

Back to Amalfi. Delightful Colatura

Michele Scicolone (July 04, 2009)



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This article is part of our Special Issue on the Fancy Food 2009

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The 55th annual New York Summer Fancy Food Show held from June 28 to 30 at the Javits Convention Center featured a vast variety of products from all over the world. I focused my attention on the Italian section where I found everything from sublime 24-month-old Parmigiano Reggiano and buttery soft prosciutto di Parma, to peculiar gnocchi in a microwaveable cup. A few new products stood out.



At the [Agostino Recca](#) [3] booth, a small bottle of reddish brown liquid caught my eye. It was colatura, the juice extracted from preserved anchovies. Colatura is believed to be descended from the Roman garum, a fish sauce or condiment that the ancients prized more highly than caviar. Vincenzo Recca, director of the company, told me that his colatura is on its way to the United States, and should be in stores in about a month. I opened the bottle and took a sniff: the aroma was mellow and rich with anchovies. Instantly I felt transported back to the Amalfi Coast as I remembered the sensational linguine with colatura I ate at the Restaurant [La Cala delle Lampare](#) [4] at the Hotel Tritone in Praiano. Though the town of Cetara on the Amalfi Coast is best known as the source of colatura today, the Recca brand colatura is being produced in Sciacca in Sicily where the company packages its line of preserved anchovies and sardines. Their high quality products have always been favorites -- the little fish are always meaty and flavorful, not harsh and salty. In addition to pasta, colatura is good in a salad, on vegetables or cooked beans, in mayonnaise, devilled eggs, and so on.

At a nearby booth, I met Joe Cimino who offered me a sample of cuccidati, a traditional Sicilian-style fig cookie produced by [Cosi Duci](#) [5] of Boca Raton, Florida. Mr. Cimino said his sister Giovanna started the company because she wanted to raise funds to help find a cure for her son Giuseppe and others who are stricken with Multiple Sclerosis. Her cookies have a tender pastry crust wrapped around a filling of dried figs, chocolate, nuts and spices and each one comes individually wrapped. The cookies have an authentic flavor and I am glad to see that they can be purchased through the company's website. They would make a fine gift during the holiday season. A portion of the proceeds benefits the Multiple Sclerosis Society.



Every time I passed the [Panificio Biscottificio Colacchio](#) [6] booth, I could not resist trying a sample of their taralli or breadsticks. They were crunchy and flavorful and perfect as a snack on their own or to accompany a meal. This company also has an extensive line of frese and freselline, toasted whole grain breads that, after a light soaking in water, make a perfect base for a summer tomato salad or a hearty seafood stew.

After leaving the show, I stopped at [Locanda Verde](#) [7], where Anna Dente, one of Italy's most famous chefs was appearing at a reception sponsored by [Lotito Foods](#) [8] and Gabriella Cheese. Anna, who has been called the "Queen of Roman Cooking", had been at show demonstrating Bucatini alla Matriciana.

Here is a quick recipe for linguine with colatura. If you can't find colatura, substitute a few finely chopped anchovies. They are not as subtle as the liquid, but the flavor will still be good.





Linguine with Colatura

Makes 4 to 6 servings

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced

Pinch of crushed red pepper

1/3 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

3 or more tablespoons colatura (or substitute anchovy fillets)

Salt

1 pound linguine

In a skillet large enough to hold the pasta, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and crushed red pepper. Cook, stirring often until the garlic is lightly golden. Stir in the parsley and colatura. Turn off the heat.

Bring at least 4 quarts of water to a boil. Add salt to taste. Add the linguine and stir well pushing the pasta under the water. Cook over high heat, stirring frequently, until the pasta is almost ready.

Drain the pasta reserving a little of the cooking water. Add the pasta to the skillet. Toss well over medium high heat. If the pasta seems dry add a little of the cooking water. Serve hot.

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[2] <http://www.i-italy.org/sections/specials/lifestyle/flavours-italy-nyc-fancy-food-2009>

[3] <http://www.agostinorecca.com>

[4] <http://www.lacaladellelampare.com/Ristorante.htm>

[5] <http://www.cosiduci.com>

[6] <http://www.panificiocolacchio.i>

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