

Client: Hotel Hassler

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THE GANNET

la dolce via

Rome's most fashionable street offers delectable cuisine to suit all tastes: classic cucina romana and a thrilling avant-garde, Japanese-inspired take at Michelin-starred Imàgo

The smart shops that line Rome's Via Condotti run the gamut of stellar Italian fashion brands from Armani to Zegna, via Prada, Ferragamo, Gucci and a host of others. The street is less blessed with restaurants, but – this being Rome – a good place to dump the designer bags and pick up a knife and fork is never far away.

At the southern end of the street, head to Matricianella, a splendid trattoria that specialises in classic *cucina romana*. This is the place to try dishes made with the *quinto quarto*: the so-called "fifth

quarter" of an animal's carcass, offal that traditionally fed the poor, while the rich feasted on prime cuts. Rigatoni con pajata is a case in point: fat, springy tubes of pasta with a rich tomato sauce and the intestines of milk-fed veal – delicate, slightly cheesy and thoroughly delicious.

And coratella: the lungs, liver and heart of lamb, cooked with onion, white wine and artichokes, that noblest of Roman vegetables – not a dish that would set an Instagrammer's pulse

racing, admittedly, but one with fabulous depth of flavour. Matricianella has a motherly, nostalgic charm, as well as a terrific kitchen and a cracking wine list.

Should your tastes tend more towards ocean than farmyard, climb the Spanish Steps at the northern end of the Via Condotti, stroll through the lobby of the opulent Hotel Hassler and take the lift to the sixth floor for dinner at Imàgo, where chef Francesco Apreda has earned a Michelin

The "tandoori-style" duck is scattered with brownie crumbs

star for his thrilling reworking of Italian cuisine. He has visited Japan for inspiration on several occasions, and so does his menu, fusing the umami-rich elements of both native ingredients and those from his travels.

The views of Rome through Imàgo's vast picture windows are stunning, as is Apreda's food. Tiny, crunchy cubes of potato, shreds of Savoy cabbage and soft white beans shimmer in an algae-rich broth, like a fusion of minestrone and a rockpool. Apreda is not immune to the embellishments of avant-garde cuisine, but he handles them intelligently: plankton is reworked as a verdant, ozone-rich gel, and his trendy spongy wisps are richly flavoured with excellent Parmesan.

The same cheese – a long-aged, almost chilli-hot version – fills perfect cappellotti, topped with katsubushi (upmarket bonito flakes) and drenched in a cool tuna broth: "double umami", as the menu describes it. A gloriously silky cacio e pepe-inspired risotto features five different kinds of both pepper and sesame seeds, while the rockpool returns in an exquisite dish of spaghetti in broth with sparkling, jewel-like shellfish, draped with sea lettuce.

Apreda's cooking is both audacious and playful – "tandoori-style" duck, for instance, is scattered with brownie crumbs (pictured) – but his culinary intelligence lends it rare class: as the renowned courtyards of the Via Condotti will confirm, trends may be temporary, but style is permanent. **BILL KNOTT**

MATRICIANELLA, VIA DEL LEONE 4, 00186 ROME (+3906-483 2100); MATRICIANE, LA J.U. IMÀGO, HASSLER ROMA, PIAZZA TRINITÀ DEI MONTI 6, 00187 ROME (+3906-6793 4726; HOTELHASSLERROMA.COM).

THE GOBLET

pop till you shop

The champagne cocktail is Tony Conigliaro's muse at his new bar/restaurant perilously close to the boutiques of Bond Street

Shopping while under the influence can be a lot of fun. But it almost always ends in tears (I have the metallic gold hoodie to prove it). So I have mixed feelings about the arrival of Gazelle, the Mayfair bar and restaurant from drinks wizard Tony Conigliaro of 69 Colebrooke Row fame. Is it quite safe, I ask myself, to have a place like this serving delectable cocktails, just minutes from the boutiques of Bond Street? Surely it's only a matter of time before a guest goes on an ill-advised shopping spree, emboldened by a few too many Negronis.

Let's just say I warned you. Because it's easy to forget yourself at Gazelle. Nestled above ultra-luxe shoemaker Casadei on Albemarle Street, this two-floor bar and restaurant sets out to be escapist.

"We want it to feel like a club," says Conigliaro, "but one where you don't have to be a member." Whether he's designing a brutalist bar in Hackney or a cocktail menu for a perfumer,

Conigliaro has always drawn on a rich mix of influences: fashion, science, art, gastronomy. And Gazelle is no different. For the interiors, he and designer Shaun Clarkson (a mucker from his days at the Atlantic) took inspiration from the work of French fashion designer Haider Ackermann. "I love his use of texture and colour: satins, cottons, velvets, silks, deep purples, blues and reds," says Conigliaro. "There's a bohemian ease to what he designs – it feels effortless." In Gazelle's high-ceilinged restaurant, luxuriant pinks and golds are illuminated by tall windows, while up in the bar, night descends in a palette of deep blues, blacks and silvers.

For the drinks menu, Conigliaro takes the champagne cocktail as his muse; six variations come embellished with whipped champagne sorbet, homemade rose liqueur and the like, while a capsule champagne list



ranges from prestige cuvées to cult growers. There are classic cocktails with a twist and some lovely non-alcoholic options that pair very well with food: a wine glass of chilled apple, pine and dill, and iced silver needle tea served in a delicate glass cup.

Chef Rob Roy Cameron (formerly of El Bulli) has created a food menu that also revels in texture and colour: shoppers can toy with Wagyu beef rolled in fuchsia plum dust; trembling domes of spherified aquavit and

caviar; charcoal-cured halibut with blood orange; and foraged herb salads scattered with crispy anchovy skeletons (a delicacy that's a lot more digestible than it sounds).

"I have a lot of friends who work in fashion and the thing I love about that world is it's always in a state of regeneration," says Conigliaro. "It's never exhausted, and I find that really inspiring." Much like the man himself. **ALICE LASCELLES**

GAZELLE, 48 ALBEMARLE ST, LONDON W1 (GAZELLE-MAYFAIR.COM).

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