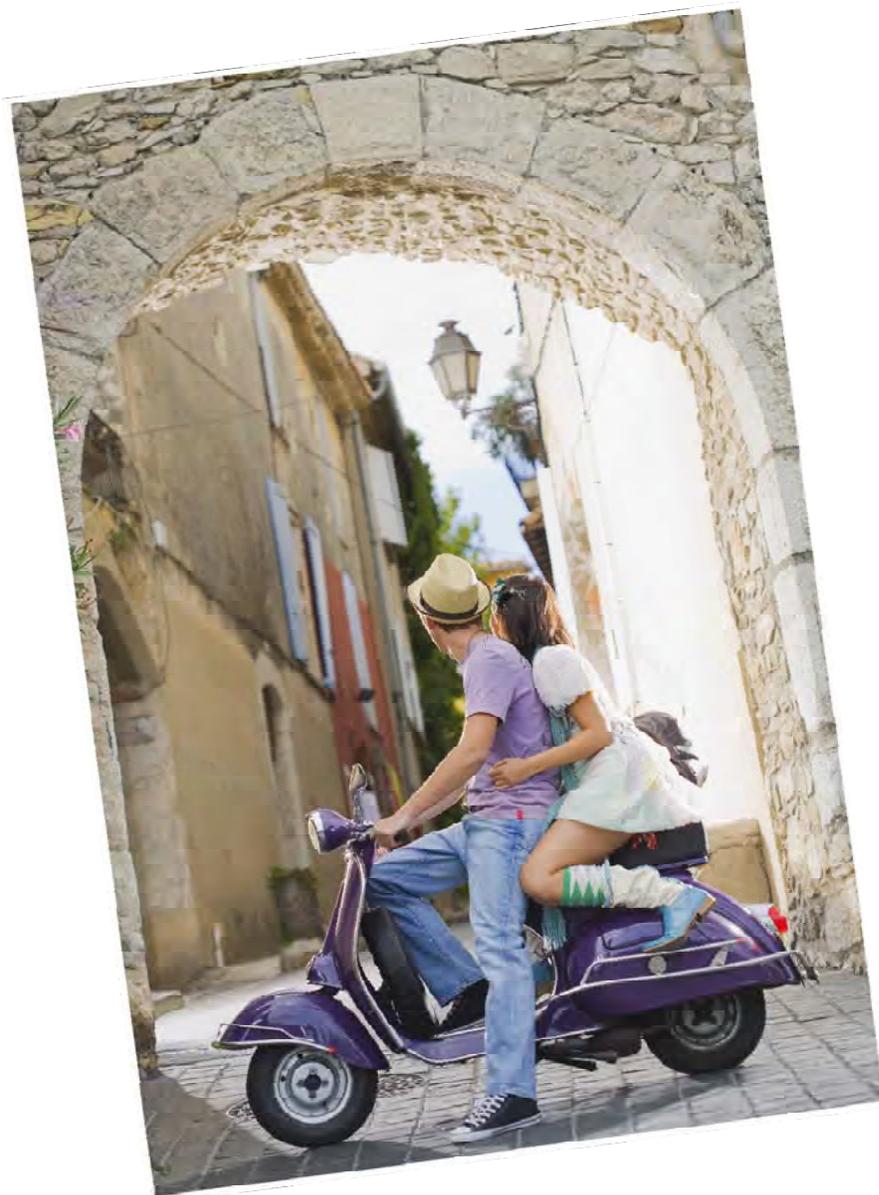


Italian Expo.us



**Final Media
Report
Italian Expo
Houston
June 3-5, 2011**

Italian Expo 2011

HOUSTON

Media and Publicity Report

To date, Italian Expo 2011 has generated extensive coverage in a diverse set of media due to the following outreach strategies:

- Italian Expo 2011 website with “Press” section and assorted material
- Distribution of Expo 2011 news releases, including some specifically focused on food, wine and fashion
- Targeted media pitching with associated follow-up before, during and after the event
- Media coverage in Television, Radio and News Papers
- On-site interviews and coverage in combination with Facebook/Twitter accounts

I T A L I A N E X P O

JUNE 3-5, 2011

GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER - HOUSTON, TX

March 22, 2011
For Immediate Release

EXPERIENCE “LA DOLCE VITA” AT ITALIAN EXPO 2011 JUNE 3 – 5 AT GRB CONVENTION CENTER

Houston, TX –

Houstonians will be able to tour Italy and experience “La Dolce Vita” without even leaving the country by attending the third annual Italian Expo being held June 3-5, 2011, at George R. Brown Convention Center’s Exhibit Hall D.

Italian for “The Good Life,” this year’s theme will draw families and tourists with free admission for kids and a variety of entertainment at affordable prices. The cultures of Italy and Houston will come together with a featured fashion competition between eight emerging local designers and a culinary arts competition with many of Houston’s top Italian chefs presenting the finest in Italian cuisine. Each competition will allow Italian Expo guests to participate and vote for their favorites for a fun and interesting interactive experience.

"Americans appreciate the Italian quality of life and they can enjoy all the delights and pleasures of Italy without using a passport through the Italian Expo experience," said Paolo Fronza, Executive Director of the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce of Texas, the organization that hosts this annual event. Italian Expo showcases Italy’s finest products and culture by specifically highlighting the areas of food, wine, fashion, home design, tourism, art, and entertainment.

The three-day Italian Expo hosts over 21,000 attendees and 150 Italian and American exhibitors. Guests will have the opportunity to savor many culinary delights with Spec’s sponsored food and wine tasting area featuring over 30 gourmet vendors and Houston’s finest Italian restaurants serving authentic dishes. Diverse entertainment will be offered, ranging from fashion runway shows, dance performances, musical concerts, and an interactive kid’s play area. Fine Italian luxury cars and motorbikes, like Ferraris and Ducatis, will be on display. And guests can enjoy the ultimate shopping experience by being able to purchase a variety of original Italian gifts, such as beautiful leather handbags, fine jewelry, and handmade artisan crafts.

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Please contact Silvia Raffa at (713) 963-8839 or sraffa@iacc-chicago.com for more information.

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I T A L I A N E X P O

JUNE 3-5, 2011

GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER - HOUSTON, TX

April 18, 2011

For Immediate Release

NINE HOUSTON CHEFS TO COMPETE IN COOKING COMPETITION AT ITALIAN EXPO, JUNE 3-5 AT GRB CONVENTION CENTER

Houston, TX –

“Who’s Your Chef?” is the question that the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce of Texas will be asking Houstonians at the culinary arts competition at Italian Expo 2011. Nine of the best professional Italian chefs in Houston will be stepping out of their kitchens and onto the competition floor to vie for the title of “Maestro della Cucina” (Italian for “Master of the Kitchen”).

Live cooking demonstrations and tastings will be given by these top Italian chefs during the three days of the Expo. Besides being spectators at these fun events, guests will also have the opportunity to be participants, as a panel of “judges” will be chosen randomly from the audience. During half-hour demonstrations, each chef will prepare one dish to be tasted by the judges and audiences, who then vote for a winner in three different categories: taste, presentation of the dish, and overall cooking demonstration. The votes will be tallied throughout the three-day event. On Sunday, June 5 at 5:30 pm, Houston’s Best Italian Chef will be announced and honored.

This is a great opportunity for Houston-area foodies to savor Italian cuisine at its best, as the chefs rise to the challenge of delivering the utmost flavor experience to Italian Expo guests. Also, Houstonians can taste excellent Italian dishes from the city’s finest Italian restaurants, paired with fine wines flown in straight from Italy, at a reasonable cost.

While the food and wine exhibitions are a favorite of many of Italian Expo attendees, many others come to the Expo for a chance to experience not just the food and wine, but every aspect of Italian culture. This showcase of Italian excellence will be hosting over 150 companies and vendors from Italy and the U.S. to an anticipated audience of over 21,000 attendees.

Italian Expo tickets are \$15 at the door, but are available for pre-sale online at www.italianexpo.us for just \$10 until June 2 only. Italian Expo will be open from 4:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Friday, 12:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Saturday, and 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm on Sunday.

Participating Chefs

Renato De Pirro, Ristorante Cavour @ Granduca	Ricky Cruz, Grotto
Maurizio Ferrarese, Quattro @ Four Seasons	Michele Mazza, Trattoria Il Mulino
Giancarlo Ferrara, Arcodoro	Vittorio Preteroti, Perbacco
Carmelo Mauro, Carmelo's Ristorante Italiano	Cunninghame West, Valentino @ Hotel Derek
Luis Rubio, La Griglia	

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I T A L I A N E X P O

JUNE 3-5, 2011

GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER - HOUSTON, TX

April 18, 2011
For Immediate Release

TEXAS DESIGNERS TO COMPETE IN FASHION COMPETITION AT ITALIAN EXPO, JUNE 3-5 AT GRB CONVENTION CENTER

Houston, TX –

Fashionistas can indulge their passion for fashion during the Italian Fashion Exchange, a fashion competition which brings together the fashions of Italy and the United States at Italian Expo. A group of emerging local designers will showcase their current collections during fashion runway shows and compete for the first place prize of a fashion trip to Italy.

The fashion competition will take place during Italian Expo in the form of three fashion show blocks on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. On Sunday, the designers will be judged by a select panel of judges, which includes Chloe Dao, Designer of DAO Chloe DAO; David Peck, Designer of CrOp by David Peck; Jeff Gremillion, Editor of Houston Magazine; and Josephine Gough, Regional Director of Fashion Group International. The Italian Fashion Exchange competition winner will be announced and honored on Sunday, June 5 at 6 pm. The winner is awarded a trip to Milan, Italy for February 2012 Fashion Week.

Besides the fashion competition, Houston-area fashionistas will be given other opportunities to indulge their passion with fashion shows, including special shows from two of the Italian Fashion Exchange competition's judges, renowned Houston designers Chloe Dao and David Peck.

The three-day Italian Expo hosts over 21,000 attendees and 150 Italian and American exhibitors. In addition to the fashion competition and fashion shows, this showcase of Italian excellence features food and wine importers, handcrafted goods, Houston's finest Italian restaurants, luxury car and motorbike displays, travel and tour operators, various artists, and musical and dance performers.

Italian Expo tickets are \$15 at the door, but are available for pre-sale online at www.italianexpo.us for just \$10 until June 2 only. Italian Expo will be open from 4:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Friday, 12:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Saturday, and 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm on Sunday.

Participating Italian Fashion Exchange Competition Designers

Abi Ferrin, **Abi Ferrin**

James Martinez, **Barron & J.**

Chioma Ikoku and Uche Osamor, **Elani Blu**

Danny Nguyen, **Danny Nguyen Couture**

Kuteka Hill, **TikiGlam**

Shawn Kingsley, **ODK Couture**

Shirin Askari, **Shirin Askari Designs LLC**

Simran Rihal, **Elan Couture**

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I T A L I A N E X P O

JUNE 3-5, 2011

GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER - HOUSTON, TX

May 6, 2011

For Immediate Release

ITALIAN EXPO CELEBRATES ITALY'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY WITH PARTICIPATION OF CERTIFIED RESTAURANTS OF ITALIAN HOSPITALITY

Houston, TX –

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy and the third annual Italian Expo in Houston. What better way to say “Happy Birthday, Italy” than to attend America’s biggest “Made in Italy” expo, which showcases Italian excellence in the areas of fashion, food, wine, tourism, culture, and entertainment.

Part of Italy’s rich cultural heritage is its cuisine and the Italian government has launched an initiative to certify qualified Italian restaurants all over the world with a special seal of approval. The Ospitalità Italiana Seal is granted to those restaurants who meet the high-quality standards of Italian cuisine, thus recognizing them as being authentically Italian.

Italian Expo allows Houston-area foodies the chance to savor Italian hospitality with the quality seal, since some of the participating restaurants at the Expo are certified. This is a wonderful opportunity to taste Italian cuisine at its very best! And on Sunday, June 5 at 5:30 pm, there will be an awards ceremony honoring these certified restaurants.

For years, Americans (and the rest of the world) have had a love affair with Italian cuisine and while the Expo gives its guests a chance to continue that love affair, many others come to enjoy other highlights of Italian culture. This showcase of the “Best of Italy” will be hosting over 150 companies and vendors from Italy and the U.S. to an anticipated audience of over 21,000 attendees.

Italian Expo tickets are \$15 at the door, but are available for pre-sale online at www.italianexpo.us for just \$10 until June 2 only. Italian Expo is being held on June 3-5 at George R. Brown Convention Center’s Exhibit Hall D and will be open from 4:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Friday, 12:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Saturday, and 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm on Sunday.

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Please contact Marina Acquista at (713) 626-9303 or m.acquista@iacctexas.com for more information.

I T A L I A N E X P O

JUNE 3-5, 2011

GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER - HOUSTON, TX

May 20, 2011

For Immediate Release

SPEED AND ELEGANCE ON DISPLAY AT ITALIAN EXPO WITH CLASSIC AND VINTAGE ITALIAN CARS AND MOTORBIKES

Houston, TX –

Eat, drink, and peruse hot Italian sports cars and motorbikes all under one roof! Come to Italian Expo, being held on June 3-5 at George R. Brown Convention Center, and see your favorite Italian automobiles and motorcycles! Italian motor vehicles are among the most exciting vehicles in the world and they offer a driving experience unlike any other.

The long-anticipated return of FIAT to the U. S. market is here and the new release, Fiat 500, will be on display at Italian Expo. Not only can Expo guests see the Fiat 500 (“Cinquecento” in Italian), but they also have a chance to take one out for a spin! Northside FIAT, one of four Houston dealers chosen from over 600 applicants nationally to represent FIAT in its return to the U.S. market, will be providing Fiat 500s to test drive. Four Fiat 500s will be parked on the sidewalk in front of GRB Convention Center’s Exhibit Hall D, ready to be test driven.

Houston Superbikes will be on hand with Ducati and Aprilia motorcycles. This all Italian motorcycle dealership carries a full line of motorbikes from these legendary Italian marques. Besides the Ducati-Aprilia experience, motorcycle aficionados can also see MV Agusta motorbikes provided by Metric Motorcycles.

Classic car buffs can enjoy seeing classic Italian cars like Lamborghini. Lamborghini Houston, part of Indigo Auto Group, will bring to the Expo the top of the line model of this fascinating luxury car. Synonymous with prestige and performance, Italian Expo guests can appreciate the sleek lines of this classic automobile.

Also, as an added bonus, a vintage collection of Lancia Integrale, Fiat, and Alfa Romeo cars will be on display. And, those with a need for speed, can get a good look at a Ferrari Testa Rossa!

While the Expo gives car and motorcycle enthusiasts a chance to enjoy fine Italian cars and motorbikes, it also features food and wine importers, handcrafted goods, Houston’s finest Italian restaurants, fashion shows, cooking demonstrations, an inter-active kid’s area, Italian language classes, and musical and dance performances. Italian Expo will be hosting over 150 companies and vendors from Italy and the U.S. to an anticipated audience of over 21,000 attendees.

Italian Expo tickets are \$15 at the door, but are available for pre-sale online at www.italianexpo.us for just \$10 until June 2 only. Italian Expo will be open from 4:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Friday, 12:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Saturday, and 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm on Sunday.

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Please contact Piergiuseppe Paterno` at (713) 626-9303 or info3@iacctexas.com for more information.

I T A L I A N E X P O

JUNE 3-5, 2011

GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER - HOUSTON, TX

May 26, 2011

For Immediate Release

EXPERIENCE THE RICH AND HEARTY FLAVORS OF LOMBARDY AT ITALIAN EXPO, JUNE 3-5 AT GRB CONVENTION CENTER

Houston, TX –

Houston residents will be able to experience Lombardy through their taste buds at Italian Expo 2011 and for a limited time, at several Houston area restaurants. Italian Expo, America's largest "Made in Italy" expo that showcases the best of Italy in the areas of food, wine, tourism, design, fashion, and entertainment, is being held June 3-5 at George R. Brown Convention Center's Exhibit Hall D.

