Named after Lady Emma, a former owner of Hotel Miramalfi who embodied the soul of this enchanted place, the restaurant continues her legacy through a passionate commitment to authentic Amalfi cuisine.

In this intimate conversation, we explore the philosophy and vision behind Donna Emma with two remarkable individuals who shape its culinary identity: Ferida Fava, the dynamic general manager and co-owner of Hotel Miramalfi, whose deep understanding of hospitality and territorial connection guides the restaurant's mission; and Executive Chef Guido Schettino, a master craftsman whose respect for tradition and innovative spirit brings the flavors of the Amalfi Coast to life on every plate.

Together, they reveal how Donna Emma serves not merely as a restaurant, but as a guardian of gastronomic heritage—a place where every dish tells the story of this UNESCO World Heritage coast and where the ancient rhythms of sea and land continue to inspire culinary excellence.

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Questions for the Culinary Team at Donna Emma

The Genesis Story

"Can you tell us about the origins of Donna Emma? Who was the original Emma that inspired the restaurant's name, and how did her story influence your vision for this culinary destination overlooking the Amalfi Coast?"

Ferida Fava: "Lady Emma was one of the owners of Hotel Miramalfi, as well as the soul and symbol of what is today Ristorante Donna Emma. Today we revisit what was her cuisine with respect and creativity, enhancing at the same time the authenticity of the Amalfi Coast and its ancient culinary traditions."

Terroir and Territory

"How does your menu reflect the unique terroir of the Amalfi Coast? Which local ingredients from land and sea do you consider absolutely essential to capture the authentic essence of this territory in your dishes?"

Executive Chef Guido Schettino: "Our cuisine is born from the territory, from the sea, and from the fragrances of the Coast. Fresh catch arrives every morning directly in our kitchen, a privilege made possible by our location. We love to enhance it with the scent of Amalfi sfusato lemons, which give freshness and character to our dishes. Among the protagonists of our cuisine is Campanian dairy excellence: ricotta, fresh cheeses and, naturally, buffalo mozzarella, appreciated throughout the world. The territory also offers us an extraordinary variety of tomatoes, like Campanian datterini and piennolo tomatoes.

We prepare most of our pasta by hand, but we also use territorial excellences like bronze-drawn Gragnano IGP pasta. And finally, the desserts: in Amalfi, every occasion has its own. From the iconic sfogliatella Santa Rosa, born in the monastery of the same name, to our zeppole, every dessert is a fragment of territory. Amalfi is this: a land of authentic flavors, of recipes that tell stories and leave memories in the heart."

Traditional Roots vs. Modern Innovation

"Amalfi has centuries of culinary tradition. How do you balance honoring these ancestral recipes and techniques with your own creative interpretation? Can you share an example of a traditional Amalfi dish that you've reimagined for today's palate?"

Chef Schettino: "We don't seek to revolutionize the cuisine; we prefer to remain faithful to tradition, valorizing the symbolic ingredients of our land through simple but carefully crafted combinations. This is the case with our Risotto 'Riserva San Massimo,' accompanied by red prawns and a gel prepared with Amalfi sfusato lemon, which gives freshness and balance to the dish. Our goal is to preserve the gastronomic memory of Amalfi, reinterpreting it with respect and delicacy."

The Sea as Inspiration

> **"Given your spectacular ocean-front location, how does the Mediterranean Sea influence not just your views but your culinary philosophy? Do you work directly with local fishermen, and how do the daily catches shape your menu?"**

Executive Chef Schettino: "Our cuisine is deeply connected to the sea that surrounds us. The spectacular view of the Mediterranean is not only a pleasure for the eyes but represents a constant source of inspiration for our culinary philosophy. Every day we begin with the fresh catch that is delivered directly by local fishermen, with whom we have collaborated for years in a relationship of mutual trust and respect. The sea dictates the rhythms of our cuisine: the menu changes often precisely based on what the sea offers us daily, allowing us to work with always fresh and seasonal ingredients. This approach allows us to maximize the excellences of the territory and offer our guests an authentic experience that tells the taste and soul of our coast."

Local Partnerships and Community

> **"What relationships have you built with local producers, farmers, and artisans in the Amalfi region? How important is it for you to support the local community through your sourcing and business practices?"**

Ferida Fava: "Valorizing the territory is an absolute priority for us. We actively collaborate with producers, farmers, and artisans from the area. We tell the identity of the territory through cheeses, bread, citrus fruits of the Coast, and by serving dishes on ceramics made by local artisan workshops. Supporting the community is important to us also outside the kitchen: we always recommend authentic experiences to guests like wine tastings in local wineries, pizza classes, or Lemon Tours organized by territorial companies."

The Dining Experience Beyond Food

> **"Your restaurant offers breathtaking views of Amalfi's dramatic coastline. How do you design the complete sensory experience to complement both the visual beauty and the flavors on the plate? What role does the setting play in your culinary storytelling?"**

Ferida Fava: "We often propose a tasting journey designed to accompany guests on a voyage through the aromas and flavors of our land. The dishes of Ristorante Donna Emma tell the story of Amalfi: each one is inspired by its history, its landscapes, its traditions. Through our tasting menus, we tell stories: those of the Duchess of Amalfi, tied to a forbidden love not accepted by the noble Amalfi family; The Ancient Arsenals, where in the time of the Ancient Maritime Republic the galleons were built; finally, the menu dedicated to the Valley of the Mills, an enchanted place immersed in nature, once home to ancient paper mills—indeed, Amalfi is still famous for handmade paper production. It's a sensory experience that unites the view of Amalfi with flavors that recall its history, all accompanied by live music, with a pianist who contributes to creating an intimate and evocative atmosphere."

Preserving Culinary Heritage

> **"As guardians of Amalfi's gastronomic legacy, what do you see as your responsibility in preserving and sharing the authentic flavors of this UNESCO World Heritage coast with visitors from around the world? What message do you hope guests take away about Amalfi's culinary culture?"**

Chef Schettino: "We always hope that our guests return, because it would mean that we have left a positive memory, both with the cuisine and with the service. Our message is simple: we remain faithful to tradition. We propose local dishes, those that we love and that represent us, and we like to make them discover to those who perhaps are experiencing Italy or the Amalfi Coast for the first time. These are the flavors that represent us and that have made us recognizable."

Hotel Miramalfi, Amalfi