

CIVILTÀ DELLA TAVOLA

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L'ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA

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ALDO PASSANTE, GIANLUIGI PONTI, GIÒ PONTI,
DINO VILLANI, EDOARDO VISCONTI DI MODRONE,
WHIT MASSIMO ALBERINI AND VINCENZO BUONASSISI.

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On the cover: Graphic depiction of the painting
"The Artists' Wives" on exhibit at the Chrysler Mu-
seum of Art in Norfolk.

The diminishing bell curve of theatrical cuisine

It seems that the great chefs have finally understood that it is better to get back to their kitchens than to constantly appear on TV.

BY PAOLO PETRONI
President of the Academy

The media law of overexposure is beginning to affect the star television chefs and their programs. Just like all phenomena, this one has a period of growth and a stabilization phase and then inevitably there begins a rather rapid moment of descent. It is not easy to identify the precise moment that these turnarounds take place, but as far as televised cooking shows are concerned the cement is beginning to show some cracks. Too many programs, too many clones, too many cooks, too many clashes, polemics and self-promotion. At the end of the day the poor TV spectator finds himself frustrated and confused and begins to have the feeling that the art of cuisine is being abused and that its excessive

theatricality has become an end in itself. Not that we long for the days of actress Ave Ninchi and the dishes prepared by Wilma De Angelis on the Telemontecarlo channel, but some people are starting to complain about the lack of reasonable information about ingredients and techniques. The brazen desire for publicity and self-promotion on the part of some chef-restaurateurs in particular has become so overbearing that it is irritating even the savviest of consumers. Therefore some of the great cooks are starting to get back into their kitchens, which for far too long have been left in the hands of their assistants who may not always be technically up to the job and who possess little or no charisma. The clientele begins

to dry up. While guides as well as awards are important, both have become self-referential and they tend to be geared to people who repeatedly patronize the same restaurants. If the trend continues, this phenomenon might actually be a healthy one for the restaurant industry. We do not support “TV serial cooks” who are never in their kitchens or “designer” menus that are developed by the great virtual chefs. Instead we appreciate those cooks who personally participate in the creation and preparation of dishes, be they simple or complex, traditional or innovative, that are developed with the consumer in mind, rather than just the writers of the guides or television scripts.

The Magazine increases its distribution

This issue of “*Civiltà della Tavola*” is the first to be published under my editorial leadership. I accept this honor and view the improvement of both its content and circulation as one of my priorities. Beginning in September this magazine will also focus on attracting an important new readership: all **Professional Hospitality institutes** and all **Italian cities with a population of at least 30,000** will receive copies (each city will receive three copies: one for the **Mayor**, and one each for the **Cultural councilor** and the **Tourism councilor**). Abroad, the monthly magazine will be sent to our **embassies, consulates, cultural institutes and foreign trade commissions**. Thanks to this increased distribution, our voice will reach numerous reference points of Italian gastronomic culture in addition to our Academicians. I am certain that all our Delegates and Academicians will work in synergy to help disseminate our magazine and make the new recipients aware of the work of their individual Delegations.

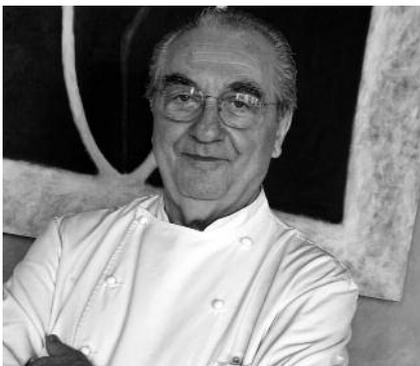


Everything new and different

An important development for the role of the "Franco Marengi" Study Center with the nomination of prestigious people from many different sectors of Italian nutritional culture.

BY SILVIA DE LORENZO

*In the photos:
Massimo Montanari,
Gualtiero Marchesi,
Mauro Rosati*



More than ever before, today the Study Center represents a cultural axis from which the guiding lines of the Academy emanate. The nucleus is made up both of Academicians and non-members who, each according to his or her profession or specialty, can conduct investigations, analyses and provide consultation on historic, economic, sociological, gastronomic, nutritional and technical issues inherent to Italian cuisine.

