

After 29 hours of traveling to get to a small town in Italy (4 flight transfers, renting a car and fighting rush hour Rome traffic and driving to a small town not on the tourist maps I can't pronounce, I finally had my first real Italian meal. I was about dead tired and Italians don't like to eat before 9 pm so I didn't think I would make it but I am so excited that, at 1 am I don't have a tired bone in my body and want to share my menu with you:

We went to Caldora in Carmine. A small town called the goat capital of Italy with a ristorante so popular there isn't a sign on the road or building and it's in a residential neighborhood on a cliff overlooking the city below. It's been owned for generations by the same family. You don't order from a menu, you eat what they bring ( you tell them what you can't eat and I told them dairy products, our host actually had the same issue: no problem we were in goat town), and they only serve dishes made with locally grown or made, in season foods.

First course brought to the table on separate plates and served with a bio-dynamically-produced white wine (native wild grapes, native fermentation, organic, unfiltered, awesome):

Marinated anti pasta each prepared uniquely and served separately

- Home-made goat ricotta cheese
- Baby garlic tops
- Sausage with pigs liver
- Zucchini sliced thin
- Cauliflower
- Salted beef shavings
- Local cod with arugula and pesto
- Brushetta with homemade olive oil

Second course: Hot appetizers:

- Lamb liver
- Sweet breads
- Zucchini flowers stuffed with fresh mozzarella
- Fried goat cheese
- Fried frittata
- Canelli beans with home smoked meats
- Homemade bread

Third, fourth and fifth courses, crack out the Montepulciano red wine:

- Fresh wide pasta noodles with goat ricotta, prosciutto, sheep parmesan and home grown black pepper
- Fresh pasta noodles with wild mushrooms and asparagus
- Lamb chops
- Arugala and butter lettuce salad

Dessert:

- House made, non-labeled Port made with Montepachano grapes and blueberries
- Pasito dessert wine made with zibibbo grapes grown on an island off Italy that tasted like apricots
- Local cherries
- Apricot and almond biscotti

Took us three hours to enjoy it all. Every dish as bizarre or gross as it sounds was the most creatively presented, delicious way I have ever seen or tasted food. I am sure this is what food is like in heaven!

Wasn't sure if the effort to get here was going to be worth it but just for that one meal, I would gladly fly back!

Excited for tomorrow, we visit the winery that made the wines.

Ciao, 2:30 am better try to get some sleep....

Kaaren

P.S. For those I didn't get a chance to tell, took a last min invitation to go with a girlfriend who travels here 4 times a year and speaks Italian, have my own private tour guide!