



# Workshop



## Truffles

An edible aroma

STORY by GUIDO BAROSIO  
PHOTOGRAPHS by BOB NOTO  
ILLUSTRATIONS by FEDERICO TADDEUCCI



## Sniff Sniff, Yum Yum. Like children and their comic book heroes...

Tartuflanghe

**T**ruffles have enchanted people since 1600 BC (during the times of the Sumerians and of Giacobbe, the patriarch) for an irresistible and almost infantile matching of smell, pleasure and taste. It's the 'aroma you eat', because truffles have zero baseline organoleptic and proteic properties. Alexandre Dumas called this volatile kitchen Lord the 'Sancta Santorum of the table', while Lord Byron kept it on his desk because the aroma of truffles stimulated his creativity.

There are many enduring food legends about truffles, but this precious food has also suffered at the hands of some. We can estimate for example that a plate of fresh pasta with shavings of white truffle could cost 180 euros in about 5 or 6 years time and that towards the year 2030 Alba restaurateurs could be presenting the last of their dishes with Tuber Magnatum Pico. The client? A Russian, an Indian, maybe even a German, and the price will depend on an auction that will be in its final stages... Should we be worried? Certainly. Really worried? Perhaps not yet. History can take unpredictable turns, and this can at times be redeeming.

The question of which will disappear first - the paper version of the New York Times or the white truffle of Alba - is still looking for an answer.. On the road to gastronomic pilgrimage that is dotted with possible solutions to this conundrum, I am accompanied by three Langhe locals who have made the precious tuber their life's work: Paolo Montanaro, Veronica Giraudo (his wife) and Beppe Montanaro, the patriarch, legendary chef, creator and manager of Da Beppe restaurant, a gourmet legend in the city of Alba between 1967 and 1982. Today their company is called Tartuflanghe, but we'll get to that in a minute.

First, we hear Beppe's analysis: "When I was a chef we used six kilos of white truffle a day. Today in the best restaurants of Alba we are down to a kilo and a half a week. There are three reasons: we export a good proportion of the product, the climate has changed and forested areas have been drastically reduced. Wine is a good business but the forest is not". These three factors put together mean that prices have gone through the roof. Paolo the scientist thinks of the white truffle as an ecological indicator: "This very sophisticated product, which is a mushroom, needs an ideal ecosystem around it, let's never forget that. To start with, it tells us if the land is fertile or not, because where there are problems it does not grow. To reproduce, it needs insects, snails, mice and small rodents, the animals that transport its spores with their faeces. Have you ever wondered why the truffle has such a strong aroma? Because it has to be found by the mouse..."

GREY SALT FROM GUÉRANDE WITH DEHYDRATED WHITE TRUFFLE: TO FLAVOUR YOUR FISH TARTARE OR CARPACCIO, MEATS FILLETS AS WELL AS EGG BASED DISHES AND CHEESE. EXCELLENT ON SUSHI AND FOIE GRAS!



TRUFFLE PERLAGE: THESE PEARLS HAVE THE TASTE OF THE TRUFFLE BUT THE SAME COLOUR AND TEXTURE OF CAVIAR. BLACK WINTER TRUFFLE JUICE OBTAINED FROM FRESH TRUFFLES DURING COOKING IS REDUCED TO SMALL PEARLS THROUGH "SFERIFICATION".





*NOH2O ALBA WHITE AND BLACK WINTER DEHYDRATED TRUFFLE: THESE SLIVERS OF ALBA WHITE OR BLACK WINTER (TUBER MELANOSPORUM) TRUFFLES CAN BE PRESERVED FOR MONTHS AT ROOM TEMPERATURE WITH NO CHANGE IN TASTE, AND A SURPRISINGLY LONG LASTING FLAVOUR. THE UNMISTAKABLE AROM OF TRUFFLE IS RELEASED WHEN THE PRODUCT IS SERVED ON WARM DISHES.*