The Center's new President is Alfredo Pelle, and he is ably assisted by Vice President in charge of the Regional Study Centers Sergio Corbino and Secretary Elisabetta Cocito, Director of the Piedmont Study Center.

Completing the Study Center's "gray matter" - and herein lies the novelty - are 13 new members of the team. They constitute the soul and especially the mind of the Center, and vary from skilled university professors, noted gastronomic journalists (including television) and authoritative writers of works on nutritional culture, all well known in their areas of expertise. They



will work together on those issues presented by Italian gastronomic culture in order to seize upon and study in a timely and critical manner every new trend. The goal is to focus the activity of the Academy both at the central and peripheral levels, and propose initiatives, projects and new ideas.

Here are the members of the Study Center and a brief summary of their work.

Among the university professors: **Giuseppe Benelli**, professor of Theoretical Philosophy and the Philosophy of Language at the University of Genoa, is the President of the City of Books Foundation for the Bancarella Prize. He is also a consulting Academician from the Lunigiana Delegation. **Franco Cardini**, professor emeritus of Medieval History at the Institute of Human and Social Sciences, is a member of the Scientific Council of the Italian Medieval History Institute. He is an essayist and the author of the recent book of historical and gastronomic stories *The Emperor's Appetite* (Mondadori).

And of course who doesn't know **Massimo Montanari**, tenured teacher of Medieval History at the University of Bologna's department of History, Culture and Civilization, professor of the History of Nutrition and director of the European Master's program "The History and Culture of Nutrition". He also teaches at the University of Gastronomic Science in Pollenzo. He is the author of many books on gastronomic culture, including *Food as Culture*, *Stories of the Table* and *The Italian Culinary Identity*. **Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli**: tenured professor



at the University of Bologna's Department of History, Culture and Civilization, teaches Medieval History and City History at the university's Bologna campus and History of Costumes and Fashion at the Rimini campus. **Massimo Vincenzini** is a tenured professor in the Department of Agrarian and Forest Systems and Food Management, and he teaches courses on "Microbiology and the Food Industry" at the University of Florence. He is a member of the Academy of the Georgophiles, and consulting Academician with the Empoli Delegation.

Andrea Vitale is a professor of Business Economics and Elements of Nutritional Legislation at the State University of Milan. He also provides legal advice to food producers and public entities, and is the author of numerous publications.

Gianni Zocchi: Nutritional biologist and specialist in Nutritional Science, and an adjunct professor in the Nutritional Science program at the University of Siena. He is a member of National Order of Biologists and reporting member of the Commission on Nutrition. He also teaches at the specialized School of New Approaches in the Science of Nutrition: Nutritional Economics and Nutritional Genetics at the University of Florence. Journalists: **Gioacchino Bonsignore** is a television journalist who specializes

in oeno-gastronomy. From 2007 to 2013 he anchored the morning news and presented the evening show *Puntonotte* for Channel 5. Since 2002 he has overseen the culinary section of *Gusto*, and is also its editor-in-chief.

Gigi Padovani is an historian of Italian nutritional habits. Journalist, food writer, and gastronomic critic, he served as special correspondent of *La Stampa* for many years. Together with his wife Clara, he edits the oeno-gastronomy page of the daily *Leggo*. He won the Bancarella Cucina Prize for his book *Getting to Know Chocolate*. **Paolo Pellegri**, journalist of the *Quotidiano Nazionale (Il Giorno, Il Resto del Carlino, La Nazione)* with a speciality in oeno-gastronomy. **Mauro Rosati** is an expert on agricultural and agro-nutritional policy; he periodically writes various columns for both the print and television media. In 2012 he won the Bandidiera Verde Agricoltura Prize. He is the Director of the Qualivita Foundation, and collaborates with the RAI network as a scientific consultant on the show *Linea Verde*. He also writes editorials for the daily *l'Unità*. He currently serves as counselor to Minister for Agricultural Policy Maurizio Martina.

Experts on Gastronomic Culture: **Simo-**

netta Agnello Hornby, Academician from the London Delegation and expert on Italian cuisine abroad. She is the author of numerous works devoted to gastronomy including *Cucina del buon gusto*, *Un filo l'olio*, *La pecora di Pasqua* and *Il pranzo di Mosè*. And last but not least among this extremely qualified group is the culinary Maestro **Gualtiero Marchesi**, founder of the "new Italian cuisine" which has significantly contributed in a decisive way to the development of Italian cuisine around the world. He is the rector of ALMA, the International School of Italian Cuisine based in Colorno (Parma) and President of the "GualtieroMarchesi" Academy.

