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CHEF ALESSANDRO PAVONI

## MAJESTIC DUO

ONBOARD GHOST II



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# Il Maestro

Master chef Alessandro Pavoni has travelled the world cooking modern Italian delicacies for adoring patrons. **Cameron Wood** joined him aboard Gulf Craft's elegant *Ghost II* to sample the acclaimed chef's menu.







What comes to mind when you think of Lombardy, Italy? Eye-popping architecture? First-rate fashion? Picturesque lakes? What about world-renowned chefs? Well, if Lombardian master chef Alessandro Pavoni gets his way, that's precisely what folks from Sydney will be raving about when it is next raised in conversation.

It's a good thing that Gulf Craft, Dubai's prestigious yacht builder, produces some of the world's most luxurious superyachts, as Pavoni's imposing frame and infectious personality need all 37 metres of M/Y *Ghost II*.

Throw in a first-rate galley and the Lombardian, along with his team of elite chefs, was able to smoothly manoeuvre around the yacht, prepare and cook a mesmerising five-course meal during my visit aboard.

Optimised for Australian cruising conditions, and with an elegant interior intricately designed by her Australian owner, *Ghost II* ushers in a new standard of chartering experience and beauty to the harbour city. Prior to her delivery in October 2016, the next largest superyacht to charter in Sydney could only carry 80 guests, while *Ghost II* can comfortably host up to 120.

Boarding on a picturesque Sydney morning at The Spit wharf, our party of nine was escorted aboard by *Ghost II*'s Captain Craig Pearson and crew.

As we made our way around *Ghost II*, I asked Pearson what stands out about this yacht compared to others he's captained.

**"For me, it's about the connection the yacht has with the outdoors; her silence, her smoothness, and her level of stability."**

Instantly, a smile spread across his face, and he explained that nothing else on the water compares to her "striking, sleek lines".

"For me, it's about the connection the yacht has with the outdoors; her silence, her smoothness, and her level of stability," Pearson explained.

As for his favourite aspect, Pearson was quick to explain that it's all about the way she performs.

"*Ghost II* tracks beautifully. She has a swift and predictable rate of turn, and I was impressed when we were up north during the last cyclone and saw the way she handled short, sharp seas."

While French champagne was sipped in the refined saloon, I made a beeline for Pavoni, and asked him how a boy from Brescia who didn't know a lick of English ended up opening one of Sydney's premier Italian restaurants.

"Grandmothers are almost always the best cooks in Italian families," he explained. "And it didn't take me long to realise that mine was incredible."

"My grandfather had 11 brothers, and my grandma had to cook for all of them after their mother died.

"I remember on Sundays, she would wake up early and prepare a feast for the family.

  
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**Left:** Enjoying the serenity on *Ghost II*'s spacious foredeck. **Above:** Kevin Altera from GCCM and Nicole Eacott enjoying the comfort of the stylish saloon.  
**Below:** *Ghost II* cruised from The Spit to Manly where we settled in and enjoyed a delightful afternoon of fine dining.







**Left:** Chef Pavoni and his team were in their element aboard *Ghost II*.

**Below:** Exquisite wines were paired and presented to go with each course.



**“As a kid, my grandmother would give me jobs in the kitchen, and I would help her cook ravioli or spaghetti. I’d even stuff the hens!”**

As a kid, she would give me jobs in the kitchen, and I would help her cook ravioli or spaghetti. I’d even stuff the hens! I gained a lot of inspiration from her.”

Anyone who spends time with Pavoni and his authentic Italian cuisine knows that Lombardian culture, history and gastronomic delights are close to his heart; you cannot remove this passionate cook from his roots.

“When I came to Sydney 15 years ago, it was a bit frustrating, and not just because I couldn’t speak any English,” Pavoni recounts.

