



TEXT Marie Tisler
PHOTO Marina Spironetti

ENRICO CRIPPA A GARDENER OF GOOD TASTE

Regularly feted as one of the best gourmet vegetable restaurants in the world by 'We're Smart', Piazza Duomo in Alba, south of Turin, has had further cause to celebrate this year as it marked its 18th anniversary on 5th May.

Piazza Duomo is run by Chef Enrico Crippa, who has three Michelin stars to his name and a real passion for nature. A passion instilled in him as a child by his family in his native Lombardy, where he inherited his life-long love of cycling the roads of Italy from his father; of markets and healthy, locally produced food from his grandmother; and of growing vegetables from his grandfather.

After studying hotel management, Enrico Crippa went on to train under one of Italy's most famous chefs: Gualtiero Marchesi, in Milan. In 1996, Marchesi sent him to Kobe, Japan, to open a restaurant. During his time there, Enrico Crippa learned a new way of presenting nature on plates, embracing aspects and influences of Japanese culture that enabled him to develop his culinary imagination and that continue to inspire his creations today.

Back in Italy, he met the Ceretto family, with whom he co-launched the Piazza Duomo restaurant project in Alba in 2005. In 2006, he earned his first Michelin star, followed by his second in 2009 and his third in 2012.

In addition, Enrico Crippa and his team grow organic and biodynamic vegetables in Piazza Duomo's very own vegetable garden, comprising a 3-hectare plot and a 400-m² greenhouse. "I go into the vegetable garden every morning to check for myself how the plants are doing and to decide which vegetables or flowers to use in my dishes that day," he says. "Today, 80% of the vegetables the restaurant uses come from our garden. I grow local and international varieties that reflect my culinary experiences abroad, especially in Japan."

So, how does Enrico Crippa adapt Piazza Duomo's daily menu to his home-grown produce?

"The garden gives us something new every day. That fascinates and inspires me. At Piazza Duomo, we don't have an à

la carte menu, but rather tasting menus: 'Il Viaggio' and 'Barolo'. We look at these menus each day and adapt them depending on the availability of ingredients. 'Seasonal Things' is our latest menu, launched in May in honour of our 18th anniversary. This is a carte blanche menu that focuses on seasonality and draws exclusively on whatever ingredients are available in our vegetable garden that day. You can't get any fresher than that!"

For this lover of flavour and precision, each dish is a work of art. His 'Insalata 21... 31... 41... 51' is the best proof of this.

"The garden gives us something new every day. That fascinates and inspires me."




PIAZZA DUOMO


4, Piazza Risorgimento — 12051 - Alba/Italy
Tel. +39 / 0173 366 167

piazzaduomolba.it

PANNA COTTA MATISSE

 Serves 4

 5 minutes

 5 minutes + cooling time



For the panna cotta base

- › 270 g fresh milk
- › 350 g cream
- › 70 g granulated sugar
- › ¼ vanilla pod

For the panna cotta

- › 400 g panna cotta base
- › 1.3 g agar agar

For the fruit sheets

- › 1 kg of fruit pulp, choice of: green peas, pineapple, mango, raspberry, strawberry, apple, blackberry, peach
- › 100 g glucose powder

The panna cotta

- 1 Combine the ingredients for the panna cotta base and bring to a boil then strain the panna cotta and let it cool. Add agar agar to the panna cotta base and bring it to a boil, pour the mixture into moulds and refrigerate. We prefer to use very thin moulds.

- 2 Once cool, turn the panna cotta out onto a cutting board and divide it into the portions.

The fruit sheets

- 1 Combine fruit pulp puree with glucose powder and mix lightly.
- 2 Thinly roll out the resulting mixture onto a Silpat sheet and dry in the oven for 3 hours at 50°C.

Once the sheets are dry, break them into irregular shapes, no larger than about 2 cm.

Plating

- 1 Place the panna cotta on a plate, rehydrate the fruit sheets in cold water for a few seconds and layer them on the panna cotta, separating the colours well.

