

# SICILIANO

*Contemporary Sicilian*  
Joe Varetto

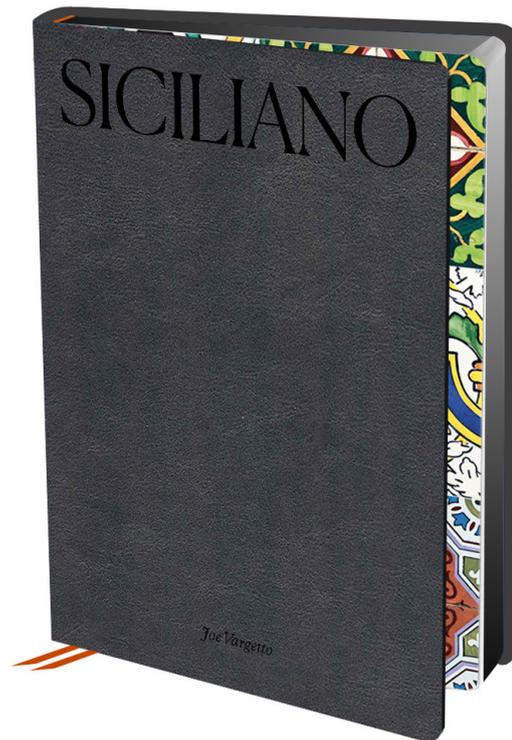


*SICILIANO: Contemporary Sicilian* is a beautifully produced Sicilian cookbook by acclaimed chef/ restaurateur, Joe Varetto.

The recipes are inspired by Joe's Sicilian heritage and mother's home cooking. The Varetto home in a Melbourne bayside suburb was like a small Sicilian farm with his father growing edible plants in the backyard with seeds bought back from Sicily, and mother using fresh seasonal produce in the kitchen to feed an extended family.

Joe's love of food led him to some of the best kitchens in Italy and France and apprenticeships in Melbourne's finest restaurants. Now he expresses his authentic take on Sicilian cuisine every day in his own restaurants, Mister Bianco and Massi and in the delicious recipes of *SICILIANO*, his first cookbook.

Each with their own story, the mouth-watering recipes in the book feature the fresh seasonal produce, vibrant colour and distinctive flavours of Sicily. Dishes such as Jerusalem Artichoke Soup with Scallops; Blood Orange Risotto with Yoghurt & Tuna Carpaccio and Chinotto Poached Quince with Rum Gelato, all exquisitely photographed with easy to follow recipes, will ensure that *SICILIANO* becomes a much - used cookbook in your kitchen.



## The Author

With a passion for cooking and an apprenticeship at Melbourne's famed Florentino under his belt, Joe Varetto travelled to Italy to work under one of the founders of modern Italian cuisine, Gualtiero Marchesi. Returning to Melbourne, he cooked with leading chefs, Jacques Reymond, Philippe Mouchel and Jeremy Strode at Langton's and won the Bocuse D'Or competition in Australia. Joe opened Mister Bianco, his modern Sicilian restaurant in Melbourne's Eastern suburbs in 2010, and then Massi in the CBD in 2016.

Duck liver parfait with figs  
'like cassata'

Serves 6  
1 hour and 30 minutes

I thought I knew how to make a duck liver parfait until I worked with Jeremy Stone and he showed me his version. It always works. It's nice and pink in the centre with amazing texture. My wife Daniela brought home some white Italian butter one day and I used it to surround the parfait and noticed that it looked like cassata with the contrasting white and pink. I started playing around with that idea and added some pistachios and confit fruits to the mix. It looks exactly like cassata, but it's not.

- Ingredients**
- Duck Paté
  - 50ml orange juice
  - 80ml Campari
  - 250g butter, melted over low heat
  - 125ml thickened cream (35% milk fat), warmed
  - 4 shallots, finely chopped
  - 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
  - 1 thyme
  - 500g duck livers, cleaned and trimmed
  - 2 eggs, lightly beaten
  - salt and pepper
  - 300g white Italian butter, softened
  - 200g soaked chopped apricots and substance
  - 50g roughly chopped pistachios

**Fig salad**

- 8-10 fresh medium-sized figs, sliced

Preheat oven to 120°C. Heat 20 g of the melted butter in a small frying pan over low heat. Cook the shallots, garlic and herbs until shallots are soft but not brown. Add the orange juice.

Sichano

Place mixture with the duck livers, eggs, cream and Campari in a food processor. With the motor running, gradually pour in the remaining butter. Season to taste.

