



Marco Giannantonio (left) and Maurizio Mastroangelo: capturing the taste of Italy

Cooking with Italian flavour

Marco Giannantonio

Company: Flavour of Italy

Position: Co-founder, head of cookery school

Location: Dublin

By Tina-Marie O'Neill

Gourmands with a passion for Italian cuisine no longer have to travel to Italy to enjoy the benefits of authentic Italian fare, thanks to entrepreneurs Marco Giannantonio and Maurizio Mastroangelo.

The duo – from Campobasso in central Italy – are the directors and co-founders of Flavour of Italy in Rathgar in Dublin. The company has three sub-divisions: the Italian School of Cooking; CaterItaly, a catering business; and Flavour of Italy Travel, a travel business which operates from Campobasso.

“I came to Ireland five years ago as a solicitor,” said Giannantonio. “I have a passion for food and found that Italian restaurants in Dublin were serving mysterious food at the time. Maurizio is an economics graduate and we knew each other from our home town.

“We decided to offer a better explanation of what Italian food is all about, and set up Flavour of Italy in Rathgar three years ago.”

The cookery school offers courses one eve-

ning a week for four weeks, costing €240. Students are offered antipasto and wine while they watch head chef Marco Roccasalvo prepare a range of dishes from diverse Italian regions, which are served to the students after class. Roccasalvo is the head chef at Campo de' Fiori, an award-winning Italian restaurant in Bray, Co Wicklow.

The catering division, CaterItaly, offers catering and banqueting services for corporate and private parties, as well as events. “We have a number of chefs and patissiers, or pastry chefs, at our disposal for the catering business,” said Giannantonio.

“These chefs work in Italian restaurants in Dublin and we require a week's notice to provide the service. We have a broad range of fare to meet clients' needs.

“For example, we've prepared kosher dishes for the Israeli embassy, and last week catered for a cocktail party at the Heritage Golf Club in Laois, which was holding a post-Ryder Cup trophy ceremony.”

The travel business offers Irish foodies authentic farmhouse holidays throughout Italy. Guests can choose a farmhouse based on its produce and can participate in cheese making, grape harvesting and wine production, or making olive oil, for example.

“Italian people enjoy the culture of food and wine. Eating is a cultural and social pleasure for us. While our cultures are very different, Irish and Italian people feel relaxed and comfortable in each other's company and we're delighted to offer a link between them through quality food,” said Giannantonio.

The company's website, www.flavourofitaly.net, has more information on courses and catering services.