

AT THE TABLE

FAMILY AFFAIR

FILMING LIDIA'S SHOW AT HOME

HISTORY AND CULTURE

LIDIA'S DAUGHTER

GUEST STARS

LIDIA'S RESTAURANT CHEFS ON SET

BEHIND THE SCENES

HOW *LIDIA'S ITALY* IS PRODUCED

FROM THE HEART

A SNEAK PEAK AT LIDIA'S LATEST BOOK

ON THE STOVE

LIDIA SHARES HER FAVORITE RECIPES

LIDIA'S ITALY

VILLA POZZI

La Dolce Sicilia





SHOWTIME: A FAMILY PRODUCTION

To watch an episode of *Lidia's Italy* is to be a part of Lidia Bastianich's family, albeit briefly. Bastianich has been inviting guests into the kitchen of her very own home for more than a decade. She admits that it can be a little invasive—after all, some 30-plus crewmembers swarm her home each year for almost a month and whisk away her living-room furniture to make space for a makeshift control room, and she's literally in the kitchen from dawn to dusk.

However, the idea to film on-site was one of Lidia's first requests when she started doing the show. "I feel comfortable here," she explains. "I'm not an actress, although I might be considered a performer now, and I think people appreciate my sense of comfort here. That's why the show is still done in my home today." >

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With every show being shot in Lidia's own kitchen at home—and the long hours of production—everyone involved in producing the show is part of one big extended family.

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Lidia's mother, known to everyone as Grandma, is near and dear to everybody on set and behind the scenes.

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Lidia shares her personal favorite recipes that have been made and enjoyed many times over in her kitchen.

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For every hour of airtime, there has been months of preparation to cook up the show and make it run seamlessly.

Cover Photo CHRISTOPHER HIRSHEIMER

We drink all we can. The rest we sell.

I mean, honestly, what sort of attitude is that for a wine company to adopt?

The truth is, it suits us and our approach toward wine perfectly.

We're The Intrepid Wine Company.

Our story began simply enough.

In 2005, at the conclusion of a bibulous lunch, the two of us, bored by the paucity of good wines at reasonable prices, agreed to set off to find new and interesting varietals, a decision that soon had us meandering through Italy visiting with families whose wines seldom—if ever at all—made it past the village gates.

The wines we returned with were an immediate hit and quickly found their way onto wine lists in some of the loftiest restaurants in Manhattan.

To be honest, that's what kept our nose to the proverbial grindstone.

If you're hoping we unearthed a new Sauvignon Blanc or a new "anything familiar," read no further.

Our wines are of a kind few people will ever taste, from places no tourist will ever find.

Consider the first wine we fell in love with for example: Asprinio.

Asprinio is grown only around the town of Aversa, just north of Naples.

It's an ancient grape that employs the Etruscan practice of *vite maritata* (married vine), in which grapes are trained in trees bearing long trunks.

The grapes hang five or six stories above the ground. Harvesting is not for the faint of heart.

Perhaps it's a folly of ours to be attracted to wines with a backstory, but we have always felt the true joy of wine lies in discovery.

That's why our portfolio remains small. And why our wines are, sometimes, infuriatingly hard to find.

Each summer, when the time is right, we release a few cases of our Rosato Lacryma Christi—the tears of Christ.

It's scarce not because of a cunning marketing plan, but because very little of it is made to begin with.

The vintner is not willing to incur the wrath of his close friends and neighbors by selling it all to us.

And so it is with all our wines.

Our red wines—of which there are three—run the gamut from smoky and peppery (Aglianico), to zaftig and inky (Pallagrello).

Which brings us deftly to our key belief.

Wine is a deeply personal thing. There are no hard and fast rules worth a damn.

Drink the wine you like, like the wine you drink.

We select our wines because we love them.

We are guided solely by our corporate motto: We drink all we can. The rest we sell.

Even though the ratio has changed over the years.

The
INTREPID
WINE COMPANY



You can read more about us at theintrepidwinecompany.com.

All in the Family

“Food is a great conduit for communication,” Lidia continues, “so to have food as a medium *and* to work with my family . . . well, let’s just say that I’m really blessed.”

Of course, the set has changed over the past ten years. Walls are painted, new drapes get hung. Most recently, Lidia Bastianich has been taking viewers outside of the kitchen as well, to the market or out in her garden, and now with her to Italy.

“My house becomes a working place,” explains Lidia. “Cameras come in, lights turn on, but the crew hasn’t changed much over the years, so it’s almost like family by now. They know every inch of the house and are very respectful.”

Working days can be long, especially when you are filming up to three episodes in one day. Lidia is up at 6, in makeup by 7, and on set by 8, with breakfast “someplace in between.” And what does the show’s star eat to keep herself energized? “Protein and fruit for sustenance,” she says, and of course coffee. “I love my coffee. A nice cup of coffee, that’s number one.”

They’re already testing the lights on set and getting the food prepped, and the wafting smells of cooking fill the kitchen. Not Lidia’s kitchen though—not yet, at least. Lidia’s mother, known to everyone as Grandma, has her own apartment upstairs. As part of the family, she’s part of the show too. During the shoot, Grandma’s kitchen serves as the prep kitchen, whereas the show is filmed downstairs in Lidia’s. Everything is cooked in real time, so although the show lasts for 28 minutes on air, it can take up to four hours to film, which allows for elaborate recipes like ragus to cook for two to three hours and only get better with time.

