

History of Society

Leaving Italy behind in the 1920's, Guiseppe Codognotto passed through Melbourne to find nowhere for Italians to eat and congregate. Resolving this, 'The Italian workers' club' in Little Bourke Street was established and became the hub for Melbourne's Italian migrant community. When Guiseppe moved the club to 23 Bourke Street in 1932, it became 'The Italian Society'. Having run non stop as an Italian restaurant on the site ever since, The Society is one of Melbourne's oldest Italian dining institutions.

Since the early days, the venue has undergone several incarnations. 'Italian' was dropped from the name in the 40s to avoid war time anti-Italian sentiment. During this time, many Italians, if they weren't interned, headed to Lygon Street where a strong Italian community was developing. At this time, The Society's appeal opened up to local Melbournians who came in to try, (many for their first time) the Italian food and hospitality provided by Guiseppe's son Rino and daughter Rina.

In its glory days from the 40s through to the 80s, Rino became the well known face of The Society, and was one of Melbourne's original 'Spaghetti Mafia', so named by the media for their role in bringing the finest Italian food and service to the city.

The Codognotto's era ended when Rino retired in 1984. Since then it has seen name changes to La Republique Societé, Rhumbarella's, back to The Society Cafe Wine Bar, until the DiMattina Group brought the venue back to its roots as The Society in April 2007.

Coined by the media, and credited with running Melbourne's Italian food culture, the 'Spaghetti Mafia' was a close knit group of Italian restaurateurs who regularly dined together, sharing a passion for food and wine.

It included Rino Codognotto (The Society), David Triaca (Café D'Italia later The Latin), Lou and Joe Molina (The Imperial Hotel), Leon Massoni (The Florentino), Mario Virgona (Virgona's in Fitzroy) and Ferdie Vigano (Mario's). Ferdie Vigano was father to another Melbourne food legend, Mietta O'Donnell.



Sketches done by Barry Humphries 1978 at Society Restaurant

Society's Timeline

- 1925** Guiseppe Codognotto opens the Italian Men's Working Club in Little Bourke Street
- 1932** The club or 'The Italian Society' moves to 23 Bourke Street
- 1940s** Rino Codognotto drops 'Italian' from the name to avoid wartime anti-Italian sentiment
- 1952** Society obtains liquor license for the first time
- 1984** After more than 40 years running Society, Rino Codognotto retires
- 1998** Restaurant renamed Republique Brasserie
- 2002** Restaurant renamed Rhumbarella's
- 2005** Restaurant renamed Society Café Wine Bar
- 2007** Restaurant returns as Society

Assaggini della Casa

Affettati della Casa 15

A cured meat platter comprising of;
Prosciutto San Danielle,
Fellino salami ,
Wagu Bresaola

Olive Miste 10

A selection of Australian olives,
served warm w/ grissini

Arancini tradizionali 10

Aborio rice balls stuffed w/ mozzarella,
peas
& tomato served w/ spiced tomato sugo

Bruschette assortite 10

Assorted bruschetta;
Tomato, onion & basil,
Olive tepanade
Balsamic glazed mushroom

Crocchette fritte 10

Duo of croquette;
Crab & salted cod,
Potato & buffalo mozzarella

Fiore di burratina 10

Soft centered mozzarella
w/ candied tomato & micro basil

Salmone marinato 14

Cured salmon served w/ squid ink crostini
& blood orange pressed olive oil

Ricotta Infornata 10

Baked buffalo ricotta

Primi

Ostriche

4 ea

Freshly shucked oysters w/ lemon air & caviar
or pancetta wrapped oysters oven baked

Coccio di sardine

15

Sardine fillets baked w/ black olives, chives,
tomato concasse & buffalo mozzarella

Terrina di polipo

16

Pressed octopus terrine, wasabi lettuce,
candied tomatoes & a raspberry vinaigrette