*TRUFFLE BRISURE (CRUMBS): MADE OF BLACK SUMMER TRUFFLE (TUBER AESTIVUM), THE BRISURE IS IDEAL FOR THE PREPARATION OF TRUFFLE PASTA, PATÈS, FOIE GRAS, AND TO ENRICH STUFFINGS.*



From the point of view of respect for the land there are many things that could be said, many of which are not very positive, but even the so-called trifolau (truffle hunters who unearth this precious tuber with their dogs) play a part in skewing the market. "They have always hung around the piazzas, very secretive people who only pull out their haul when the price gets interesting. They are bitter rivals, traders without scruples, jealous of everything: of the dogs, the tracks, the right places to look. The white truffle can be found even in late December, but when the first snow falls, everyone stops looking. Why? Simple, because you can see tracks in the snow and your rivals could follow you, and find your secret places..."

Is it possible to offer a guaranteed product at the right price of first grade quality, perhaps using technology to extend its life without falsifying the truth or without ambiguity? This is where Tartuflanghe comes in, an enterprise that is somewhere between business and poetry, a reflection of its deep Piedmont roots. "More than anything we buy and sell truffles, fresh or processed. We have the culture of the restaurateur in our veins. Our technology is exclusively focussed on preserving the real and natural flavour of the product over time. Simple? Not always, but it is a process without compromise".

But how does the edible aroma of the white truffle resist over time, without tricks or pretence, exactly because it is what it is? "Like any other product you can stop bacterial growth only in three ways: extracting water with dehydration, starving it by depriving it of oxygen or killing it with temperature". So, what's the top of the range? "Without doubt it's our trademarked 'noH2O', 100% dehydrated truffle. This product contains neither added aromas nor preservatives, it's only been deprived of water and it can be used in the same recipes that need fresh white truffle".

*BLACK WINTER TRUFFLE (TUBER MELANOSPORUM) WATER: OBTAINED BY DIRECT EXTRACTION FROM THE TRUFFLE (DURING STERILIZATION, TRUFFLE RELEASES PART OF ITS WATER), THIS IS A HIGHLY CONCENTRATED JUICE THAT CONTAINS ALL THE INTENSE FLAVOR OF THE WINTER TRUFFLE. GREAT AS A CONDIMENT IN THE PREPARATION OF SAUCES.*



*WHITE AND BLACK TRUFFLE PAILLETES: AN INNOVATIVE CONDIMENT PRODUCED WITH COCOA BUTTER AND DEHYDRATED ALBA WHITE TRUFFLE (TUBER MAGNATUM PICO)*



And how does it work? Paolo smiles, revealing little, but enough. "Our truffles are dehydrated and we eliminate the water content by sublimation. Well we don't actually eliminate the water but the hydrogen and the oxygen..." And does the aroma disappear? "No, it's a technical issue. With sublimation the aroma remains. If we were to evaporate the water with other methods, as you do for sun-dried tomatoes for example, the aroma would disappear".

When you actually smell and use the product, you get the impression that the Montanaros have touched, and smelled the philosopher's stone. It is the only one that can offer 'the aroma you eat' 365 days a year. The benefits of their alchemy do not stop here. Their Black Truffle Perlage (made into tiny spheres so that it looks like caviar) is conquering the hearts of curious and innovative chefs. Talk of price and markets, however, strikes a sensitive chord: "How is the 2012 season going? It's got off to a rotten start because of the heat. Things could go better towards the end of the year. Prices will be accordingly high, but it's the taxes that are causing most of the damage for clients." Why is that? "You can sum it up like this. If we pay the truffle hunter 2,000 euros a kilo and we sell it at 3,600, we will never have more than 300 left at the end. Truffles are not considered to be an agricultural product. Like the Porcino mushroom that grows spontaneously, it carries a value added sales tax of 21% instead of 4%. This is at the expense of the consumer".

These are environmental alchemists who are poetically in love with the 'aroma you eat', but watchful and aware of the challenges of the market. If something has to die by 2030, let it be the New York Times...



