

il tridente

ISSUE #31

Maserati Australia & New Zealand

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FOLGORE



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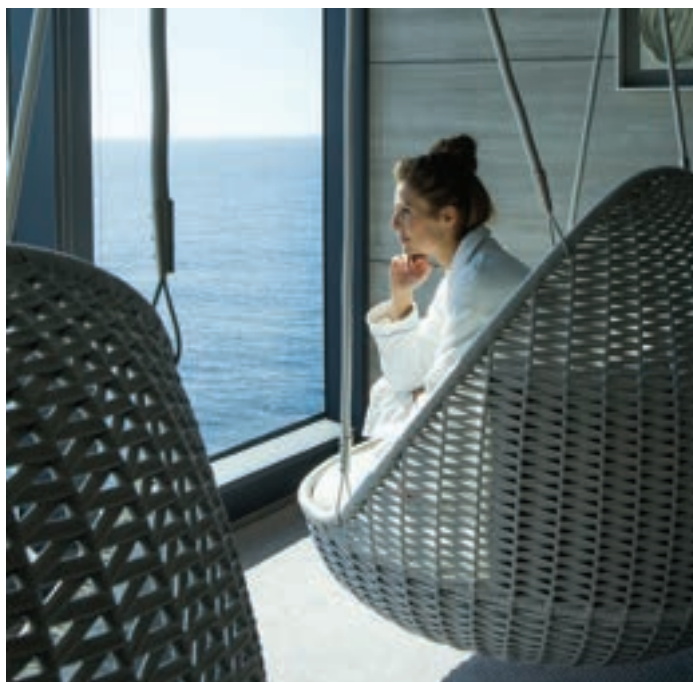


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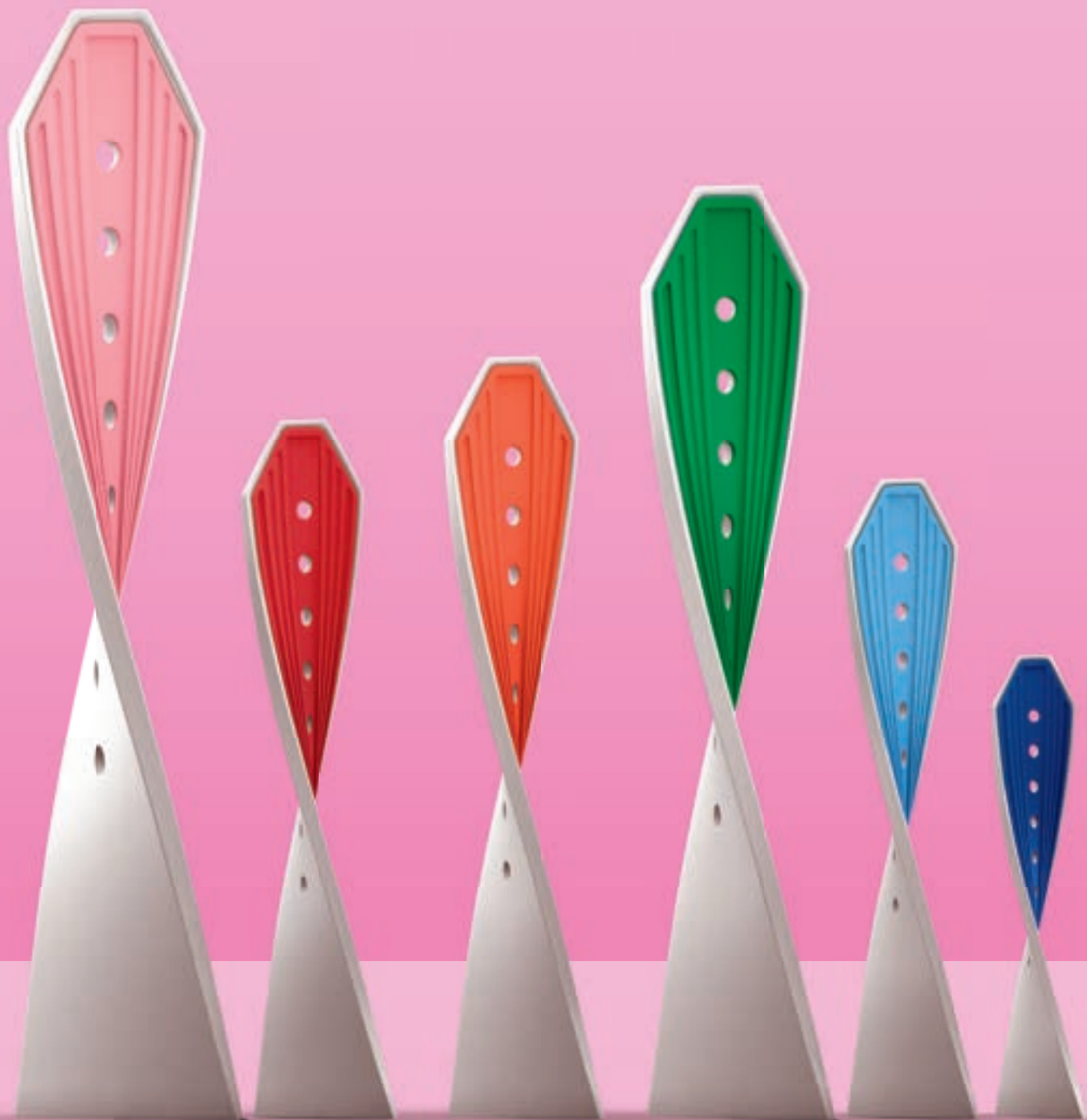
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WELCOME



