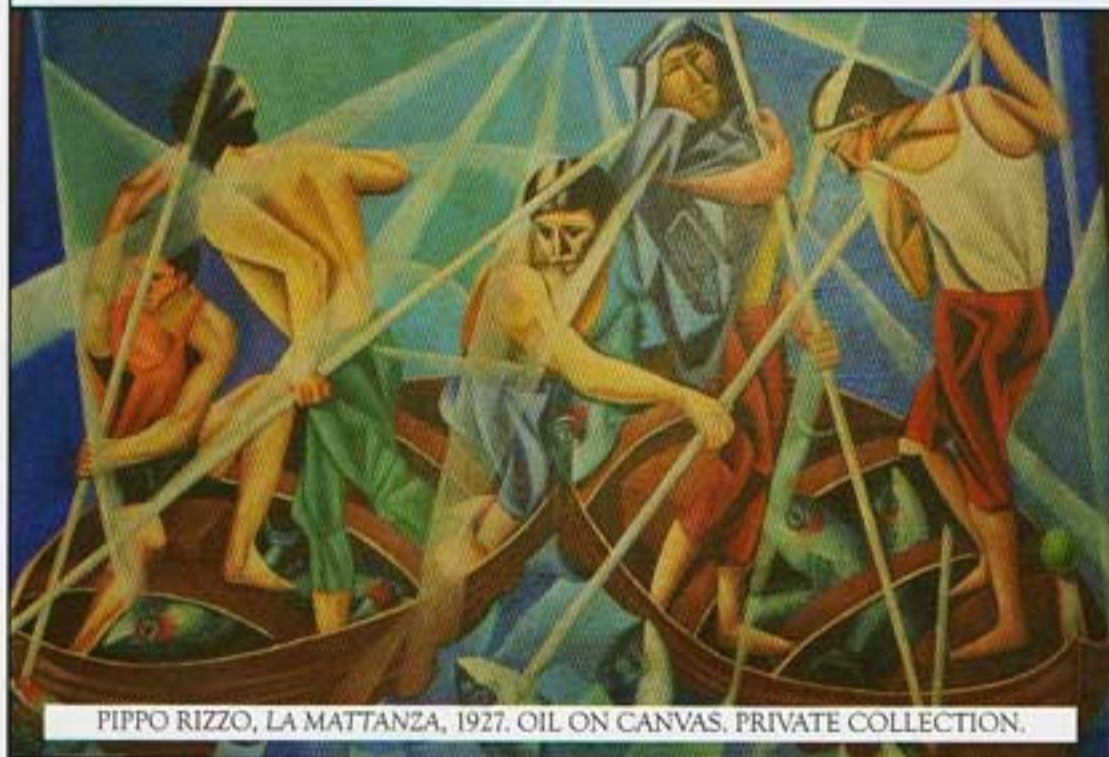


futurism gastronomy

INDELICATE PALETTE



PIPPO RIZZO, LA MATTANZA, 1927. OIL ON CANVAS. PRIVATE COLLECTION.

To capture the essence of Futurism in food, a restaurant must have a style, a sense of humor and food that inspires and challenges the usual tastes. It must transport, it must be fun, it must be visually exciting, its tastes must surprise.

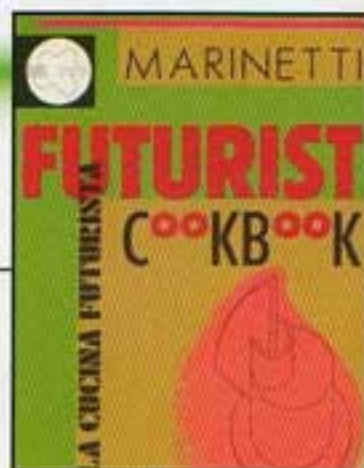
Hidden in the Testaccio section of Rome is an eatery that does just that. Across from the major modern art museum MACRO, a small set of stairs emerging from a weedy bed of lemon tree plants leads up to a place a futurist's kind of shrine, a gallery-cum-restaurant. Once inside, the cobblestones and traffic fade away, and light, color and creativity take over the senses.

The space is comprised of two exhibition rooms and a dining room, which is the restaurant. When you have toured the exhibition rooms filled with an unpretentious and eclectic display of futurist art and memorabilia, the show continues in the dining space. Each tabletop is a handpainted futurist-themed design. The room glows with an ambient blue light that forms criss-cross patterns on the white walls, which display more futurist artwork, posters and photography. Green and red napkins float over each place setting.

A bright orange fizzy cocktail in a champagne flute stands at attention near each plate. It's not a Bellini -- but an indiscernible cocktail meant for "light flying," according to the menu. The food is presented modestly, but cleverly, on glossy black plates that offset the often-vivid culinary concoctions. From a star-shaped tea sandwich spread with tuna paté, to a wedge of meat brushed green with a spinach pureé, to a smooth white dome of custard, each course contains a message for the senses. Color and taste combine, and the act of eating is, as Marinetti desired, elevated from the ordinary.

Marinetti held that the food should awaken the palette; he recommended outlandish (even repulsive) recipes for this shock effect. However, Palermo-born Michele Vaccarella, the chef behind the Taverna's menu, adapts the master's intentions but treats the palette with dignity nonetheless. His risotto all'alchechingio fairly melted on the tongue with a mild warming sweetness, but left a pleasant tangy aftertaste. Bitter cocoa and spinach form an unlikely combination for a chicken marinade, but it's unexpectedly pleasing and light.

Dessert is sensual. A creamy dome topped with a plump maraschino stimulates the eye, while the light almond and sugar custard makes a calm, cool finish.



FUTURISTIC MENU, CIRCA 2009

A meal created by Michele Vaccarella (opposite page) after Marinetti, for Taverna Dei Futuristi restaurant, Rome

Inventina

A little creation

Futurist Marinetti's cocktail for light flying complements a picturesque appetizer "designed" after the painter Filli

FIRST COURSE

Risotto all'alchechingio

Rice with physalis

The *physalis* is a Chinese berry with an aerodynamic shape.

Risoverde

Green Rice

From futurist Pascà D'Angelo, "a light plate that is heightened and invigorated with pistachio and spring peas.

SECOND COURSE

A caccia nel paradiso

From the Hunt in Paradise

Formula of the futurist aerial painter Fillia: Chicken cooked with sparkling wine and bitter cocoa powder, served in a green sauce made with spinach and various spices.

DESSERT

Mammelle sicilane nel sole

Sicilian breasts in the sun

An almond-milk custard confection served with a cherry.



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Photo courtesy MICRO



"INVENTINA"



RISOTTO ALL' ALCHECHINGIO



MAMMELLE SICILIANE AL SOLE

LEFT:
A FUTURIST DINING
EXPERIENCE AT TAV-
ERNA DEI FUTUR-
ISTI, ROME;
RIGHT, THE MAN
WHO INTERPRETS
MARINETTI'S RECI-
PES FOR TODAY'S
PALETTE, MICHELE
VACCARELLA.
BELOW: PHOTOS
OF THE FUTURISTS
DINING TOGETHER,
HANGING ON THE
WALLS OF THE TAV-
ERNA.



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