



Dear Guests,

Welcome to the dining room of my house.

*I'm ready to share with you a place where all of our efforts are dedicated to building and maintaining a sense of quietness, balance and harmony. Life has taught me to value human beings for what they share of their brains and hearts, not for how they appear, nor for their social status. I'll give the best of me to Guests happy to share their time savouring our dishes, drinking our fine wines and beers, and, all in all, paying the price of our loyalty to them. I expect you will enter here with the same feeling.*

*My low price menu, the rural context and the friendly atmosphere I'm happy to offer, shouldn't lead you to believe that snapping fingers or being demanding as in a metro fancy restaurant, are attitudes to which I bring any consideration, similarly to concepts like "instant service", "first in-first out", "multiple service shifts", "money can buy everything", "customers are always right" or similar. If this doesn't find you in agreement, I'm sure there are other places that can better accommodate you for your dining pleasure.*

*After 8 years of welcoming Guests, I take great pride in this menu - a balance of simple, genuine, easy to identify flavours and textures, prepared with passion and dedication. All dishes are prepared by us in our kitchen fresh daily.*

*The menu offers a small selection of starters, pasta dishes, main courses and desserts. The majority of our ingredients are produced locally. I buy them frequently in small quantities at the producers. One consequence of these extra efforts is that freezers are empty and switched off. The kitchen has no microwave.*

*It can happen sometimes that a particular dish may not be currently available, either because we have just run out, or because there is a temporary lack of some ingredient. This is the price I have chosen to pay in order to assure my guests of the freshness of the food that they will eat here.*

*To flavour our recipes, our garden provides the kitchen with a wide variety of aromatic herbs, such as basil, sage, rosemary, Melissa, chives, parsley and marjorie, which we use fresh in the warm season and dried in the cold one. We have reduced to a bare minimum the use of salt, because it alters the genuine flavours of the ingredients, nor do we use stock cubes or other synthetic flavourings.*

*My kitchen uses only a selection of extra virgin olive oil, made exclusively from the olives of Montisi, Trequanda, Castelmuzio and Petroio, produced in the Romita or Talini olive presses in Montisi. I believe that excellent olive oil is essential to fine food, so we flavour foods with it but we do not use it for dipping bread.*

*Fresh bread, biscuits for our tiramisu and cantucci biscuits come from the bakery of Verena Rosati and her family in Montisi.*

*The various kinds of pasta are made from Cappelli wheat or from spelt, (an ancient grain related to wheat) and like our tomatoes and legumes, come from the organic Il Pereto farm of Franco and Barbara Bordoni in Serre di Rapolano, 20 miles from Montisi, where I go usually twice a month.*

*Our cheeses (Pecorino) are made from the whole raw milk of sheep, and come from the Belsedere farm of the De' Gori Pannilini in Trequanda, as well as pork, salami and dishes made from Cinta Senese (an ancient local breed of pig). I do not serve Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese because Pecorino is the traditional cheese of this region.*

*Our Central Apennine beef, known as Chianina, is grass-fed on the farm of Enrico and Rossana Ricci, just outside the village of Trequanda on the road to Petroio. You may see these huge white animals grazing on the hills. Be aware that this lean, natural beef will not have large amounts of white fat and will have a firm texture. For this reason overcooking is not recommended, so please trust us to cook it gently to present its flavors at its best. We don't add salt on it for the same reason. In the case you're not used to firm textures or to rare or medium rare cooking, our pot roast might be an excellent alternative to taste Chianina beef.*

*Fruit and vegetables, exclusively of Italian origin, seasonal, arrive three times a week from the San Lorenzo green grocer wholesaler in Castel del Piano.*

*Fresh whole milk and eggs are provided twice a week by the organic division of Mukki in Firenze. A very small quantity of fresh cream is purchased exclusively for the preparation of panna cotta. Butter is used for our desserts only.*

*In the light of these remarks, please don't ask me "What's good today?" or "What is the house speciality?" or "What would you recommend?", since I have no genuine reply because of two reasons: all dishes have been included in the menu after carefully listening to Guests' feedback and, of the same importance, I don't have to get rid of anything unsold from my fridges.*

*By all means ask me about the ingredients of the various dishes, and I shall be happy to answer all your questions to help you make a careful choice of the dishes you wish to try.*

*Ever since I began to welcome guests in 2001, bread, cover and service charge have never found a place on my menus.*

*I hope that you have found this interesting to read. I look forward to welcoming you and your friends.*

*Roberto Crocenzi*

*Summer 2009*