During the course of a shoot, they aim to complete two or three recipes. While Lidia cooks, “guests” drop in and out of her kitchen, much like in real life. Her daughter, Tanya, with her own two kids; Lidia’s son, Joseph; and chefs from her restaurants all stop by to lend a hand and taste her latest dishes straight out of the oven.

Once they’ve wrapped the first show, it’s lunchtime, and everyone eats out in the courtyard, where the vibe is generally fun and familial. Unlike most other film and television sets, there’s no food service called in. “Nobody wants that!” says Lidia. “They want to eat what I actually cook.” The crew even takes food home for their families to try. And just like with real families, and in line with Lidia’s waste-not-want-not philosophy, what doesn’t get eaten at lunch is saved for the next day. “Unless no one can wait to taste it,” says Lidia, laughing. “In that case, everyone just sticks their forks in.”

They film for the rest of the day and try to wrap by 6 p.m. But like any family gathering, things don’t always go according to schedule. “At the end of a long working day, sometimes I just want to be left alone,” explains Lidia. “It’s my house, and that’s a lot of people.” Other times, Lidia and the kids head out for sushi for a change of pace, or she gets dressed up and goes out to one of her restaurants to let other people do the cooking and see how business is.

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Having Grandma involved with the show was a natural choice. "Ours is a family business, if you will," says Lidia, "and our family is always close."

"She was always there to support me, taking care of my children while I was working," she continues. "She is a part of our lives, she was there when we needed her, and she is here now. She is living history."

Everyone knows that mother figures are particularly emphasized within the Italian culture, and Lidia's

mother is no exception. "She embodies the sensibility of love, of giving, of warmth, of gathering around the table, of good food. She's just there when you need her with a big warm hug, a lecture, or a joke."

The family relationship offscreen is pretty much what you see on it. Lidia laughs at the thought of it being otherwise. "Yes, we are on our best behavior, but you know, we don't act. This is who we are."

Unlike most other film and television sets, there's no food service called in. "Nobody wants that!" says Lidia. "They want to eat what I actually cook." The crew even takes food home for their families to try.

Mixing in Culture and History

"Going and shooting in Italy changed the course of our production tremendously," remarks Lidia. "Italy is not just about eating and drinking, it's also about art and history. To capture all this, I coproduce and coauthor with my daughter, Tanya, an art historian."



Lidia Bastianich explains how including her daughter, Tanya, in the action adds to the show. "When you're visiting a region, you don't want to just highlight the typical sights and scenes," she says. "Tanya gives the viewer a deeper appreciation of the history of art by virtue of her extensive knowledge, while I do likewise with the food. It really is a wonderful symmetry."

Lidia's producer, Shelly, is also an art historian. She has worked with Lidia for many years and leads the production of the show. "It's a great collaboration of passion—about things we love and how we capture them," Lidia explains.

"This season, we visited Abruzzo, Umbria, Basilicata, and Sardegna, and showcased all these beautiful, though less known, settings, foods, and flavors," she continues. "We went all the way down to Calabria, where the food is spicy with a lot of peperoncino, and all the way up to Alto Adige, the northern parts, where they're almost Germanic and use lots of beer and apples in their cooking. Then we went to Val D'Aosta, which is near France, with their great, delicious, oozing cheeses like fontina."

The on-site location of Lidia's show means that her home is temporarily transformed into a set for weeks out of the year. So what is it like for her children when they drop by? After all, this is no ordinary day at Mom's.

"It has its ups and downs," says Tanya, Lidia's daughter. She agrees with her mother that the crew isn't such a distraction, since they have been around for so long they are almost like family. But super chef and supermom Lidia cooks dinner for her brood every Saturday and Sunday when she's around—and that's off the table, so to speak, when the kitchen is in studio mode. Tanya's jokes, "It's O.K., I guess I have to cook for myself and my kids . . ."

Tanya, who is also involved in the production of each show, is happy to have her workplace just around the corner. And her children love every minute of the tapings. "There's the snack table and the food table, a chance to yell into the microphone and to watch the cameras." In fact, they love to be on the set so much

that, Tanya adds, "there is a fine line to walk, so that they don't get movie starstruck. They would be on the show every day if they weren't in school. They love seeing themselves when the shows air!"

But Lidia's family doesn't drop in on the set just to sample the food and add family flavor to the show. As an art historian, Tanya is an integral part of the research and production that goes into each book and the subsequent television series.

Everything begins with the book, and the show is an offspring of it. Each book takes about two years to research and write, and Tanya is involved from the very start. The recipes are chosen and tested, and Tanya finds ways to weave in cultural elements of every region they visit. When the crew actually heads to Italy, she is in charge of the footage.

Lidia takes each recipe and explains to the reader and viewer the ingredients and traditions that are particular to each region and what makes every dish so special. Tanya does the same with the art and culture of the area to give a richer understanding of the place. And she's not talking about your everyday landmarks, either: "Even in passing conversation, I'm always quick to tell people to go get a really good guidebook to Florence, Venice, or Rome, because that's not what I'm going to tell you about."

What she will tell you about is a piazza in Bologna where all of the old men stand around and argue for hours. "It gives you a real sense of this passionately communist city." Just this little glimpse of culture provides insight into Bologna's long history, and Tanya is full of fascinating tidbits and nuances that accompany her mother's culinary voyage up and down the Italian peninsula. "When traveling through Abruzzo, you have to go to Sulmona for the confetti shops," she gushes. "The almond and colorful sugar candies are arranged like bouquets in a flower shop."

