

Giovanni, Antonella & Gianluca Rana. “Not only Pasta!”. Donating to those in need of NYC.

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Giovanni Rana is renewing its collaboration with the Food Bank for New York City. The company created by Italy’s “patriarch of pasta” will donate 100,000 meals to people in need throughout the city. In addition, until December 31, 2015, \$1 will be donated for every dish prepared and sold by guest chefs of the “United Tastes of Pasta” initiative and at Rana’s restaurant in Chelsea.

At the end of October the Rana family—founders of Giovanni Rana Pastificio & Cucina, a pasta-making shop and restaurant located in the Chelsea Market—held their first-ever Pasta Party, kicking off their new initiative: United Tastes of Pasta.



Talking to the press and to guests at the event, Antonella Rana—the soul of this successful Italian food venue—announced the project. She started by introducing her “two champions:” her father-in-law Giovanni Rana and her husband Gianluca. “They are my teachers, my everything. They've had this fantastic idea and they are the only ones who should be illustrating it. An idea made of both love and flavor!”

The idea Antonella was referring to originated in the Rana family's desire to help less fortunate people. The Ranas are investing some of their resources into donating more than 100.000 meals to people in need. And there is more.

Donating to those in need.

Actually, as Gianluca Rana tells us, the idea itself came at Antonella's suggestion, because she wanted “to greet all the people that love us in this country by offering something that could help strengthening family bonds.” Gianluca explains: “When asking ourselves what is really important and meaningful in life, we thought of the dinner table, a meeting place that in this country is not used as much as it is in Italy. So, why not bring to that not-so-busy table something that could make families get together again?”

From there it was a short trip to the Food Bank For New York City. The Food Bank collects and distributes free food to more than 1.5 million hungry New Yorkers each year. Meals donated from Rana will be part of this monumental effort.

“But we'll do something else as well,” adds Gianluca. “We'll include in our menu the dishes of the best chefs from the United Tastes of Pasta, and each dish will produce a small extra donation for these families in need. We'll donate one dollar from each signature pasta dish ordered by our customers. So there'll be the big donation, the 100,000 meals, and also an ongoing one until the last day of 2015.”

Transparency—something the Rana family values highly—will mark every stage of the project. Everything happening inside the restaurant will be tracked, an opportunity to show the transparency of their day-to-day work. “We make food and the most important thing for us is to show what we put—love aside—in our products. We'll leave our doors open to show the world what we are made of.”

Not chefs... but pasta makers.

Family head Giovanni Rana is clearly proud and pleased by what his company's achieved in the United States. “Two or three years ago we would have never imagined to be welcomed in this great country with such enthusiasm: the magnitude of our success was unexpected,” he confesses. “We put on the table our dedication, art, skills and quality—and it didn't take the Americans long to appreciate our capacity of producing a high level product. It truly is satisfying.”

What interests Giovanni Rana the most, however, is the fact that the family achieved their success without losing their original identity. “We don't think of ourselves as chefs, but as pasta makers. And this”—his flagship restaurant in Chelsea—“is home to all of those who through their ideas and passion, give us the chance to think differently. They allow us to be different and unique, and this is in what has rewarded us so much in this country.”

"Let's go to 'Merica."

Giovanni, the patriarch, is from the region of Veneto, and tells us that in his youth many young people nurtured their American dream. “After the war, many of my countrymen would say “Let's go to 'Merica” to find work and opportunity. And now I've done it too! I built a business here and it is a great achievement. The credit goes to my son Gianluca, who loves the American way so much, and he has dragged me into it. I made a name for us in Italy—my son did it in America and in the rest of the world!”



It's Gianluca who wraps up our conversation. "I think mine is a vocation, a mission and a passion," he says. "These are the three most important values my father passed down to me. Being an only son, I am lucky and unlucky at the same time. But I have been very fortunate to have found an amazing wife, Antonella. We complement each other both by being unique and by sharing a common goal at the same time: to build a good business and then give back in the best way possible."

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