I TRUST EVERYONE is well and I'm thrilled to introduce our latest edition of Il Tridente.

Maserati has an incredibly rich heritage, born from a passion for racing cars. Founded in 1914 in the north of Italy by four ambitious young entrepreneurs – the Maserati brothers: Alfieri, Ettore, Ernesto and Mario – Maserati marks 110 years in 2024, celebrating a legacy that has produced some of the most iconic vehicles for both the road and the racetrack. While we honour our past, we're equally excited about our future. We proudly present a completely new model lineup, one of the

freshest in the premium luxury market and in Maserati's illustrious history.

In recent years, we've launched the MC20 coupe in 2022, followed by the MC20 Cielo and the Grecale SUV in 2023. Now, I'm thrilled to announce and welcome back a Maserati icon with the exhilarating all-new GranTurismo, soon to be joined by the open-air allure of the all-new GranCabrio.

Our heritage of Grand Touring, which we pioneered in 1947, lives on in the allure of Italian luxury and style, combined with race-bred performance. The all-New GranTurismo and all-new GranCabrio embody this legacy, transcending mere vehicles to become a lifestyle.

We continually seek fresh and innovative ways to keep you informed and engaged with our latest products and news. This includes a launch roadshow featuring the new 2024 models throughout Australia and New Zealand. The journey has begun with a spectacular unveiling at our state-of-the-art dealership in Brisbane and will culminate with an exhilarating drive program planned for our New Zealand clients in Auckland.

Furthermore, our passion for racing will evolve with the introduction of a range of all-electric Maserati's, which draw inspiration from the racing models that have been tearing up the track in the Formula E World Championship. These cutting-edge vehicles, developed with advanced technical solutions, will soon hit the roads, carrying the Folgore name – "lightning" in Italian. Always true to the Maserati soul of pure power and supreme comfort, Folgore will welcome performance of the future. I look forward to keeping you updated on this exciting journey.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Barling', written in a cursive style.

GRANT BARLING
*General Manager, Maserati
Australia and New Zealand*

MASERATI GRANTURISMO

THE OTHERS JUST TRAVEL



LIVE THE GRANTURISMO LIFE. A JOURNEY THAT IS BOTH PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL, IT GUIDES THE SENSES INTO UNCHARTED TERRITORIES, WHERE THE ONLY ROADMAP NEEDED IS CURIOSITY.