“I was frustrated because the Italian food scene was at a very low level. There were a couple of good Italian restaurants, but the rest were pretty average. Quality produce was also hard to get. In the last five years, though, there has been an amazing change in Sydney in the

quality of produce and producers, as well as the calibre of chefs and [Italian] restaurants.”

Having worked with world-famous chefs Iginio Massari and Giuseppe Maffioli in Brescia, at La Rotonde in France, the Michelin-starred Villa Fiordaliso on Lake Garda, and even at Restaurant Lido in Bermuda, Chef Pavoni moved to Sydney in 2003 and was appointed Executive Chef at the Park Hyatt in 2005.

In 2009, Pavoni rolled the proverbial dice again and started his first restaurant venture, Ormeggio at The Spit. The blend of contemporary flavours, techniques and textures with his northern Italian culinary heritage proved an instant hit. Pavoni says, “I love to embrace traditional recipes that have been handed down through the families of my region and mix it with local produce.”

**Right:** One of the standout dishes of the day, Pavoni's renowned Brasato. **Below:** Ghost //s immaculate saloon and flowing aft cockpit.



This passion and enthusiasm led Pavoni to work further at promoting quality Italian culinary culture in Australia, signing on to serve on the executive committee of the Council of Italian Restaurants in Australia (CIRA), a position he holds dear to his heart.

As we cruised to an anchorage off the golden shore of Little Manly Beach and soaked up the sunshine, Pavoni's Italian zeal was displayed in five courses gloriously presented.

After sampling more French champagne and devouring what Alessandro and his team call their interpretation of *baccala cappuccino* – salted cod, slow-cooked in milk and olive oil with anchovies, brioche croutons and Dutch cream potatoes cooked in cream and milk – we were treated to a deliciously fresh crostini, burrata and

anchovy mixture. As the boisterous chef was quick to point out, the stracciatella cheese is the hero of the dish as it brings everything together and enhances the anchovy.

Filtering out of the expansive saloon to the aft cockpit, a dazzling dining table, set for nine, awaited us.

Taking our seats, it wasn't long before our master chef arrived from the galley armed with plates of *vitello tonnato*. Comprised of veal tartar, anchovy dressing, homemade tuna mayonnaise, roasted pine nuts, sourdough croutons and fresh watermelon radish, this ravishing dish was breathtaking, and expertly paired with a blissful 2015 Piazano Messidoro Sangiovese-Syrah rosé.

It wasn't long before another northern Italian wonder, Venice, came into the picture



Q+A

## Chef Alessandro Pavoni

### How would you describe your signature cooking style?

*Difficoltà!* I have four restaurants, and they all have a unique style. My signature restaurant, Ormeggio at The Spit, is what I call modern Italian. We take inspiration from traditional dishes and, using knowledge and technique, make our own versions.

### What is your signature dish?

Risotto. I've become well known for my risottos! When I first came to Australia, people were cooking them in the microwave. So I started importing my own rice and implemented an 18-minute cooking process that wasn't being used here in Sydney.

### In your time as a chef in Italy, France, Bermuda and now Australia, what has changed in the way people dine?

These days people are after adventures; they like to try new dishes and flavours. I think the influence of *MasterChef* and other food TV programs is helping to change minds.

### What is on your culinary bucket list?

I want to get into Gordon Ramsey's kitchen, find something wrong (or off) in his fridges, and then humiliate him in front of everyone!

### What is your favourite culinary destination in Australia?

Sydney! There are so many quality restaurants right here.

### When you are at home, what do you prepare?

It must be something that the kids can help with. For example, last night I made gnocchi with them. It was fun, and very messy!



through a delicious, full-bodied 2012 Palazzo delle Torri Allegrini Valpolicella Superiore red wine, exquisitely paired with what would quickly become my favourite dish of the day, *brasato*: a wagyu beef cheek, marinated for seven days in red wine, slow cooked and then grilled over charcoal. Pavoni summed up this delicious dish perfectly by announcing, "If you can't eat it with a spoon, it isn't worth eating!"

