

TRADER JOEY'S TRIBUNE

YOUR ONE-STOP SHOP FOR NEWS FROM OUR NORTH BEACH STORE

This boot was made for Rome-ing, and that's just what we'll do

A Tour de Italia with our Italian Crew

With a gusty spring wind in our sails, Trader Joe's North Beach is cruising the culinary seas to a place close to home. For this voyage, our Italian crew is at the helm.

Some call this nook of the city Little Italy, but we know it as North Beach – a quaint, eclectic neighborhood stamped by its founding Italian families with an enduring character and undying ingenuity. Especially when it comes to food.

Crew member Lor knows a thing or two about these families, because she is a third-generation North Beach Italian-American.

“My great-grandfather immigrated to North Beach from Lucca, Italy in the summer of 1922 with \$20 in his pocket,” Lor said. “About seven years later, the rest of the family followed.”

Growing up, Lor says everyone in the tight-knit community knew each other and cared for each others' kids. They also cooked – a lot – and it was always from scratch.

“We were the original farm to table,” Lor said.

Her grandmother married one of the three original owners of Victoria Pastry, previously housed where Stockton and Vallejo streets meet. She says the bakery was one of the premier in the city and famous for a rum-soaked sponge cake ornamented with puff pastry and whipped Italian cream.

“If you were Italian, that's where you got your wedding cake or your St. Honoré,” Lor said about the iconic confection. She reminisced about the countless mornings she and her cousin would run downstairs to swipe globs of frosting from storage vats underneath the



Lor's grandfather Rafael with Honoré cakes. Lor B.

bakery before it opened.

Her other grandfather grew up playing stickball with Joe Dimaggio, bartending at Johnny Cordonis's Marina Bowl and The Condor, and volunteering as a firefighter during



Lor's Papa Gino and knife-sharpening buggy. Lor B.

World War II. Before the war, he and his business partner ran a knife-sharpening business and drove a buggy around offering their services to restaurants in North Beach.

Crew member Sean is one-quarter Italian and says

most of his Italian heritage revolves around one thing.

“It all comes around food,” Sean said.

His grandfather was born in Oakland to immigrant parents from Piedmont, Italy, a picturesque northern region near snow-capped alps and two hours away from coastal Genoa.

“That's probably why I love salami so much,” Sean says.

He grew up in Modesto, where his grandparents owned an Italian delicatessen known for its frozen homemade ravioli. He says they sold the business years ago, but each child got to keep a framed window from the original building.



Sean's family delicatessen sign at his parents' house. Sean G.

Sean has lived in San Francisco for over five years now and worked at five Trader Joe's locations. He says Trader Joe's North Beach has something special.

“It feels like the most neighborhood store,” Sean said.

Lor agrees. Though she says North Beach shed some of its more “bohemian” and Italian vibes as Italians moved to other parts of the city – she herself has since moved to a different San Francisco neighborhood – she will always appreciate the types of people her home draws in and the Italian-American community that makes the magic within it.

“The smells and sounds haven't changed,” Lor says. “I just keep getting drawn back here.”

IN THIS ISSUE

2	3	4
Crew member feature: An Italian photographer's odyssey of family and film	Feature continued, plus special recipe!	Comic and Trade(r) Secrets

Frames in time: An Italian photographer's odyssey of family and film

This issue's crew member feature introduces: Cazimira "Cazz" Altomare



When Cazz Altomare looks through her camera lens, she sees a portrait of a world painted by her Roman ancestors.

Her own family's coat of arms implies a storied pedigree of philosophers, fishermen, Broadway starlings and cannoli connoisseurs — their affinity for art is passed down like an heirloom.

The 32-year-old photography student and North Beach local grew up surrounded by artists of all varieties and spent the first six years of her life living in and around Europe.

These things empowered her to express her artistic side from a young age, but she says she didn't enter the photography scene until she got her first "real" camera from her godfather in high school. And it wasn't until she started researching her family's history with her father that she realized how far back in time both her hobby and her genealogical curiosities would carry her.

Family first

Altomare — whose name can be traced back to its Roman roots — says through her familial investigations she's learned

she comes from a long line of fishermen on her paternal side. Her last name literally translates to "high sea," and she says her great-great-grandfather made a living trading fish between Italy and Morocco. Altomare's family's coat of arms is emblazoned with a dagger and book, which she says leads them to believe their ancestors had strong ties to philosophy as well.

Her great-grandfather and grandfather immigrated to the U.S. from Bari, the coastal capital of Puglia, Italy nestled in the heel of the country's boot. Once stateside and an adult, her grandfather landed a job as a dark room photography instructor at a deaf college in New Jersey. She says he almost completely lost his hearing fighting for the U.S. in World War II and knew sign language, so the gig was an easy sell for him.

"The thing about my grandpa is he had a hustler's 'gift of gab' and he could pick up anything," she said. "So things eventually fell into place for him."