Insalata di agnello

18

Seared lamb fillet served w/ baby spinach,
pine nuts & a pumpkin chutney

Conchiglia con gamberone e capesante

19

Hervey Bay scallops w/ fennel cream, citrus salad
& pan seared leader prawn

Pâté di fegato d'anatra

15

Duck liver pâté wrapped in pancetta
served w/ mandarine jam

Calamari alla griglia

18/36

Lightly grilled calamari tossed w/
chilli,
lemon & extra virgin olive
oil

Carpaccio pepato

19

Peppered Black Angus beef carpaccio
w/ spiced rocket, Grana Padana
& Maldon sea salt

Paste e Risotto

Pasta ripiena 32

Filled pasta of the day

Gnocchi di ricotta con Roquefort 28

Ricotta gnocchi tossed w/ a Roquefort cream,
fresh pear & candied walnuts

Calamarata rivisionata 32

Durum wheat pasta w/ black tiger prawns,
scallops
& squid finished w/ aromatic bread & lemon

Sigaro alla polenta e bufala 29

Buffalo cheese & soft polenta filled cigar
on broccolini cream

Pappardelle con funghi porcini 28

e olio al tartufo

Pasta fresca w/ porcini mushrooms,
truffle oil & Grana Padano

Tagliatelle con guancia di maiale 29

Pasta fresca w/ cured pork cheek,
& fave beans & Pecorino Romano

Risotto del giorno 32

Risotto of the day

Secondi

<u><i>Galletto alla salsa d'uva</i></u>	35
Pan roasted spatchcock w/ a grape salsa & baby root vegetables	
<u><i>Trio di coniglio</i></u>	42
Slow-roasted rabbit leg , vanilla scented sausage & a spinach & pecorino wrapped loin	
<u><i>Filetto di maialino bardato</i></u>	37
Oven roasted Murray Valley pork fillet wrapped in speck w/ Jerusalem artichoke cream & Griottine cherries	
<u><i>Anatra al limone e fichi</i></u>	42
Bendigo duck two ways; slow roasted leg (14 hrs) & a pan seared breast w/ lemon glaze & caramelised fig	
<u><i>Costata di manzo</i></u>	45
300g milk fed Margaret River veal ribeye w/ panzarotti & pumpkin chutney	
<u><i>Agnello con patate e porcini</i></u>	45
Roasted 2 point lamb rack & seared lamb fillet w/ kipfler potato & porcini mushrooms	
<u><i>Pescato del giorno</i></u>	market price
Fish of the day	
<u><i>Grigliata mista per due</i></u>	130
A seafood platter comprising of; shallow fried calamari, gratinated mussels, leader prawns, scallops, crab salad, octopus terrine & fish fillet served w/ roast potatoes & a garden salad	for 2 people

Contorni

Insalata di barbabietoea e formaggio 10

di capra

Baby beetroot, turnip, goats cheese
& watercress
salad

Verdure miste saltate 7

Green beans, broccolini & baby carrots
tossed w/ lemon pressed olive oil

Insalata di pomodorini misti 9

A medley of tomatoes w/ olive oil, fresh
oregano
& basil

Patate Arrosto 7

Roasted chat potatoes w/ butter & sage

Insalata Mista 7

Baby mesculine, tomato , cucumber
& carrot salad

Formaggi

Pecorino Affienato

A hard, sheep's milk cheese
aged under hay & honey for 12 months
from Tuscany, Italy
served w/ figlettes in saffron syrup **15**

Casatica di Bufala

A washed rind buffalo milk cheese
from Lombardia, Italy
served w/ mandarine jam **12.5**

Testun al Barolo

A semi hard cheese made from a combination
of sheeps, goats & cows milk, matured in oak
barrels
from Piemonte,
Italy **13.5**
served w/ quince paste

Roquefort

A crumbly blue vein cheese produced from
ewe's milk & aged for 3 months in the caves
of Roquefort-sur-Soulzon, France,
served w/ dried pears in vanilla syrup **14.5**

Formaggi Misti

for the true chesse lovers , a taste of all our chesses **36**