

Nonna's olive oil

For some delicious Italian olive oil, head for Nonna's Cucina and stock up on the Terra di Puglia extra virgin olive oil. This oil comes from Puglia and is a blend of the two main olive types: Cima di Bitonto and Coratina. The first provides a sweet taste that blends perfectly with the strong fragrance of the Coratina olive's oil. This gives the oil a distinctive fruity taste that's delicious when drizzled on fresh, crusty bread.

Once picked, the olives are immediately brought to the mill in jute sacks or baskets in order to allow a constant circulation of air, which ensures that they remain fresh and healthy until they're milled. The time which elapses between the harvesting and the milling and pressing never exceeds 44 hours so you're guaranteed the best-quality oil.

● **Nonna's Cucina Terra di Puglia olive oil costs £2 per 100ml. For more information, visit www.nonnas.co.uk**

on the shelf

THE VEGETERRANEAN: ITALIAN VEGETARIAN COOKING

MALU SIMÕES AND
ALBERTO MUSACCHIO
SIMON AND SCHUSTER; £25

WHAT'S IT ABOUT: This book is designed to reverse the stigma attached to vegetarian cooking as being bland and tasteless and offers full-flavour, colourful, sexy food from Italy.

WHO IS IT AIMED AT: This book isn't just for vegetarians; it's for anyone who loves fresh, inspiring dishes, offering everything from flavoursome fruit and muesli recipes to risottos, pasta dishes, tarts, pastries and desserts – you name it, they've got a recipe for it!

BEST BITS: The recipes are simply sumptuous, many are unusual, and the photography is superb. The book encourages you to make your own sauces and pesto, along with many other essentials, and includes a section on learning the basics. The *antipasti* section is particularly inspiring!

WORST BITS: Those who love their Italian served *con carne* obviously won't necessarily find anything to tempt them here, although that's the essence of the book – to allow you to savour some appealing vegetarian recipes, using the best ingredients in the world.

VERDICT: This book has something that will appeal to everyone, with everything from chocolate cake to spaghetti and more. It's superb, innovative and downright delicious!



Ham it up



Here in the UK, we're the biggest consumers of Parma ham outside Italy. Last year we devoured over 12 million packets, with sales increasing by 27 per cent in 2007. Parma ham, or Prosciutto di Parma, is produced in the hills surrounding the town of Parma. The air in the hills here is unique, creating perfect conditions for a natural drying of the ham, while the special taste is dependent on the traditional production process passed down from Roman times, and which is carefully controlled by the Consorzio del Prosciutto di Parma.

Only hams that have passed stringent curing regulations approved by the EU can be awarded the stamp of the Ducal crown – a five-pointed coronet logo with PARMA in the centre, which is branded onto the ham's skin.

kitchen question time



Will Greig is the chef at risotto restaurant Ooze...

TIM: Describe your cooking style and the food you serve.

WG: Rustic Italian food concentrating on seasonality and the robust flavours so typical of Italian ingredients.

Do you have a signature dish?
Risotto!

How would you compare British and Italian cuisine?

British cuisine has improved considerably in the last five years, where chefs have placed much greater emphasis on well-sourced, good-quality ingredients, at the same time injecting a bit of much-needed passion into preparation. This has always been present in Italian cuisine, but the main

difference is the simplicity of Italian food, and also the enormous variety of produce that's available, hence its widespread appeal.

Tell us about your menu...

We feature very traditional starters which are simple and seasonal, Italian-inspired salads and grills; risottos with some of the old favourites and new combinations; home-made breads, pestos and ice creams; and home-made Italian desserts. We also feature very traditional, seasonal specials.

What would you say has been your most memorable Italian meal?

It was while we were staying on Lake Garda, at a small place called Campagnola. The owner insisted that we tried everything on the menu – all the *antipasti*, an amazing risotto *alla Milanese*, some simply cooked *fegato*, then an incredible *torta di polenta* – all washed down by lots of *Vin Santo*!

● **Ooze: 2 Goodge Street, London; 020 7436 9444; www.ooze.biz**

DO THE DRIZZLE

Create an impact at the table this summer with Typhoon's colourful and stylish range of oil drizzlers. In various colours, such as ruby red, olive green, smoky blue and clear glass, these are ideal for drizzling oil on salads and for use in cooking. They can hold 300ml, while also making a fashion statement at the dinner table. The clear glass drizzler also includes measuring increments, making it easy to follow recipes. They cost £8 each and are available from leading department stores and cook shops nationwide.

● **For further information, see www.typhoonhousewares.com**