## Andrea Ferrero's interpretation at Bulgari

"I have always regarded products based on truffles with suspicion, and I have always hesitated using them, but the tests with the Tartuflanghe products convinced me otherwise." says Andrea Ferrero of the Bulgari restaurant in Milan. "I encountered avant-garde research, careful attention and a real love for the product". And now? "The game changes. You can use truffle twelve months a year without betraying the consumer".

What do you think of the dehydrated white truffle noH2O? "I use it exactly as I would fresh white truffles. It goes well in the same dishes. I am currently using it with pigeon, but it's just a first experiment". Have you tried the whole range, does it stimulate your creativity even further? "Definitely. The Perlage is flavoursome and fun to use. A truffle caviar that is absolutely eclectic. I have it on the menu in the antipasti with a salt cod carpaccio, toasted bread from Altamura, black olives, mint, anchovies and pine nuts".



### Salt cod carpaccio with crunchy olive bread, mint, anchovies and pine nuts

#### For the salt cod and bread

60 g de-salted salt cod, 7 g black olive bread, citronette, garlic, 3 g pine nuts, Maldon salt, 10 ml extra virgin olive oil

Cut the salt cod into very fine slices, dress it with the citronette and place it on a rectangular plate. Take the crust off a piece of olive bread and break into small pieces, frying it in the olive oil with salt and garlic until it dries and becomes golden, then pat in kitchen paper and put aside in a dry place. Toast the pine nuts in a pan on high heat and once they are golden remove from heat and put aside.

#### To serve

5 g black truffle perlage, 3 mint leaves, 3 g anchovies cut into pieces

Sprinkle the bread and Perlage onto the salt cod carpaccio. Add the mint leaves torn into pieces, the pinenuts, the anchovy pieces and the Maldon salt. Dress with a drizzle of oil and serve.

## Mushroom risotto

### Black Truffle and Vacche Rosse Parmigiano

#### For the risotto

80 g Carnaroli rice  
30 g sour butter  
10 g chopped shallot for the roux  
1 l chicken stock  
black truffle shavings  
white wine  
olive oil

Heat a small rondò (low and wide pot) add the oil and shallot and brown before adding the rice and white wine. Once it has evaporated, continue cooking, adding chicken stock as needed and adjusting with salt. After about 16 minutes, add the Parmigiano and let it melt, add the sour butter and the Black Truffle Paillettes. Stir the risotto until creamy and place on a plate.

#### To serve

60 g porcini mushrooms  
30 g chanterelle mushrooms  
butter

Slice the porcini mushrooms and brown in a pan with butter and oil, clean the stalk of the chanterelle mushrooms and add both mushrooms to the creamed risotto. Place on a plate and serve hot.

## Piedmont Tartare

### With vegetables and white truffle salt

#### For the vegetables

1 carrot  
1 horseradish  
cucumbers

Slice the vegetables about 1 mm thick with a mandolin slicer and cut to form rectangles about 2 x 13.5 cm. Blanch the carrots and horseradish separately in salted veal stock for about 10 seconds and cool in cold water. Pat dry and place in the refrigerator.

#### For the tartare

80 g Piedmont veal  
white balsamic vinegar  
20 ml extra virgin olive oil  
white truffle salt

Cut the meat into 5 mm cubes and dress with oil and truffle salt. Place the meat on a plate, using a pastry ring as a guide for a circular form that is about 8 cm wide and 1 cm high. Dress the blanched vegetables with a white balsamic vinegar vinaigrette.

#### To serve

Garnish with tatsoi leaves.



# Truffled egg with grain salad

---

## For the salad

21 g spelt  
50 g pearl barley  
5 g Dijon mustard  
6 g toasted pine nuts  
2 g raisins  
4 g pumpkin seeds  
4 g sunflower seeds  
2 g finely chopped Cantabrico anchovies  
chicken stock

Cook the spelt and barley separately in chicken stock. Leave to cool and add to the other ingredients. Put aside in a cool place.