Maserati

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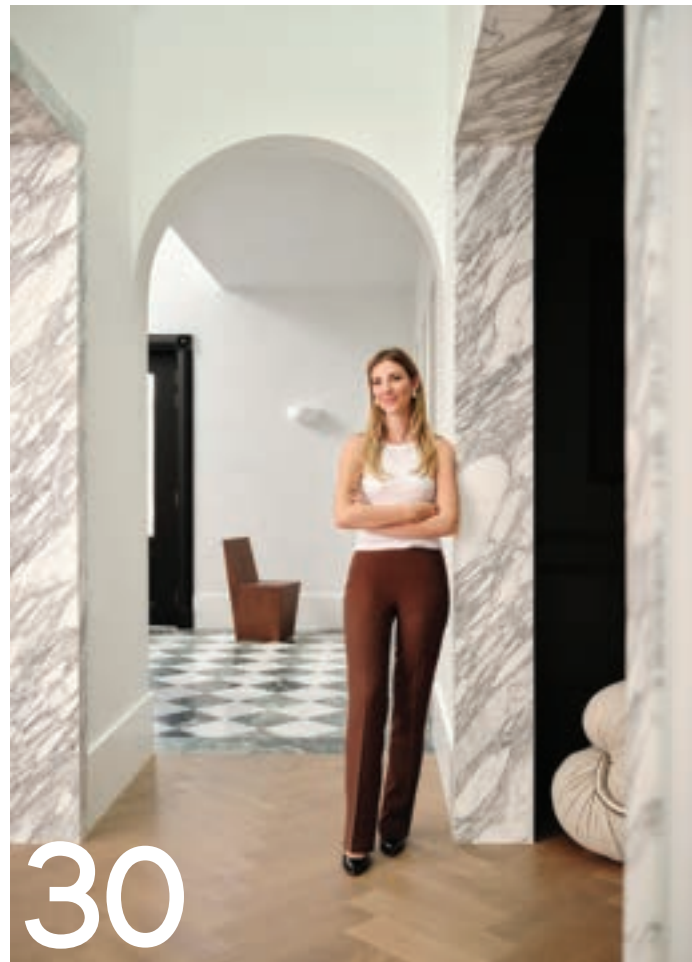
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Unleash the beast

WITH THE MCXTREMA, MASERATI
ELEVATES THE MC20 SUPER SPORTS
CAR TO YET ANOTHER LEVEL.

ABOVE: The wild Maserati MCXtrema has already been snapped up by three Australian customers.
RIGHT: The newly unveiled GT2 Stradale.

MASERATI CALLS IT “the beast”, and with good reason. The MCXtrema is a non-road-homologated race car that represents one of its boldest developments.

It has been undergoing final racetrack testing during 2024 ahead of the release of a limited run of just 62 units of a model that is a direct evolution of the MC20, the super sports car that won Evo Magazine’s prestigious Car of the Year award.

Building on four years’ development on the road-going MC20 model, the MCXtrema has been subjected to an extraordinary testing regime, which has included about 200 hours in the Maserati dynamic simulator and 1,000 hours of virtual simulations.

In addition, Maserati Chief Test Driver Andrea Bertolini hit the track at the Autodromo Varano de’ Melegari in Parma, Italy, to put the finishing touches on “the beast”. Bertolini, a four-time world title winner in the Maserati MC12 racer, has been

working on the MCXtrema's development in the dynamic simulator since the early stages, and likes what he sees.

"Taking a new car to the track always results in a special, unique feeling, as is the case for the MCXtrema," he says. "A wonderful creation made to devour the asphalt and trip through the curves, a true gem of mechanics and aerodynamics, perfect for balance and handling."

The combination of a race tuned, 540 kW twin-turbo V6 engine and a driver-focused cockpit that is described as a cross between a fighter jet and a Formula 1 single-seater, is sure to add up to a track day experience its lucky owners will cherish.

"With MCXtrema, we raised the bar of development even further, working with the track in sight and always bearing in mind the needs of the Maserati customer, who remains the focus of our work and to whom this car is dedicated," Bertolini says.

The very first of 62 examples of the MCXtrema was delivered to its new owner during the illustrious Monterey Car Week in August, after the model arrived on US soil for the first time. During a week of activities, the MCXtrema also hit the nearby Laguna Seca racing circuit where it was heard roaring to life and racing around the track for the first time.