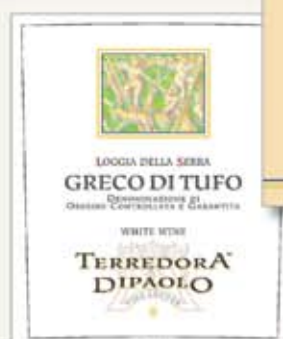
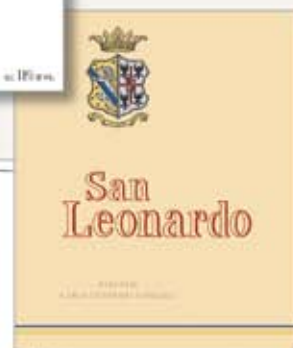
Tanya's cultural contribution adds dimension to the travel segment of the show. "Everyone knows the bright colors of Italy, like the Vatican and the Colosseum," she explains. "I try to shade in the lines."



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SUPPORTING CAST

The chefs from Lidia's restaurants make regular guest appearances on *Lidia's Italy*. Here, they share their insight and thoughts on cooking with Lidia in front of the camera.

Chef Mark Ladner Del Posto

Describe the experience of cooking with Lidia Bastianich on the show.
Incredibly inspiring. Very few people truly enjoy Italian food, wine, and culture like Lidia. And she is exceptionally generous with her knowledge!

What's the best part about taping the show with Lidia?
Spending a day at her home.

How is this different from doing a regular cooking demonstration?
An industrial kitchen can feel sterile. Lidia's kitchen is a home.

What do you think is unique about Lidia's TV show?
Lidia is real. She really teaches the viewer; she really believes in what she's teaching.

What is the best recipe to date that you have made on air with Lidia?
Recently we made a seafood pasta dish called Lidia's Spicy Paccheri with Frutti di Mare alla Marinara at Del Posto for Regis [Philbin] and Kelly [Ripa]. It's currently one of the most popular pastas on our menu!

Name something you have learned during the tapings?
That people need to learn to have a greater appreciation for fresh and cooked vegetables in their diets. Huge portions of proteins are unnecessary.

Can you give an example of how Lidia inspires her viewers with her approach to food?

Yes! I love how Lidia always considers every last morsel of even the most humble of ingredients in a meal. For example, the first time I was invited to her house, we made a particular type of stuffed pasta. She then made another dish from the trim and scraps of the pasta dough! That's *amore!*



Chef Cody Hogan Lidia's KC and Pittsburgh

Describe the experience of cooking with Lidia Bastianich on the show.
It feels like cooking with Lidia, which I've been doing for 11 years now, but with the volume turned up! When you're on the show, with the lights on and the cameras rolling, it's a little like drinking too much espresso!

Any time I cook with Lidia, it is always a great learning experience—it's just fun. Spending time at the house and sharing meals, conversations, and stories with Grandma is a great bonus!

What is unique about cooking in front of the camera?
There are certain "unnatural" things that you have to do for TV cooking, usually to allow the cameras to catch just the right shot. For example, the way you pause before adding an ingredient to a pot, holding a pan at a funny angle, or slowly pouring

liquids so that the camera can follow your motions. Regardless, for any cook in a strange kitchen, things always feel a little out of place, not quite at home. I think that's why Lidia likes to do her show in her own kitchen, and I think her viewers feel that same sense of comfort.

What is special about Lidia's show?
I like the way she teaches people to take her recipes and make them their own. She gives them the technique and then different ways to apply it. I also love the authenticity of the dishes and ingredients.

Of the recipes that you have made on air with Lidia, which do you get requests for?

I've had quite a few people mention the ribs with rigatoni. We made the frico with the egg inside on one episode, and that is on our brunch

menu at Lidia's KC and has been really well received. Now that the Chocolate Bread Parfait recipe is out, I'm sure people are going to really love that one. I know I do.

What have you learned from Lidia during the tapings that carries over into your work?

Organization is very important. It's also about being in the moment, using what you have at hand to make the best possible product. For example, if we have a planned recipe and suddenly Lidia happens to notice a beautiful and delicious piece of produce that we are using for a prop, she'll just modify the recipe, explaining to the audience how they can make substitutions, to make the freshest and most seasonal version possible.

What tips would you tell viewers to follow at home?

You just have to go into the kitchen and do it, but pay attention—be in the moment. People often comment that after watching the show, they feel confident that they could cook whatever recipe Lidia has just made—and then lots of them actually do! And that's what the show is all about, bringing *Lidia's Italy* into your home.



Chef Fortunato Nicotra Felidia

How is the experience of cooking with Lidia during the show different from cooking with her at Felidia? Since I'm the executive chef of Lidia's flagship restaurant, Felidia, I see Lidia more often than some of the other chefs. Although she travels extensively, when she is in New York she is often here, since this is where her office is. Lidia has always been like a second mother to me. We laugh together, argue, and, most important, love to talk about food, ingredients, and new recipes. At Felidia, she gives me the reign of the kitchen, so if she pops in and things are hectic, she'll turn around and come back when things calm down. But when I'm at her home, the dynamic is completely different. Whereas I feel like the Felidia kitchen has become my kitchen, when I go to her house, I'm really in her kitchen. And it's really inspiring to see how far she has come with the show.