As for the rest of the family? One of Altomare's cousins is on Broadway and another is a well-known jewelry designer.

— Continued on page 3

Taste the "Tears of the Gods"

How you *should* be making your pasta:

The Italian way.

What you'll need:

- Trader Joe's spaghetti
- Boiling water
- A handful of salt
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Red pepper flakes
- Grated Parmigiano Reggiano
- Seafood or veggies, cooked and seasoned to your liking

What you'll do:

- 1) Add enough salt so that your water is murky—"you want the taste of the ocean in your water," Altomare says.
- 2) When the pasta is al dente, reserve about 1/4 cup of "the tears of the gods" cooking water and drain the rest.
- 3) Pour the cooking water over drained pasta with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, grated parmesan, red pepper flakes and your seafood or veggies. Combine and serve!

"The pasta's starches will combine with the other ingredients and the salted water will bring out the flavor of whatever else is there," Altomare says. "It's restaurant quality, every time."



Maurice Altomare (far left) and his photography students. Photo: Cazz Altomare

Her great-great-uncle was a professional boxer and spent his free time defending the tight-knit community.

“(Italians) were the hot, new immigrant coming in (to the U.S.), so people didn’t like them very much,” she said.

Meanwhile, Altomare’s great-grandfather got busy opening Carlo’s Bakery, now famous for its appearance on TLC’s *Cake Boss*. She says he sold the bakery to his apprentice prior to the show, but its current owners still use her family’s famous cannoli recipe – and she gets a discount for life.

An eye for art

Decades and the dawn of a new century later, Altomare is finding her own place in the world and an appreciation for what led her here. She was born in America, and despite her time abroad, she’s never been to Italy. In fact, she’s fluent in French – a skill she owes to living for six years in Paris’s 18th district after short stints in Prague and Berlin with her parents and a touring acting group.

Her mother eventually brought her back to the U.S., and she ended up in North Beach.

By the time she moved here, Altomare had since retired her godfather’s gift camera and was focused on making clothing and jewelry. But it wasn’t long before she was back to fiddling with focus and adjusting aperture behind the lens.

“I love photography as art, like making cool and abstract stuff,” Altomare said. “Something that’s just interesting to look at.”

She says she likes to walk around San Francisco taking pictures of architecture and classic cars, but lately she’s been enchanted by light. One of Altomare’s inspirations is Ira Cohen, a ‘70s era photographer whose iconic “Mylar Chamber” series gave her the idea for a shoot with former Trader Joe’s North Beach crew member Paolo.

Using a kaleidoscope lens, a couple of props and a make-shift backdrop — Altomare says she climbed Paolo’s shoulders

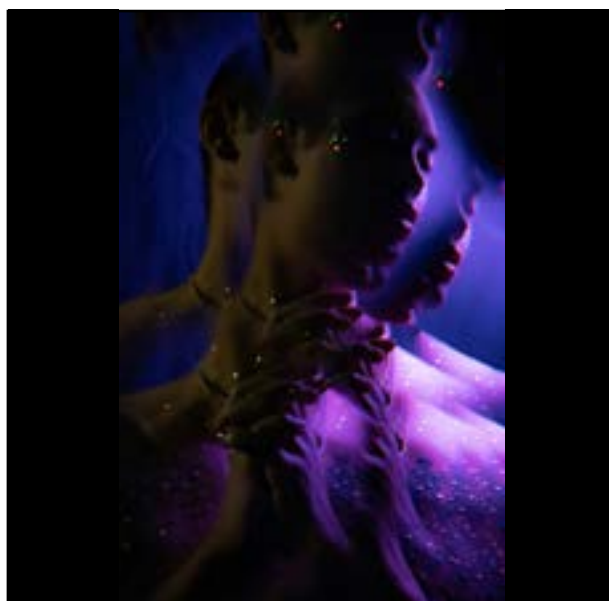
to hang a sheet from the ceiling — she captured glittery strobes as they bounced and dodged darkness.

“That was my first experience curating everything,” Altomare said. “It came out really well.”

Her photo ended up winning a scholarship in an introduction to photography class she’s currently taking at the Community College of San Francisco, and she says she’s already planning her next shoot with Paolo.

In a dark room class similar to one her grandfather might have taught, Altomare has been learning how to manipulate matting so she can frame her pictures as intentionally as she curates them. She plans to display snapshots of North Beach scenes on Trader Joe’s North Beach walls when she gets the chance.

“Just having my artwork in a gallery is honestly my dream,” Altomare said.



How Soft a Man, Cazz Altomare

Recipe Roundup

Biscotti di Nonnie

Recipe by: Lor B.