Backing his claim up (in spades), Pavoni's signature main was accompanied with (and complemented by) celeriac puree, pickled onion, black garlic paste and my favourite addition, puffed wild rice.

Discussing Pavoni's coaching and expert judging appearances on the hit television show *MasterChef* with his in-laws was delightful. Beaming with joy, Rick and Betsy shared how dedicated Alessandro is to his craft, family and life.

It then came as no surprise that our dessert, tiramisu in textures paired

with a wickedly sweet 2015 Zaccagnini Plaisir, was full of this family's love and reflected their shared Italian pride.

When it was time for *Ghost II* to escort us back to The Spit, guests took in the afternoon sun and coastal beauty on the palatial top entertaining deck while I relaxed with Pavoni in the saloon. Seizing the moment, I asked him to nominate one dish from his *Lombardian Cookbook* that I must prepare for my heavily pregnant wife.

"Does she have a sweet tooth?" he asked, as a doting husband and father would.

"She has a mouth full of sweet teeth!"

"Okay, you need to make her a *barbajada*. This is a dessert drink made of chocolate, coffee and cream. It's easy to make, and it is perfect for a pregnant woman."

After scribbling down Pavoni's suggestion, I shook his hand, grateful that this proud Lombardian had found a second culinary home here in Sydney. **O**

## M E N U



Baccala cappuccino

Crostini with burrata and anchovy

Vitello Tonnato

Biodynamic veal tonnato

2015 Piazzano 'Messidoro' Sangiovese-Syrah Rosé, Toscana Rosato IGT, Toscana

Brasato

Braised wagyu beef cheek, celeriac, daikon, black garlic, wild rice

2012 Palazzo delle Torri Allegrini Valpolicella Superiore IGT, Veneto

Tiramisu

Tiramisu in textures

2015 Zaccagnini 'Plaisir',  
Colline Pescaresi IGT, Abruzzo

**"I love to embrace traditional recipes that have been handed down through the families of my region and mix it with local produce."**



**From left:** Cameron Wood, Kevin Altera from GCCM, Alessandro Pavoni, Donna Morris from Australian Superyachts, Betsy Parson, Josh Cleaver from Australian Superyachts, James Rowden from The Luxury Network Group. **Sitting:** Rick Parson, Hillary Buckman, Nicole Eacott.

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### Ormeccio Restaurant Group

The Sydney-based Ormeccio Restaurant Group started with Ormeccio at The Spit in 2009 and has since opened Chosco at D'Albora Marina in Middle Harbour, Via Alta in Willoughby, and Sotto Sopra in Newport. With a visit to any of their Italian restaurants, you'll quickly discover that each Ormeccio venue is unique and delicious. Renowned chef and restaurateur Alessandro Pavoni continues to extend his award-winning team, seeking to give each restaurant a unique northern Italian feel and appeal.

[alessandropavoni.com.au](http://alessandropavoni.com.au) | [ormeggio.com.au](http://ormeggio.com.au)





## Vitello Tonnato

*Vitello tonnato* is an Ormezzio signature dish of cold, sliced veal covered with a creamy, mayonnaise-like sauce that has been flavoured with tuna. Serves 4 people as an entree.

### Ingredients:

570g tuna in oil (Ortiz brand)  
 40g Spanish anchovies  
 14g capers plus 3tbsp caper vinegar (from jar)  
 570g whole-egg mayonnaise  
 1.7g xanthan gum  
 1.5tbsp pine nuts  
 2 slices sourdough bread, cut into 0.5cm croutons  
 2tbsp olive oil  
 40g grapeseed oil  
 200g organic, free-range, topside veal, diced into approx 0.5cm cubes  
 1/3 bunch of chives, finely chopped  
 1/2 eschallot, brunoise (try not to press too firmly on the eschallot as the natural juices can be quite bitter once extracted)  
 4 radishes, thinly sliced

### Method:

#### Tuna mayonnaise:

1. Blend the tuna, half the anchovies, whole capers, and caper vinegar in the Thermomix at maximum speed until smooth. If you do not have a Thermomix, a hand/stick blender is fine, but add a little extra oil and a small amount of white wine to reach the same consistency.
2. Add the mayonnaise and blend at maximum speed until smooth.
3. Add xanthan gum and blend again.