The "Taste of Lombardy" project, sponsored by Regione Lombardia and Unioncamere, is aimed at promoting Italy's famed Lombardy Region ("Regione Lombardia" in Italian). Lombardy is a place where food and wine take center stage, with the region's high-quality olive oils, cereals, cheese, specialty meats, and well-known wines being products of its diverse landscape. It is also one of Italy's strongest industrial and commercial centers and its capital city of Milan is recognized internationally as one of the world's most important fashion centers.

This northern Italian region is rich in many ways and it has been said that it is a feast to the mind and senses. Italian Expo guests will be able to feast on the flavors of Lombardy through some of the cooking demonstrations and at a booth sponsored by Regione Lombardia and Unioncamere, where guests can sample Lombard specialties like wine, cheese, and pasta. Regione Lombardia and Unioncamere will also be sponsoring some sessions of the "Who's Your Chef?" Cooking Competition. At these special sessions, there will be a basket containing eight Lombard ingredients and the competing chefs have to select two ingredients from the basket to prepare their dish.

Also, Houstonians can have an extra "Taste of Lombardy" for two weeks at several of the Italian restaurants that are participating at the Expo. Arcodoro, Quattro at Four Seasons Hotel, and Ristorante Cavour at Hotel Granduca will be offering a special Lombard menu from May 30th through June 12th.

While the food and wine are a favorite of many of Italian Expo attendees, many others come to the Expo for a chance to experience not just the food and wine, but every aspect of Italian culture. This showcase of Italian excellence also features luxury cars and motorbikes, handcrafted goods, Houston's finest Italian restaurants, fashion shows, an inter-active kid's area, Italian language classes, and musical and dance performances. Italian Expo will be hosting over 150 companies and vendors from Italy and the U.S. to an anticipated audience of over 21,000 attendees.

Italian Expo tickets are \$15 at the door, but are available for pre-sale online at www.italianexpo.us for just \$10 until June 2 only. Italian Expo will be open from 4:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Friday, 12:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Saturday, and 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm on Sunday.

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I T A L I A N E X P O

JUNE 3-5, 2011

GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER - HOUSTON, TX

June 2, 2011

For Immediate Release

LOCAL HOUSTON CELEBRITIES TO EMCEE COOKING AND FASHION AREAS AT ITALIAN EXPO

Houston, TX –

Local Houston celebrity hosts will be adding fun and flair to the popular Cooking and Fashion Areas at the 3rd Annual Italian Expo. The Cooking Area's Masters of Ceremonies will be Cleverley Stone, host of the Cleverley Show on Talk 650/CBS Radio and Michael Shine, President of the Greater Houston Restaurant Association. And gracing the Fashion Area Main Stage will be Edward Sanchez, creator and owner of Edward Sanchez Cosmetics and Hasti Taghi, KPRC Local 2 TV reporter.

Italian Expo's Cooking Area offers foodies a chance to savor some great Italian cuisine through the "Who's Your Chef?" Cooking Competition. And fashionistas can indulge their passion for fashion with the Italian Fashion Exchange Competition and special fashion shows.

While the cooking and fashion areas are favorites of many of Italian Expo attendees, many others come to the Expo for a chance to experience not just the food and fashion, but other aspects of Italian culture, like luxury cars and motorbikes. Guests will be able to see classic Italian cars and motorcycles like Lamborghini, Ferrari, Ducati, and Maserati on display.

Italian Expo is America's largest "Made in Italy" expo that showcases the best of Italy in the areas of food, wine, tourism, design, fashion, and entertainment. This showcase of Italian excellence will be hosting over 150 companies and vendors from Italy and the U.S. to an anticipated audience of over 21,000 attendees. Tickets for Italian Expo, which is being held on June 3-5 at George R. Brown Convention Center's Exhibit Hall D, are \$15 at the door. The Expo will be open from 4:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Friday, 12:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Saturday, and 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm on Sunday.

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Please contact Sara Barbieri at (713) 963-8839 or sara@italianexpo.us for the Cooking Area information and Silvia Raffa at (713) 963-8839 or sraffa@iacc-chicago.com for the Fashion Area information.

I T A L I A N E X P O

JUNE 3-5, 2011

GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER - HOUSTON, TX

June 6, 2011

For Immediate Release

CARMELO MAURO CROWNED COOKING COMPETITION WINNER AT ITALIAN EXPO 2011

Houston, TX –

“Who’s Your Chef?” was the question that the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce of Texas was asking Houstonians at the cooking competition during the three-day Italian Expo, held from June 3-5 at George R. Brown Convention Center. Chef Carmelo Mauro of Carmelo’s Ristorante Italiano was voted “Maestro della Cucina” (Italian for “Master of the Kitchen”).

Italian Expo guests enjoyed tasting delicious Italian cuisine prepared by Carmelo and the eight other competing chefs, who hail from some of the best Italian restaurants in Houston. During the entertaining half-hour-long cooking demonstrations/tastings, each chef prepared one dish to be tasted by the judges (who were randomly selected from the audience) and the audience, who then voted for a winner. Voting was based upon three different categories: taste, presentation of the dish, and overall cooking demonstration.

Besides the top prize of the “Maestro della Cucina 2011,” the chefs also competed for “Most Clicked Chef,” in a YouTube competition, “Most Creative Chef” sponsored by Regione Lombardia and Unioncamere, using ingredients from the Lombardy Region, and “Most Entertaining Chef,” for best showmanship. Vittorio Preteroti of Perbacco was awarded the “Most Clicked Chef,” Giancarlo Ferrara of Arcodoro was honored as the “Most Creative Chef,” and Chef Cunningham West of Valentino @ Hotel Derek was voted the “Most Entertaining Chef.”

The other five talented chefs who competed were Renato De Pirro of Cavour @ Hotel Granduca, Maurizio Ferrarese, Quattro @ Four Seasons Hotel Houston, Michele Mazza of Trattoria Il Mulino, Ricky Cruz of Grotto, and Luis Rubio of La Griglia.

This was a fun and entertaining opportunity for Houston-area foodies to savor Italian cuisine at its best, as the chefs definitely rose to the challenge of delivering the utmost flavor experience to Italian Expo guests. Guests were able to taste delicious Italian cuisine not only in the cooking competition, but also at the above-mentioned restaurants, which offered food to guests at the Expo for a very reasonable cost.

While the food was a favorite of many Italian Expo attendees, many others came to the Expo for a chance to experience not just the food, but other aspects of Italian culture. This showcase of Italian excellence also featured a Spec’s-sponsored wine and food tasting area, luxury cars and motorbikes, handcrafted goods, fashion shows, an inter-active kid’s area, Italian language classes, and musical and dance performances.

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I T A L I A N E X P O

JUNE 3-5, 2011

GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER - HOUSTON, TX

June 13, 2011

For Immediate Release

ITALIAN EXPO CELEBRATES AND AWARDS CERTIFIED RESTAURANTS OF ITALIAN HOSPITALITY

Houston, TX –

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy and the third annual Italian Expo in Houston. What better way to say “Happy Birthday, Italy” than to award the qualified Italian restaurants here in Texas with a special seal of approval, thanks to an initiative launched by the Italian Government. The “Ospitalità Italiana” Seal is granted to those restaurants that meet the high-quality standards of Italian cuisine, thus recognizing them as being authentically Italian.

Italy-America Chamber of Commerce of Texas (IACC) Chairman of the Board Luciano Topi and Consul General of Italy Fabrizio Nava recognized the certified restaurants during the final celebration at the Expo, Sunday, June 5. The certified restaurants for the year 2010 are: Andiamo – Austin, Arcodoro – Houston and Dallas, Carmelo’s Ristorante Italiano – Houston and Austin, Ristorante Cavour – Houston, Nicola – Plano and Dallas and Quattro – Houston. This important recognition promotes the image of top Italian restaurants in Houston and other Texas cities and guarantees the high quality of authentic Italian cuisine at these restaurants.

Italian Expo was a fun and entertaining opportunity for Houston-area foodies to savor Italian cuisine at its best, but also a chance to experience other aspects of Italian culture. This showcase of Italian excellence featured a Spec’s-sponsored wine and food tasting area, luxury cars and motorbikes, handcrafted goods, fashion shows, an inter-active kid’s area, Italian language classes, and musical and dance performances.

The Ospitalità Italiana initiative is an annual event. The IACC is busy preparing for the next edition of the Ospitalità Italiana initiative for 2011, which will be starting in the near future.

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Please contact Marina Acquista at (713) 626-9303 or m.acquista@iacctexas.com for more information.



Pre-Event Coverage



Houston – Italian Expo

Ciao!

Would you like to learn a little about Italy? You don't have to leave the country to experience "La Dolce Vita", that is "The Good Life" in Italian. The expo is a fun-filled event for everyone put on by the Italian American Chamber of Commerce. For the past three years the City of Houston has been host to the Italian Expo. This year the event will take place on: [June 3-5, 2011](#), at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

The expo showcases Italy's finest culture, food, wines, fashion and much more. Guest will be able to taste a variety of Italian wines; reds and whites, sweet and "bubbles", Rosé and Sparkling wines. Don't forget to try the cheeses! More than 30 vendors will be there. One of my favorite stops is at the Prosciutto di Parma and Prosciutto di San Daniele. Don't miss out on all this good stuff. This is all partially possible from a sponsorship from Spec's Liquor.

New to this year's event are the Fashion and Cooking Competitions. The chefs competing are from Houston area Italian restaurants. Earlier this year I was able to see and meet two of the chefs competing, Maurizio Ferrarese from Quattro and Renato di Pirro from Ristorante Cavour. They are my favorites so far, but you decide who is "Maestro della Cucina". You will be able to taste their foods throughout the three-day event. A "panel" of judges, selected at random from the audience, will decide who has the best dish. Be there June 5 at 5:30 pm to find out who the best of the best is.

Is Fashion your Passion? An emerging group of fashion designers will be able to showcase their work this year. The show will bring together fashions from Italy and United States. Designers will be judged on Saturday, June 4, don't miss out! Besides the competition, you will get a special show by Houston designers Chloe Dao and David Peck.

Cars and Motorcycles your thing? You can see Ducati and Ferraris on display. Visit the art exhibit or home decor section. Listen to some music while you eat. Take the kids to learn Italian. Then top it all off by taking a stroll down the market to buy some fine Italian products.

Tickets are on sale now! Get them online and save \$5. You don't want to miss out on this amazing event. Join me! I will be there all weekend.

Visit - [Italian Expo Houston](#) for more information.

When: June 3-5, 2011

Where: George R. Brown Convention Center in downtown Houston.

Prices: \$10 if pre-ordered online before June 2.

\$15 at the door.

Children 12 and under are free.

[Get your tickets NOW!](#)

*** Bring extra money for parking and food, souvenirs, etc. I usually spend about \$5 - \$8 on food. There are many shops where you can buy things, up to you how much you are willing to spend. Other than that, to my knowledge, everything is free.***

RESTAURANTBUZZ



home / food / restaurant buzz

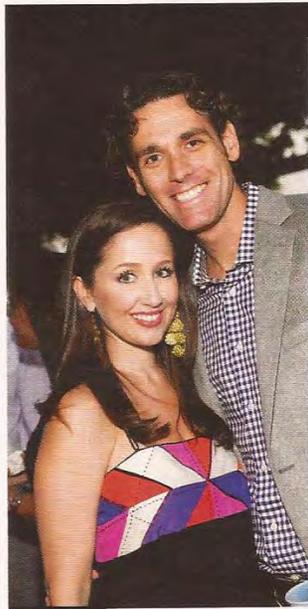
Restaurant Buzz

Houston Dining News for May 2011

By Laurann Clandige April 27, 2011

Chef **Arturo Boada** has left his eponymous restaurant in Uptown Park (which he formerly owned with Bill Sadler) and opened **Arturo Boada Cuisine** in the Tanglewood area. Look for a compilation of the concepts he's created over the years, from Latin to Italian to seafood, at lunch and dinner ... **Mai Nguyen**, owner of **Mai's**, Houston's first Vietnamese restaurant opened in 1978, has reopened her namesake eatery downtown after a wok fire burned it to the ground 14 months ago. Her new space, in the same location at 3403 Milam Street, was designed by **Studio Red** and features a streamlined menu that stays true to traditional Vietnamese cuisine and a full bar for those who famously crowd the place late night ... **Chris Cusack**, owner of Austin's **Thunderbird Coffee**, is opening **Down House** with partner **Joey Treadway** at 1801 Yale Street in the Heights, just as we go to press. Inspired by the grand cafes of Europe, Down Home has interiors styled by **Joel Mozersky** with fabrications created for the space by Installations co-owner **Yur Van Der Oord**. Look for well-crafted coffee (made with direct-trade beans) and cocktails, as well as chef-driven fare from the kitchen of chef **Chandler Rothbard**. Hours are 7 am to 2 am. Watch for updates at downhousehouston.com ... **Central Market** is stamping your passport to Spain this month to show you a cuisine far beyond the requisite tapas and paella. From May 11 through 24, enjoy tastings, classes, demos and new products from *España* ... **Benjy Levit** of **Benjy's Upper Washington** — one of the first to bring well-crafted cocktails to the fore — has introduced barrel aging not just to the spirit but to the entire blended cocktail. Starting with his New Tejas Treaty, he's blended an array of Texas-made products to create a six-week oak-barrel-aged cocktail with a depth of flavor and spice so unlike its un-aged counterpart. (Order half portions of both to perform your own taste-test.) Coming this month to Benjy's: aged sangría, with white wine, cilantro, apricot brandy and fresh fruit ... Yearning for a little something sweet? Preorder **Crave Cupcakes'** diminutive new minis in several tempting flavors, \$44 for two dozen ... Live la dolce vita Friday through Sunday, June 3 through 5, when the **Italian Expo** hits the George R. Brown Convention Center. Italian food, wine, fashion and design converge at this celebration of all things Italian featuring more than 150 exhibitors. Info italianexpo.us.

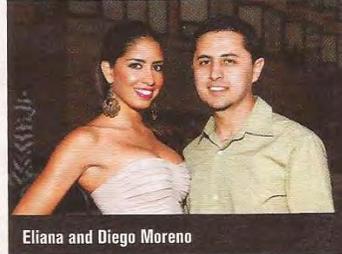
SCENE IN HOUSTON



Claire and Michael Westmoreland



Maurizio Muzzetta, Silvia Raffa, Paolo Fronza



Eliana and Diego Moreno

LA DOLCE VITA

Forget about a transatlantic flight! Houstonians didn't even have to leave town for a luxury tour of Italy, thanks to the Italy America Chamber of Commerce's Italian Expo event. Guests descended on the Four Seasons for a night of fashion, music and food to celebrate all things Italian and to kick off the main event next month. Nibbling hors d'oeuvres and sipping vino, guests perused wares by local vendors, including Hamilton Shirts (they craft their signature custom-made button-ups from fine Italian fabrics) and Times Past estate jewelry and fine watches, touting Italian brands like Panerai and Bertolucci. —*Charlie Bier*



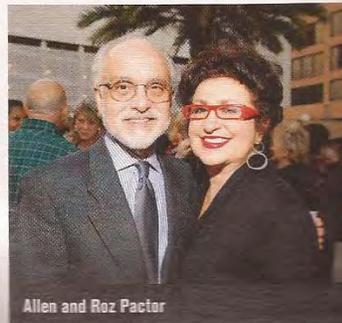
Page Parkes models in Hamilton shirts.



Sarah Sadka



Fatsma and Wazim Khan



Allen and Roz Factor



style + trends + tips + pics + assorted fashionABLE musings
a fashionABLE weblog powered by élan raichle rogers

Wednesday, May 18, 2011

AH! TANTA BELLEZZA! THE ITALIAN EXPO 2011 BRINGS FASHION AND HAUTENESS

Italian Expo 2011-Fashion Exchange Competition

Indulge your passion for fashion at the Italian Fashion Exchange!

