

In Style & In Season

The Ferragamo family name is synonymous with good taste. But it's taste of a different kind that powers Brand Ferragamo's newest offering, **Il Borro Tuscan Bistro Dubai** – a slice of Italy served up in the heart of the UAE

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Salvatore Ferragamo: two words that roll style and substance into one deliciously lyrical, perfectly designed package. The Italian empire that began in 1914 with a single shoe store in California and today counts Hollywood's hottest property among its many fans is known and loved as much for its silk scarves and leather goods as its pioneering footwear. But the eponymous designer's legacy reaches far beyond the realm of fashion, right into the beating heart of Italy: its food.

In 1993, the Ferragamo family took over the ancient Tuscan estate of Il Borro, and set about transforming it into a luxury hotel complete with vineyards, olive groves, biodynamic farm and a trio of restaurants: Vin Café, Osteria del Borro and Tuscan Bistro.

Now, thanks to the late Mr Ferragamo's grandson, also called Salvatore, and executive chef Andrea Campani, you can experience the latter some 5,000km away at the brand's first international outpost, Il Borro Tuscan Bistro Dubai.

From the rolling hills of Tuscany to the waterfront wonderland of Jumeirah Al Naseem, Dubai's newest stay-and-play destination, the choice of location was natural, says Ferragamo: "Dubai in many ways is one of the capitals of the world – you have New York, London, Tokyo – but I think Dubai is becoming more and more the centre of the world." The city is already home to gastronomic greats from all corners of the globe, but the Tuscan Bistro promises something special – a true taste of Tuscany rarely found outside the central Italian region.

"Tuscan cuisine is characterised by the variety of products the area offers. We are so lucky to be close to the Mediterranean Sea, the rich Apennine Mountains and lush forests at the same time, which are the best source of local produce," explains Campani, who grew up just a stone's throw from the original Il Borro, and is the creative force behind its expanding foodie offering. "Unlike French restaurants, where the plates tend to be much more elaborate, Italian cuisine is very simple," adds Ferragamo, "so for us the success of the project is really in finding raw materials of top quality, like our extra-virgin olive oil, which is superb."

It's no less than you'd expect from a Ferragamo family venture – and raw materials don't get any more





Right: Executive chef Andrea Campani at the original Il Borro Tuscan Bistro



top-quality than those cultivated at the estate. Everything from the aforementioned olive oil to the free-range eggs, the millefiori honey to the award-winning grape, is produced organically, ethically and sustainably within the 700-hectare hilltop reserve. “It’s a win-win situation,” Ferragamo explains. “It’s important to me, for my generation and the generations to come – and for consumers, too, because the food tastes just as good if not better.” And, he says, “absolutely everything” on the menu at the new Il Borro Tuscan Bistro Dubai is flown in specially – from orto to table, via the clouds. “It’s a unique concept, bringing Tuscan food directly from the producer to the consumer,” he enthuses. “That is at the heart of our philosophy and it’s a very authentic philosophy.” When

it comes to the menu, it’s clear that authenticity is paramount. “We want to showcase simple, rustic cuisine that carries the unique taste of Tuscany,” explains Campani. “The menu features classic Il Borro dishes – such as the panzanella, a fabulous summer salad made with bread and vegetables, or our house-made fresh pasta featuring our signature sauces – but our concept is to cook seasonally, forcing us to align our selection of dishes with the seasons.” Freshness is the order of the day at the Dubai bistro, a fact proudly asserted by the gleaming display counter that greets guests with gusto on arrival, where the likes of creamy burrata and zesty tartares are prepared to order. The design of the place, too, bears those same hallmarks – all clean, crisp neutrals and washed woods with

an underlying air of Italian glamour (naturally) in the shape of marble and bronze. “It’s a very fresh, contemporary look,” says Ferragamo. “Soft lighting, combined with the traditional materials of Tuscany, all of which creates that very simple but yet elegant feel, which I think is important.” Simple yet elegant: words that could just as easily be used to describe Brand Ferragamo. And it’s a synergy that surpasses mere form; the restaurant echoes the rich heritage and artisanal craftsmanship synonymous with the fashion house. As Campani puts it, at Il Borro Tuscan Bistro Dubai “you can sample the true flavours of Tuscany prepared with the most traditional recipes that have a long history” – values that infuse everything under the (impeccably styled) Ferragamo umbrella.

While the restaurant may lack the verdant countryside surroundings of its Tuscan namesake, it is blessed with a clear view of the glittering Arabian Gulf from its Turtle Lagoon setting. “Our vision,” says Campani, “is to transport the original Tuscan atmosphere, with its rustic cuisine and warm ambience, to Dubai. We want to recreate a true piece of Tuscany and convey the philosophy behind Il Borro in the most authentic way possible. Our mission is to showcase the exceptional flavours of biodynamic produce and immerse guests in our passion for organic food. I am convinced that diners will understand the essence of Tuscan cuisine better when they visit Il Borro Tuscan Bistro Dubai.” Me too – but you know, there’s only one way to be sure...