



## Sweet and Savory Gelato at L'Albero dei Gelati

By Krista Garcia



*[Photographs: Krista Garcia]*

**Country of Origin:** Italy **Locations Worldwide:** Four in Italy and the US **NYC Locations:** One, in Park Slope

I write under the column [Fast Food International](#), but it almost feels blasphemous to categorize **L'Albero dei Gelati** as fast food considering that the small Lombardy-based gelato chain aligns itself with the Slow Food movement. But a scoop crafted from a marriage of Piedmont hazelnuts and organic Pennsylvania dairy is a casual treat, nonetheless. A few weeks ago we [went behind the counter](#) to see what goes into the ice cream at this Park Slope shop; now, before summer weather leaves us for good, we're back for a real taste.



The takeout window is where you'll likely find a small crowd, yes, heavy on children (this is Park Slope, right?). If you're feeling more leisurely, though, next door there is a table-service cafe, complete with panini, biodynamic wine and a semi-secret patio and herb garden. Here, the gelato comes plated and garnished instead of in a paper cup. (Prices at the window range from \$5.15 for a small with two flavors to \$7.35 for a large with three flavors.)



Unusual flavors like blue cheese, salmon and white pepper asparagus have grabbed a little media attention (more on the savory gelati in a minute). Most of the gelati, which are creamy with a light quality, and sorbets, about 16 in total, are less radical. Subtly floral lavender is thankfully more honeyed than perfumey, and bridges the gap between traditional and esoteric.



Layers of apricot and peach sorbet were both pressed into a single glass in a happy accident (I'd only asked for peach after deliberating between them) if only to play a an orange stone fruit taste test. Peach stood out with a brighter, juicier quality.



There's no Crayola green pistachio gelato here, just natural tan hues. This time my pairing was purposeful: coffee and pistachio complement each other well. You don't have to know that the nuts are from Bronte and coffee from Huehuetenango, or that both are part of the Slow Food Presidia, a program meant to preserve local artisan heritage, to enjoy them.



Okay, if someone offers a meat and cheese plate paired with gelato (\$12), you're going to try it. Saffron and red pepper were the two savory flavors of the day, and they aren't so weird if you just think of them as a chili jam. Red pepper is vegetal and slightly spicy, and was meant to go with the cow's milk cheese. Since saffron has that barely-there flavor that no one can seem to describe (I can only think of it as what makes paella taste like paella) it functioned more as an cooling herbal cream to plop on the salami and sourdough, creating an unlikely ice cream sandwich.



Unlike streamlined [Grom](#), L'Albero dei Gelati is earnest, but also cutesy; there are white brick and chalkboard walls, and whimsical tree illustrations (the name translates to The Gelato Tree) and wooden birdhouses as a recurring motif. If it wasn't for the Italian couple running the place, you might think it was a studied Japanese brand interpreting an Italian gelato shop because it feels so spot on.

<http://newyork.seriousseats.com/2013/09/lalbero-dei-gelati-ice-cream-gelato-park-slope.html>