At the time of going to press, three examples of the MCXtrema had been snapped up by Australian customers, who will soon enjoy similar opportunities to enjoy this lively extension of Maserati's racing DNA.

Like all 62 customers, their ownership experience will be heightened by access to the MCXlusiva Customisation Programme. This is designed to take each owner on a personal journey to find out more about their car's creation, whilst taking care of every last detail to provide a truly tailor-made experience.

They will also enjoy membership of MCXperience, a series of exclusive services designed to allow customers to fully immerse themselves in the world of Maserati racing, alongside professional drivers and the technicians at Maserati Corse Services.

"We have built an entire universe dedicated to 62 of the brand's fans and the most appealing kind of driving: between the curbs of a racetrack," says Giovanni Sgro, the Head of Maserati Corse.

"MCXtrema is a sensational car, a daring vehicle that has no trepidation, made to give shape and power to an unparalleled desire. A true marvel of racing." •



A new racer for the road

The newly unveiled GT2 Stradale combines stunning attributes from two mighty Maserati's.

THE LEGENDARY MONTEREY

Car Week in California proved the ideal venue for the world premiere of Maserati's newest super sports car, the Maserati GT2 Stradale.

At the event dedicated to connoisseurs and enthusiasts, the new model broke cover promising unparalleled sensations and superior performance.

The GT2 Stradale is the result of a technical and stylistic partnership between the Maserati GT2, which was created for the brand's return to GT competitions, and the iconic Maserati MC20.

It combines in-depth technology transfer of the purest performance, typical of a racing car, with the intrinsic qualities of the road-going MC20. It is designed to evoke both style and racing performance, while ensuring comfort in all conditions, without sacrificing the best driving experience on the road.

With maximum output of 477 kW (640 hp) and a weight decrease of 60 kilograms from the MC20, acceleration from 0 to 100 km/h is expected to take just 2.8 seconds on the way to a top speed of over 320 km/h. Sophisticated aerodynamics and attractive design inherited from its racing sibling complete a compelling package.

"Maserati GT2 Stradale is a unique product, bringing together as it does the brand's greatest sporting heritage, and at the same time representing the evolution of one of Maserati's most iconic vehicles, the MC20 halo car," says Maserati CEO Davide Grasso.

"This model intended for everyday driving was created based on the desire to offer our customers more and more in terms of technical mastery, innovation, design and emotions in road driving.

"On the one hand, we find sophisticated solutions reserved for models designed for track use only, the epitome of Maserati's racing DNA; on the other, we can guarantee optimal comfort paired with all the most advanced driver assistance systems.

"Maserati GT2 Stradale is a product that can fulfil the requirements of the most discerning enthusiasts; a new creation that expresses the brand's entire essence." •



LEFT: Maserati MSG Racing is now well entrenched in the Formula E series. BELOW: Race-winning driver Max Günther.

Electric chargers

STRONG PERFORMANCES IN THE FORMULA E WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ARE INTEGRAL TO MASERATI'S ROAD TO ELECTRIFICATION.

WHILST MASERATI HAS always stood for electrifying performance, its move into the world of pure electrification is gathering momentum. A key alignment helping the brand to embrace this brave new world is Formula E, the world's premier all-electric racing series.

Maserati MSG Racing has just completed its second season in the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship,

which included both a race win in Tokyo and a third place finish at Maserati's home race, in Misano, for driver Max Günther. His rookie teammate Jehan Daruvala gained confidence throughout the season and achieved his first top 10, also at Misano. As a result, the team finished a respectable eighth in constructor standings following the season's final race in London in July.

The Formula E World Championship provides Maserati with a unique opportunity to make the most of the on-track development of advanced all-electric technologies.

With the company now proudly rolling out its Folgore – or fully electric – range of models, the lessons it learns on the track can continue to be applied to mass production.

Giovanni Sgro, the head of the brand's racing division, Maserati Corse, says the Maserati MSG Racing team took significant steps forward in the 2023–24 season.

"Our second season enabled us to get to the heart of the series, including by ensuring our reading of the races was more comprehensive. This year, we were determined to carve out a place among the leading names in the battle for the top spots," he says.