Italian Expo 2011 guests will have the chance to delve in the world of fashion by attending the Italian Fashion Exchange, a competition which brings together the styles of Italy and the United States under the same roof. Emerging local designers will showcase their collections and compete for the first place prize, a trip to Milan, Italy for the February 2012 Fashion Week. The designers will be judged by a select panel of judges, which including Chloe Dao, Designer of DAO Chloe DAO; David Peck, Designer of CrOp by David Peck; Jeff Gremillion, Editor of Houston Magazine; and Josephine Gough, Regional Director of Fashion Group International.

Italian Fashion Exchange Competition Designers:

Abi Ferrin, Abi Ferrin	Kuteka Hill, TikiGlam
James Martinez, Barron & J.	Shawn Kingsley, ODK Couture
Chioma Ikoku and Uche Osamor, Elani Blu	Shirin Askari, Shirin Askari Designs LLC
Danny Nguyen, Danny Nguyen Couture	Simran Rihal, Elan Couture

For more information please visit <http://www.italianexpo.us/>.

For tickets click [here!](#)

Like the Italian Expo on [Facebook!](#)

Check out last year's event:



POSTED BY ÉLAN ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2011 AT 10:59 AM IN AROUND TOWN/HOUSTON!,
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GET ON TOP: GIRL ON TOP

GET FASHIONABLE AND BUSINESS SAVVY WITH ALL THE SMART, SASSTY WISDOM FROM CAREER EXPERT NICOLE WILLIAMS IN HER NEWEST BOOK, GIRL ON TOP: YOUR GUIDE TO TURNING DATING RULES INTO CAREER SUCCESS.

Texas continues to develop its wine identity

As more and more vineyards are being developed in Texas, it appears that our state's "identity crisis" is being resolved.

California is known for its "fruit-bomb" Cabernet Sauvignons and its "buttery" Chardonnays. Texas has tried to copy this process since wine lovers are looking for these "New World" styles.

Grape growers like V. J. Reddy, Cliff Bingham, Neal Newsom and others have been experimenting with many different grape varieties to find what grows great in our "Texas Terroir." Terroir is a French term derived from "terre" meaning land and describes the impacts of soils, climate, altitude and other local factors in establishing unique identities in the grapes.

It takes at least three years before the grapes can be harvested for making wines. Then those grapes are made into wines with another period of time for fermentation and aging. It takes at least four years before the grapes can be determined to have that uniqueness to be great wines, sometimes even longer. What has evolved is that Texas is developing its own uniqueness on two levels being vitis vinifera (classic

wine grapes) and hybrid grapes. In my humble opinion, these vitis vinifera are identifying Texas as a great wine producing state:

■ **Tempranillo** has been grown in Texas since 1981 with Inwood Estates leading the way with this round, fruity grape. This red wine is one of the under-stated greats with wine critic Robert Parker rating Texas' Ts as some of the best in the world!

■ **Shiraz (aka Syrah)** is a red wine grape with wonderful fruit and some peppery attitude. This grape is "at home" in the drier regions of Texas producing wonderful food-pairing wines.

■ **Viognier** is a grape that acts like it is a Texas native producing white floral wines with peach, melon, and some citrus tones. Out of the last three years, the varietal has captured two Texas Grand Championship at the Houston Rodeo Uncorked Wine Competition. Wine critic Andrea Inner has acclaimed Texas Viognier from Becker Vineyards as the best she has ever tasted!

■ The new kid on the block in Texas is Roussanne (also spelled Rousanne) which is a blending white grape from the southern part of France. This grape is outstanding when made as a 100 percent varietal from Texas grapes. The wonderful peach and melon interspersed with floral tones makes this a unique Texas product.

Texas' climate is similar to the Mediterranean climate which just happens to be where these grape varieties have flourished. Texas is growing and experimenting with other Mediterranean grape varieties, but no decision can be made as of yet since it is too early in the cycle.

However, "grape expectations" are expected from Tannats, a red, tannin-based grape from the south of France. Look for others to evolve over the next five to seven years. The Texas Department of Agriculture has helped with this research and the subsequent liaisons between vineyards and winemakers, making the Texas wine industry a \$2 billion in-

dustry. The state legislature now wants to "zero out this budget" and drop completely its support of this growing industry.

The hardest step is yet to come which is to get others to try these Texas wines made from grapes that few people know about or would consider. It is called advertising and public relations.

What is needed for you, the wine consumer, to try these Texas wines? The Texas Department of Agriculture has supported the marketing efforts of Texas wines with its Go Texan program. The state legislature also wants to "zero out" this marketing effort.

RON'S WINE PICK

■ MCPHERSON CELLARS 2010 ROUSSANNE

■ Characteristics:

Dry, with a candy lemon drop flavors and a delicate, herbaceous, tea-like aroma. I predict this white wine will become a benchmark making

Roussannes one of the best white wines in Texas evolving into a benchmark!

■ **Pairs with:** Texas shellfish and chicken pasta dishes with vinaigrette sauces.

■ **Costs:** \$14 per bottle

■ **Where:** SPEC'S Liquors (most stores) and H-E-B Grocery (Austin area only - lucky them!)



WINE and FOOD WEEK in The Woodlands kicks off on Monday, June 6, with Wine Wizard and Houston Texan JARVIS GREEN leading the week of wine events. This week of wine and food is one of the top five in the USA. Buy your tickets online at www.wineandfoodweek.com or call 713-557-5732. Get your tickets while they are still available since tickets sales are ahead of last year's record!



Ron Saikowski writes about wine and wine-related events for HERE. He may be reached at rsaikowski@comcast.net.

TEXAS-SIZED WINE EVENTS

The Italians are invading Texas, taking over a part of the George R. Brown Convention Center June 3-5. More than 150 individually styled Italian wines will be available at this Texas-sized event featuring the best of Italian wines, foods, fashion, cars and more. Italian Expo tickets are \$15 at the door, but are available for pre-sale

online at www.italianexpo.us for just \$10 until June 2 only.

Italian Expo will be open from 4 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. on Friday, 4 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. on Saturday, and noon to 7 p.m. on Sunday.

Leftovers

Upcoming Events

By Katharine Shilcutt Fri., May 20 2011 at 12:00 PM

Categories: [Leftovers](#)

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Fans of [Little Bitty Burger Barn](#)'s burgers will be happy to hear about the email we received from owner Ricardo Luna about today's special at the restaurant:

We are excited to announce that on Friday, 5/20, from 6PM-8PM, we will be giving away free 1/4 Basic Burgers at Little Bitty Burger Barn. As you know Houston was voted one of the best burger places in the U.S. by Travel & Leisure Magazine. I know our customers love our burgers so we're inviting everyone to come out and enjoy one, on us.



Get yer free mini burgers!

Go early, go often. Or something like that.

For more mini-bites, be sure to grab your tickets today for tomorrow's [Great Taste of the Heights](#) at the All Saints Catholic Church on 10th Street. The annual event will feature food from the 'hood's best restaurants, such as [benjy's on Washington](#), [Broken Spoke](#), [Carter and Cooley](#), [Chatters](#), [Hickory Hollow](#), [Pink's Pizza](#), [Pizzitola's](#), [Shade](#) and many, many more. There's no online ticketing, but you can purchase passes for \$25 at the event itself or from one of [these four locations](#).

Hopefully, you caught our two posts this week about a weekend filled with crawfish. Tomorrow is the [Big Star crawfish boil](#) hosted by our own EOW blogger [Jason Bargas](#), with the first batch coming out at 2 p.m. And this Sunday is [Tuscapalooza at Firkin & Phoenix](#), sponsored by [Texas Girls Pint Out](#). It's a great excuse to eat with your friends while you help support victims of the tornadoes in Alabama.

This Wednesday, May 25, it's [Bring Your Blanket To Work Day](#) if you work downtown. Why is that? Because the [City Hall Farmers Market](#) is hosting a picnic day and inviting people to stretch out on blankets around the central fountain and enjoy lunch from dozens of local vendors -- many of whom don't just sell produce; they also sell ready-to-eat meals. Two personal favorites are the half sandwiches from [Words & Food](#) ([best pimento cheese](#) in town!) and [Frank the Pretzel](#) from the [Eatsie Boys](#). There will also be bocce ball and a host of other activities sponsored by [Urban Harvest](#) if you want to do something other than a little daytime lounging.

And coming up in June, the [annual Italian Expo](#) kicks off the summer at [George R. Brown](#) when it sets up shop from June 3 to 5. Advance tickets are a mere \$10 online, a bargain when you consider the sheer size of the Italian Expo and all the food and wine that makes an appearance throughout the weekend. This year's expo will also include [live cooking demonstrations](#) from chefs such as [Trattoria Il Mulino's Michele Mazza](#) and [Quattro's Chef Maurizio Ferrarese](#).

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Tags:

[City Hall Farmers' Market](#), [free stuff](#), [Heights](#), [Italian cuisine](#), [Little Bitty Burger Barn](#), [picnic](#)



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LATEST PARK REVIEW

Denver Firefighters Museum

Review by greatparks

★★★★☆

The Best: Interesting collection of firefighting-related artefacts.

The Worst: Fairly small.

Review: This small but pleasant museum is a nice place to spend 20-60 minutes if you are interested in firefighting, fire trucks, etc. There's old equipment...

full review

INVITE A FRIEND

Recommend ParkGrades.com to:

Send invite

Italian Expo

E-Mail Tweet Like 1

Event Date: June 5, 2011 - 12:00pm

Park where event takes place: Discovery Green

Experience 'La Dolce Vita' at the Italian Expo 2011, at the George R. Brown Convention Center in downtown Houston. The Italy-America Chamber hosts this sprawling event to showcase Italy's finest products and culture. There is something for the entire family to enjoy including mouth-watering Italian cuisine from Houston's finest Italian restaurants, over 150 wines for tasting from Spec's, Italian fashion and jewelry, a tourism corner, and slew of hot Italian sports cars including the debut of Fiat, new to the states. Cast your vote for the Who's Your Chef cooking competition or catch the fashion design competition. For tickets and more information, please visit: http://www.italianexpo.us/



Filed Under: Houston

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Home



Español

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Italian Expo

Address: 1001 Avenida De Las Americas
Houston 77010

Phone: + 713-963-8839

URL: <http://www.italianexpo.us/>

Start Date: June 3, 2011

End Date: June 5, 2011

Cost: Adults: \$15 at the door
Children: \$ages 12 and under enter free
Seniors: \$15 at the door

Additional Pricing: \$10 pre-sale



Experience 'La Dolce Vita' at the Italian Expo 2011, at the George R. Brown Convention Center in downtown Houston. The Italy-America Chamber hosts this sprawling event to showcase Italy's finest products and culture. There is something for the entire family to enjoy including mouth-watering Italian cuisine from Houston's finest Italian restaurants, over 150 wines for tasting from Spec's, Italian fashion and jewelry, a tourism corner, and slew of hot Italian sports cars including the debut of Fiat, new to the states.

Cast your vote for the Who's Your Chef cooking competition or catch the fashion design competition. Don't forget to try to espresso and freshly-made gelato. Mangia Bene!

Hours:
Friday 4:00 - 10:30pm
Saturday 12:00 - 10:30pm
Sunday 12:00 - 7:00pm

Note: We do our best to ensure all information is accurate. However, it's a good idea to visit the website listed or contact

the organization or venue to verify event details.

First Texas wine, food pairing competition June 3



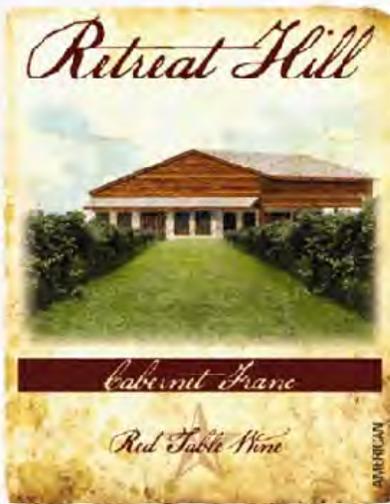
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Posted: Friday, May 20, 2011 12:00 am | Updated: 12:32 pm, Fri May 20, 2011.

0 comments

By Ron Saikowski Wine Walk

Local foods always pair best with local wines. Dr. Russ Kane, a wonderfully talented fellow Wine Writer, is taking this theme to the next step.

While visiting with Terry Thompson-Anderson of Texas Food and Wine Gourmet.com, the idea grew into the first Texas Regional Wine and Food Pairing Competition which will be held on June 3 during the International Association of Culinary Professionals' Annual Conference in Austin.

Five chefs were picked from dozens of contestants for this Final Friday event. Competition included food preparations, wine selections and an essay describing why the wines and food were paired. This is a first-ever competition of this stature and will show-case Texas Wines with local foods.

Texas-Sized Wine Events

The Italians are invading Texas, taking over a part of the George R. Brown Convention Center on June 3-5. Over 150 individually styled Italian wines will be available at this Texas sized event featuring the best of Italian wines, foods, fashion, cars and more. Italian Expo tickets are \$15 at the door, but are available for pre-sale online at www.italianexpo.us for just \$10 until June 2nd. Italian Expo will be open from 4 to 10:30 p.m. on Friday, 4 to 10:30 p.m. on Saturday, and noon to 7 p.m. on Sunday.

WINE and FOOD WEEK in The Woodlands kicks off on June 6 with Wine Wizard/Houston Texan JARVIS GREEN leading the week of wine events. This week of wine and food is one of the TOP FIVE in the USA. Major events include Market Street Wine Walk on Thursday, Sips, Suds, and Sliders on Friday, and the Grand Tasting and Cooking Competition on Saturday evening. There will be numerous wine dinners along with several wine seminars to entertain and educate you. Buy your tickets online at www.wineandfoodweek.com or call 713-557-5732. Get your tickets while they are still available since tickets sales are ahead of last year's record!

Couponing Shopaholic

Houston Italian Expo- \$10 For 2 Tickets!!

By Cathy On May 22, 2011 Under deals, internet



Have you been to the [Houston Italian Expo](#)? We went last year, and it was so much fun!! For \$10, you get a single-day admission for **two** to the [Houston Italian Expo](#), Friday, June 3, from 4 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., Saturday, June 4, from noon to 10:30 p.m., and Sunday, June 5, from noon to 7 p.m. at the [George R. Brown Convention Center](#).

The Houston Italian Expo, which is hosted by the Italian American Chamber of Commerce, has more than 100 displays and kiosks from vendors from Italy and the U.S., including more than 30 gourmet vendors distributing noshables of authentic Italian pasta, olive oils, and cheese. Live cooking competitions and demonstrations are also there for you to enjoy. In addition to admission, this Groupon entitles guests to wrap their teeth around **two complimentary pizzas**. Click [here](#) to get your tickets!! (if you do not see this offer, click on "all deals") See you at the **2011 Houston Italian Expo!!!**

Houston, TX

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Entertainment

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Houston / Food & Drink / Restaurants

Italian wine and food fans: Italian Expo on June 3 - 5

May 22, 2011 10:48 am CT



Mike Riccetti

Houston Cheap Eats Examiner



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The George R. Brown might be done up like this...

Credits: Getty Images

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Good news for Italophiles and anyone interested in wine and food. **The third Italian Expo will be held on the weekend of June 3 -5 at the George R. Brown Convention Center.** This is a showcase of Italian food, wine, fashion, design, art, entertainment and tourism. This annual event is held only here and in Chicago. It is a lot of fun – and really a great value – if you enjoy Italian food and wine.

Related Topics

- [Italian Expo](#)
- [Italian Expo Houston](#)
- [Italian wine tasting](#)
- [Italian restaurants in Houston](#)

This year, there will be **over 250 different wines to sample for the price of admission**, which is \$15 at the door and \$10 in advance on-line. There will also be wine and food to purchase and consume at your leisure. There will be a cooking competition during the weekend, too.

