

Eataly Boston: Building a Surf and Turf Market

Tommaso Cartia (June 07, 2017)



Following its success in New York and Chicago, Eataly landed in Boston late last year. After its original strongholds—the fish restaurant Il Pesce, and a pop-up restaurant called La Cucina—Eataly Boston has now added a grilled-cuisine restaurant, Terra, which includes a Barrel Room where you can taste artisanal beers directly from the barrel.

At times, great ideas hide from the most simple of intuitions. This is the case of Eataly, the Italian marketplace devised by Oscar Farinetti in 2002. Eataly was founded with the idea of combining the best Italian products in a space where it's possible not only to buy them, but also to taste them, and to learn more about some of the great Italian culinary traditions. Today, the Eataly concept has become a winning brand, a leader in the Made in Italy food sector with more than 30 stores across the world. The Eataly phenomenon truly seems unstoppable, and its success in the USA confirms it.

The CEO of Eataly USA, [Nicola Farinetti](#) [2], son of Oscar, was able to expand the store's presence from New York's Flatiron and World Trade Center locations to Chicago, and finally, to Boston, where



it opened in November 2016. This was achieved thanks to the help of some exceptional partners including restaurant owners, businessmen, and TV personalities such as Lidia and [Joe Bastianich](#) [3], [Mario Batali](#) [4], and Adam and Alex Saper. Eataly USA aligns itself with a very specific philosophy that is inspired by both the Italian way of cooking and the secret of the Mediterranean diet: use of only the freshest seasonal and local products. Therefore, the American store presents products imported both from Italy and local, seasonal American products.

Eataly in “The Pru”

The Boston store is situated in a location that is, in itself, already a symbol of the city and a historic area for Bostonians—the Prudential Tower. Located in the historic Back Bay neighborhood, “The Pru” was built in 1964 and is one of the most prestigious examples of 20th century urban design in the United States. Eataly picked it as its headquarters among the revitalization of the Back Bay area, a place that is in the heart of the residents and that looks to make them feel united. This goes hand in hand with Eataly’s philosophy, which is to create a place where people can meet not only to buy products but also to feel part of an interactive community where culture and education is just as important as the consumption of food. This is why when you stroll past the market stands and the store’s various restaurants, you find signs that tell the story of each of the foods. Many products are prepared fresh on the spot, and you even have the chance to see the work of the butcher and the baker, just as you would in the Italian bottegas. For example, the mozzarella, in all of its variations from stracciatella to burrata, is prepared by hand in front of the customers.

Il Pesce

Every Eataly store is dedicated to a specific theme that has either to do with culture or with Italian food. Eataly Rome is an homage to beauty, Eataly Smeraldo in Milan to music, Eataly Istanbul to history. For [Eataly Boston](#) [5], the theme of the sea and its treasures was chosen, with fish as the star. This choice was made with two reasons in mind. The first was following the theme of sticking together as evidenced by the seas of the world, which unite both the continents and their inhabitants. The second was as an homage to Italian culinary traditions in the Mediterranean. Furthermore, the cuisine of Boston and New England in general is heavily based on fish, which is caught fresh off the coasts of Maine and Rhode Island.

You can try some of this cuisine in the restaurant Il Pesce, which is run by renowned chef **Barbara Lynch**, who is originally from Boston. Lynch is considered one of the most important cooks in the world. After her first experiences in the food industry, Barbara took a long trip to Italy where she had close contact with the local cuisine and was able to learn its secrets.

Nominated by [Food & Wine Magazine](#) [6] as one of America’s best chefs in 1996, Lynch then founded the [Barbara Lynch Gruppo](#) [7], which manages some of Boston’s important food establishments. Her great experience guarantees a fresh and authentic menu that extends from raw fish with oysters from Maine or clams from Cape Cod to exquisite first courses like spaghetti alla chitarra, house made spaghetti with local squid and spicy tomato, or second courses like the grilled shrimp.

La Cucina: A Rotating-Concept Corner

In addition to the established restaurant La Pizza & La Pasta, which offers the crowning jewels of Italian cuisine, inside Eataly Boston’s “La Piazza” you’ll find La Cucina, a pop-up restaurant that was envisioned as a corner of Italy where, on a rotating basis, every two months, different regional cuisine would be offered. Since February, La Cucina opened its doors to the region of Emilia Romagna. Along “Via Emilia,” the public will have the chance to taste all of the Emilian delicacies starting from the classic products like Parmigiano Reggiano, Prosciutto di Parma, and dishes from



famous chef **Michael Schlow**, who had the chance to travel to Emilia Romagna and to learn the typical cuisine.

Mario Batali expressed words of great enthusiasm both for the concept and for the new chef: “La Cucina is perhaps the most exciting part of Eataly Boston. It’s a venue dedicated to highlighting specific ingredients and regions of the Italian peninsula. Of all of the countless Bostonians for whom I have great affection, Michael Schlow is at the top of the list. Schlow’s approach to Italian cooking with Boston ingredients epitomizes how we hope people will use the Eataly marketplace.”

Terra and the Barrel Room

The big news this year was the April 4th opening of the restaurant, found on the third floor—Terra. From the treasures of the sea to the strong flavors of the Earth, the new restaurant awakens the primordial senses with food cooked on a wood-burning Italian grill.

For Terra’s Chef de Cuisine, [Dan Bazzinotti](#) [8], the restaurant’s atmosphere is truly a unique sensory experience that envelops diners with the intense scent of the roasted meat, greens, and fish together with inebriating flavors and scents of the canteen overlooking the restaurant. This space presents a rich wine cellar and an absolute novelty—the Barrel Room—where you can taste artisanal beers directly from the barrel, which allows you to try them during the various stages of their aging.

“With Terra we go back to the roots, everything is simple but traditional,” Bazzinotti tells us. “We don’t grill with charcoal that usually overpowers the taste of the food, but with the wood-burning grill, the wood is taken from the local oaks, which guarantees that everything is cooked, cleaned, and fresh with that smoky sensorial flavor and aroma. We grill vegetables, whole fish, and we showcase all of the meat that animals have to offer, even unusual tasty cuts.”

The idea for the Barrel Room was born from Nicola Farinetti’s great passion for beer in partnership with the breweries Dogfish Head in Milton, Birrificio Baladin from Piedmont, and Cambridge Brewing Company in Cambridge. The room is composed of floor-to-ceiling rows of 15 repurposed oak wine barrels that treat the wood-aged draft beer. **Sabrina Mazza**—Restaurants and Beverages Development at Eataly—showed her enthusiasm in our recent interview with her: “The concept behind Terra was to create a unique space away from other restaurants. You have the 15 wine barrels, created with an interesting style of construction, where the temperature changes. You can experience the aging of the beer and have a sip of it; every day the taste of the same beer will be different. Behind the Barrel there’s the cellar with more than 300 labels Italian wines. We have many partners in Italy from Piedmont to Tuscany and Lombardy.” ww

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