Push mixture through a fine sieve into a bowl and discard the solids. Fold in the soaked fruits and pistachios. Line a terrine mould with cling film. Pour in the pâté mixture and cover tightly with a lid or aluminium foil. Place the terrine mould in a baking dish and fill the dish with boiling water so that water comes halfway up the sides of the terrine. Cook in the pre-heated oven for 25-30 minutes or until pâté wobbles slightly.

Remove the terrine from the baking dish and leave to cool for 15 minutes. Chill in the refrigerator for at least for 2-3 hours.

Once cold, smear the softened white butter all over the sides of terrine to create a butter wall.

To serve, slice parfait onto a plate with figs.



Jerusalem artichoke soup with pan  
fried scallops and fried grissini

Serves 4  
2 hours

I made this dish for the World Gourmet Summit in Singapore in 2005. I knew that they liked a bit of glam at the festival so I decided to try something new. I had an idea about building a bridge over soup. What I did was take some pasta and lay it across the bowl with scallops on top of that. To eat the soup you crack the pasta, the scallops fall into the soup and the pasta rehydrates in the liquid. It's a little crazy but it's fun and tasty.

- Ingredients**
- 500g Jerusalem artichoke, peeled and sliced
  - 1 medium potato, peeled and sliced
  - 1 onion, finely chopped
  - 1l vegetable stock
  - 50ml cream
  - 12 scallops
- Fried Grissini**
- 250g flour
  - 160ml water
  - 5g dried yeast
  - 50ml olive oil
  - 3g salt
  - 100g polenta

Knead all of the fried grissini ingredients to form a dough. Allow to prove for 1 hour. Cut into 15cm long, thin strips. Roll the strips in polenta. Heat a wide fry pan with olive oil and deep fry the grissini until golden. It is okay to have unusual shapes.

**Green Oil**

- 200ml grapeseed oil
- 20 Basil leaves

Sweat the onion in a fry pan. Add the potato and Jerusalem artichoke. Add the chicken stock and reduce by two thirds. Add the stock again to cover.

Add 200ml of cream at the end to whiten the soup. Blend until smooth. Strain the mixture through a fine chinois and season to taste.

**Grissini**

Fried grissini: Oven-roasted to resemble a bridge effect over the velouté.

Pan-roasted scallops: Finish with a drizzle of lemon juice.

**Assembly**

Pour the velouté into a bowl. Cross the bowl with the fried grissini and let the scallop rest over the grissini. Drizzle with green oil.



Watermelon jelly cake

Serve 4  
30 minutes

This is like a mash-up of Sicilian desserts, tricked up a bit. Watermelons are plentiful in Sicily and goes really well with dark chocolate and sugared pistachios. I've also added some baby jossme flowers here to make it even more Sicilian.

- Ingredients**
- Gelo Di Melone
  - 1kg seedless watermelon flesh, cut into small pieces
  - 60g caster sugar
  - 75g cornflour
  - 6 gold leaf gelatine sheets

**Chocolate Sauce**

- 150ml milk
- 50ml cream
- 30g sugar
- 17g dark chocolate

**Caramelised Pistachio**

- 225g chopped pistachios
- 20ml liquid glucose
- 75g caster sugar
- 75ml water

**Caramelised Pistachio**

Place water, caster sugar and liquid glucose in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Add the chopped pistachios, stir, and remove from heat. Soak the pistachios in the syrup for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Drain the pistachios and spread evenly on a baking tray. Bake at 190°C for 5 minutes. Stir in the nuts and continue to bake until golden brown.

**Chocolate sauce**

Place milk, cream and sugar in a saucepan. Bring to the boil, then immediately remove from heat. Pour milk mixture over the

chocolate. Allow mixture to sit for a minute. Whisk everything together, starting with slow circles in the centre before mixing with larger and quicker circles.

Pour into mould and set in the fridge.

**Gelo Di Melone**

Place watermelon in a blender and blend until smooth. Strain into a bowl through a fine sieve and extract as much liquid as possible. You will need 750 g of watermelon juice.

Soak gelatine sheets in ice water. Place sugar and cornflour in a saucepan with 30g of watermelon juice. Stir until cornflour has dissolved. Add remaining watermelon juice and bring to boil over a medium heat.

Squeeze excess water out of gelatine sheets and stir into the hot watermelon mixture.

Allow to cool, stirring occasionally to prevent the surface from forming a skin.

**Assembly**

Place the cooled watermelon mixture into desired moulds. Once set, turn out and place the chocolate sauce in the middle of the plate. Place the watermelon on the sauce.

Garnish with the caramelised pistachios and jossme flowers.

Dalce

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