We must also remember that the Regional Study Centers are part of the "Franco Marengi" Study Center, and their dedicated and passionate work under the leadership of their Directors helps bring in the stimuli and collaboration of the new members of the CSFM. It is a prestigious team that provides even greater support and substance to the Academy's cultural role in society, and which reinforces its visibility. As President Paolo Petroni reminded us in his inaugural speech, "a true and lasting visibility can be built only with solid research and cultural deepening".

SILVIA DE LORENZO

2015 ECUMENICAL DINNER

The convivial ecumenical meeting that brings together all the Academicians in Italy and around the world at the virtual table, will take place on October 15 at 8:30 pm. This year's theme will be Condiments: Sauces and Gravies that characterize regional cuisine. This topic, chosen by the "Franco Marengi" Study Center and approved by the President's Council, is aimed at recapturing, through cuisine, traditions that are undergoing great changes today owing to our passage from home and family cooking to artisanal and finally industrial foods. And if at one time the use of condiments was determined by neighboring cultures, today the field is a global one and is in a state of constant and rapid change. Delegates are entrusted with ensuring that the ecumenical dinner is accompanied by an appropriate presentation of a cultural character that illustrates this important theme and that the dishes served are relevant to the topic.





listed in Italy or any other foreign country. In the second case, one can request home delivery of gastronomic products or can order a menu *à la carte* for lunch or dinner. This service has spread in an impressive crescendo of statistics: the international market of take away food is currently valued at 93 billion dollars and is slated to grow in the next three years up to 11 billion. *JustEat* is number one in the Italian market, as it serves 140 towns with the menus of 1,300 restaurants. There are, however, many other small outfits that are multiplying in the territory of Italy.

Another important trend is “Food Sharing”, a true movement that originated in Northern European countries, aimed at facilitating the exchange of products that are available in various households, including surplus food that can be exchanged with other products. Food should no longer be thrown in the garbage bin. It should be gifted away or exchanged for something that may turn out to be useful. In a way it is going back to barter. If we move on to consider recreation and entertainment one can resort to applications such as *Foodspotting* or the better known and widespread social networks, particularly *Pinterest* and *Instagram*. These sites are preferred by the aficionados of food and photography both on desktop and smart phone with the purpose of sharing their images of food with other people using

the Web, who are thus able not only to see them, but to comment and even vote on them.

One of the latest fashions on the Web relevant to food is “Social Eating”. In fact, it means sharing a real meal among friends, and even with unknown people. One can go out to dinner, not in a restaurant, but in some body else’s house. All is needed is to enroll in any of the networks in the Web (*Gnammo*, *Kitchen Party*, *Eatwith*) to discover a goldmine of savory eats near home or in other towns in Italy and around the world. The organizer (the chef) opens up the house, prepares the menu, chooses the date and sets the price (in the majority of cases it is only a contribution to the expenses). The digital scenario is dynamic and evolving, making it possible for new professions to emerge with a distinct benefit to the young. For instance, the Food Blogger is a new digital profession: he or she is not a journalist or spin doctor for someone or some establishment. He or she is simply a devotee of food who is naturally inclined to communicate. In Italy alone there are more than 3,000, many of them gathered since February 2014 in an association (AIFB); the better known members are in demand by various establishments who seek collaborators and consultants. As to the ingredients to become a successful blogger, here are some: a virtual diary that is well organized and up to date, with recipes

and high quality pictures, content that is original and optimized for the Web, passion and consistency.

From this brief exposition one can deduce that all the previous canons concerning food have been uprooted. New opportunities have opened for a person, or a family that lives with today’s accelerated tempos. It is a phenomenon that engulfs almost exclusively young people because they are perennially navigating the Web as their high participation in the social networks amply documents.