---

## For the egg

1 fresh egg  
200 ml truffle juice

Cook the egg in boiling water for about 2 and a half minutes. Leave to cool for 30 minutes and then pass in the Roner oven for 35 minutes at 64°C. Leave to cool. Once cool, peel the egg and soak in the truffle juice overnight. The next day, re-heat the egg for about 10 minutes in the Roner.



---

## To serve

Make a small mound of the grain salad in the centre of a round plate, place the egg on top and serve.

# Pigeon with cream of Jerusalem artichokes and truffles with a pickle of shimeji mushrooms and borretane onions



## For the pigeon

*1 whole pigeon  
salt  
pepper  
duck fat*

De-bone the pigeon and divide in four. Remove the skin. Salt, pepper and place in vacuum seal. Cook at 60°C for 30 minutes. Vacuum cook the thighs in duck fat for two hours at 70°C. Once the pigeon is cooked, remove from cooker. Cook the skin on a hot plate until crispy, placing it aside for a few minutes. Remove the thighs from the vacuum bag and keep them warm in the duck fat under heat lights.

## For the cream of Jerusalem artichokes

*100 g Jerusalem artichokes  
milk  
butter  
salt*

Boil the Jerusalem artichokes in milk. When they are well cooked and soft, blend in the Thermomix, adding butter and salt, to obtain a smooth but thick cream.

## For the pickle

*white wine  
white wine vinegar  
whole pepper grains  
bay leaves  
salt  
2 borretane onions  
10 g white shimeji mushrooms  
10 g brown shimeji mushrooms  
extra virgin olive oil*

Make a bouillon with water, white wine and white wine vinegar, adding whole pepper grains, bay leaves and salt. Boil first the onions and then the shimeji mushrooms separately, cool and place aside. Combine and dress with olive oil and set aside.

## To serve

*pigeon cooking juice  
dried black truffle  
black truffle juice*

*Smooth a little Jerusalem artichoke cream on a round plate, cut the pigeon breast lengthways and position on the edges of the cream, adding the salad. Re-hydrate two slices of black truffle in the truffle juice and add over the vegetables. Re-heat the cooking juice and pour a few drops over the pigeon.*



Terrine of foie gras with truffle Brisures celeriac, celery and morel mushrooms

Per non pescare sorprese scarica **Fishbook**, l'app de L'Amo per riconoscere il pesce italiano.

**Fishbook**: il vostro nuovo personal shopper al banco pesce!



## CUCINI ITALIANO?

L'Amo è un progetto di sostegno, promozione e valorizzazione del prodotto ittico italiano.

L'Amo invita i produttori, trasformatori, distributori, ricercatori, giornalisti ed operatori ad ogni titolo interessati al settore di diventare partner del progetto entrando nella "rete" multimediale di collegamento tra tutti gli attori della filiera.

I ristoratori partner del progetto saranno contattati per essere invitati a partecipare ad un gruppo di acquisto dove il prodotto ittico viene fornito direttamente da un consorzio di produttori.

Ciò dovrebbe assicurare al ristoratore maggiori garanzie di freschezza, prodotto stagionale e mediterraneo, un prezzo nella media più vantaggioso (perché con meno passaggi) e, soprattutto, un supporto alla sopravvivenza della pesca italiana.

Inoltre sarà portata avanti una importante campagna di promozione e comunicazione de L'Amo e dunque, tutti i partner coinvolti potranno farla propria, se di loro interesse così come potranno essere coinvolti in eventi ed attività correlate di cui saranno puntualmente informati.

**Sostieni L'Amo, diventane partner e scoprine i vantaggi!**

EURO FISHMARKET

Per sostenere il progetto L'Amo o diventare partner contattaci [info@lamoitaliano.it](mailto:info@lamoitaliano.it)

Scoprici in rete [www.lamoitaliano.it](http://www.lamoitaliano.it) [www.eurofishmarket.it](http://www.eurofishmarket.it)

