



Beet carmelle from Quiescence

Chris Malloy

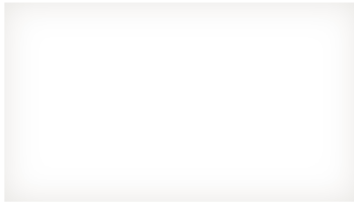
You Can't Get Much More Local or Arizona Than This New-Age Pasta

CHRIS MALLOY | APRIL 19, 2018 | 8:00AM

D Dustin Christofolo is rolling out beautiful beet carmelle pasta at Quiescence in south Phoenix.

H The world knows more than 600 pasta shapes. One of the cooler shapes is carmelle. It's a stuffed pasta, like ravioli or agnolotti, but shaped like salt water taffy: long, skinny, with twists at the ends. The filling goes in the tubular middle.

ADVERTISING



Carmelle is a new-age pasta, one you won't find in old Italian cookbooks, one that has spread through social media and thinking chefs like Christofolo.

He uses a hand-crank machine to make pasta. He has rolled pasta in Italy and learned from afar from some of modern pasta's luminaries, like The Geometry of Pasta and San Francisco's Flour + Water, one of the country's top pasta restaurants.

As he continues his work at Quiescence on this spring morning, he fills the cylinders of dough evenly. They show few imperfect lines that belie their hand-making. You might think they look smooth at first blush, but they aren't. Coarse specks of semolina flour stipple the tubes and end twists, texturing the carmelle like sandpaper. The dough is purple, deep purple, a vivacious hue that radiates color and shouts, loudly and clearly, *this ain't your nonna's pasta*.



A fleet of carmelle ready to be cooked.

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That said, this new pasta channels one of the few, old principles that unites Italian cooking from 12,000-foot Alps in the north to a volcanic island 100 miles from Africa in the south: Use fresh food from nearby.

Christofolo prides himself on using ingredients from Soil & Seed. Overseen by Billy Anthony and

Christofolo himself, Soil & Seed is the garden at the Farm at South Mountain, the south Phoenix complex that Quiescence also calls home. Its proximity to the garden, reachable in a walk of 30 seconds, lets Christofolo use the garden's bounty in building fresh pasta dishes. He can forge ahead with novel pasta creations while keeping in line with timeless Italian ideas about freshness.

Beets color the pasta. They come right from the garden. The eggs in the dough come from the property, too. The dough for the carmelle is mixed from beets, eggs, salt, and Hayden 00 flour. The only way you could get any fresher would be to dry the salt and mill the flour yourself.

The pasta is filled with puréed dates. Guess where they're from?

Once shaped and cooked, the pasta joins other ingredients from the farm.



Seed + Soil's row of beets.

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There are ping pong and French breakfast radishes. There are snap peas sliced on a bias, lemons freed from nearby trees, preserved, and sliced thin. Christofolo's Danzeisen Dairy milk doesn't come from the farm, but the ricotta his kitchen makes from it, in a way, does.

If you order the carmelle while they remain on the menu for the next few weeks, they will arrive nested into all these ingredients. A sauce of chicken stock, wine, and butter will show

under the noodle tubes. (If you don't eat meat, you can ask for the sauce to be made with vegetable stock.)

The bright corollas of nasturtium flowers wink from places atop the pasta. Below, chopped beets and the beet-containing pasta have purpled the thin pool of sauce.

The pasta tastes earthy and a little sweet. It tastes not so much like being in a garden, but like walking sandaled through a certain garden in south Phoenix on a warm spring day. Don't believe me? After your carmelle, take a stroll over to the farm.

Quiescence. 6106 South 32nd Street; 602-276-0601.

Tuesday through Saturday 5 p.m. to close; closed Sunday and Monday.