Within this context, it is obvious that the quality and the true culture of food can become optional just as the identity of a territory or a country can be mortified. At the bottom of all this is speculation, an interest that prevails; there is a positive aspect, however, in this evolving sector of food in general. It is the fact that many work opportunities are made available to the young. As far as the phenomenon of the online guides is concerned, there is a surely a risk in some cases to encounter blatantly contrasting evaluations when they are not vitiated by incompetence or even worse by somebody’s interests. Unfortunately, as gastronomic tourism takes hold all over the world, it is easy for a tourist without knowledge looking for quick advice on the Net to fall into false recommendations about the establishments that he would like to visit. As the Academy strives to perfect an online guide, keeping it up to date in real time on the basis of competent advice that is absolutely free of interests, it is imperative to improve its quality by providing all the information that can extol the specialties and the products rooted in the territory. It is also wise to confront the world of the Web in order to ascertain the taste trends among the new generations. The Academy must be committed at all times to taking into account such changes with the purpose of building an academic culture that is in keeping with the times without abandoning the roots of the Italian tradition.

NAZZARENO ACQUISTUCCI



Mushroom blends

A mixture that is not balanced and does not take into account diverse textures, aromatic molecules, different cooking times can jeopardize the result of the preparation.

BY GIANCARLO BURRI
Academician of Padua



In a letter to a friend and collaborator, the great mycologist Pier Andrea Saccardo (who has been called the “Linneus of mushrooms on account of the importance of his studies and research) in discussing the nutritional value of mushrooms, conferred to them “high value for their very high nutritional power but also for their very appreciated and delicate taste, especially if used with care and intelligence in the wisest mixture of species”.

It is the season for mushrooms that unquestionably, in the restaurant business, represents an element of strong appeal for customers. It happens however that the choice of species to be used in the mushroom mix will not accommodate the scent, the consistency, the taste itself (and consequently the different outcome of the cooking process) of the various assembled species with the result that the gastronomic preparations

would yield a modest result, acceptable at times thanks to the use of ambiguous aromatic compounds. “The mixing of mushrooms is a very important gastronomic art, just like the spread of colors in a palette, that from an inchoate mass creates a picture and the very masterpiece...”, as the unforgettable Giovanni Capnist wrote in his book *Mushrooms in Venetian Cuisine*. A few considerations indeed come into play with regard to pairing in order to delineate the correct demarcation between mycologist and gastro-mycologist.

In discussing the consistency of meat, in the first instance it is opportune to recall that the principal component of the fiber of many mushrooms is microcellulose, a nitrogenous poly-saccharide, similar if not identical to chitin (a constituent of the exoskeleton of insects and crustacean carapace) that are not easily digested by the human organism. In the various mushroom species and within a particular species in relation to the development of the carpoforus, it is an element that involves significant differences in terms of cooking.

Those mushrooms that have a rather fibrous consistency, like the *finferlo* (*Cantharellus Cibarius*) or the golden *steccherino* (*Hydnum repandum*) must be cooked ahead of those mushrooms with a spongy consistency, such as the various boletus. According to Paul Raiman, the author of the interesting book *Mycogastronomie*, there are no fewer than 275 perceptible odors in fresh mushrooms, ranging from those of fruit to those of vegetables, from those of flowers to spices (to mention only the most pleasant ones), but the aromatic mole-

cules that compound them are in most cases extremely volatile and heat sensitive. Given the fact that quantitatively the mushroom odors become more powerful as the carpoforus grows, it is quite unwise to harvest and consume mushrooms that are not completely developed, while it is obviously wise to reject a carpoforus that is unquestionably “old”. Even a waiting period that is excessively long (in some cases it can be a handful of hours) after the harvesting may inevitably cause the reduction (and heavy modification!) of the characteristic smells.

Cooking will not damage the components of peculiar odors only for some species. However, an unbalanced dosage of the mix can result in such smells reaching an excessive preponderance in the final result of the preparation, as in the case of *anicino* (*Clitocybe odora*).

In the phase of gastronomic preparation of mushrooms, as a consequence of their chemical composition and the cooking method (liquids and temperature), numerous reactions occur causing typical odor aggregates that are much appreciated and attractive to the palate, as in the case of *piopparello* (*Agrocybe aegerita*).

Furthermore, it must be stressed that the degeneration of such reactions (incorrect temperature and base) quite obviously involves a whole series of compounds that are decidedly unappealing. Lastly, the addition of herbs in the cooking phase: garlic, parsley and so forth, if not used in the correct fashion, can heavily influence the preparation, as happens when it produces the unacceptable “scent of dry hay”.



