

## Traditional Italian cheese dishes undergo a makeover at IDENTITÀ New York (Photos) 0 Share



This past weekend, New Yorkers had a chance to learn a few innovative culinary techniques from some of Italy and New York’s most renowned chefs at the 4th annual IDENTITÀ New York congress held at [Eataly](#).

Founded under the auspices of [IDENTITÀ Golose](#)—a organization focused on

highlighting culinary excellence and honoring Italian chefs who fuse together traditional and modern techniques—IDENTITÀ New York showcased Italian and New York-based chefs and their creative approach to traditional Italian dishes. “We want to demonstrate that in addition to the traditional Italian dishes, we are able to evolve and move forward combining other cultures in an interesting dialogue that is shaped around six ingredients [found] in all gastronomic landscapes. The difference lays in the way we experience them and cook them,” said IDENTITÀ Golose founder Paolo Marchi.



This year’s IDENTITÀ New York consisted of six hour-long cooking demonstrations— each focused on a specific ingredient in the preparation of two dishes (one prepared by a US-based chef, one by an Italy-based chef)—at [La Scuola di Eataly](#), as well as two five-course dinners hosted at [Birreria](#).

The faculty of New York-based chefs included [Mario Batali](#) (Otto, Del Posto), [Daniel Boulud](#) (Daniel, DB Bistro Moderne, Café Boulud), and Sara Jenkins ([Porsena](#), [Porchetta](#)), partnered with some of Italy's most respected chefs including Cesare Battisti ([Ratanà](#)), Massimo Bottura ([Osteria Francescana](#)), and Mauro Uliassi ([Uliassi](#)).

IDENTITÀ New York's final demonstration featured [Rouge Tomate](#)'s executive chef Jeremy Bearman and [Alice Ristorante](#)'s executive chef Viviana Varese who each offered unique interpretations of traditional Italian cheese dishes. Attendees had a chance to sample several wines during the demonstration including [Berlucchi](#) 1961 Franciacorta Rosé, marking year it was founded.



In addition to being the executive chef Rouge Tomate, Chef Bearman also heads up the culinary team for [SPE Certified](#)—an independent restaurant food certification and nutritional consulting firm—with Rouge Tomate being New York's first SPE Certified restaurant. Thus, it was quite fitting for Chef Bearman to tackle a traditionally heavy dish such as *gnocchi* (potato pasta dumplings) and offer an exquisitely delicious approach while preserving the [SPE Certified](#) principles of sourcing, preparing, and enhancing food through the nutritional density and quality of the meal.

Chef Bearman's *gnudi with black truffle, celeriac and fine herbs* offered an alternative that used 'naked pasta' made entirely from fresh ricotta and Grana Padano cheeses sans potato. By mixing these ingredients and then submerging them into durum flour, the result was bite-size nuggets. The *gnudi* were mixed into a broth that consisted of celeriac purée (ie, celeriac, milk, salt, and olive oil) and celeriac stock (ie, celery, celeriac, onion, garlic, and skim milk, and salt) along with black truffle oil and finely grated Grana Padano.

Complemented by fine herbs, every bite of *gnudi* was phenomenal. The best part was not feeling guilty given the health conscious approach to the ingredients and preparation. Chef Bearman's dish was accompanied by a glass of Marchiopo, Amarone della Valpolicella Classico DOC 2004—perfectly complementing the pasta.

For her demonstration, Chef Varese ventured outside the box with a unique twist on *eggplant Parmesan*. Considered a peasant dish served on feast days in her hometown of Salerno, the *melanzana, Grana Padano, and pomodoro* dish was anything but ordinary.

Chef Varese presented a recipe that called for boiling tomatoes, then placing them in an ice bath, only to then cut them into cubes to place into vacuum-sealed bags. Following a few rounds in the thermocirculator, the juicy tomatoes were removed and stacked on the plate. For the cheese contribution, Chef Varese blended Grana Padano cheese with water and cooked it at about 130

degrees before filtering the mixture, and adding heavy cream and xanthan gum to help emulsify the water. The result: granita!

Along with the stacked tomato sushi, these enticing elements served as beautiful and tasty complements to the roasted tomato sauce topped with slices of seared eggplant lightly drizzled with olive oil. Attendees had a chance to sample a glass of Mirafiore, Barbera d'Alba Superior DOC 2010 from the Piedmonte region.

As the final demonstration of IDENTITÀ New York, the cheese-based presentations reinforced the overall objective of bringing together traditional and modern elements of Italian cuisine through a uniform dialogue between Italy and US-based chefs. As an annual event, IDENTITÀ New York serves as a gateway to learning from culinary experts while enjoying some delicious food. If you missed this year's event, this is one you will want to mark on the calendar for next year. Then again, you might even venture to Milan—one of IDENTITÀ New York's collaborators—in 2015 for [ExpoMilano](#), which will focus on quality nutrition and sustainability. If IDENTITÀ New York is an indication of the expo's agenda, you might want to start looking for flights.

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