"Formula E continues to be an essential platform for Maserati in the development of our production cars, and at the same time keeps alive the brand's overwhelming passion for the racing world. Now's the time to take stock and catch our breath ahead of next year." •



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The local arrival of the all-new GranTurismo featured a cavalcade of spectacular events across multiple locations, offering Maserati customers and VIPs the opportunity to be among the first to sample the new model's irresistible charms.

From the very first Australian appearance of the coveted grand tourer at Auto Italia in Canberra – including an exclusive cocktail party at the QT Hotel – there was palpable excitement to learn more about the all-new model featuring a swathe of significant updates.

Over the next few pages, you'll discover more details about the GT's triumphant tour including a jaw-dropping reveal on Sydney Harbour, a high-flying collaboration that showcased the parallel worlds of Maserati and premium small aircraft manufacturer Cirrus, appearances at showrooms across the country including at a state-of-the-art new showroom in Brisbane, and even a hands-on opportunity for a fortunate few to get behind the wheel of the GranTurismo and put it through its paces at The Bend Motorsport Park in South Australia. •

Making a Gran entrance

A SERIES OF EXCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES HERALD THE LATEST GENERATION OF THE COVETED GRANTURISMO.



TOP: The all-new GranTurismo makes a dramatic entrance on Sydney Harbour. **ABOVE:** Putting the GranTurismo to the test at The Bend Motorsport Park.

IWC PORTUGIESE CHRONOGRAPH.



Portugieser Chronograph, Ref. IW371626

Inspired by a nautical instrument with chronometer precision, the Portugieser is a timeless yet dynamic paragon of sporty elegance. And now, for the first time, the Chronograph, with its distinctive, vertically organized totalizers for optimum legibility, features an elaborately crafted dial in Horizon Blue.

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Rising to the occasion

THE LATEST EDITION OF THE BELOVED MODEL MADE AN UNFORGETTABLE ENTRANCE.



Imagine this: a captivating luxury car making its grand Australian debut by dramatically ascending from the floor of an opulent superyacht, set against the backdrop of one of the world's most stunning harbours. This was no ordinary event—it was La Serata, held in May aboard the lavish Starship Sydney on Sydney Harbour.

In attendance were 105 VIP guests and media, all witnessing the reveal of the breathtaking new Maserati GranTurismo, the very first of the updated grand tourers to touch Australian soil. The evening was nothing short of spectacular, with Maserati Australia and New Zealand's General Manager, Grant Barling, leading the celebration with Good Food's General Manager Kate Reid.

As if the night wasn't already dazzling enough, guests enjoyed a delectable Sardinian feast crafted by two-hatted chef



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: The Starship Sydney with precious cargo on board; Maserati GM Grant Barling; guests with chef Giovanni Pilu; The big reveal; stunning fare courtesy of Pilu at Freshwater; photo opps aplenty as guests enjoyed the festivities.



and Maserati ambassador Giovanni Pilu, the culinary mastermind behind the renowned Pilu at Freshwater. Giovanni not only presented his extraordinary four-course menu but also mingled with guests, adding a personal touch to an evening celebrated as “a tribute to the rich cultural, historical, and artistic heritage of Bologna,” Maserati’s original birthplace.

To cap off the night, the Starship Sydney itself became a spectacle, lit up with Maserati’s iconic Trident, leaving all who witnessed it in awe and curiosity about this extraordinary fusion of luxury, culture, and elegance. ●





Unveiling elegance

A GRAND OPENING REVEALS MASERATI BRISBANE'S STATE-OF-THE-ART SHOWROOM AND THE STUNNING GRANTURISMO.



Innovative design and stunning experiences at the luxurious opening of Maserati Brisbane.



The grand opening of a Maserati showroom is always a significant event, but it becomes even more exciting when it coincides with the unveiling of an icon in the Maserati lineup.

The recent opening of Maserati Brisbane's state-of-the-art facility was perfectly timed with the arrival of the much-anticipated Maserati GranTurismo in Australia. Guests were among the first in the country to experience this legendary model up-close.