The restaurants participating this year are a very good bunch: Arcodoro, Carmelo's, Grotto, La Griglia, Perbacco, Quattro, Ristorante Cavour, Trattoria Il Mulino, and Valentino. These include **four of the best and most authentically Italian spots** plus a few others with Italians heading the kitchens including a version of the longtime New York Italian Zagat champ, Il Mulino. Additionally, there is Grotto and La Griglia, which might not be at their Vallone-era peaks, but can still be enjoyable restaurants.

In addition to restaurant-prepared fare, there will be other food products to sample including some top-notch cheese from the Lombardy and elsewhere. And, lots of wine.

Italian Expo

Friday, June 3 4 to 10:30PM

Saturday, June 4 – noon - 10:30PM

Sunday, June 5 – noon to 7PM

www.italianexpo.us

TexSport Publications

ITALIAN BEAUTY IN MOTION – ITALIAN LUXURY CARS AND MOTORBIKES FEATURED AT ITALIAN EXPO 2011 IN JUNE

HOUSTON, TEXAS (May 22, 2011) Eat, drink, and peruse hot Italian sports cars and motorbikes all under one roof! Come to Italian Expo, being held on June 3-5 at George R. Brown Convention Center, and see your favorite Italian automobiles and motorcycles! Italian motor vehicles are among the most exciting vehicles in the world and they offer a driving experience unlike any other.

The long-anticipated return of FIAT to the U. S. market is here and the new release, Fiat 500, will be on display at Italian Expo. Not only can Expo guests see the Fiat 500 (“Cinquecento” in Italian), but they also have a chance to take one out for a spin! Northside FIAT, one of four Houston dealers chosen from over 600 applicants nationally to represent FIAT in its return to the U.S. market, will be providing Fiat 500s to test drive. Four Fiat 500s will be parked on the sidewalk in front of GRB Convention Center’s Exhibit Hall D, ready to be test driven.

Houston Superbikes will be on hand with Ducati and Aprilia motorcycles. This all Italian motorcycle dealership carries a full line of motorbikes from these legendary Italian marques. Besides the Ducati-Aprilia experience, motorcycle aficionados can also see MV Agusta motorbikes provided by Metric Motorcycles.

Classic car buffs can enjoy seeing classic Italian cars like Lamborghini. Lamborghini Houston, part of Indigo Auto Group, will bring to the Expo the top of the line model of this fascinating luxury car. Synonymous with prestige and performance, Italian Expo guests can appreciate the sleek lines of this classic automobile.

Also, as an added bonus, a vintage collection of Lancia Integrale, Fiat, and Alfa Romeo cars will be on display. And, those with a need for speed, can get a good look at a Ferrari Testa Rossa!

While the Expo gives car and motorcycle enthusiasts a chance to enjoy fine Italian cars and motorbikes, it also features food and wine importers, handcrafted goods, Houston’s finest Italian restaurants, fashion shows, cooking demonstrations, an inter-active kid’s area, Italian language classes, and musical and dance performances. Italian Expo will be hosting over 150 companies and vendors from Italy and the U.S. to an anticipated audience of over 21,000 attendees.

Italian Expo tickets are \$15 at the door, but are available for pre-sale online at www.italianexpo.us for just \$10 until June 2 only. Italian Expo will be open from 4:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Friday, 12:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Saturday, and 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm on Sunday.

Posted by TexSport Publications at 5/22/2011 05:47:06 PM [0 comments](#) [✉](#) [Link to this post](#)



Labels: [cars](#), [Italian Expo](#), [motorcycles](#)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Frank Sinatra tie behind Houston's Italian food fetish: Fever dates back to a secret romance

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BY MARENE GUSTIN

05.23.11 | 06:02 pm

Despite its buzz worthiness, fusion isn't always a good thing in food.

"The first few years I was in America, the food really confused me," says Giancarlo Ferrara, the executive corporate chef of [Arcodoro](#). "Why do they call this scampi? This isn't scampi. And we don't even eat meatballs with spaghetti in Italy."

Ferrara knows of what he speaks. Born in Salerno, Italy, he trained at the Centro Professionale Alberghiero and worked at restaurants in Italy, France, Ireland and Florida before winding up in Houston in 2003. He's one of several local chefs vying for the title of Maestro della Cucina (Italian for Master of the Kitchen) at the upcoming Italy-America Chamber of Commerce of Texas culinary arts competition at [Italian Expo 2011](#).

During half-hour demonstrations, each chef will prepare one dish to be tasted by the judges and the audience, who will all vote for a winner in three different categories: taste, presentation and overall excellence in the cooking demonstration. The votes will be tallied throughout the three-day event. On June 5 at 5:30 p.m., Houston's Best Italian Chef will be announced.

The fact the city has an Italian Expo is testament to how much Houstonians love Italian food, fashion, wine and culture.

And when it comes to that food and wine, we have plenty of pasta places to choose from. [B4-U-Eat.com](#) lists 311 Italian restaurants in Houston. A surplus of steakhouses, yes. A tremendous Tex-Mex food culture, hell yes. Barbecue, duh. But why so many Italian restaurants in Texas' biggest city?

Ferrara has one theory.

"The city is growing so fast," he says. "In just nine years here I've seen the restaurant scene grow so much. And Houston is a real cosmopolitan city. The people here are very cultured and well traveled. They appreciate real Italian food, not Italian-American food like Olive Garden."

But if you want to know the history of the popularity of Italian dining in Houston, you have to go back to 1965 when Tony Vallone opened a casual hole-in-the-wall Italian joint on Sage Road where Macy's now stands. He once told me that that back then he had to buy his calamari from bait shops, but of course it was the forerunner of [Tony's](#), arguably Houston's most famous eatery and one that renowned Esquire magazine food and wine critic John Mariani has called "one of the finest Italian restaurants in the country."



Watsuyuki/Flickr

Why so many Italian restaurants in Texas' biggest city?



Photo by Gracie Cavnar

"The first few years I was in America, the food really confused me," says Giancarlo Ferrara, the executive corporate chef of Arcodoro.

"He'll do anything, pay anything, to get the finest ingredients," Mariani says.

But wait. Let's back up 16 years before Tony's opened.

Houston's Italian restaurant scene first made national headlines in 1949, as the famous Shamrock Hotel was opening. [Frank Sinatra](#) was one of the headliners at the glitterati event.

OK, bear with me for a moment here. The residents in the high rise where I live started a lending library in the laundry room. There's a bookshelf there and we put the books we've read there and pick up others. The offerings are pretty eclectic. I recently snagged a new James Patterson and Kitty Kelley's 1986 *His Way; The Unauthorized Biography of Frank Sinatra*.

On page 146 I found this tidbit about the torrid secret romance between Frank and Ava Gardner: "They went to dinner with Jimmy Van Heusen at Vincent's Sorrento restaurant as guests of Mayor Oscar Holcombe. (So far, so accurate.) They were spotted by Edward Schisser, a photographer from the *Houston Post* (yes, the *Post* was around then), who approached them to get a picture. Schisser said that Frank threw down his napkin, reared back in his chair, and was ready to smash the man's camera. Ava screamed and hid her face in the folds of her mink coat. The owner, **TONY VALLONE** (my bolded caps) rushed over, and the photographer left without his picture.

But the story appeared in the next day's paper and was picked up by the wire services, finally making public the secret romance of the last eighteen months."

When the book came out in the 1980s, everyone thought it was our famous Tony Vallone, whose restaurant was already a classic by then. But wait, do the math.

"I would have been about six years old then," Vallone laughs. "That was my dad, but he never told me about that story. His restaurant was known as Sorrento, based on the town where he was born and everybody called him Anthony."

But the younger Vallone did serve Sinatra at his restaurant over the years, recalling that he was very nice and loved real home-style Italian pasta. Celebrities aside, why do we Houstonians love our Italian restaurants?

"Tex-Mex is number one here," Vallone says. "But nationwide Italian is number one. Houstonians know their food; they love good food. And when Italian food is done right it is light and delicious, it's like a garden in your mouth."

As I hang up the phone with Vallone, having just come off another three-margarita-queso-and-enchilada-lunch with Dad, I am determined to book a lunch this week at Tony's. I am in serious need of some fresh seafood and pasta and if I can just convince him to leave the fishing hat in the car, I think Dad will like Tony's just fine.



Photo by Rick Staudt

If you want to know the history of the popularity of Italian dining in Houston, you have to go back to 1965 when Tony Vallone opened a casual hole-in-the-wall Italian joint on Sage Road.

EAT UP AT THE ITALIAN EXPO AND OTHER HOUSTON RESTAURANT NEWS

<< Dale Earnhardt Jr. Jr. race into town | Main | Week in Music: Happy Birthday Bob >>

SYD KEARNEY AT 12:31 PM ON MAY 24, 2011

IF you're a fan of pasta and vino, consider a visit to the **Italian Expo**, which will be June 3-5 at the George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas.

More than 30 food and wine experts will be offering samples in the Spec's Tasting Area. And some of the city's best Italian restaurants will be offering small plates of the specialties. Among them:

Arcodoro, Carmelo's, Grotto, La Griglia, Trattoria Il Mulino, Perbacco,

Quattro, Ristorante Cavour and Valentino.

Admission to the expo, which features dance and music performances, kid-friendly attractions and fashion shows, is \$10 in advance (\$15 at the door).



Try the gelato at the Italian Expo.; Courtesy photo

FREEBIRDS OFFERS IMBIBERS A BREAK

Freebirds is now offering \$2 drafts and \$2 margaritas (with the purchase of an entree) all day on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

KEY LIME YOGURT? YOU BET

Yogurtland, which has two locations in Houston, has added a few flavors to its summer menu. On sale now through the end of June: Key Lime Bar Tart, Chocolate Mint Cookies and Cinnamon Graham Cracker. Launching later this summer: Dragon Passion (a blend of passion fruit, strawberry and dragon fruit) and Caramel Almond Turtle. Find the nearest store at yogurt-land.com.

EAT SUSHI FOR A GOOD CAUSE

May 29-June 4 is "Nicky's Week" at **RA Sushi**. The event is a fundraiser that provides 100 percent of sales on select menu items and beverages to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. The event honors an RA Sushi founder's 13-year-old nephew who lost his battle with brain cancer. Since 2005, RA Sushi, which has two Houston locations, has raised more than \$700,000 for the hospital. Find the nearest restaurant at <http://www.rasushi.com/>.

HOT DOG TRUCK GETS A NAME

Sherri and Michael Bright came up with the winning name — Coney Cruiser — for **James Coney Island**'s new 34-foot mobile kitchen. Among the finalists names: Weinerbago, Lamborgweinie and Coney Express. The Brights' prize: a year of free hot dogs. JCI's food truck should be hitting the streets later this summer.

dine+drink



gelato Sample this frozen dessert at the upcoming Italian Expo at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

If you're a fan of pasta and vino, consider a visit to the **ITALIAN EXPO**, which will be June 3-5 at the George R. Brown Convention Center, 1001 Avenida de las Americas.

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Admission to the expo, which features dance and music performances, kid-friendly attractions and fashion shows, is \$10 in advance (\$15 at the door). Find details at italianexpo.us.

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Northside FIAT of Houston to Sponsor Italian Expo 2011

“Northside FIAT of Houston sponsors the Italian Expo this year as FIAT is reintroduced to the American market for the first time in 25 years. Check out the all-new FIAT 500 at www.HoustonNorthsideFIAT.com.

Houston, TX (1888PressRelease) May 25, 2011 - The Italian Style Expo proudly announces the recent addition of Northside FIAT of Houston as a major sponsor of the Houston based show.

The Italian Style Expo showcases Italian excellence in [business](#) and culture via such exciting events as a Fashion Show and a Cooking Competition during the three-day event at the George R. Brown [convention](#) center. This year the show will proudly reintroduce the FIAT nameplate to Texas and the all-new FIAT 500 to the American market place as well.

Event organizers for the Italian Expo know style and [design](#) when they see it, so the addition of the flashy FIAT 500 just made sense.

The all-[new product](#) is just the beginning of FIAT's full-scale entry into the American market. Northside FIAT of Houston is the proud sponsor of the [car](#) showcase and in a tip of the hat to the Italian heritage of the brand they aren't only bringing in the all-new products, they're planning to highlight some vintage vehicles as well.

Ed Paez, Studio Director of Northside FIAT said, "The Italian racing history and the FIAT brand go hand-in-hand. We're honored to be a part of the show and are so excited to have FIAT vehicles back in the US again. It's truly a great way to extend our Italian blood lines and racing heritage to the next generation of Italian-Americans."

While different versions of the FIAT have been available in Europe since the brand was introduced in 1899, the last product sold in the US--before this year--was more than 25 years ago.

Alfred Flores and Bruce Glascock, co-owners of the dealership believe that the vehicles will make a complete comeback and have invested in an exclusive, FIAT studio that will showcase the Italian cars in the Woodlands, opening in June. Just like the cars, the studio will have stylish lines and an exciting Italian design.

Until the studio becomes operational you can check out the selection of FIAT vehicles at Spring Chrysler Jeep Dodge in Spring, Texas or at the Italian Style Expo on June 3-5, 2011.

To order your tickets for the Italian Style Expo please click on the following link:
<http://italianexpo.us/houston/event-info>

About the Italian Style Expo:

America's largest Italian expo is hosted annually in Chicago and Houston. Exhibitors from Italy and the U.S. join to display their products, create international business relationships, and educate the public on what is authentically Italian.

About Northside FIAT of Houston:

Northside FIAT of Houston is a new and used car dealership that proudly sells, services and sells parts for the all-new FIAT nameplate, including the all-new FIAT 500. The dealership will be opening a storefront to display their FIAT vehicles in June.

For more information about Northside FIAT of Houston, please visit their website at www.houstonnorthsidefiat.com.

Leftovers

Upcoming Events

By [Katharine Shilcutt](#) Fri., May 27 2011 at 12:00 PM

Categories: [Leftovers](#)



Photo by [rdpeyton](#)

This gumbo is from Emeril's in New Orleans; the gumbo at Under the Volcano will likely be just as good.

If you've been missing Robb Walsh, here's your chance to catch up with our former food critic outside the busy environs of his new restaurant. On June 7 and again on July 12, Walsh will be speaking at his restaurant, [El Real Tex-Mex Cafe](#), as part of the Houston Museum of Natural Science's [Cultural Feast](#) series. The talk, [Tex-Mex! The Cuisine](#), will focus on the history and evolution of the oldest regional American cuisine. [Tickets are \\$73](#), or \$63 for HMNS members, which includes a full Tex-Mex dinner to illustrate Walsh's talking points.

If you don't already have plans for this Memorial Day Weekend, here's one suggestion: the annual [gumbo cookoff at Under the Volcano](#). Each year, the Rice Village-area bar hosts the cookoff to support Wellsprings, a home for abused women and their children, and to fill your bowls with tasty gumbo from [a dozen different competitors](#). The cookoff takes place from 4 to 9 p.m. and costs \$10 at the door.

Next Thursday evening, check out our very own [Thirsty Thursdays at Niko Niko's](#) in Market Square Park. Our weekly happy hour series always features a great local band, but this Thursday, June 2, is a real treat. Los Skarnales will be playing from 5 to 8 p.m., and Niko Niko's will be offering happy hour prices on its Nikoritas and Mighty Aphrodites.

And the following weekend, the [Italian Expo](#) will be hitting town once again when it takes over the George R. Brown Convention Center from June 3 to 5. Advance tickets are a mere \$10 online, a bargain when you consider the sheer size of the Italian Expo and all the food and wine that makes an appearance throughout the weekend. This year's expo will also include live cooking demonstrations from chefs such as [Trattoria Il Mulino's Michele Mazza](#) and [Quattro's Chef Maurizio Ferrarese](#).

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Italian Expo 2011: La Dolce Vita

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1001 Avenida de las Americas  MAP
Houston, TX 77010
713-963-8839
<http://www.italianexpo.us/>

 ADD TO MY CALENDAR

Event Type: Expos/Conventions
District: [Convention](#) Jun. 03: 4 p.m.

