

**PRETTY AS A PICTURE**

Risotto "Vialone Nano" with langoustines at Armani/Ristorante



# FASHION PLATES

*The hauteest couture houses in the world bring their wares out of the closet and into the kitchen*

BY JAY CHESHES

**AT 6:15 A.M.**, as the sun rises over the Persian Gulf, I meet Alessandro Salvatico, the young Italian chef behind Armani/Ristorante at the Armani Hotel in Dubai, for a tour of the city's old fish market. "You can do some beautiful carpaccio with that," he says, eyeing pristine local tuna stacked on ice, as we wander, groggy, among the catches of the day.

We both could be in better shape this morning. Just a few hours ago we were

overindulging at the Cavalli Club, an animal-print and crystal-chandelier-bedecked nightclub owned by Florentine designer Roberto Cavalli that's currently the place to be seen in the Emirates. In fact, much of my time here has been spent indulging in over-the-top food and drink provided by luxury fashion houses. The five restaurants in the Armani Hotel, for instance, have been piling on the foie gras, caviar and shaved Alba truffles in dining

rooms shaded in muted grays and browns. Versace will soon join them here, with a new restaurant-filled hotel on the shore of Dubai Creek that will no doubt be as glitzy as the company's red-carpet gowns.

While Giorgio Armani himself famously eats simple and light, the food at his Dubai restaurants is hardly model bait—like most successful designers, he gives his clients what they want. "Last night we did 28 truffle tasting menus,"

ARMANI/RISTORANTE, ARMANI HOTEL DUBAI

➤ says Salvatico, wandering past displays of live lobsters and baby hammerhead sharks. In fact, Armani himself may have started the fashion-food fad now sweeping the world. The 79-year-old icon launched his first Emporio Armani Express restaurant in London in the 1980s, its look and feel inspired in part by Richard Gere's clotheshorse hustler in *American Gigolo*. "Mr. Armani designed everything," says a member of his hospitality team not authorized to speak for the company. "The restaurant was the start of becoming not just a clothing company but a lifestyle brand."

Though it might be (slightly) more eye-popping here in Dubai, where high-end brands and lavish dinners go hand in hand, this phenomenon is hardly unique to the Emirates. Epicurean ventures are an essential component these days for fashion brands vying for world domination. Roberto Cavalli also runs clubby restaurants in Delhi, Beirut, St.-Tropez and Miami, among other places. And in Paris, Ralph Lauren recently opened Ralph's, a hotspot on the Left Bank known for its pricey burgers and New York-style cheesecake.

In Armani's hometown of Milan, where the designer runs a high-end Italian restaurant, a Nobu franchise and the Emporio Armani Caffè, there's plenty of competition on the fashion/food front—often with surprisingly ambitious and accomplished cuisine. London-based Canadian design duo Dsquared2 just opened a serious rooftop restaurant there, joining eateries from Dolce & Gabbana, Trussardi and Missoni. The nearby Bulgari Hotel flies in food stars from around the world for guest chef stints. Even New Yorker Marc Jacobs has a small café attached to his Milan boutique. And in all of this excess and luxury, there seems to be just one rule: Don't spill anything on the clothes.

**BOARDING PASS** ➤ Ready to design your getaway to Dubai? United can take you there with nonstop service from Washington. Before you go, remember Premier Access, the fast lane through the airport. An earlier place in line and the opportunity to board sooner will make your trip even more relaxing. **For detailed schedule information or to book your flight, go to [united.com](http://united.com).**

## From Fratty to Natty

The drop shot grows up

Drop shots—lowbrow shooters tossed in beer or Red Bull and often drunk in a single go—are longtime favorites of rowdy college kids and off-duty bartenders. Those same bartenders are now updating this drink style for the craft-enthusiast crowd, using high-end spirits and mixers to make versions that are more sippable—for example, Fernet-Branca poured into ginger beer at Las Vegas' Vesper Bar, and Maker's Mark and preserved lemon syrup tipped into Kölsch-style ale at Chicago's Drop, which will make almost any cocktail on the menu into a drop shot. Composing these things requires a deft palate, says Steve Yamada, Drop's cocktail consultant. "There's a pairing aspect to it," he says. "You're essentially making a small cocktail—the shot component—and then serving it in another medium, like a housemade soda or a craft beer." Here, he shows us how to make one. —ANNE BERRY



### SAINT ROSA

- › 6 sprigs rosemary
- › 750 ml bottle of Don Julio Blanco
- › ½ oz. Cynar
- › ¼ oz. fresh lime juice
- › 3 oz. San Pellegrino grapefruit soda

1. Place rosemary in the bottle of Don Julio. Infuse overnight, then strain.
2. Add 1 oz. rosemary-infused tequila, Cynar and lime juice to a mixing glass with ice. Shake and strain into a shot glass.
3. Place a rocks glass over the shot glass. Holding the shot glass against the bottom of the rocks glass, flip over both glasses. The mini cocktail should stay in the upside-down shot glass.
4. Pour grapefruit soda into the rocks glass.
5. Before drinking, bump the shot glass so that the seal is broken and all the contents mix.

ARTHUR KNUTSON (SAINT ROSA)