What is the best part about taping the show with Lidia? My wife, Shelly, is one of the producers, so I hear her talk about all of the characters, crew members, typical day-to-day stuff. I get an inside view of what goes on behind the scenes. But when I'm out there, it comes alive. And I have to say that we really do all have a lot of fun while shooting the show.

How is it different from cooking in your own kitchen?

I cook a lot at home with friends and family and I have a nice open kitchen, which allows me to interact with everyone as I cook. But Lidia's kitchen was designed specifically like a chef would design their kitchen. I aspire to design my own kitchen one day too.

What are some of the best recipes you have made on air with Lidia, and why? Two seasons ago, she featured a few episodes on Sicily that I was invited to be part of. Although I grew up in Turin, I was born in Sicily and go back there every year, so I love cooking anything Sicilian with Lidia. In one episode, she made grouper alla matalotta and *pannelle*, which are chickpea fritters. I always search high and low for a great *pannelle* sandwich every time I go to Sicily! I also loved creating the limoncello tiramisu with her, which is a favorite at Felidia.

What have you learned from Lidia during the tapings that you carry over into your work? Know your subject and manage your team, but have fun.



What tips do you think viewers most appreciate?

Shortcuts—whether it's crushing garlic by hand instead of always chopping it or pulling out long pasta with tongs instead of pouring it into a pasta strainer, things of that nature.

Chef Billy Gallagher Becco

Can you describe what it's like cooking on set with Lidia Bastianich? It's really a great experience, something that I look forward to all year long because it reminds me of when I was young, cooking with my grandmother. Lidia is extremely warm and compassionate about food and family, and that definitely carries over into the work philosophy at Becco!

What is the best part about taping the show with Lidia?

We laugh a lot and have fun with the entire crew. I also like that we cook in real time and then sit down with everyone and enjoy the fruits of our labor. Again, it's a family atmosphere.

Do you like cooking in front of a camera?

Sure, the camera loves me! I have a large family, so I usually have an audience when I'm in the kitchen at home, especially around the holidays, when I cook for big family events.

What do you think makes Lidia's show unique?

She's real, she's not a character type. There's no schtick. She's completely genuine!

What is the best recipe so far that you have made on air with Lidia? They're all good, but the beer-braised beef and spaetzle was definitely my favorite. We actually featured that dish at our most recent book-release party with Lidia and the family. It was definitely a crowd-pleaser!

What have you learned from Lidia during the tapings that carries over into your work at the restaurant? That Becco is a family. My co-workers are my brothers and sisters, and that is something that I learned from Lidia. We treat everyone equally, and you can sense that the second you walk into the restaurant. We're a family, period.



What food philosophy tip would you like to share with viewers?

Our ingredients are incredibly fresh and imported from Italy as well as procured from local farmers. Using fresh ingredients is really the key to a winning dish. You can taste the difference, and that is something that viewers should take into consideration when shopping.

Behind the Scenes: COOKING UP A SHOW

Shelly Burgess Nicotra, Supervising Producer

Shelly Burgess Nicotra has been working with Lidia for 15 years and is practically part of the family. As the supervising producer of *Lidia's Italy*, she gave us a glimpse into what it takes to bring Lidia's vision to life.

The starting point for Lidia's TV show is her books. Shelly and Lidia begin by asking themselves: "What would make a good show?" The first six months are dedicated to pre-production. "You have to have your costs and timing in order before actually shooting the episodes or you could end up working overtime," Shelly explains. "If you've got everything ready by the time you go to shoot, you're golden."

During pre-production, Lidia and the team break down the book into 52 episodes, with 26 airing each year. With the addition of the travel segment and Lidia's regional Italian recipes in her latest two books, there's even greater attention given to the recipe selection for each episode in order to keep in theme. They also have to decide whether a recipe can realistically be edited down into a 26-minute episode, and whether it's TV friendly. "For example, we do a lot of 'homey' finished dishes that tend to be brown," Shelly

says. "So it's important that you supplement each one with something colorful, like a green salad or accompanying a vegetable dish."

Recipes can also create the highlights in the travel segment. "If there is a lot of cheese in one recipe, we might visit a cheese shop, or a particular fish dish could lend itself to a fishing excursion."

Shelly is responsible for hiring the crew, finding the underwriters, and creating the budget, all of which begins months in advance of shooting the show. "When taping time rolls around, we need to be ready to shoot in real time. That means the kitchen staff starts a few days earlier than the rest of the crew, prepping, making stock, organizing pots, pans, and utensils—all upstairs in Grandma's kitchen." Onions need to be chopped but viewers don't necessarily need to see that, and from a production standpoint, that's a simple way to save a little time in production. With 26 episodes and about three recipes per episode, time-saving steps like this can end up saving you quite a bit of money.



Dominick Ciardiello, Director of Photography

Describe your role as director of photography. My role is to create the best-looking food show possible. I work closely with both the director and lighting director on the kitchen segments. I pretty much pick the format and frame rate that we shoot video on, and work with the lighting director to use very specific lighting techniques to create the beauty shots of the finished dishes. When we shoot segments in Italy, I travel with Lidia and oversee the final composition and lighting of all the shots.

How has ever-updated technology changed the way you shoot a TV show? Technology has changed dramatically in the last couple of years. I would say shooting in HD has been especially great for shooting food. The detail you can achieve by shooting 1080, particularly on tight shots of food, really allows you to capture its beauty.