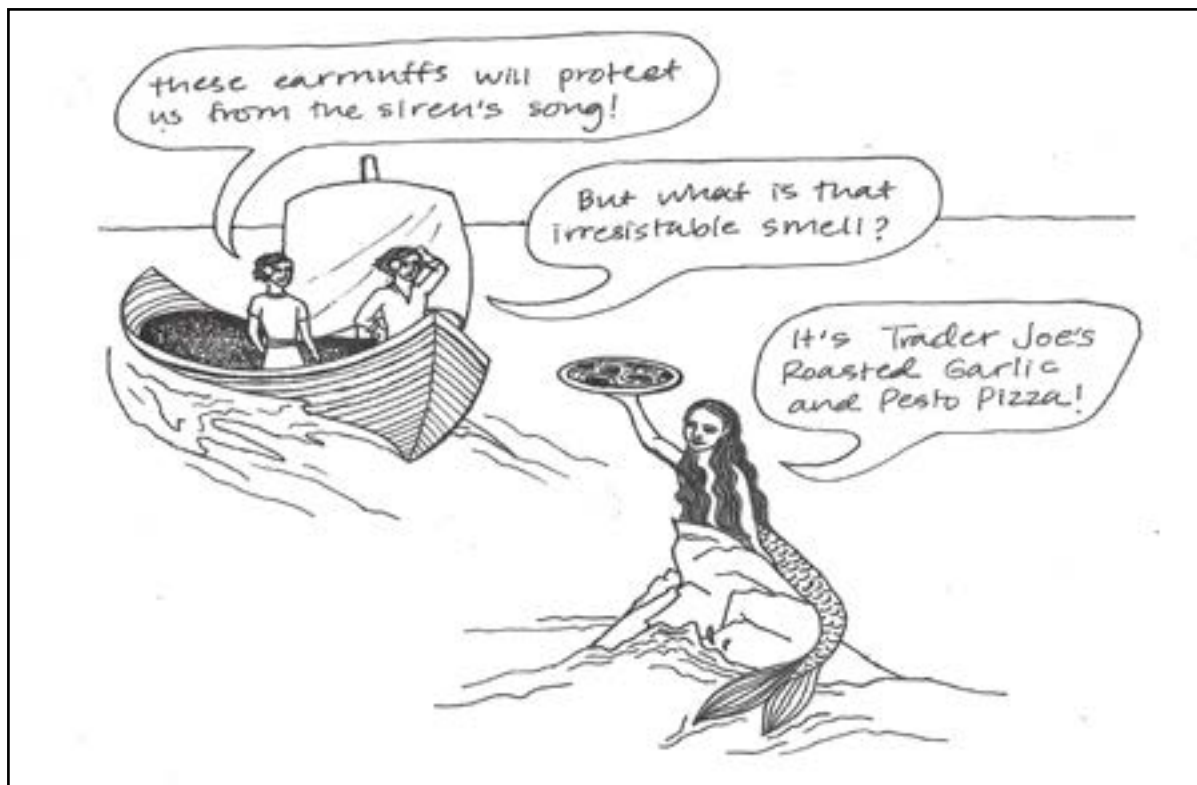
Most of the ingredients you can find here at Trader Joe’s North Beach, but you may need to go to a local Italian speciality grocery for the Anise. You could forgo it if you’re not a fan of the taste (it’s like black licorice)—however, it makes the cookie local to Italy’s Tuscan region. Why the spoon? That’s to keep on hand in your apron like my Nonna Maria did. She’d just raise it in the air if anyone went near her biscotti before it was ready. Trust me, the wooden spoon is an Italian icon. Buon Appetito!

The ingredients:

- 5 eggs
- 2 sticks of butter (melted)
- 3 cups sugar
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 5 cups flour
- A pinch of salt
- One-half to two-thirds cup sliced almonds
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon ground Anise
- Trader Joe’s Olive Wood Spoon

The steps:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F and lightly cover a cutting board with flour.
2. Add all of the ingredients to a large bowl. Mix by hand until they’re thoroughly combined into a thick dough. *Note: add almonds to your liking.*
3. Divide the dough in half. Set aside one half.
4. Form the other half into a log-like shape and place it onto a lightly floured baking sheet.
5. Bake for 20 minutes, or until the dough is firm to the touch.
6. Use a knife to cut the biscotti loaf into about half-inch slices. Turn each slice on its side and bake for an additional 5-8 minutes on each side, or until the crust is golden-brown.
7. Repeat steps 4-6 with your other dough half.



Illustrated by: Maddie Mead

TRADE(R) SECRETS

“Tomato sauce in a jar is just not the same. We put sugar in our recipe, but other families dangle a carrot on a string into the sauce. It removes the acidity.”

“At all of my family’s meals, there’s always something Italian. It’s usually anti-pasto – like a charcuterie board, honestly. The Trader Joe’s grilled, marinated artichokes are perfect for that.”

“It’s true. Italians eat pasta like, all the time.”

“In Italy, wine is cheaper than beer. I always go for an Italian label when I’m at Trader Joe’s, because I know it’s going to be good!”

“If you’re making Parmigiana di Melanzane (eggplant parmesan), and you don’t want soggy eggplant, rinse the slices, lightly salt them and let them sit for an hour on paper towel.”