A cultural meeting with President Petroni at #CasaCorriere

In an interview with “Corriere della Sera” at the newspaper’s pavilion inside the Expo, Paolo Petroni recaps the cultural itinerary of the Academy, an endeavor along the path laid out by the founders that has remained uninterrupted.

BY GIANNI FOSSATI
Member of the President’s Council



“T o nourish the planet, energy for life”: this is the slogan that links the events organized inside the exhibition area and those that are unfolding outside to enrich the programs of the exhibition. It is a large theme scrutinized in diverse sceneries, starting from a series of principles that provide common ground for comparisons and reflections. Expo 2015 is the occasion to celebrate the alimentary wealth of the planet and much more, through cultural and artistic events that fall within the scope of “Energies for Life”. This is what underlies the presence of President Paolo Petroni at #Casa Corriere, the offices of the *Corriere della Sera* staff assigned to Expo. *Corriere* is the only newspaper in the world that participates in the Expo with its own pavilion and meeting places reserved for its readers. It is a welcoming inte-

ractive place where one can find all kinds of information to take advantage of this great assemblage of the year with a staff that educates the visitors by practicing journalism in the context of Expo. The columnists of the newspaper meet the visitors and discuss the unfolding events with guests from the world of arts, sport and culture. In addition to “expo-corriere.it”, the contacts that are generated exceed 2 million 800 readers of the print edition of *Corriere*, reaching no fewer than 2 million followers on Twitter and Facebook. On July 22, #CasaCorriere” met the Academy. Secretary General Roberto Ariani and the writer of these notes were in attendance. The theme of the meeting was both timely and provocative allowing for no misunderstanding: “Cuisine, recovering tradition, Paolo Petroni, President of the Italian Academy of Cuisine talks with Isidoro Trovato”. The

dialogue with the journalist of one of the most important Italian newspapers reflected the continuity between the founder of the Academy Orio Vergani and others in the historic headquarters of *Corriere* in Via Solferino, such as Dino Buzzati, Vincenzo Buonassisi and Massimo Alberini. It was a moment for searching and comparing because the alimentary paradigm is still a matter that must be looked into. The table is indeed the starting point of many things but is also a place where traditions perpetuate themselves since cuisine mirrors the history of our country where the historical, cultural and geographic conditions create diversity in alimentary habits.

In the multimedia environment of a room crowded by visitors and Academicians, President Petroni answered questions by Trovato and praised Orio Vergani and the historic nucleus of the Academy making the point that the problem of our times in the national gastronomic debate is to enhance the understanding for the long term in an effort to shed light on commonalities in the presence of an expanding society that appears to be vacuous and an end in itself by indulging in fashions that appear on the table instead of promoting solid research. In this light, new cultural challenges await the Academy and its Delegations around the world. The President recalled the recent statement by Michelle Obama about spaghetti with tomato sauce during her visit to the Expo, and went on to emphasize the role of the organization born in 1953 as a vehicle of culture



and safeguarding our tradition that is necessary, today more than ever, to spread and improve the awareness of the Italian cuisine on the national territory and in other countries, all the while stressing the virtues of Mediterranean cuisine. The Italian oeno-gastronomic patrimony is the catalyst of aspects that go well beyond the functional dimension, by manifesting identities, creating relationships and economic opportunities. Once upon a time our society was characterized by a poor cuisine where food was a marginal factor; today, it is reaching new heights as “made in Italy” whose success is re-

cognized and appreciated all over the world.

The interviewer Trovato questioned Petroni about a recent article in *Corriere della Sera* devoted to the role of food and the chefs of chiefs of state and government. Paolo Petroni pointed out that the Academy had published the book *The Menus of Quirinale* to celebrate 150 years of Italian unification with an introduction by the then President of the Republic Giorgio Napolitano. The book narrates the history of the country through the unpublished collection of the menus of four kings of Italy and eleven Presidents of the Republic that

bring to light standards and customs of the high level cuisine of state dinners. The volume emphasizes artistic, culinary and cultural values and thus highlights the link between food and the identity of an entire nation.