From your perspective, why is Lidia's show unique? Probably because of the atmosphere of our shooting environment. We spend almost a month at her house instead of in a TV studio. Lidia makes us feel like family, and there is some sort of comfort level there because she is actually cooking in her own kitchen. We really capture that feeling for her audience, so when she says, "*Tutti a tavola a mangiare*" you are really

seeing her at home and at her table. It is something you just can't recreate in a TV studio.

What is the most challenging part about shooting Lidia's show? Only getting one take on shooting a lot of her cooking activities—from chopping, adding ingredients, and tasting, down to cutting into a finished dish—is pretty challenging. We tape three shows a day, and all the cooking (with a few exceptions) is done in real time. A lot of shows really don't run that way—they have swap-outs for everything. Lidia doesn't like to waste anything—and besides, she is such a professional that she knows how to position and pour ingredients a certain way and length of time so that the camera can capture the best angle.

What do you enjoy most about working on the show? Sitting in Lidia's yard with her and Grandma, eating the dishes she just cooked on the show. Usually the finished dishes from two shows are set up on a table. The crew gets in a line and samples every dish. Lidia always makes a plate for Grandma, and we sit around the table eating and generally having a grand time. Grandma tastes and comments and makes us all laugh. She is one of a kind!



As supervising producer, Shelly Burgess Nicotra oversees everything from the conception of the season alongside the book writing to pre-production, production, and delivery of the finished product to American Public Television. Throughout the process, she keeps a close eye on the budget.

LIDIA'S ITALY BY THE NUMBERS

104	Total episodes of <i>Lidia's Italy</i>
26	Number of episodes conceived per year
26	Episodes aired per year
26	Minutes in each episode
22	Number of crew members inside Lidia's home during filming
12	Days spent filming in Italy
13	Number of episodes discussed at each breakdown meeting
15	Number of years Shelly has worked with Lidia
9	Days it took to film 26 episodes this year
7	Number of crew members in Italy this year
6	Minimum months of pre-production
3	Number of shows filmed in one day at Lidia's house

EVERYONE'S GRANDMA

SHELLY ON GRANDMA

Grandma is our cheerleader. She's the first to compliment you on what you wear, to tell you that the season is the best yet. Her positive energy is contagious and with such long days, all of us thrive on it. I consider her one of the most inspirational women I have ever met.

DOMINICK ON GRANDMA

Grandma was a schoolteacher in Italy, and she loves children. And it shows not only in how she loves her own family but also in her concern for others. She always asks how my children are doing. I have brought my son, who is autistic, to the set before. Lidia did some fundraising for his school, and one year she raised over \$100,000! When she went there to cook for 50 autistic kids, Grandma insisted on going to the event with her because, as she told me, "I have to be there for the kids." Whenever my son has visited the set, Grandma sits with him all day, singing songs and keeping him company. She truly is one of the most loving people I know.

AMY ON GRANDMA

Grandma is amazing. Everyone feels lighter and happier when she walks in the room. No matter how long the day has been, if Grandma is on the show, everyone just relaxes. I don't know where to start about what I've learned from Grandma, I love her so much. Even my kids call her Grandma! I started working with Lidia shortly after my daughter was born (she is now 9), and have learned so much from Grandma (and Lidia!) about devotion to family. When you put that as your first priority, no matter what life throws at you, it all comes together in the end. Grandma is also so much fun to be around. She helps me remember that a good laugh goes a long way.



Amy Stevenson, Culinary Producer

Describe your role as the culinary producer. I work with Lidia, testing and developing recipes for her books. We also meet to plan out the shows that feature those recipes, and I write "breakdowns," which are scripts that choreograph how it will all play out in front of the camera. Before the shoot, I make sure we have all of the right staff, equipment, props, food, etc. Once the shoot begins, I supervise the prep kitchen to set everything up for Lidia to cook and work with, and then Lidia and I lay out all the food and equipment so it makes sense and flows. Finally, we go over everything with the producer, director, and crew before we roll tape on each act to make sure everyone knows what's going to happen.

How do you generate the themes and develop the storylines for each show? We start meeting about six to nine months before we tape the shows, taking the recipes from the book and mapping them out into segments. First, we choose what goes together as a menu or theme, what would taste and look good together. The recipes also need to work timing wise; for example, not too many pans on the stove at one time.

Describe the process you use to test the recipes. Anything Lidia makes is TV friendly! Honestly, she could take bread, water, and garlic and make delicious food and an amazing show out of it. For me, that is part of Lidia's magic. When we are developing recipes, I am always amazed at what she can make out of such humble ingredients. When we test for the books, Lidia comes up with the basic recipes, then I buy the ingredients and prep them. We meet at her house and spend the whole day cooking and refining them until they are exactly what she wants. We eat it all for lunch, then I take home a nice dinner for my family. Rough job, I know! I also take the recipes home and retest them on my own to be sure a mortal can get the same results, then I send them back to Lidia for her final input.

How long does it take to plan for each season? After our initial meeting, I usually spend a few months writing the scripts and sending them back and forth to Lidia and the rest of the production team to finalize all the details. I also need

time to get all of our props and equipment together—we need a huge amount of these sort of things to generate three shows a day, and they have to be very organized so we know we have everything we need before we roll tape.

How many people are involved in making each show happen? I have a great culinary team. Cody Hogan, one of Lidia's chefs from her Kansas City restaurant, has been working with me for the past four or five years. We also have three prep cooks—Diana, Kelly, and Liz—working in our upstairs kitchen, plus Wendy who washes dishes, helps us prep, and generally keeps us together. We work really well together. They make things easy for me, and we have a lot of fun.

