



First Look: Emphasis on Fresh, Local Ingredients at L'Albero dei Gelati, Brooklyn

By Brooke Porter, SEP 5, 2013
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[Photographs: Brooke Porter]

It all started in 1985, in Lombardy, Italy. That's when Monia Solighetto's parents opened the cafe and gelateria Oasi. Flash forward to 2006, when Solighetto herself joined the family business, relaunching and renaming the place L'Albero dei Gelati. But that wasn't enough for the enterprising daughter, who recently opened a U.S. location in Park Slope, Brooklyn, with her husband Alessandro and close friend and pastry chef Mauro Iannatuoni.

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"We were looking for a new challenge, and wanted to find a place that would really appreciate our philosophy," Solighetto says. "It's important that we serve sustainable products from the best small farmers and producers, in a family friendly environment. We wanted to be a part of a community, and Park Slope seemed to be perfect for that. In fact, when we visited the site, I got *pelle d'oca*—goosebumps. I just had a feeling it was meant to be."

The cafe seems to be fitting in nicely with the Brooklyn neighborhood best associated with families with young children (and the strollers that come with them). Children's artwork adorns the walls, and Solighetto is planning on launching birthday parties and

gelato-making workshops.

As for the gelato, it's made every morning using fresh, organic ingredients, seasonal fruits, and herbs from the garden out back. According to Solighetto, best-sellers are the panna cotta with caramel and gianduja (chocolate-hazelnut), yet they've also become known for savory flavors like pesto, yellow bell pepper, and saffron.



But don't be fooled by the name of the rustic, wood-filled spot—it serves much more than just that beloved, creamy Italian treat. On the sweet side, there are breakfast pastries, cookies, cakes, biscotti, all made with organic flour. Savory options include salmon frittata, panini (on housemade focaccia or ciabatta), and charcuterie and cheese boards. And the coffee is made with slow-roasted Huehuetenango Highland beans from the foot of Guatemala's Cuchumatanes mountains.

As Solighetto puts it, "I like to imagine that we are part of a strong interlinked chain—and every link in that chain matters, from our dairy producer to our sugar producer to the coffee bean picker to the roaster. Everything you eat here has a special origin, a story, and good values behind it."

<http://sweets.seriousseats.com/2013/09/first-look-lalbero-dei-gelati.html>