

THE GOOD LIFE COTTAGE INDUSTRY



Paciugo

Cristiana Ginatta cools down Dallas' summer heat with fresh, handmade gelato

Cristiana's gelato recipes, inherited from her grandfather, feature high-quality fresh ingredients from local and regional producers.

Her former life Before launching her successful gelato business in Texas, Paciugo (pa-CHOO-go), Cristiana Ginatta studied accounting at Universita' Bocconi outside Milan and worked in an Italian museum. Childhood memories of her grandfather's smooth, creamy gelato led her to attend a school to learn about the soft Italian

ice cream and apprentice in a gelateria in Turin. "My father was always telling me I should own my own business. He gave me my grandfather's recipes, but I was afraid to get started," she says.

Turning point In Turin, Cristiana met her future husband, Ugo, a passionate entrepreneur who helped her find the confidence to open her own business. Following their dream, she and Ugo relocated to Dallas, where they faced a number of unexpected difficulties getting Paciugo off the ground. "No one knew what gelato was, and the landlords didn't want to take a chance on it," Cristiana says. Even more troubling was that they had to convince local dairies to work with them. "Because the dairy farmers didn't know us, they wouldn't trust us with their milk." Thankfully, family relationships and Slow Food, an international organization dedicated to preserving regional food customs, opened the door to many Dallas-area producers.

Trade secret Know the locals. "In Italy, there is a word—a feeling, really—called *campanilismo*: the feeling of belonging to your territory and your community. Everyone is connected to the community and their whole life is centered around it. Food is related to topography, the environment, and the country. If you go to Sicily you see certain foods and traditions, and in Milan, everything will be totally different," Cristiana says. Her customers appreciate local and seasonal products, and she's happy to search them out. "When I moved to Dallas I had to establish local connections for peaches, watermelons, cheeses—everything. You've got to explore your area to find the best products."

What's hot "This summer, several of our gelatos will feature ingredients high in antioxidants, like berries, the superfruit açai, pineapple, green tea, chocolate, and extra-virgin olive oil," says Cristiana. "We'll also offer fresh basil, fruit, and wine, and we'll introduce a chocolate variation of our Mediterranean Sea Salt Caramel."

Where to buy Visit paciugo.com for stores. ■

GLOSSARY

PACIUGO: messy concoction, as in "you're cooking and having a blast making a mess," says Cristiana.