What are some insider secrets to making the show look seamless to the viewer? Organization. I have been doing food TV for 13 years, and it is all about being prepared, down to the last spatula. I check and recheck everything. Does the blender work? Does it work now? How about now? I probably seem horribly OCD when I am on set, but it works!

What distinguishes Lidia from other TV chefs? I have worked with many, many TV chefs over the years. When people find out what I do, more than any other chef they've seen, Lidia is the one they respond to the most warmly. She makes her viewers feel like they are in the kitchen with her, tasting, smelling, and learning. Viewers come away from her show having learned a lot, but also feeling like they've spent half an hour with their mom or grandma or a good friend. That is not easy to do. Some TV chefs are great teachers, others make you feel good, but there are very few that can consistently do both.

What is the main thing you want viewers to take away from the show? I want people to feel empowered in the kitchen by Lidia, and feel confident that they can make their friends and family feel that same warmth and love that Lidia imparts on her viewers. It is not about creating something big and fancy; it is about taking the time to make some good, homemade food and sharing it with the people you love. And really, anyone can do that.



COLDI SOLE

CASTELLO DI MONASTERO

POGGIO ALLE SUGHERE

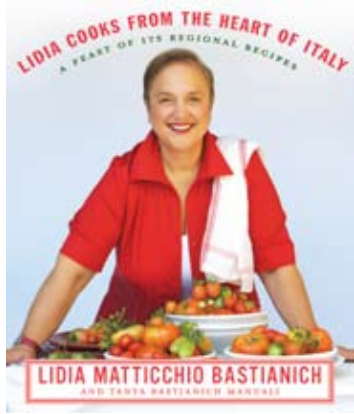


THE PHILOSOPHER ENTREPRENEUR

Thirty years ago, a successful industrialist decided to devote himself to his great passion: wine-making. And so began a fascinating and complex story of three very important estates in Tuscany.

- The purchase and restoration of an historic monastery (dating from 1000) at Castelnuovo Berardenga, in the heart of the Siena Chianti Classico area, the present day *Castello di Monastero*.
- Montalcino, the homeland of one of the most famous wines in the world, saw the acquisition and renovation of the *Coldisole* estate.
- Lastly, the foundation of *Poggio alle Sughere* in the Tuscan Maremma area.

LIONELLO **M**ARCHESI



LIDIA ON LOCATION IN *THE HEART OF ITALY*

My latest book is ultimately about being at the table, because the table is so important in Italian culture—it's where everything happens. The table should be important in the American culture as well. Time spent around the table is essential for maintaining relationships with others as well as for cultivating a relationship with the world around us.



"How can you talk about Italy and not show Italy?" asks Lidia, and rightly so. But she always longed to show *her* Italy. "It's the Italy that I enjoy and know, made up of all those wonderful food artisans and winemakers that I have befriended over the years. In a sense, they have made me who I am. They shared their passion with me and, in turn, I share it in my restaurants, on TV, and in books."

Excerpt from
Lidia Cooks From the Heart of Italy

Food is a way of connecting with the people who surround us. Through food we communicate love, compassion, and understanding. The sharing of dishes together at the table opens doors for us to penetrate the thoughts of those around us. There is no better opportunity to communicate with our children than at the table, to discuss values of life that are important to us as individuals, as a family, and as a part of the world we live in.

A WASTE-NOT-WANT-NOT APPROACH TO LIFE

"I grew up within those parameters. My grandmother and my grandfather ate everything they grew, cured, and dried, like peas and beans. When you have to get up at 5 a.m. to harvest potatoes, you're not going to waste anything. I grew up with that—to respect every last crumb. In fact, my grandmother would gather up the crumbs after we ate and feed them to the chickens.

That is the way we still should live. I think there is an overabundance of everything today. If you don't have a real connection to what it takes to grow an apple or a tomato, it's that much easier to discard it—after all, you can always buy another one, until perhaps one day there are no more apples. So let's each work on saving a crumb. Do you know how many more people could be fed?"

Excerpt from
Lidia Cooks From the Heart of Italy

It is now a time for reflection, for looking back at the generations before us to understand their approach to the table. In my research into the 12 regions of Italy that I explore here, some answers came to light. The recipes I share with you reflect a respect for food—growing it, shepherding the animals, foraging for the gifts of nature in the wild, and hunting respectfully to put nourishing meat on the table, not just for sport.

Nothing is wasted.

LIDIA'S MESSAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF ITALY

"We visited different regions and show their traditions. In most of the recipes in this book, it is evident that the original dish is rooted in the reality of those times, when frugality went along with hard work, and home cooks made do with what was on hand."

Excerpt from
Lidia Cooks From the Heart of Italy

Our approach to food, our respect for and understanding of the ingredients we work with, will dictate our future survival. Will there be enough available for the generations to come? Will the world survive?

Waste not, want not—and make it delicious.