Houstonians will be able to tour Italy and experience “La Dolce Vita” (the good life) without even leaving the country at the third annual Italian Expo, at George R. Brown Convention Center’s Exhibit Hall D. For times and ticket information, visit www.italianexpo.us/

Italian for “The Good Life,” this year’s theme will draw families and tourists with free admission for kids and a variety of entertainment at affordable prices. The cultures of Italy and Houston will come together with a featured fashion competition between eight emerging local designers and a culinary arts competition with many of Houston’s top Italian chefs presenting the finest in Italian cuisine. Each competition will allow Italian Expo guests to participate and vote for their favorites for a fun and interesting interactive experience.

“The goal of Italian Expo is to promote Italian businesses while educating others about Italy today and all that it has to offer the U.S. The Italian Expo has become an event that offers something the entire family can enjoy,” said Paolo Fronza, Executive Director of the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce of Texas. The Chamber hosts this annual event that showcases Italy’s finest products and culture.

The three-day Italian Expo hosts over 26,000 attendees and 150 Italian and American exhibitors, such as fine jewelry and fashion designers, food and wine importers, including an enormous spread of Italian wines from Spec’s. The Expo also showcases Houston’s finest Italian restaurants, luxury car and motorbike displays, travel and tour operators, various artists, and music and dance performers.

DATES/TIMES -  ADD TO MY CALENDAR

Photo



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MONDAY, MAY 30, 2011

Italian Expo

Hello everyone!



I just wanted to update you all on my crazy schedule. Today I'm working on my mini Resort collection for the Italian Expo that is this weekend June 3-5. It is going to be a tour of Italy from food, wine, fashion, design, tourism, art, and entertainment. Tickets are available online for \$10 and at the door for \$15 we also have coupons for \$2 off at Lot 8 so stop by and grab one!

Sunday is when the fashion design competition will take place. I will be on a panel where we will be judging 9 designers that will be competing to win a trip to Italy for fashion week in February. I will be closing the show with my collection.

Here is a sneak peak of the line up and what we have been working on.

Here is the link to the Italian Expo, hope to see everyone there!
<http://italianexpo.us/>



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Wine & Dine: Houston's Wine Events

 June 1, 2011

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By [lbreslin](#)

Tip your glass and toast to the good life! Well, do so this weekend when Little Italy invades Houston. Two of Houston's biggest wine events, The Italian Expo and Wine and Food Expo, are set to hit the city this weekend and through next week with a slew of excellent events, and of course, food.



Houston Wine Events

Three-days of excellent wine tasting, sipping and toasting are set to be the main event at the [Italian Expo at George R. Brown Convention Center](#) in Houston. Come sample the best wines, mingle with the best wine aficionados, and dine on tasty Italian gourmet foods all for the cost of \$10 when you purchase tickets online! A great deal for three-days of tasty wine and food, right?

Of course, then there is the [Wine and Food Expo](#) taking place through June 6th – June 12th at [The Woodlands](#). With over 400 different wines, 50 chefs and 40 different events

happening through the week, Houston residents are sure to celebrate June with lively libations. Tickets are on sale for individual events through the week.

What events are you looking forward to? Share with us your events for the weekend on our comment board!

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The Houstonian Insider

By [Jennifer Wilbur](#)

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JUN
2

The Houstonian Insider

June To Do's

[There are tons of fun things to do this month...](#)

Join the City Hall Farmers Market at Agnes Moffitt Park at 5 pm each Friday in June for the "[Friday Farmers Market and Movie Nights](#)". Come and shop and catch a free movie with the family! Movies start at 8 pm. For this first movie night they will feature "Grease" and will have food trucks Oh My Pocket Pies, Frosted Betty & Fusion Taco and many of your favorite market vendors. // [Free Press Summer Fest](#) is June 4-5 from 11 am to 10 pm and features an ambitious line-up of bands for a fun outdoor music festival at Eleanor Tinsley Park on Buffalo Bayou. A handful of notable acts such as the Grammy-nominated Weezer, Yeasayer, Cut Copy, Ween, Sharon Jones and The Dap Kings, MF Doom and Black Dahlia Murder will perform along with 70 other bands. / Catch the "[Chill Out at the Houston Zoo](#)" sponsored by TXU Energy. Beat the heat with 13 different chill zones where you can get out of the heat and cool down at the zoo. Don't miss one of the many Keeper Talks where you can learn about your favorite animals. // Tonight is "[Thirsty Thursday](#)" at Niko Niko's Market Square location starting at 5 pm. Bring your blanket, lawn chair, family & friends and enjoy a free concert by Los Skarnales. Dogs welcome too! // TUT's presents "[Rock of Ages](#)" featuring all of your favorite 80's hits and starring American Idol's Constantine Maroulis. // Houston Ballet's "[Raising the Barre](#)" spring repertory program will feature a powerhouse of 21st century ballet, including a world premiere by Finnish choreographer Jorma Elo, an American premiere by Christopher Bruce and a company premiere by Christopher Wheeldon. // Every first Saturday of each month, The Heights turns into an eclectic street fair, with their "[First Saturday Arts Market](#)". It takes place Saturday, June 4th on 19th Street in the Heights and walking visitors are greeted by musicians, abstract paintings, glass earrings, steampunk jewelry, photography and handmade books. // The [2011 Italian Expo](#) is June 3-5 at the George R. Brown Convention Center. Food, wine, fashion, design, tourism, art, and entertainment are showcased as the cultures of Italy and Houston come together at Italian Expo. // [The Great American Trailer Park Musical](#) is back by popular demand at Stages Reperatory Theatre and runs throughout June and most of July. Get your tix early because these sell out fast! // It's summer and Discovery Green Park is jam packed with things to do. [Thursday night Free Concerts in the Park](#) is one of my favorite events so grab a blanket, snacks and drinks and head over to Discovery Green for some jammin' live music. If you are looking for another family friendly event then the [Outdoor Movies in the Park](#) at Discovery Green fits the bill. "Yogi Bear" is playing June 11th at 8:30 pm. // [Sing-a-Long](#) events at Alamo Drafthouse include "Grease" and "Totally 80's New Wave" in June so make sure to get your tix early. // [First Annual VegFest](#) is June 11th, 10-4 pm and will include Houston's superb vegan restaurants, guest speakers Kids Zone, food demos, vegan vendors, product samples, educational films, live music, community booths, green businesses and prize giveaways. // Please [email me @ jwilbur@cbunited.com](mailto:jwilbur@cbunited.com) if you have any questions.

****Happy Father's Day to all the Daddies!*****

The highest compliment you can give a referral...so please don't keep me a

> [Special Issues](#) > [Summer Guide](#) > [3rd Annual Italian Expo](#)

3rd Annual Italian Expo Ad

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Italiane Expo 2011

JUNE 3-5
GRC CONVENTION CENTER
Exhibit Hall D

Fri: 4:00 pm – 10:30 pm
 Sat: 12:00 pm – 10:30 pm
 Sun: 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm

What's Happening at Italian Expo

- "Who's Your Chef?"**
A culinary showdown with Houston's top Italian chefs.
- Houston's Favorite Italian Restaurants**
Assassini, Perducci's, Grato, Ciccio's, Quattro, La Capria, Trattoria Il Mulino, L'Amore & Malice.
- Over 1,000 Free Italian Wine or Sample Salami!**
- Special Specialty Food and Wine samples from Italy with your 1st Tasting Glass!**
- Test Drive the Fiat 500!**
Follow Fashion to Conquering Conquering!
- Local Fashion Designers**
Come see us at the Fashion Capital - Milan!
- Chloe Deo and David Peck's**
Latest Collections by the Runway!
- Italian designs: jewelry and accessories**
- Music and Dance on the Main Stage**
- "Little Italy" Superhero Kids Area!** Get in on the fun with face painting, Italian games, coloring and art, Italian...
- Chef! A Crash Course in Milan**

TALIAN STYLE TEXAS SIZE

www.italianexpo.us

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Social Diary: May 31 - June 6

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May 31, 2011

Let's make fashion history

Do Me, Please

Everyone's buzzing about The Do Bar, the blowouts-only salon opening this summer in West Ave. No need to wait – comment on our Facebook post for your chance to win a service at the temporary set-up at Craft Salon. [More.](#)

Italian Runway Showdown

Sunday, June 5, 5 – 7 p.m.

The three-day Italian Expo ends when local emerging designers compete for a trip to Milan Fashion Week (pictured).

Chloe Dao, Jeff Grenillion and David Peck help judge. Come early to sample European wine and bites, then hit the shows, a finale by Chloe and a cocktail reception. [More.](#)

Book Signing at Bering's (Westheimer location)

Saturday, June 4, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Meet the local author of a new book of vintage photos telling the story of Foley's, the department store chain born in downtown Houston. [More.](#)

By Donation Yoga Classes

Beginning tomorrow, June 1

Cura Yoga has unveiled pay-what-you-wish yoga classes at New Living, the eco-boutique in Rice Village. [More.](#)

Contained by Design

Through Saturday, June 4

Hit pretty Peel Gallery to see the results of a design competition amongst U of H architecture students. [More.](#)

New Happy Hour at Mortar

Every Friday, 6 – 8 p.m.

Take your hip plus-one to men's boutique Mortar to kick off the weekend with after-hours shopping and themed cocktails. [More.](#)





SPEED AND ELEGANCE ON DISPLAY AT ITALIAN EXPO WITH CLASSIC AND VINTAGE ITALIAN CARS AND MOTORBIKES

Houston, TX – Eat, drink, and peruse hot Italian sports cars and motorbikes all under one roof! Come to Italian Expo, being held on June 3-5 at George R. Brown Convention Center, and see your favorite Italian automobiles and motorcycles! Italian motor vehicles are among the most exciting vehicles in the world and they offer a driving experience unlike any other.

ItalianExpo.us

*Live la Dolce Vita!
Enjoy wine, food and fashion like an Italian at the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce 3rd annual*

ITALIAN EXPO

Sample over 150 wines & gourmet Italian food at Spec's tasting area

Vote for your favorite dish in the "Who's Your Chef?" cooking showdown

Savor food from 9 local Italian restaurants

See hot local fashion designers' collections & cheer them on as they compete to win a trip to Italy.

Admire Italian beauty in motion. Test drive the new Fiat 500 & see Lamborghini, Ferrari, Aprilia, Ducati and MV Agusta.

Hosted by the Italy America Chamber Of Commerce Of Texas

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JUNE 3-5
GRB CONVENTION CENTER
HOUSTON
WWW.ITALIANEXPO.US

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www.facebook.com/italianexpo

The long-anticipated return of FIAT to the U. S. market is here and the new release, Fiat 500, will be on display at Italian Expo. Not only can Expo guests see the Fiat 500 (i°Cinquecento± in Italian), but they also have a chance to take one out for a spin! Northside FIAT, one of four Houston dealers chosen from over 600 applicants nationally to represent FIAT in its return to the U.S. market, will be providing Fiat 500s to test drive. Four Fiat 500s will be parked on the sidewalk in front of GRB Convention Center's Exhibit Hall D, ready to be test driven.

Houston Superbikes will be on hand with Ducati and Aprilia motorcycles. This all Italian motorcycle dealership carries a full line of motorbikes from these legendary Italian marques. Besides the Ducati-Aprilia experience, motorcycle aficionados can also see MV Agusta motorbikes provided by Metric Motorcycles. Classic car buffs can enjoy seeing classic Italian cars like Lamborghini. Lamborghini Houston, part of Indigo Auto Group, will bring to the Expo the top of the line model of this fascinating luxury car. Synonymous with prestige and performance, Italian Expo guests can appreciate the sleek lines of this classic automobile.

Also, as an added bonus, a vintage collection of LanciaIntegrale, Fiat, and Alfa Romeo cars will be on display. And, those with a need for speed, can get a good look at a Ferrari TestaRossa! While the

Expo gives car and motorcycle enthusiasts a chance to enjoy fine Italian cars and motorbikes, it also features food and wine importers, handcrafted goods, Houston's finest Italian restaurants, fashion shows, cooking demonstrations, an inter-active kid's area, Italian language classes, and musical and dance performances. Italian Expo will be hosting over 150 companies and vendors from Italy and the U.S. to an anticipated audience of over 21,000 attendees.

Italian Expo tickets are \$15 at the door, but are available for pre-sale online at www.italianexpo.us for just \$10 until June 2 only. Italian Expo will be open from 4:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Friday, 12:00 pm – 10:30 pm on Saturday, and 12:00 pm – 7:00 pm on Sunday.

Italian Expo 2011

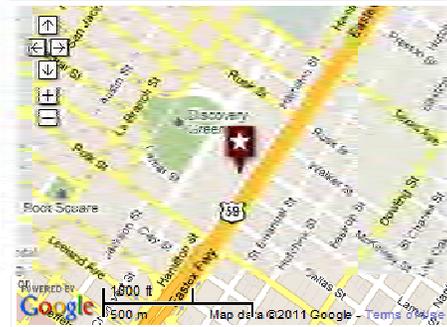
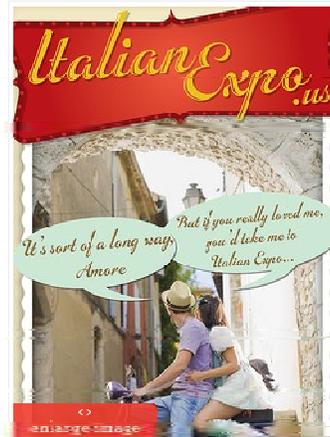
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Take a tour of Italy and experience "La Dolce Vita" without even leaving the country at Houston's third annual Italian Expo. Food, wine, fashion, design, tourism, art and entertainment are showcased as the cultures of Italy and Houston come together at Italian Expo. Over 100 companies and vendors from Italy and the U.S. will be present.

Watch cooking demos, enjoy wine tastings, fashion shows and a car display featuring luxury vehicles. For detailed event information, [click here](#).

Italian Expo is open on Friday from 4 - 10:30 p.m., on Saturday from 12 - 10:30 p.m. and on Sunday from 12 - 7 p.m.



GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER
[Get Directions - 1001 Avenida de las Americas Houston](#)

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- The Lake House 0.14 mile
- Huynh 0.15 mile
- The Grove 0.18 mile

DRINKS

- The Tree House 0.18 mile
- Reserve 101 0.37 mile
- The Dirt 0.37 mile

SHOPPING

- Tipping Point 0.59 mile
- Spee's Liquor Warehouse 1.19 mile
- High Fashion Home 1.38 mile

HOTELS/SPAS

- Hilton Americas-Houston 0.17 mile
- Spa at the Four Seasons 0.33 mile
- Four Seasons Hotel Houston 0.33 mile

D/ATE

Friday, June 3rd 2011 at 4 p.m. Sunday, June 5th, 2011 at noon
 Saturday, June 4th, 2011 at noon

LOCATION

George R. Brown Convention Center
 1001 Avenida de las Americas
 Houston, TX 77010

WEBSITE

italianexpo.us/houston

PHONE

713-626-9303

TICKET INFO

\$10 in advance, \$15 at the door

TAGS George R. Brown Convention Center, Italian, wine

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Houston | Food & Drink | Restaurants

Lombard food at local restaurants: Far better than it sounds

June 1, 2011 8:54 am CT



Mike Riccetti
Houston Cheap Eats Examiner



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It might not be Lombard, but it surely is Italian, and delicious
Credits: Four Seasons Houston

Do you like this article?

A focus on this weekend's Italian Expo is the northern region of Lombardy. This is where the commercial and fashion capital of country, Milan, is located, and nearby its international airport, Malpensa, the point of arrival for many tourists.

The region also has a rich agricultural tradition that includes prized cheeses, cured meats, rice, wine, and even olive oil. Bresaola, air-cured beef, is from Lombardy as is the famous mostarda of Cremona, a traditional spiced fruit chutney. Some of the cheeses are taleggio, mascarpone, crescenza, gorgonzola, provolone and several types of rich grana cheeses, even parmigiano-reggiano. The wines are can be good, if not among the best of Italy. The exception is **Franciacorta, the Italian version of champagne**. A number of these products will be on display at the Expo.