The new showroom, situated in Fortitude Valley, captures the essence of Italian luxury craftsmanship. Its innovative design seamlessly incorporates the sophistication of a "sartoria" – or tailor's atelier – into a gallery-like experience.

Both guests and media were thoroughly impressed with Maserati's stunning new facility, and the all-new GranTurismo certainly lived up to expectations.

"This design allows our clients to fully explore their creative vision and craft their own bespoke Maserati," explains Maserati Brisbane's Dealer Principal Scott Newland. "It's about bringing their ultimate luxury car dreams to life." •

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Around The Bend

OWNERS AND FANS OF THE BRAND HAD A THRILLING OPPORTUNITY TO EMBRACE THE WORLD OF MASERATI PERFORMANCE, FEATURING THE NEW GRANTURISMO.

One of Australia's most exciting new racetracks became a high-speed playground as Maserati owners, prospective customers, and national and international media were handed the keys to a fleet of Maserati models, including the newly arrived GranTurismo. The Master Maserati Program at The



Bend Motorsport Park in South Australia was the perfect location for an immersion into all things Maserati, from beautiful venue spaces and displays to a series of on-track activities under the guidance of a team of professional driving instructors.

It provided yet another highly exclusive opportunity for Maserati customers to see, hear, feel and experience the company's motorsport-rich DNA, which stretches all the way back to its foundations in 1914 and still runs through the model range today. The presence of a stunning red 1970s-era Maserati Bora provided yet another clear link to the brand's proud heritage.

But the undoubted star of the show was the Maserati GranTurismo. The flagship model bears a number of crucial updates and redevelopments, yet

remains so familiar, from the wide grille framing the famous Trident and the iconic trio of side vents, to the muscular rear framing quad tailpipes.

Their unmistakable symphony reverberated throughout the venue as each passing car powered down the main straight in a thrilling experience for the assembled owners, brand fans and media.

Attendees also had the chance to get behind the wheel of the Maserati Grecale Trofeo, the performance-focused variant of the latest SUV that continues to grow the brand's appeal with its intoxicating mix of driving capability, luxury and practicality.

At the conclusion of each daily program, attendees were presented with a commemorative Maserati Driving Experience certificate certifying their participation in the GT Pro driving day. •

FIRST DRIVE:

Maserati GranTurismo

A quick taste of this iconic model at The Bend suggests there's a lot to like on a racetrack, and even more to enjoy once it hits the road.

By Toby Hagon

THERE'S AN ARGUMENT to suggest the all-new Maserati GranTurismo should be more at home cruising to a racetrack than being put through its paces around one.

Poring over the stunning tailored cabin of the Gran Turismo reinforces that initial thinking. Sumptuous leather is liberally applied in a low-slung space, oozing attention to detail at every angle.

It's a special place, and a fitting aesthetic that beautifully complements the svelte and purposeful exterior.

There's no shortage of tech, either, with a crisp digital instrument cluster paired with a large central touchscreen and a separate lower display for ventilation controls.

On the surface, then, it's aptly leveraging 110 years of Maserati heritage, but also embracing the future.

Easing out of the pits in the new iteration of the imposing two-door quickly reinforces

that this model ushers in a new era for the Italian brand.

Slowly cruising along The Bend's pit lane, there's enough time to briefly soak up its relaxed, easy-to-live-with nature. Riding on air suspension, it feels suitably supple; a serene experience befitting a car built for everyday comfort.

There's no V8 under the bonnet, but the purposeful purr of its 3.0-litre V6 twin-turbo engine provides a clue to its intent.

Unleashing the full potential of the Nettuno engine reveals enough aural mystique and burliness to reinforce that this is, indeed, something special. It's the same engine that debuted in the potent Maserati MC20, a sports car that takes on heavy-hitting supercar rivals at their own game.

Exiting the pit lane and squeezing the accelerator, there's effortless thrust as the

650Nm of torque available in the flagship GranTurismo Trofeo pushes me back into the sculpted driver's seat.

It's a beautifully free-revving engine, and utilising the full 405kW is easy without compromising any driver involvement. A clever all-wheel-drive system diverts most of the thrust rearward, while utilising the front wheels to add traction when it makes sense.