The meeting concluded with warm applause after the mention of a book that some consider a sort of small Bible of tradition, the Academy’s collection of recipes *La Tradizione a Tavola* containing 3,000 recipes from Italian towns. The book will go on sale in October but it will be made available on an exceptional basis during Expo.

GIANNI FOSSATI

Milano.Corriere.it

#CASACORRIERE

“Defending tradition without charging outrageous prices”

The President of the Italian Academy of Cuisine is a guest on #CasaCorriere: “We don’t present dishes correctly. We must not overlook service”.

by Silvia Morosi

Tradition and innovation. A dichotomy that has been enlivening the national gastronomic discourse in recent years. “If on the one hand it is undeniable that traditional cuisine is born in the home”, affirms Paolo Petroni, President of the Italian Academy of Cuisine, “it is also true that the spark of innovation is found in restaurant kitchens”. A guest on #CasaCorriere, Petroni recalled the importance of “rediscovering traditional cuisine”, and defending it from “the risk of extinction”, as stated by Orio Vergani on the occasion of the founding of the cultural association in Milan in 1953: since its inception, the Academy has devoted itself to defending and protecting the Italian gastronomic tradition, and promoting and encouraging its diffusion and improvement in Italy and abroad through various initiatives, studies and presentations, including a Study Center, publishing activities and tastings.



Petroni: “Cuisine as a Musical Score”

“Many things have changed in dishes, but not the threat posed by overly expensive theatrical cuisine that torments our tables today”, emphasizes Petroni. “If Michelle Obama, visiting the Expo, describes her passion for simple pasta with tomatoes and basil, we should treasure it and rediscover our roots”. However, cuisine should not

fossilize. “It is like a musical score: over time the interpretation changes, but we always need to refer to the original score”. Therefore, variations are permissible. “One need only consider pesto. The original recipe called for an entire clove of garlic per person, but no one would eat that today. The important thing is not to consign the whole recipe to the ash heap of history”. There is one defect in Italian cuisine that should be remedied, according to Petroni. “We don’t serve dishes correctly. We must not overlook service or leave it in the hands of so-called professionals who can’t remember the orders”, he emphasizes and concludes: “The chef’s responsibility? To select the appropriate side dish to accompany the main course on the same plate. Unlike abroad, this doesn’t always happen in Italy”.



Waste not want not

The subject is not just about leftovers but a cuisine that makes use of food that is discarded.

BY GIAN PAOLO PINTON

Academician of Eugania-Basso Padovano

The figures that appear in this article are impressive: following a ten-year crisis, Italy counts four million absolutely poor people and ten million relatively poor. One-third of the yearly production of food ends up in the garbage bins. There is no doubt that “eating” is the first material action of day-to-day living, following the immaterial action of interpersonal relations. Starting from this simple premise, we will endeavor to discuss the so-called “cuisine of waste”.

Let us try first to ascertain the difference between the food that is wastes and that’s which is discarded. We will try to understand what the expiration date on foods really means, why certain packaging is indispensable and if some “unseen hand” pushes the market cart when we go shopping. And more: if the four seasons continue to exist, which are the products that are convenient to buy and when and how to use the refrigerator and the burners while trying to understand why the garbage bin is always full and of what stuff. Let us point out at the outset that “cuisine with no waste” has nothing in common with the “cuisine of the leftovers”, a gastronomic treasure trove reserved for the lucky ones. Leftovers can be found only on the well-to-do tables, surely not on the poor ones. A curious question is this: when do leftovers acquire a gastronomic function? The history of gastronomy takes note of them alongside the consecration of the third state: the bourgeoisie. Before that, there were only the overfed nobles and clergy, obese and affected by gout, on one side and on the other, the undernourished poor with all the concomitant illnesses

of bad or insufficient nourishment, starting with pellagra. In today’s global context that is “statistically” considered to be one of well being, the economic crisis has focused more on waste than on leftovers. Throwing away the leftovers is truly a pity: it is a phenomenon that can only take place only when there is a consumption that exceeds necessity. To waste and discard food is a form of social abuse of power vis-à-vis the poor, almost a scandal that cannot be comprehended. To cook without waste, by utilizing even the food scraps, is an action deserving a triple E in the eyes of the experts. The first E is for Eco, the other two for Ecological and Economic. They are respectively factors that impact our health, the health of the planet and our income. As an extreme paradox, in the times that we are living through, we can sometimes imagine wallets that are almost empty, next to grocery carts, pantries, refrigerators and garbage bins that are increasingly full albeit not always with quality food. A new paradigm may come to life: to consume, to transform, to cook, to eat just to live but not for “too much good living”. Not vice versa, however, in the sense of living to consume and giving little value to what is consumed and often destroyed or wasted.