In conjunction with the Expo, a few of the participating restaurants are offering special menus featuring the cuisine of Lombardy. Beginning yesterday and running through June 12, **Arcodoro**, **Quattro**, and **Ristorante Cavour** in the Hotel Granduca in Uptown Park will be offering these menus.

Butter, cheese, meat, game, cured meats are key components in the cooking of Lombardy. Risottos and polenta dishes comprise many of the first courses, and are far more popular than pasta. Milan has given us several notable dishes that have become Italian restaurant classics. These include **risotto alla Milanese** (saffron-tinted slowly cooked rice) and its frequent accompaniment, **osso buco**, and **cotoletta alla Milanese** (breaded, pan-fried veal scallops). Mantua at the southeastern edge of the region has given us another staple, **tortelli di zucca** (pasta stuffed with pumpkin). From the towns near Milan come dishes such as zuppa alla Pavese (hearty bread, egg and cheese soup), polenta agli ucceletti (polenta with small birds), and casonsei (pasta filled with spinach, salame, ricotta and eggs).

To taste some of the Lombardy, at least the cheeses and wines, **the third Italian Expo will be held on the weekend of June 3 -5 at the George R. Brown Convention Center.**

Italian Expo

Friday, June 3 –4 to 10:30PM
Saturday, June 4 – noon - 10:30PM
Sunday, June 5 – noon to 7PM

Related Topics

- [Italian Expo Houston](#)
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Houston

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Houston Italian Expo – George R. Brown Convention Center

\$10 for Admission for Two (\$20 Value)

\$10 No Longer Available

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Expires Jun 5, 2011 Limit 3 per person Limit 1 per visit Non-transferable See the rules that apply to all deals.

Highlights

- 100+ displays of art, fare, fashion & design
- Chefs from Houston eateries
- Two complimentary pizzas

A cultural expo is an ideal way for anyone to learn more about a country without resorting to drastic measures such as running for president. Get acquainted with Italy the easy way with today's Groupon: for \$10, you get a single-day admission for two to the Houston Italian Expo, Friday, June 3, from 4 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., Saturday, June 4, from noon to 10:30 p.m., and Sunday, June 5, from noon to 7 p.m., at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

The Houston Italian Expo, which is hosted by the Italian American Chamber of Commerce, immerses visitors in a three-day tour of the fashion, design, fare, and art of the boot-shaped nation. Amble by more than 100 displays and kiosks from vendors from Italy and the U.S., including more than 30 gourmet vendors distributing mouthwatering authentic Italian pastas, olive oils, and cheeses. Live cooking competitions and demonstrations show off the culinary prowess of some of Houston's top Italian chefs, hailing from such restaurants as Arcodoro, La Giglia, and Valentino. The expo also honors Italy's rich history of design with fashion shows from such designers as James Martinez, Danny Nguyen, and Simran Rihal, as well as displays from all the country's regions that display handcrafted items, luxury cars, motorbikes, and sculptures of Sophia Loren made out of mashed gnocchi. In addition to admission, this Groupon entitles guests to wrap their teeth around two complimentary pizzas.

Join the Discussion 4 comments



Groupon says...

The Groupon Guide to: Identifying Memories

Far from being a perfect recording of our lives, our memories are fickle things, often becoming hazy or adding in heroic sword fights or talking animals where there were none. Here's a guide to differentiating real memories from false ones.

The Memory: Your carefree childhood—a swim in McQueen's Pond, a ride on the carousel at the County Jamboree—is cut short when millions of pounds of space debris begin crashing into major cities all over the world. The only person who can stop Earth's impending destruction? Bruce Willis.

Real or False Memory: Probably False. You may have started to remember your childhood but then added in some details from the film Armageddon.

The Memory: Your first kiss—the nerves, the excitement—is cut short when a meteor, Ben Affleck is there.

Real or False Memory: Possibly False. It's unlikely that you'd be having your first kiss if you're already old enough to be working a full-time oil-drilling job. Also, a lot of these details come from the film Armageddon, so you may be confusing that with your real memories.

The Memory: The birth of your first child—the pain, the screaming, the unbelievable joy—is cut short when the plot of Armageddon starts happening to you.

Real or False Memory: Maybe False. Some of the details of your child's birth—the plot of Armageddon happening to you and the joy part—both seem highly improbable.

Comment on our feelings board

Like 172

Houston Italian Expo

Company Website



George R. Brown Convention Center 1001 Avenida de las Americas Houston, Texas 77010 Get Directions

Reviews

- 2010 Houston Chronicle spotlight
- 2010 Examiner festival preview
- 1,794 Facebook fans

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\$69 (\$150 value)

View It!



Houston (Memorial) \$25 for Three Automated Exercise-Table Sessions at Slender Peach Toning Salon (\$81 Value) 461 bought

Multiple Locations \$6 for Two Games of Bowling and Shoe Rental at MaxBow (Up to \$16 Value) 614 bought

Conroe (The Woodlands) Five Yoga Classes or a Half-Day Yoga Retreat at Indus Valley Yoga and Retreat Center in Conroe 37 bought

Kemah \$79 for a Three-Hour Introduction to Sailing Session at South Coast Sailing Adventures in Kemah (\$159 Value) 78 bought

Bryan \$5 for \$10 Worth of Donuts, Coffee, and More at Daylight Donuts in Bryan 57 bought

Multiple Locations Southern Italian Cuisine for Dinner or for Breakfast, Brunch, and Lunch at Little Napoli Italian Cuisine 1,209 bought

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THE GRAPEVINE

WOODLANDS BACCHANAL

Wine and Food Week returns Monday for a six-day festival of flavors. For details, go to wineandfoodweek.com. Events are as follows:

■ **Monday:** Launch Party with the Texans' Jarvis Green at Kirby's Prime Steakhouse, 1111 Timberloch Place, 5:30-7 p.m., \$55. A Charles Krug wine dinner, \$70 plus tax and gratuity, follows at 8 at the restaurant. 281-362-1121.

■ **Tuesday:** Rombauer Wine Dinner at Kirby's Prime Steakhouse, 7-10 p.m., \$110 plus tax and gratuity, 281-362-1121. Banfi Wine Dinner at

Tavola Tuscan Bistro, 32623 FM 2979, Magnolia, 7-10 p.m., \$65, 281-252-8700.

■ **June 8:** Wine tasting with Master Sommelier Guy Stout at Kirby's Prime Steakhouse, 5:30-7:30 p.m., \$45, followed by a pairings dinner with Stout at the restaurant, \$85, 281-362-1121.

■ **June 9:** The H-E-B Wine Walk on Market Street, 9595 Six Pines, 5:30-8:30 p.m., \$50 in advance, \$60 at the door, 713-557-5732.

■ **June 10:** Sips, Suds and Sliders at The Woodlands Marriott Waterway, 1601 Lake Robbins Dr., 5:30-9:30 p.m.,

\$20, 713-557-5732.

■ **June 11:** Wine Rendezvous Grand Tasting and Texas Monthly Chef Showcase at The Woodlands Marriott Waterway, 7-10 p.m., \$125, 713-557-5732.

OTHER EVENTS

■ **BUBBLES:** Spec's is hosting a Champagne dinner at 7 tonight at Charivari, 2521 Bagby. \$95, 713-521-7231.

■ **SOM AUDITION:** Ill Forks, 1201 San Jacinto, is inviting customers to participate in a "Sommelier for a Day" experience on June 9. For \$35, you can sample 20 pinot noirs and enjoy hors d'oeuvres while

voting on a wine to be added to the restaurant's wine list for a year, 713-658-9457.

■ **VIVA ITALIA!** Friday-Sunday, Italian Expo featuring Italian wines at the George R. Brown Convention Center, 713-963-8839 or sraffa@iacc-chicago.com.

MORE BUBBLES

■ **SUMMER SIP:** Check out Dale Robertson's Sip of the Week in Sunday's The Good Life section. It's an old friend much deserving of a re-visit, especially in these dog days (already) of summer. And remember to raise a glass to the rain gods! It can't hurt.

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2011 Italian Expo

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Where

[George R. Brown Convention Center](#)

1001 Avenida de las Americas
Houston, TX 77010

Categories

Events, Festivals, Food | Wine

Upcoming

4:00 p.m. Friday, June 3, 2011

June 3rd: 4pm-10:30pm

June 4th: Noon-10:30pm

June 5th: Noon-7pm

Houstonians have the chance to experience true Italian culture and tradition, and live "La Dolce Vita" without leaving the country. By attending the 3rd annual "Italian Expo," being held June 3-5, 2011, at the George R. Brown Convention Center, Houstonians can participate in exciting activities including: a fashion competition between eight local designers, a culinary arts competition with Houston's top Italian chefs, fine Italian luxury cars and motorbikes, and a wide range of wine and food samples from different Italian regions. Each activity and competition will allow guests to participate and vote for their favorites, in a fun and interactive event which showcases why Italy is one of the most sought after locations in the world.

For more information please visit www.italianexpo.us Adults: 10\$ online pre-sale 15\$ at the door

Children: 12 and under free



What's Cookin'

KENNY & ZIGGY'S BEER DINNER

Reception + Five courses paired with beers from Brooklyn Brewery/ June 9, 7 p.m. [Kenny & Ziggy's](#), reservations required:

713.679.8453

ITALIAN EXPO

Eat, shop and enjoy everything Italy – food, wine, tourism info, design, fashion, art and entertainment. June 3 – 5, George R. Brown Convention Center, [tickets required](#)

GOURMET TOUR OF PERU

An 8 day, 8 night trip to discover the wine, beer, food, markets and authentic cultural experiences Peru has to offer. September 16 – 25 [More info](#)

MAI'S RISES FROM THE ASHES

The [Houston](#) Institution hosted a sneak preview (which we were sadly unable to make) this week before reopening their doors this weekend on April 16th. Early [reviews](#) say the new look is updated but doesn't take away the old-school charm that is quintessentially [Mai's](#).

06/01/2011

Freedom for Food & Caffeine in the Heights

Foodie Freedom



Earlier this week the [Texas Cottage Food Bill](#) made it through the Texas legislature. The almost-law (it only needs to be signed by Gov. Perry now) allows some canners, bakers and farmers to create low-risk food products like jams, jellies, baked goods and syrups in their homes. Current health regulations ban the sale of such products to the public unless prepared in a certified commercial kitchen.

[Robb Walsh](#) has more details about the "TEX & Baker's Bill" movement and the recent legislation on his personal blog, [Texas Eats](#).

Coffeehouses Making Headlines

Two new brewers of a different sort – and both inside the [Houston](#) Heights – have our town's two [restaurant](#) critics gushing with praise.

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Just Deal

Discount Dining: Quattro at the Four Seasons

By Minh T Truong Wed., Jun. 1 2011 at 10:00 AM

Comments (6)

Categories: [Just Deal](#), [Recession Tips](#)

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Photos by Minh T Truong

Vitello e Tonno Tonnato

[Groupon.com](#) recently offered a \$40 voucher for \$20 to [Quattro](#) at the Four Seasons Hotel. It just so happens Chef Maurizio Ferrarese's will be one of the contenders in the *Who's Your Chef?* competition at the upcoming [Italian Expo](#), so this was a good opportunity for me to try some of his modern Italian fare.

The restaurant's casual yet elegant atmosphere was a welcome surprise as I expected something stuffier, but the service is just as you would expect from the Four Seasons. The waiter didn't bat an eyelash when we let him know we would be sharing small plates instead of ordering entrees. I decided to try a few of Chef Maurizio Ferrarese's top picks noted on the menu with a chef's toque.

Next came the Ravioli di Carciofi, hand-filled artichoke ravioli with snail ragout. The dish was accented with a butternut squash puree and zucchini flower "chips." The fresh ravioli was perfectly *al dente*, the artichoke filling melting perfectly into the pasta. The snail ragout worked well and overall, it was a very successful dish.

The last dish was the Schiacciata Prosciutto e Arugula, a very simple flat bread with cured ham, arugula and gorgonzola. The ham – which could have brought too much salt to the table again – was actually mild, and the cheese and arugula were good companions. The schiacciata was inoffensive but unexceptional. I was hoping for more flavor and more crispness in the bread.

So would I return to Quattro without a discount? I may give it another shot and try the entrees as they do change seasonally. The server also let us know of their Sunday Brunch buffet that sounds promising but mostly I want to explore more of the chef's take on modern Italian.



Schiacciata Prosciutto e Arugula and Ravioli di Carciofi

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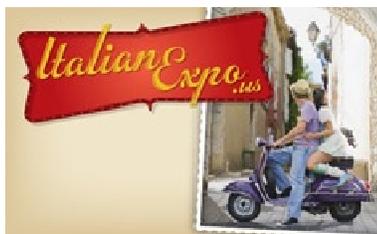
Tags:

arugula, flat bread, Four Seasons, gorgonzola, Italian Expo, prosciutto, ravioli, tuna, veal

« **How to Look Cool While Keeping Cool!**

Gloria Gaynor and the Smiths Get the Pink Crowd Moving at Galleria Salute to Cancer Survivors »

Live La Dolce Vita



Ahh, the Good Life...who doesn't think of fashion, food & wine and, of course, luxury cars, when you think of Italy?! This weekend all of you that are Italian and the others that just wish they were, can experience all that is the best of Italian culture including art, entertainment and tourism at the **3rd Annual Italian American Expo**.

The Italy-America Chamber of Commerce Houston is bringing together all things that are the "Best of Italy" beginning **Friday, June 3 through Sunday, June 5** at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

If **Fashion** is your thing, the show opens with a fashion runway show (there will be a total of 24 runway shows in all) of **David Peck's** fashions. It will end on Sunday with another show by one of our town's favorite designers, **Chloe Dao**. The Chamber is also very happy to bring to the states Italy's own famous footwear designer, **Salvatore Procopio**, whose fine hand-crafted footwear is not available in the U.S. For these three days only, he will be showing his shoes and they will be available for purchase at the Expo only.



However, what the Chamber is most excited about is what they are calling the Italian Fashion Exchange, which is a fashion competition bridging together the fashions of Italy and the U.S. There are 8 designers from this area competing for the chance of a lifetime. The winner will fly to Milan, Italy for February 2012 Fashion Week where they will participate in business-to-business meetings and present their collection to industry professionals...a true dream come true for any serious fashion designer. These eight designers will be showing their collections thru runway shows running continuously all weekend.

List of Participating Designers are:

Abi Ferin

James Martinez

Chioma Ikoku and Uche Osamor

Simran Rihal

Kuteka Hill

Shawn Kingsley

Shrin Askart

Danny Nguyen

Food & Wine will be plentiful and available in many different ways and in great quantities. After all, no Italian event of any kind can be complete without wonderful samplings of Italy's finest imported foods and wines. Spec's is overseeing 30 of their vendors and over 150 wines that will be participating in sampling and many will be available for purchase as well.



Some of Houston's favorite Italian Chefs and their respective restaurants will be there with samples to mangia to your heart's content. "Who's Your Chef?" Cooking Competition and live demonstrations and tastings will be happening for all. Some examples are Chef Giancarlo Ferrara from Arcodoro, Chief Renato De Pirro from Hotel Granduca's Ristorante Cavour, Michelle Massa from the Il Mulino family in NYC, whose Trattoria here in Houston has opened to rave reviews, Carmelo's Chef Carmelo Mauro....and many, many more.

I could go on and on, of course, talking all things Italian but strongly suggest that you check out their website for more details and info.

Click on <http://www.italianexpo.us>

However, I must share with you a few must-know details:

Date: June 3—June 5, 2011

Place: George R. Brown Convention Center, Exhibit Hall D

Times: Friday, 4:00 p.m.—10:30 p.m.

Saturday, 12:00 p.m. till 10:30 p.m.

Sunday, 12:00 till 7:00 p.m.