MY MOTHER'S CHICKEN AND POTATOES (WITH MY SPECIAL TOUCHES)

Serves 4 or more

FOR THE BASIC CHICKEN AND POTATOES

2 1/2 pounds chicken legs or assorted pieces (bone-in)

1/2 cup canola oil

1/2 teaspoon salt, or more to taste

1 pound red bliss potatoes, preferably no bigger than 2 inches across

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

2 medium to small onions, peeled and quartered lengthwise

2 short branches fresh rosemary, with plenty of needles

FOR MY SPECIAL TOUCHES – TRY EITHER OR BOTH

4 to 6 ounces sliced bacon (5 or 6 slices)

1 or 2 pickled cherry peppers—sweet or hot, or none or more!—cut in half and seeded

RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

2-inch cast-iron or other heavy-bottomed skillet with 3-inch-deep sides, or deeper, with a cover



PREPPING AND BROWNING THE CHICKEN (AND BACON) AND POTATOES

Rinse the chicken pieces and pat dry with paper towels. Trim off the excess skin and all visible fat. Cut the drumsticks from the thighs. If using breast halves, cut into two small pieces.

If making the bacon rolls, cut the bacon slices in half crosswise and roll each strip into a neat, tight cylinder. Stick a toothpick through the roll to secure it, and cut or break the toothpick so only a tiny bit sticks out, allowing the bacon to roll around and cook evenly.

Pour the canola oil into the skillet and set it over high heat. Sprinkle the chicken with 1/4 teaspoon salt on all sides. When the oil is very hot, lay the pieces in it, skin-side down, an inch or so apart, and watch out for oil spatters. Don't crowd the chicken; if necessary, fry it in batches, with similar pieces (like drumsticks) together.

Drop the bacon rolls into the oil around the chicken, turning and shifting them often. Let the chicken pieces fry in place for several minutes to brown on the underside, then turn and continue frying until they're golden brown on all sides, 7 to 10 minutes or more. Fry breast pieces for only 5 minutes or so, taking them out of the oil as soon as they are golden. Let the bacon rolls cook and get slightly crisp, but not dark. Adjust the heat to maintain steady sizzling and coloring. Remove the crisped chicken pieces with tongs to a bowl.

Meanwhile, rinse and dry the potatoes. Slice each one through the middle on the axis that gives the largest cut surface, then toss them with the olive oil and 1/4 teaspoon salt.

When the chicken and bacon are cooked and out of the skillet, pour off the frying oil. Return the skillet to medium heat and put in all the potatoes, cut side down in a single layer, into the hot pan. With a spatula, scrape all the olive oil out of the mixing bowl into the

skillet, and drizzle a bit more olive oil if the pan seems dry. Fry and crisp the potatoes for about 4 minutes to form a crust, then move them around the pan, still cut-side down, until they're all brown and crisp, 7 minutes or more. Turn them over and fry another 2 minutes to cook and crisp on their rounded skin sides.

COOKING EVERYTHING TOGETHER

Still over medium heat, toss the onion wedges and rosemary branches around the pan, with the potatoes. If using cherry peppers, either hot or sweet, cut the seeded halves into 1/2-inch wide pieces and scatter them in the pan too.

Return the chicken pieces—except breast pieces—to the pan, along with the bacon rolls; pour in any chicken juices that have accumulated. Raise the heat slightly, and carefully turn and tumble the chicken, potatoes, and onion (and bacon and/or pepper juices), so they're heating and getting coated with pan juices, but take care not to break the potato pieces. Spread everything out in the pan—potatoes on the bottom as much as possible, to keep crisping up—and cover.

Return the heat to medium and cook for about 7 minutes, shaking the pan occasionally, then uncover and tumble the pieces and potatoes (and bacon rolls) again. Cover and cook another 7 minutes or so, adding the breast pieces at this point. Give everything another tumble. Now cook covered for 10 minutes more.

Remove the cover, turn the pieces again, and cook in the open skillet for about 10 minutes to evaporate the moisture and caramelize everything. Taste a bit of potato (or chicken) for salt, and sprinkle on more as needed. Turn the pieces now and then, and when they are all glistening and golden, and the potatoes are cooked through, remove the skillet from the stove and—as I do at home—bring it right to the table. Serve portions of chicken and potatoes, or let people help themselves.

From *Lidia's Family Table*, published by Alfred A. Knopf

Don't crowd the chicken; if necessary, fry it in batches, with similar pieces (like drumsticks) together.

This recalls for me the chocolate-and-bread sandwiches that sometimes were my lunch, and always a special treat. And it is another inventive way surplus is used in Umbrian cuisine, with leftover country bread serving as the foundation of an elegant layered dessert. Though it is soaked with chocolate and espresso sauce and buried in whipped cream, the bread doesn't disintegrate, and provides a pleasing textural contrast in every heavenly spoonful.



8 ounces bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, finely chopped

8 ounces country-style white bread, crusts removed

1/2 cup freshly brewed espresso

2 tablespoons dark rum

2 tablespoons sugar

1 1/2 cups chilled heavy cream

1 cup sliced almonds, toasted

RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

A large rimmed tray or baking sheet, such as a half-sheet pan (12 by 18 inches); a spouted measuring cup, 1 pint or larger; 6 parfait glasses or wineglasses, preferably balloon-shaped

Put the chopped chocolate in a bowl set in a pan of hot (not boiling) water. When the chocolate begins to melt, stir until completely smooth. Keep it warm, over the water, off the heat.

Slice the bread into 1/2-inch thick slices, and lay them flat in one layer, close together, on the tray or baking sheet.

Pour the warm espresso into a spouted measuring cup, stir in the rum and sugar until sugar dissolves, then stir in half the melted chocolate. Pour the sauce all over the bread slices, then flip them over and turn them on the tray, to make sure all the surfaces are coated. Let the bread absorb the sauce for a few minutes.

