



## Modern Comforts

ASELLINA CHEF DE CUISINE ANDREA MONTOBBIO TAKES ITALIAN COOKING IN NEW DIRECTIONS, ESPECIALLY FOR THE HOLIDAYS. **BY ERIN RILEY**

In a city that loves Italian and is an expert in Italian, what's a chef to do if he wants to stand out? Give some lesser known mainstays a modern new twist. Here's how Andrea Montobbio does it.

**What dishes are you introducing at Asellina for the holidays?** "A butternut squash and goat cheese gnocchi with roasted pheasant and chestnuts, and for dessert, French toast panettone with crème anglaise and pistachio gelato. I wanted to create comfort foods that you would typically find in a Northern Italian home over the holidays."

**How do you define nouveau Italian?** "Respecting traditional and regional cooking and ingredients while applying innovative

techniques and international influences."

**What dishes are currently popular with your crowd?** "Black pizza with rock shrimp and robiola cheese, wild boar agnolotti with cocoa-infused pasta and Barbera sauce, and monkfish osso buco with Livornese sauce and gremolata."

**How do New York restaurant-goers differ from those in Atlanta where you helmed restaurants?** "New Yorkers are much more demanding when it comes to Italian food. People expect certain staples, but want something new and original as well."

420 Park Ave. South, 212-317-2908; [togrp.com/restaurant/asellina-new-york-city](http://togrp.com/restaurant/asellina-new-york-city) **G**

—spotlight—

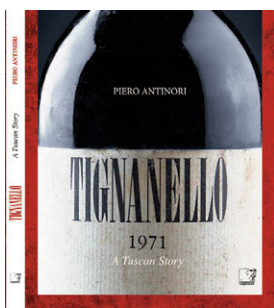
## DRINK YOUR CAKE



Here's a new holiday drink that could be a classic in the making: If Panettone Were a Cocktail, Boulud Sud's liquid homage to the classic Milanese holiday treat. Combine Zabov, an egg liqueur popular in Northern Italy, with gin and lemon. Next, shake the mixture with an egg, then top with soda. "This creates a fruity, oozy, and boozy concoction with just a hint of cake flavor," says bar manager Jon Fitzgerald. 20 W. 64th St., 212-595-1313; [bouludsud.com](http://bouludsud.com) —E.R.

## // EURO EXCHANGE //

**Books to give or savor, any time of the year.**



Marchese Piero Antinori revolutionized the Italian wine industry in the 1970s with the introduction of Tignanello, which *Wine Spectator* called "the most influential wine in the history of the world." In his new book, simply named *Tignanello, A Tuscan Story* (CinqueSensi Editore, \$50; available at Rizzoli, 1133 Broadway, 212-759-2424),

Antinori, whose family has been in the wine business for 700 years, tells how this wine, the first of the super Tuscans, came into being. Tignanello is now one of the most requested wines at Eataly Vino (200 Fifth Ave., 212-229-2560), which recently introduced the 2006 and 2012 vintages.

Two recent book releases will help keep the flavors of favorite holiday destinations—the French Riviera and

Tuscany—on your palate long after that suitcase has been unpacked. Fig & Olive, whose Mediterranean-centric restaurants (at 10 East 52nd St., 808 Lexington Ave., and 420 West 13th St.) dot the city, introduces a luscious cookbook, *Fig & Olive, The Cuisine of the French Riviera* (Assouline, \$50), to celebrate the company's 10th anniversary. In the book, founder and owner Laurent Halasz shares his secrets for market-driven cooking with recipes that include restaurant favorites like Zucchini Carpaccio, Fig & Gorgonzola Tart, and Green Apple and Olive Oil Sorbet. Also included: Insider tips on how to pair olive oils with the right dish. —C.S.



## THE BUBBLE BEAT

Louis Roederer, one of the few luxury Champagne houses still operated by its founding family (since 1776!) introduces **Cristal 2007 Vintage** (\$249) to its portfolio of posh sparklers, just in time for end-of-year celebrations. Cristal, originally created in 1876 for Tsar Alexander II, has become a billionaire favorite from New York to

Moscow—and at all the glittery pit stops where members of the Forbes 400 like to gather. With the flavors of this year's introduction described as a mix of ripe pear, red currants, tarte Tatin, and white chocolate, who needs dessert? Available at Sherry-Lehmann, 505 Park Ave., 212-838-7500; [sherry-lehmann.com](http://sherry-lehmann.com). —C.S.