Research states that the relationship between food and the middle class is evolving, with the risk of causing a psychophysical state that is bulimic and sick, which in turn is cutting down the enthusiasm for and the pleasure of the good table. In his *De rerum natura*, Lucretius wrote: “at that time the lack of food made the weak bodies die, now instead the great abundance kills them”



(book V vv. 1007-1008). In our times we have borrowed a social concept that fits perfectly with Lucretius' passage: one hundred years ago one died of hunger, today we die because of an excess of food, by creating the conditions for the development and increase of cardio-vascular disease.

A new awareness should involve the luckiest countries: to understand that "eating", the first action of need for any human in order to live, impacts the planet itself and not just our wellbeing. The essay that inspired us is by Andrea Segrè (*Cooking Without Waste*, Ponte delle Grazie Publisher), Artusi Award 2012. The author teaches International Comparative Agrarian Policies at Bologna University. He was the founder of "Last Minute Market", a project aimed at recovering surplus food for social purposes; he is also at the forefront in Europe in the fight against waste and chairs the technical scientific committee of the national plan to prevent waste and food losses by mandate of the Ministry for the Environment.

I wish to mention as well Pellegrino Artusi, 124 years after his *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well*. The title of this famous family treatise could be brought up to date in this fashion: "Science in the kitchen and the art of not wasting while eating well, utilizing all the possible and imaginable discards". Segrè's essay mentions the alimentary paradoxes of our age. In the world of today there is a billion hungry people and a billion hyper-nourished people.

Thirty-six million people die each year for lack of food and twenty-nine for its

excess. One hundred forty-eight million children are underweight while one hundred fifty-five million are overweight if not obese. In short, there are two billion consumers who eat badly - either too much or too little. A billion people do not have access to water. In other words, more than a third of the world population is poorly nourished with all the consequences of social and health costs that are exploding.

The second paradox concerns the presence of three billion animals that are raised all over the planet. One-third of the entire alimentary production in the world is destined to feeding them. In the year 2000, the cattle breeding farms required approximately 27.5 billion cubic meters of water. In 2050 at least 45 billion will be needed, an increase of 64 percent. The farms are strong producers of gas and consequently they contribute in a significant measure to the climate change that is unfolding. Given these facts, the politicians in various countries should be asking themselves: do we want to nourish people or animals?

A dilemma within a dilemma: should the consumption of meat increase, since this is the food preferred by emerging classes, we will have even more problems to solve in the absence of a new culture to control waste. In order to produce 10 kilograms of meat for human consumption 20,000 liters of water are required, as Umberto Veronesi recently wrote in his leading article in *Corriere della Sera* in a special edition for the Milan Expo. The third paradox refers to "competition" in the use of agricultural land, a natural

resource that is limited and renewable only in the very long term. A recent news item tells us that hydrocarbons are playing a larger role in those products that are meant for human consumption. The preceding dilemma is thus transferred: do we want to feed human beings or the automobiles? In terms of bio-energetic return from the soil an automobile is worth more or less what is needed to feed six persons. This is an unexpected but not unforeseen form of competition: the clash between a billion circulating automobiles and a billion hungry people. Fourth global paradox: the alimentary waste. If in 2050 the population of the planet will reach nine billion people, the need to increase food production will increase by at least 70 percent. Let us not forget what was stated before: in today's world a third of the produced food is thrown away and/or destroyed. Should we try to recover this waste (which is indeed possible), we could provide food for a whole year to half of the world population, the equivalent of 3.5 billion people. Let us emphasize this fact: fifty percent of the inhabitants of the planet could feed themselves in a satisfying manner by recovering the waste of those who produce, transform and distribute but do not consume and destroy foodstuffs. The alimentary waste should not be confused with refuse even though waste can mean both. The refuse cannot be recovered from an alimentary standpoint, nonetheless a great part of what is thrown away could be recovered.

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NewsLetter



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