Meanwhile, whip the cream until soft peaks form, by hand or with an electric mixer.

To assemble the parfaits: Break the bread into 1-inch pieces. Use half the pieces to make the bottom parfait layer in the six serving glasses, dropping an equal amount of chocolatey bread into each. Scrape up some of the unabsorbed chocolate sauce that remains on the baking sheet, and drizzle a bit over the bread layers. Next, drop a layer of whipped cream in the glasses, using up half the cream. Top the cream layer with toasted almonds, using half the nuts.

Repeat the layering sequence: drop more soaked bread into each glass, drizzle over it the chocolate sauce from the tray and the remaining melted chocolate. Dollop another layer of whipped cream in the glasses, using it all up, and sprinkle the remaining almonds on top of each parfait. This dessert is best when served immediately while the melted chocolate is still warm and runny.

CHOCOLATE BREAD PARFAIT *PANE E CIOCCOLATA AL CUCCHIAIO*

Serves 6

Publisher
MICHAEL GOLDMAN

Editor-in-Chief
PAMELA JOUAN

Design Director
JANA POTASHNIK
BAIRDesign, Inc.

Managing Editor
CHRISTIAN KAPPNER

Contributing Editor
ANNIE B. SHAPER

Copy Editor
KELLY SUZAN WAGGONER

Photo Director
CHARLES HARRIS

Advertising
advertising@hautelife.com

Marketing Director
KATHERINE PAYNE

Photography
LIDIA BASTIANICH

TED AXELROD
axelrodphotography.com

Cover Photo
CHRISTOPHER HIRSHEIMER
thecanalhouse.com

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www.hautelife.com
info@hautelife.com

Subscription Inquiries
718.858.1187
subscriptions@hautelife.com
or visit www.hautelife.com

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HAUTEVINTNER



LIONELLO MARCHESI ENTREPRENEUR, PHILOSOPHER, AND WINEMAKER

Lionello Marchesi's journey into the wine world is an impressive modern tale. Marchesi did not inherit a family estate, but instead is an entrepreneur motivated by an incredible passion for wines. Thirty years ago, after a successful career inventing and manufacturing car accessories for Italian and American automobile giants, Lionello, based in Milan at the time, began his search for properties in Tuscany. He quickly assembled ownership of estates from three of the most prestigious appellations of Tuscany—Chianti Classico, Brunello di Montalcino, and Montepulciano—and became the very first winemaker to unite these three DOCG under one name.

After a brief hiatus from winemaking, Lionello continued following his passion and embarked on his second adventure as a winemaker by purchasing three Tuscan estates: Castello di Monastero in the Chianti Classico area, Coldisole in the famous Montalcino area, and Poggio alle Sughere in the Maremma region on the coast, an area new to wine producing.

Lionello's winemaking philosophy focuses on quality, and his standards often surpass stringent DOCG requirements. His Castello di Monastero Chianti Superiore is made with 85 percent sangiovese grapes and aged for seven months in French oak barrels, although the law requires only 75 percent sangiovese and no oak aging at all. As a result, the Monastero's mouth is deliciously round with a medium body and delicate notes of toasted oak. And his Coldisole Rosso di Montalcino also demonstrates the careful attention given to every wine, spending eight months in small oak barrels and another eight months in the bottle, again exceeding the DOCG standards. The Rosso is a very approachable wine, showing violet and raspberry flavors and very good structure.

Lionello Marchesi has proved to be an innovator and a man of simplicity all in one, balancing the values of authenticity and modernity in his wines.

HAUTECOCKTAIL



THE CAIPIRINHA

2 oz Leblon Cachaça
1/2 lime
2 tsp superfine sugar

Cut the lime into four wedges. Muddle the lime and sugar in a shaker. Fill the shaker with ice and add Leblon Cachaça. Shake vigorously. Serve in a rocks glass. Garnish with a slice of lime.

LEBLON

Cachaça is unique to Brazil, as it can only be made there. Like France's Cognac or Champagne and Mexico's tequila, cachaça has qualities that separate it from any other spirit. Cachaça is made from fresh-pressed sugarcane juice, which is then fermented and distilled. Distillation can be accomplished using two accepted methods: industrial column stills or artisanal alembique copper pot stills. The latter method represents the minority of the yearly production, but it can result in complex, interesting, and wonderful spirits.

Leblon, an artisanal cachaça, is made at Maison Leblon in Brazil's state of Minas Gerais. The distillery's mission is to show the world that cachaça can be a noble spirit. The result is a lively pure nose and a full-bodied liquor that exhibits a floral bouquet with light herbal and grassy notes and tastes of sweet sugarcane, crème brûlée, spicy vanilla, and white pepper. The spirit warms in the mouth and leaves a gentle sweetness in the middle of the tongue that flowers as it lasts, much like a refined tequila.

RESTAURANT LOCATIONS

lidiastaly.com
blog.lidiastaly.com



Felidia
243 East 58th Street
New York, NY 10022
Tel. 212.758.1479
felidia-nyc.com



Lidia's Pittsburgh
1400 Smallman Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Tel. 412.552.0150
lidiast-pittsburgh.com



Lidia's Kansas City
101 West 22nd Street
Kansas City, MO 64108
Tel. 816.221.3722
lidiast-kc.com



Del Posto
85 Tenth Avenue
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