



Far left: Fettuccine al Sugo di Maiale (pork ragu with kale and pecorino). **Left:** Stufato di Guanciale (slow braised pork cheek with wild mushroom risotto). **Below:** Pizza Ligure (goat and mozzarella cheese, artichokes, sliced tomatoes, basil and charred red pepper puree).



PHOTOS: TRINA GONZALEZ

FLAVOR PROFILE

Italian Indulgence

INSPIRED BY THE foods of his native Italy, David Carteni, owner of Claremont's Il Mattone Trattoria Italiana, formerly La Parolaccia, serves dishes that will take your palate to Tuscany, Emilia-Romagna and Umbria. Carteni hails from Le Marche on the Adriatic coast and plans to introduce its cuisine in specials and a future wine dinner. In the meantime, Chef Julian Lopez uses wild mushrooms and truffle products to produce earthy, bold-flavored dishes.

Begin with Pizza Ligure that's topped with goat and mozzarella cheeses, sliced tomatoes and artichoke hearts, basil and a charred red pepper puree. Baked in a wood-burning brick pizza oven, the crust is thin and soft.

Bombolotti Norcina features al dente penne topped with crumbled house-made sausage and cream braised oyster and beech mushrooms, flavored with white truffle oil and a touch of hot pepper flakes and garlic. The flavors linger on the palate.

Fettuccine al sugo di maiale is a rich pork ragu cooked down to a thick sauce made with black garlic and deep fried kale and sprinkled with Pecorino Romano cheese. The pasta is perfectly al dente and

coated with the ragu. The flavors virtually leap off the plate.

Stufato di guanciale is made with slowly braised pork cheek meat served over a buttery risotto made with caragnole rice. Each grain is distinct and the consistency is perfect, neither dry nor soupy.

Side dishes include grilled vegetables with fresh mozzarella. The squash hails from the chef's grandfather's backyard, while the other vegetables are bought by Chef Julian at the local farmers market.

End your meal with lemon cheesecake. It's topped with tarragon granita, while lemon curd surrounds the bottom. — *David Cohen*

Snapshot: Il Mattone Trattoria Italiana, 201 N. Indian Hill Blvd., Claremont; (909) 624-1516, ilmattoneusa.com. Open 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mon.–Thurs., 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday. Reservations recommended on weekends.



**Chef Bill
Blackburn**

FOOD BUZZ

FARM TO GRIDIRON

When quarterback Jared Goff hits the turf with the Los Angeles Rams, he will be fueled by more than enthusiastic fans welcoming a professional football team back to Southern California. He, along with tight end Cory Harkey, will be burning calories supplied by Bill Blackburn, chef-owner of Blackburn's Farm to Table restaurant in Corona. Blackburn, who has been cooking for the two players, made his connection with the Rams through his association with the Rancho Cucamonga Quakes and several baseball players he cooks for. When preparing meals for individual players, Blackburn goes to their homes to cook. For a recent team lunch, he prepared the food in Corona and transported it to the Los Angeles Coliseum. Pro athletes eat "a lot of lean protein like grass-fed/organic beef, fish, legumes, organic eggs, veggies and fresh fruit," he says. They eat four to five times a day, especially before and after workouts, he says. — *Tammy Minn*

PHOTO: TRINA GONZALEZ