Online ticket pre-sales at <http://www.italianexpo.us/houston/tickets> valid to purchase until June 2, 10:00 p.m. for \$10 only, after, \$15 at the door.

This is truly an event not to be missed, if you are a lover of all things Italian...do not miss this opportunity that brings together two cultures, as Italy and Houston come together. Ciao!

Share and Enjoy:



This entry was posted on Wednesday, June 1st, 2011 at 11:13 am by *Roz Pactor* and is filed under **Dining, Events, Fashion**. You can follow any responses to this entry through the **RSS 2.0** feed. You can **leave a response**, or **trackback** from your own site.

« Pick your alliance with 2011 NBA Finals Tees | Main | Project Runway Season 6 designer wins trip to Italy at Italian Expo »

Weekend Roundup: Actress Kate Walsh at Sephora, fashion hits Italian Expo



Kate Walsh, who known for her roles in Grey's Anatomy and Private Practice, visits Houston to debut her new fragrance at Sephora in the Galleria on Saturday.

Breakups are hard. But actress [Kate Walsh](#) had a great idea when she was inspired to create a fragrance following a breakup five years ago. The *Grey's Anatomy* and *Private Practice* actress visits [Sephora at the Galleria 2-4 p.m. Saturday](#) to debut her new fragrance, *BOYFRIEND*. It's reminiscent of a man's scent on a woman's skin, with dark plum, myrrh, and night blooming jasmine, as well as floral notes of amber musk. Also starting at 10 a.m. Saturday, Sephora is offering the first 200 guests who make a *BOYFRIEND* fragrance purchase the opportunity to meet Kate and pose with her in a photo signed by the actress herself.

While you're at the Galleria, check out the new [lululemon athletica](#) store in the Nordstrom wing in Galleria IV. (There's a grand opening on Thursday, June 2, from 7 to 10 p.m.) Take a look around at all the great fashionable athletic wear for summer. (Bring your wallet.)

You like Italian food, right? How about Italian food and fashion? **The Italian Expo at George R. Brown Convention Center this weekend** features an assortment of fashion shows and will host the 2011 Italian Fashion Exchange 4-7 p.m. Sunday that has aspiring fashion designers competing before a panel of judges. The expo will feature the work of Italian shoe designer [Salvatore Ferragamo](#), [Chloe Dao](#), Houston makeup artist [Marc Harvey](#) with his [Elementtwo™](#) cosmetics (Harvey is the office makeup artist of the Italian Expos and will be handling 30 shows.) Tickets to the Italian Expo are \$15 at the door, free for children under 12.



Fashion on Display This Weekend at Italian Expo



By *KyAnn Lewis*, GalTime Editor
on Thursday, June 2, 2011

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When you hear about the Italian Expo, you probably think food! Eats and drinks aren't the only thing to indulge in this weekend at Houston's third annual Italian Expo. Treat yourself to fashion and shopping, too.

At the event, you can see emerging Texas designers compete before a panel of judges that include renowned Houston fashion designers Chloe Dao and

David Peck and other Houstonians that are high profile in the fashion scene. The fashion competition brings together the fashions of Italy and the U.S. The local designers will showcase their current collections during fashion runway shows and compete for the first place prize of a trip to Italy. The winner will be announced at the end of the expo on Sunday and will be awarded a fabulous trip to Milan, Italy for February 2012 Fashion Week. Students from Houston Community College-Central's School of Fashion Design will also present their fashion creations during special runway shows throughout the expo! Visit the [Italian Expo website](#) for a complete schedule of designers and fashion shows participating in the Italian Fashion Exchange.

What else can you expect at the event? Food, of course! Taste Italian cuisine served up by some of Houston's best restaurants. Shop for original Italian handcrafted items, check out luxury cars and motorbikes as well as get travel and tourism information from the various regions of Italy. Expect music and dancing, too!

The Italian Expo starts Friday and runs through Sunday. Hours are 4-10:30 p.m. on Friday, Noon-10:30 p.m. on Saturday and Noon to 7 p.m. on Sunday. The fun takes place in Exhibit Hall D at the George R Brown Convention Center. Admission is \$15 at the door, but kids under 12 get in free.





Post-Event Coverage

Battling Chefs, Wines, Cheeses, and Foods at this Weekend's Italian Expo

FRIDAY, JUNE 03, 2011 [NO COMMENTS](#)

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(EXPIRED)

Do you know what time it is? Here's a hint: Italian wines galore and the aroma of Italian foods filling the air. Still clueless? It's time for the [Italian Expo!](#)

Everything is bigger in Texas and this year's Italian Expo is no exception. It's the country's largest "Made in Italy" expo and it's happening this weekend in Houston. It may not be like taking an actual tour of Italy but after putting all five senses to use, the look, sound, feel, smell, and taste of Italy will come to life inside the George R. Brown Convention Center.

This year promises to be an exciting event showcasing more than just Italian art and fashion, but lots of attention paid to food and wine too. With so much to do at the expo, it may become overwhelming to decide where to begin. You can't go wrong by beginning your adventure with food and wine sampling.

Known for their vast wine selections and gourmet food items, [Spec's Wines Spirits & Finer Foods](#) will have a [Food and Wine Tasting Area](#). There, guests will find vendors providing **authentic Italian food and wine samples** to guests in attendance. Taste **pastas, risottos, olives, cheeses, meats**, and much more. Additionally, **over 150 Italian wines** will featured and all will be available for tasting.

If you still have energy to press forward, check out [Who's Your Chef?](#) The competition features chefs from local Italian restaurants such as Chef Maurizio Ferrarese of [Quattro](#) at Four Seasons, Chef Michele Mazza of [Trattoria Il Mulino](#), Chef Renato De Pirro of Hotel Granduca's [Ristorante Cavour](#), and Chef Cunningham West of Hotel Derek's [Valentino](#).

The chefs will compete in a three day competition to win the title of Master of the Kitchen (or if you want to take the Italian route, Maestro della Cucina). It's a must-see if you're a foodie. Not only will attendees get the opportunity to see their favorite chefs cook, but they'll be able to **taste their creations**. Okay, so even if you're not a foodie, watching chefs from Houston's best Italian restaurants duking it out, plus tasting their food is pretty awesome too.

Round out your trip to the Italian Expo with food straight from the restaurants of the chefs featured. Try **Pistachio Crusted Lamb Chops** from Valentino, **Sicilian Arancini (deep fried risotto balls filled with ground beef, tomato sauce, mozzarella, and peas)** from Carmelo's Ristorante Italiano, **Ravioli Porcini e Champagne (porcini ravioli in a truffle-Champagne sauce)** from Trattoria Il Mulino, and many [more delicious dishes](#).

The Italian Expo begins Friday, June 3rd and will run through Sunday, June 5th. Hours for each day are located on the [expo's website](#). Tickets are available at the box office.

Friday, June 3rd - Sunday, June 5th

Cost: \$15 at the door, free for children 12 and under

George R. Brown Convention Center
Exhibit Hall D
1001 Avenida de las Americas
Houston, TX 77010

Houston, TX

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Houston's italian runway showdown

June 3, 2011 12:13 pm CT



Nicole Morris

Houston Fashion Finds Examiner



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Spring 2011
Credits: Dolce & Gabbana

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- [David Peck](#)

The three-day Italian Expo features emerging Texas designers; Ann Hoang, James Martinez, Chioma Ioku and Uche Osamor, Danny Nguyen, Kutcka Hill, Shawn Kingsley, Shirin Askari and Simran Rihal who will compete before an esteemed panel of judges, who are renowned Houston fashion designers Chloe Dao and David Peck, Houston Magazine's Editor-In-Chief Jeff Gremillion, Fashion Group International's Regional Director Josephine Firat, and Tootsies' Buyer Jennifer Cunningham.

Fashion Designers will be competing for a trip to Milan Fashion Week...

Houston's "Italian Runway Showdown," will take you on a tour of Italy and experience "La Dolce Vita" without even leaving the country at Houston's third annual Italian Expo during the weekend of June 3-5 at George R. Brown Convention Center's Exhibit Hall D. Eat, shop, and enjoy life like an Italian!

Food, wine, fashion, design, tourism, art, and entertainment are showcased as the cultures of Italy and Houston come together at Italian Expo. Over 100 companies and vendors from Italy and the U.S. will be present, displaying and selling their products, straight from Italy, for three days only. We welcome all to enjoy this exciting family-friendly event by tasting delicious Italian cuisine, viewing fashion runway shows of high-quality apparel and fine jewelry, shopping for original Italian handcrafted items, and discovering luxury cars, motorbikes, and travel and tourism information from the various regions of Italy.

Italian Expo is held annually in both Chicago and Houston and is organized by the Italian American Chambers of Commerce located in those two cities.

For more information on fashion show schedule, event info and volunteer oppourtunities click [here](#).

Houston Italian Expo, featuring 150 Italian wines and Italian cuisine

June 3, 2011 (Fri) - June 5, 2011 (Sun) from 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Houston, TX

 Add to Calendar |  Tell a Friend |  Share |  Tweet this Event |  +1 |  0

Cost: \$15 at door; \$10 pre-sale online at www.italianexpo.us

Event Details

 Wine OR Wine & Food

EVENT ID #371017

 Tags: [Food](#) [Wine](#) [Celebrity Chefs](#) [Tour](#)

Where can you taste hundreds of Italian wines in one place? If you answered, "Italian Expo," you would be correct! Italian Expo, America's largest "Made in Italy" expo that showcases the best of Italy in the areas of food, wine, tourism, design, fashion, art, and entertainment, is being held June 3-5 at George R. Brown Convention Center's Exhibit Hall D.

For Italians, it's all about quality: fashion, cars, cuisine, and of course, wine. If you want to taste and learn everything about Italian wine and all its glorious regions, Italian Expo 2011 will offer an extravagant spread of over 150 different Italian wines, along with the iconic food products that pair with them.

Spec's Wines, Spirits & Finer Foods will be on hand again at the Expo, sponsoring a large food and wine tasting area. Italian Expo guests can enjoy an array of classic and new Italian finds, discovered by Joseph Kemble, Italian wine buyer for Spec's. Kemble is a major contributor to the Expo in collaboration with the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce of Texas (IACC), the organization that hosts this annual event. "I got tired of Houston Italian festivals being about bad music, boring food, checked tablecloths and basic Chianti, so we wanted to bring the best Italy has to offer," says Kemble. Attendees can expect wines from all 20 regions of Italy, along with some visiting Italian wine producers who will be available to chat about their wines.

Adult guests will be greeted at the entrance of the Expo with a sample of Spritz to kick off the journey through Italy. Not familiar with Spritz? Perfect for summer, this aperitif is a favorite of the stylish northern Italians. The cocktail is made with Aperol, an Italian vermouth, mixed with Prosecco, seltzer, and garnished with a slice of orange. "In Milan, we will meet our friends in local bars after work for a Spritz drink and small bites. It's so refreshing," says Paolo Fronza, IACC's Executive Director.

Visit Website: [Italian Expo](http://ItalianExpo)

Houston / Food & Drink / Restaurants

Escape the heat (and humidity) this afternoon at the Italian Expo

June 5, 2011 11:21 am CT



Mike Riccetti

Houston Cheap Eats Examiner



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The GRB sort of looks like this for the Italian Expo....

Credits: Getty Images

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If you don't have plans today, Sunday, **the third annual Italian Expo at the George R. Brown Convention Center** is a good place to avoid the unseasonably brutal heat and humidity. The Expo is a showcase of Italian food, wine, fashion, design, art, entertainment and tourism.

There are **over 300 different wines to sample for the price of admission**, which is \$15 at the door and \$10 in advance **on-line** (you'll need to check if this is still an option). There is also wine and food to purchase and consume at your leisure. There will be a number of cooking demonstrations and also a competition. There are a number of terrific wines including a few Brunellos plus a number of unique ones from areas that are rather underrepresented on area shelves and wine lists.

I've been there the past two days, and the layout is better thought-out this year, less of a convention feel as it was in the past (and difficult not to have in a large convention center). The complimentary Aperol Spritz not too far from entry was very welcome might have been the biggest improvement. Well, a big one at least.

If you are going, the Italian Expo is in Hall D, which is close to the Hilton. The Discovery Green underground parking and the Toyota Center parking garage are two wise parking options; nearby and covered. Street parking is free on Sundays.

Italian Expo

Sunday, June 5 – noon to 7PM

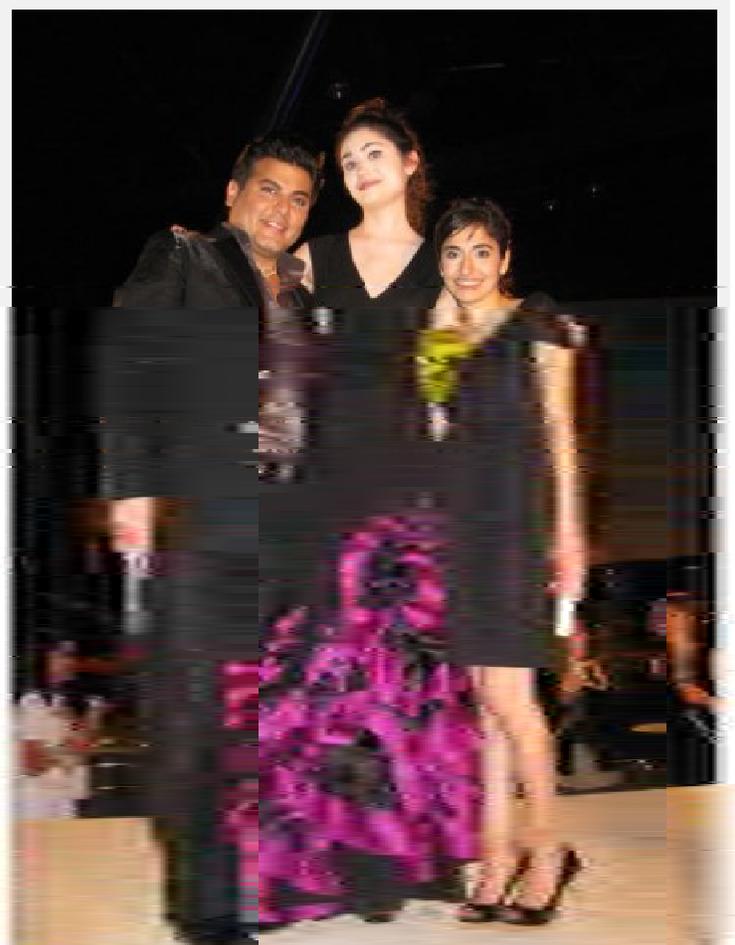


Shop Girl

Shop smart and look fabulous with Joy Sewing

« Weekend Roundup: Actress Kate Walsh at Sephora, fashion hits Italian Expo | [Main](#) | Heidi Klum takes on the Internet with new lifestyle site »

Project Runway Season 6 designer wins trip to Italy at Italian Expo



Makeup expert Edward Sanchez served as co-host to the Italian Expo and HCC designer challenge with winner and Project Runway Season 6 designer Shirin Askari (right) and model Kathrin Williams wearing Shirin's design. Shirin's beat out seven designers for an all-expense paid trip to Italy.



Menswear designer Emmanuel B. Eloundou was also at the Italian Expo with his Bengjof Couture collection. He specializes in special-occasion suits.



Houston designer Chloe Dao showcased new pieces from her collection.

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Posted by Joy Sewing on June 6, 2011 at 11:37 am | [Permalink](#) [Comments Off](#)

Categories: [General](#)

Tags: [Bengjof Couture](#), [Chloe Dao](#), [HCC](#), [Italian Expo](#), [Project Runway](#)

Houston | Style & Fashion | Women's Style

Touch the Sky: TIKI GLAM

June 6, 2011 10:31 pm CT



Raygon Fields

Houston Women's Fashion Examiner



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TIKI GLAM

Credits: Merry Widjaya



Slideshow: TIKI GLAM



Video: Tiki Glam 2011

Last year, I had the pleasure of having a phone interview with Designer Kuteka Hill of Tiki Glam on my BlogTalkRadio Show. Fresh from Houston's Italian Expo, her designs have made editorial pages across the country, in addition to, an ANTM television feature. The element that anchors her body of work as a designer is that she's creatively consistent. Going into her sixth year with TikiGlam, Kuteka maintains her pace with collections that rival some of the best red carpet creations.