#### Veal:

1. Roast the pine nuts in the oven at 150C for 12 minutes.
2. Pan fry the croutons in the olive oil until golden brown.
3. Heat the grapeseed oil and the other half of the anchovies in a pan, just long enough to become warm, not hot.
4. Strain the oil and anchovy mix to remove any bones from the anchovies.
5. Add the anchovy oil to the veal and mix through until the veal is fully coated.



### Plating:

1. Dollop 1 tablespoon of the tuna mayonnaise in the centre of the plate.
2. Add a heaped spoonful of the veal and anchovy mix on top of the mayonnaise.
3. Sprinkle the pine nuts, chives, eschallot and croutons over the top.
4. Cover evenly with a layer of thin radish slices.



## Tiramisu

Inspired by the flavours and ingredients of the traditional Italian dessert, tiramisu. This dessert is made up of five separate components. Serves 10 guests.

### 1. Coffee cream

#### Ingredients:

83 g milk / 44 g cream / 4 g agar / 32 g egg yolk  
26 g sugar / 5 g Nescafé instant coffee

#### Method:

1. Add the milk, cream, and agar to a saucepan.
2. Heat until boiling, stirring occasionally.
3. Remove from heat and transfer to a container to set.
4. Once set transfer back to a saucepan, blend the egg yolk and sugar into the milk mix with a handheld stick blender for 5 minutes until it has reached 80°C.
5. Mix in the Nescafé until fully dissolved.
6. Set the mix aside to cool in an airtight container in the fridge.

### 2. Coffee sauce

#### Ingredients:

118 g coffee (espresso shots)  
80 g sugar syrup (equal parts sugar and water)

#### Method:

1. Combine ingredients and set aside in an airtight container in the fridge

### 3. Chocolate crumble

#### Ingredients:

60 g butter / 60 g demerara sugar / 60 g plain flour  
/ 60 g almond meal / 14 g cocoa powder

#### Method:

1. Combine all ingredients.
2. Roll mix into log shape and freeze.
3. Once frozen, grate the log onto a tray lined with baking paper.
4. Cook in the oven for 12 minutes at 160°C.

### 4. Tuille

#### Ingredients:

64 g butter / 64 g icing sugar  
64 g egg whites / 64 g plain flour

#### Method:

1. Cream the butter and icing sugar together until pale.
2. Add the egg white and plain flour a little at a time, alternately.
3. Spread over a tray lined with baking paper to 1 mm thickness.
4. Cook in oven for 1 hour on the lowest, or no fan setting at 110°C.

### 5. Mascarpone ice-cream

#### Ingredients:

165 g milk / 56 g sugar / 13 g skim milk powder  
22 g egg yolk / 60 g mascarpone

#### Method:

1. Heat milk in saucepan to 40°C.
2. Add sugar and milk powder then increase temperature to 60°C.
3. Add egg yolk and whisk constantly until the temperature reaches 82°C.
4. Pour the mix over the mascarpone and leave to cool.
5. Churn in an ice cream machine following the machine's instructions.

#### Plating:

1. Pipe approximately 20 g of the coffee cream into a donut shape in the centre of the dish.
2. Fill the centre of the ring with 10 g of the coffee sauce.
3. Cover the coffee cream and sauce with 30g of the chocolate crumble.
4. Add a quenelle/ scoop of the mascarpone ice cream on top of the crumble.
5. Dust some cocoa powder over the ice cream.
6. Arrange some shards of the tuille to lean against the sides of the ice cream.