

Good evening everybody. First of all, I would like to thank the organizers of this event for inviting me and giving me the opportunity to share my personal and professional experience in the food domain. Particularly in the domain of the Gelato Makers, a world of passion and taste and flavors I'm honored and proud to be part of since 2014. Meaning, since when I decided to follow a dream that changed my life completely.

I was born and raised in Sardinia, a small island in the center of Mediterranean Sea, that is why I apologize in advance for my English!

As any native Italian, my first approach with food was following my mom and my grandmother while they spent time in the kitchen, learning recipes, watching them preparing food and helping them in cooking. The best part of it is that, since my grandfather was both an entrepreneur and a farmer, we used to cook only with seasonal and local ingredients.

My education path, though, went through a totally different direction. Because, when I was a little girl I decided to study electrical engineer and after working a couple of years as a consultant, I decided to experience a more creative field, always engineering related: I had a master in lighting design. This master changed my approach to the job and opened my mind since everything was then all about creativity and art. In fact, when you make a lighting project you are creating a new space otherwise dark at night. And doing so, you discover a lot of new opportunities making different choices. Somehow, it has a very strict relation with cooking.

I worked as a lighting designer for almost 20 years and during that time cooking was one of my passions, my own private "shelter". Making marmelade and jams was kind of a stress releasing hobby to me. And friends and family were quite happy about it, since my "goods" became their gifts. The best gift, though, was to me, because creating combinations of fruit, spices, nuts and other several ingredients was really really funny. Passion is the engine of all this, but studies are important too – remember, I'm an engineer after all. So, while following my cooking passion as a hobby, I started attending courses with a 1 Michelin star chef friend of mine.

My husband and I worked for a big company and our secret dream was to make something by ourselves that would make people happy. One day he came home and he told me "Do you want to quit your job and come with me to open a gelato place? Now or never!"

We attended courses in Bologna with Maestro Giampaolo Valli, a gelato guru who taught us important gelato making techniques always putting in first place quality of ingredients and the tradition of an ancient job.

So, we came to California, made some scouting for a place and found an amazing spot in La Jolla. And in February 2014 we opened our first gelato shop on Girard Ave.

Since the very beginning we have always wanted to make a gelato that's true to our native Italy that yet reflects what we love most about our new home of California: the bounty of seasonal ingredients.

My idea of gelato is based on my Sardinian/Italian/Mediterranean roots: simple food made of high quality ingredients linked to the territory, following the traditional slow process method combined with ingenuity. Our suppliers are from the local Farmer's market, families that we know and we trust, sharing the same idea of food with us.

That is what I love most of my new professional, but also personal, path: anything you eat, drink or smell in this beautiful and rich in diversity California State is an inspiration to me. It makes me wonder how it can be part of a combination for a brand new gelato flavor, whether a sweet frozen treat or a savory one made express for the restaurant chefs we usually work with in partnership in San Diego.

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And I never stop experiencing, blending, mixing ingredients whose inspiration for gelato come to me both from my native cultural heritage and my new home here in South California. And this is the addiction to the new "creative part" of my mind.

Coming back to our dream, the reason why we came here, in Italy we use to say: "Poco poco ma non privarti del gelato", meaning, have a little scoop, not a big one, but don't give up to Gelato.

Because, remember, if Gelato makes you happy, a top quality gelato can makes you even happier!

Thank you for listening to my story. Good night.