From voluminous ruffles to whimsical wraps, Tiki Glam takes its wearer into a place void of undesirable designs. She beckons the Wonder in every woman with beauty and class that compels a runway to her feet. Ms. Hill excels in Haute Couture, which for some gets a bit tricky. Ready to Wear Fashion is what you swipe on your Neiman's card. Hauteness has to have an element of fantasy. Couture maintains structure and volleys between costume and "Caviar Luxury". She embodies all of these things; 2011 will be surely be the year Tiki Glam will touch the Sky!

Booze

Tiny Cars and Expensive Wine at the 3rd Annual Italian Expo

By [Katharine Shilcutt](#) Mon., Jun. 6 2011 at 12:00 PM

[Comments \(8\)](#) 

Categories: [Booze](#)

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Photos by [Christopher Patronella, Jr.](#)

Wine: a guarantee of a good time.

The 3rd annual [Italian Expo](#) was held this past weekend at the George R. Brown Convention Center, directly next to one of the gun shows that seems to rotate throughout Houston every other weekend. Walking up to the convention center, it was fairly easy to pick out the attendees of each: gun cases for one group, cases of wine for the other.

And the wine really was the best draw this year at the Italian Expo, which also showcases a few other things Italians do well: tiny cars, fast cars, fashion, food and very small models of very expensive boats. I'm only interested in one of those other things -- food, obviously -- but the most interesting thing I witnessed on Saturday afternoon had nothing to do with food or wine.

Instead, it was a woman's *mons veneris* on the runway at one of the many fashion shows. My friend Judy and I did double-takes as we looked from each other back to the bare mound, in disbelief at what we were seeing.

"Is that...her vagina?" Judy asked, incredulously.

"It sure is," I replied. "See? They cut a little panel out in the dress so you could see it."

"I do not understand fashion," Judy sighed. We looked at each other in our plain black dresses and flat sandals, then decided it would be best if we moved away from the runway and back into our comfort zone: food.



Freshly-sliced prosciutto.

Nine chefs from Italian restaurants around Houston were offering samples of their cooking all weekend, as well as participating in the "Who's Your Chef?" competition that would culminate with a verdict on Sunday afternoon. The word "chef" was stretched a bit, however, as Judy and I spotted several "chefs" who are undoubtedly extremely hard-working and talented guys, but not chefs; they are kitchen managers. But six of one, half a dozen of the other, I suppose.

And their food was good, even if you had to purchase a sheet of tickets, State Fair-style, to sample it. My favorite came in the form of a very simple spinach calzone from Arcodoro, topped with thin shavings of prosciutto that were being carved off a massive pork leg by Chef Giancarlo Ferrara himself.

Throughout the rest of the Expo, gelato and espresso were being served in a genteel manner unbecoming a hulking convention center, and slim, beautiful women browsed racks of designer clothing and sculpturally fascinating shoes. We continued to move toward the end goal: the Spec's food and wine area.



Yeah, I'm hungry too, kid.

Once inside, however, we found that it was more akin to a Saturday afternoon at most Spec's in town: small samples and tastings with long lines and noisy crowds. I managed to find a few gems amidst the crush of people, such as an unusual Masi Campofiorin that was not something I expected to like. With notes of bitter cherries and licorice, I quite expected to dislike this 70 percent Corvina blend from Veneto, but instead found it charmingly funky and couldn't help thinking how wonderful it would taste with the tiniest bit of chill on it.

Ditto the 100 percent Grechetto Arnaldo Caprai Grecante, a dark yellow wine that was surprisingly light and fruity with a mild minerality. And I was equally enamored of a much lighter Donnafugata Anthilia with a more pronounced minerality that would be an ideal summer wine.

All three pours came from the same table, too, an oddity. But Folio was doing a terrific job of explaining its wines in a friendly manner while keeping the crowds moving, something I would have liked to see more of at the Expo overall.

On the way out, I stopped and sat in one of the tiny Fiat cars near the exit. They're alluringly small -- almost like Smart Cars -- and alluringly priced. I imagined myself jetting around town like a suave European, purchasing cases of wine and sculptural footwear and dresses that have convenient portholes for my lady bits.

And then a friend reminded me: "That car would get crushed like a Dr Pepper can in Houston traffic." With that, the Italian Expo was over. But I'll still be stopping by Spec's for some of that wine.

See more photos from the Italian Expo in our slideshow.

2011 HOUSTON WEB AWARDS JULY

Days of Wine and Pasta: Italian Expo 2011

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Houston's third annual Italian Expo gave food and fashion lovers a taste of La Dolce Vita at the GRB this weekend, including a little [upskirt action](#). PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER PATRONELLA, JR.

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Italian (Wine) Expo a Huge Success in Houston

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Joseph Kemble - the "wine man" for the highly successful Italian Expo held every year in Houston

The **Italian Expo** in Houston was a huge success for the third year in a row. Sponsored by the **Italian American Chamber of Commerce** and **Specs**, It's the next best thing to Vinality without having to go there. Upwards of 40,000 people passed through the halls a day this past weekend.

Huge kudos to **Joseph Kemble** and the fine folks at **Specs** and the **Italian American Chamber of Commerce** for another great Italian Expo in Houston. And a huge Grazie to Italian wine partners **Banfi, Baroncini, Contadi Castaldi (and Bellavista), Mezzacorona, Petra, TMT USA, Winebow, Zaccagnini and Zonin**, many who made the trek from Italy and all over the USA to show the Italian wine love to Joseph and his company. Teamwork makes the dream work!

More shots below:



Giulio Galli TMT USA VP shows the SuperTuscan wines from Petra to Collectors looking to cellar fine Tuscan wines



Jim Pettit pours a favorite Sicilian red while his wife gives her feet needed and earned break. Standing for 10 hours on concrete is tough work, even when the wine is flowing



Tiffany Ross pleasing the crowds with the Zonin Prosecco - which is spreading like wildfire in Texas!



Maura McNeany of Winebow proudly displaying a Tiefenbrunner white with one of her volunteers



The ever popular wines from Banfi had Italian wine lovers lined up from the moment it opened to the last bell!



Elie Massoud, of Euro Mid in Houston toasts the event with a stunning Contadi Castaldi Franciacorta Rose from Sara Pedrali of TMT USA



Tony Laveglia showed the new Zaccagnini wines including the stunning 2010 Cerasuolo of Montepulciano



(L to R) Alberto Chioni, the international sales manager for Petra, Contadi Castaldi and Bellavista, Alfonso Cevoia, the corporate import director for Glazer's and Monica Marcucci, export manager for Baroncini share a festive moment in the TMT USA booths



Italian wine and food lovers came from near and far. Here, Giulio Galli of TMT USA shares a moment with his friend Paul Di Carlo of Jimmy's from Dallas

LIGHTS CAMERA ACTION

HOUSTON INDO-AMERICAN SOCIETY NEWS

Passion For Fashion: Italiano Style



Fashionistas indulged in their passion for fashion while foodies indulged in Italian cuisine and wine. All this in the heart of Downtown Houston at the George R Brown Convention Center from June 3-5 2011. The **Italian Expo** took off with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday afternoon with a select number of guests that included the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce of Texas, exhibitors, models, emcee Edward Sanchez and Hasti Taghi, fashion designers and media.

The **Italian Fashion Exchange** hosted a fashion competition that brought together fashions of Italy and Houston designers. A group of emerging local designers showcased their collections during fashion runway shows and competed for the first place prize of a fashion trip to Milan, Italy for the February 2012 Fashion Week.

The fashion competition took place during this Italian Expo in the form of three fashion shows from Friday to Sunday. The designers were judged by a select panel of judges, which included **Chloe Dao** Designer of DAO Chloe DAO; **David Peck**, Designer of CrOp by David Peck; **Jeff Gremillion**, Editor of Houston Magazine; and **Josephine Gough**, Regional Director of Fashion Group International. The Italian Fashion Exchange competition included eight emerging fashion designers that were:

- **Abi Ferrin**, Abi Ferrin
- **Kuteka Hill**, IIKIGlam
- **James Martinez**, Barror & J.
- **Shawn Kingsley**, ODK Couture
- **Chioma Ikoku and Uche Osamor**, Elani Blu
- **Shirin Askari**, Shirin Askari Designs LLC
- **Danny Nguyen**, Danny Nguyen Couture
- **Simran Rihal**, Elan Couture

Project Runway fame **Shirin Askari**, 25 will be soon flying to Milan for the 2012 Fashion Week. "I am so excited to have won this competition and it is beyond explanation. I have always wanted to go to Italy, being a fashion designer, and now being able to go for the Fashion Week is like a dream come true," says the petite Shirin. As a designer Askari describes her style as chic classic look with a modern twist who has love for vintage clothing. "I think women in the 50s and 60s *dressed up more* and I really like that," added Shirin.

Another designer, creating style without borders, at the expo was Indian born, Houston based fashion designer **Simran Rihal** who awed the audience with her chic classy clothing. "This is a great experience to be at the Italian Expo, mix and mingle with clients and models from Italy, and a great way to find out what they wanted," says Simran. "I am also excited to have sold most of my merchandise," stated Rihal. Elan Couture can be simple and at the same time has the grandeur look with fabrics such as pure silk, georgettes and cotton with fine embroidery with thread work or sequins. The rust tunic with gold shrug stole the show. Other tunics teamed with short shorts was haute. Her style is unique and fresh and yet undoubtedly ELAN reminds me of the next Tory Burch with very affordable prices.

The three-day Italian Expo hosted over 21,000 attendees and 150 Italian and American exhibitors. In addition to the fashion competition and fashion shows, this showcase of Italian excellence featured food and wine importers, handcrafted goods, Houston's finest Italian restaurants, luxury car and motorbike displays, travel and tour operators, various artists, and musical and dance performers.



Jeff Shell (center) with the ladies



« La Prairie Launches Its First Makeup Artist Color Collection...

Guys Need Their Time Too...and It's This Sunday, June 19th »

And the Winner Is?!!



Ahh, to have been in Italy this past weekend would have been bellissimo!! Couldn't be there? Well then, I hope you at least made it to the Italian Expo at the George K. Brown where Hall D was filled with many, many native Italians. There was a taste of fine fashion, wines, food and some deliciouso restaurant delicacies to taste, and some amazing cars and motorbikes to feast your eyes on.

Our Chic Sheet Star today is an established local (Dallas) designer, **Shirin Askari**, who is the winner of the Fashion Design Competition, which consisted of 8 finalists that all had established collections, were from

this area, Houston or Dallas, and had a heart filled with desire to be a great designer and to learn from the best. Each contestant picked their favorite styles for their fashion show this Sunday where they presented their designs and themselves for the local judges. The prize for this, a trip to Milano for Fashion Week 2012 to meet and have working meetings with some of Italy's finest design teams...and Shirin took home the prize!

This 25 year old Dallas native began sewing under the guidance of her Mom at the age of 4, made her first dress at 7 and continued to sew her own clothes. After graduating in Fashion Design from North Texas, she worked in NYC and then was encouraged to audition for Project Runway, Season 6. That was the season of the big move to L.A. and she says the experience is something that she will never forget. When asked what she learned from that all-consuming, intense 5-week competition, she said "I learned how to take positives from criticism, that everyone isn't going to like what I do and how to be a tough competitor!" (Good training I would say for facing retail buyers!)



When asked how she would describe her designs, her response was, "Chic and classic with a modern twist," and looks to vintage clothing for her inspiration...how to take many of the great classic styles of yester:day and change them up to make them work for today's modern woman.

Her target audience began as the 20 to 30-somethings but has evolved to include the Boomer set... hey, I get it, when I shop with my girls and we like the same things...age is definitely a state of mind! She also sizes from XS to L, with a large being the equivalent of a 14.

When asked what the future holds for this young talent...other than the Milan experience of course, she said simply that she is always with her camera, taking photos for inspiration for her next collection. My suggestion to her, be prepared to take lots of photos of Milano's Golden Triangle. Their fine boutiques are chocked full with more fashion than two eyes can absorb...and to please think of me while you're doing just that!

KENNETH BRACKETT

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Passion For Fashion: Italiano Style

Wednesday, June 15, 2011

By Kenneth Brackett

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Watch the Video here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ve4t5KYFVIY>

Article source: <http://goarticles.com/article/Passion-For-Fashion-Italiano-Style/4791387/>

June 2011

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MY TABLE



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June 17, 2011

Two of our favorite folks, both actively involved in our recent Toque 5 dinner series, have left their restaurant jobs. Chef Juan Carlos Gonzalez has departed **Bistro Alex** at Hotel Sorella in



CityCentre. He plans to return to his hometown of New Orleans to work at **Commander's Palace** for a while and then hopes to open his own place in the French Quarter. And Carlos Ballon, the

personable bartender at **Mockingbird Bistro**, has left to take some time off for himself ... **Chuck Russell** emailed us to say he is no longer at **Farrago**, but is looking at two new restaurant/lounge ventures, including one in the Heights ...

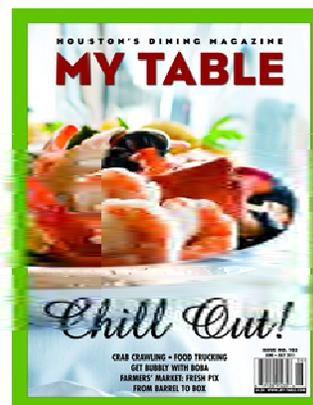
Marc Borel has left downtown's **Samba Grille** and is heading up the wine program at the newly opened **Bacchus** on Dunlavy just north of Westheimer ... Over at the new **Brasserie 19** in River Oaks Shopping Center, both the opening chef **Michael Gaspard** and his replacement **Antoine Ware** have already left. As you probably know, Ware worked for Brasserie 19 owners **Charles Clark** and **Grant Cooper** as chef **Chris Shepherd's** sous-chef at the now-shuttered **Catalan** for many years. We were surprised that his stint at Brasserie 19 ended so soon.

We're sorry to report that **Clary's Seafood** in Galveston burned this week. Early word is that it was an electrical fire. The dining room and kitchen were untouched, but there is still much infrastructure to repair. **Clary Milburn** had only recently completed repairs to damage from Hurricane Ike ... **Swamplot**, the real estate/architectural blog, reports that the **11th Street Cafe** in the Heights has closed and will reopen (perhaps as soon as tomorrow) as **Ruggles 11th Street Cafe**. We also hear that a third **Ruggles Green** is in the works, perhaps in Meyerland ... **Lasagna House** will open their third location, this one in the former **Amici Ristorante** space in Sugar Land.

Ouisie's Table owner **Elouise Adams Jones**, aka **Ouisie**, has announced the name of her new restaurant, which is scheduled to open this September at 2810 Westheimer, a spot temporarily occupied by **Tony Mandola's Gulf Coast Kitchen**. It will be called **The Bird & The Bear**, **Ouisie's American Bistro**, and the logo features a traveling black bear accompanied by an adventurous blue bird, both of which illustrate the spirit she hopes to capture. The **Bird & The Bear**, says **Ouisie**, will be a little more casual, have lots of Southern flair and no shortage of surprises in both menu and decor. Long-time **Ouisie's Table** GM **Wafi Dinari** is managing partner in the new venture.

Congratulations to chef/restaurateur **Carmelo Mauro**, who was voted *Maestro della Cucina 2011* by attendees at the Houston Italian Expo (held June 3-5 at the George R. Brown). Among his dishes that seduced expo visitors: *arancini* (baked rice balls), risotto with truffles and Sicilian pizza. Mauro's namesake restaurant, **Carmelo's**, is located at 14795 Memorial.

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