Some of the GT's impressive pace comes from Maserati's efforts to shave precious kilos. Aluminium panels ensure the sizeable two-door isn't burdened by extra weight.

Its Brembo-made brakes are assertive and reassuring, with sizeable calipers that bite hard, washing off speed with the confidence that matters at racetrack speeds.

The long nose turns assertively, adding to the lively dynamics and cementing the impression that the GranTurismo is not afraid to play. The steering, too, is communicative and rewarding.

As I wheel back into pit lane, the notion continues to bubble away that for all its undoubted performance capability, this car that sits at the heart of the Maserati brand has even more talents to show once we can head out onto public roads.

But that's something to look forward to another day. ●



The Bend Motorsport Park in South Australia proved an ideal playground for the new GranTurismo and a fleet of Grecale SUVs.

Flight of fancy

A TRIDENT TAKEOVER OF CIRRUS AIRCRAFT'S MELBOURNE HANGAR PROVIDED MASERATI OWNERS WITH EXCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES.



owning a Maserati is more than just purchasing a car; it represents a luxurious lifestyle that's enriched with exceptional experiences and unforgettable moments. For those who seek more than mere transportation, Maserati embodies a way of life.

In a continued collaboration with Cirrus Aircraft, Maserati hosted an exclusive event at Cirrus' prestigious hangar in Moorabbin. Celebrated as "the pinnacle of innovation" by top personal aircraft manufacturers, the venue provided a perfect backdrop for an opulent gathering. Guests explored a curated collection of Dolce & Gabbana

jewellery, Zenith watches, and Suzanne Kalan pieces.

The event was a highlight for Melbourne's VIPs and select media, who were among the first in Australia to view the all- new GranTurismo. Scott Plowman from efm.com described the GranTurismo Modena on display as "sounding like heaven" and praised its "incredibly stylish" updated infotainment system.

The event showcased the parallel worlds of Maserati and Cirrus. While Maserati owners are familiar with swift acceleration, this event provided a new level of excitement.

Beyond the showcase, Maserati owners enjoyed private joy flights over Melbourne in a Cirrus SR22 G6, while Cirrus customers were introduced to the Maserati range through a guided driving programme. All guests also had the opportunity fly a vision jet via the flight simulator on display, courtesy of Real Sim Gear. ●



ABOVE: Presenting the stunning Maserati GranTurismo to the assembly of VIP guests.

LEFT: Maserati owners are used to quick takeoffs - but not like this.



Maserati

MASERATI GRECALE

EVERYDAY EXCEPTIONAL





TOP OF THE CLASS

Barbagallo Maserati wins a prestigious award for the South East Asia Pacific region.

Best in the west

PERTH IS THE PROUD HOME TO A NEW SHOWROOM THAT IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN ASIA PACIFIC.

For Perth locals, the Barbagallo name signifies unparalleled luxury. Since 1967, this family-owned business has been a symbol of prestige in the automotive world. Barbagallo Maserati's state-of-the-art new showroom elevates the luxury experience, offering a revolutionary way to discover Maserati's world of elegance.

As the first of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region, this showroom redefines the traditional automotive space. It features an inviting, gallery-like environment where Maserati vehicles are showcased, illuminated like masterpieces.

Within this opulent setting, clients can explore Maserati's Fuoriserie Programme, which offers exceptional customisation and creativity. From choosing the perfect exterior colour to

selecting the finest leather stitch, customers can create a Maserati tailored to their exact specifications.

"We're excited to bring this cutting-edge store environment to Perth, providing our customers with an immersive journey into the world of Maserati and Italian luxury," says Grant Barling, Maserati General Manager for Australia and New Zealand. •



EARLIER THIS YEAR, Barbagallo Maserati had the honour of being awarded Best Maserati Partner for 2023 in the South East Asia Pacific region, a testament to the passion and dedication of the Perth team.

The award, presented by Maserati Chief Operating Officer Luca Delfino at the brand's global conference in Italy, was accepted by Vince Barbagallo and marks the first time one of Australia's Maserati dealerships has been recognised in such a way.

Barbagallo Maserati demonstrated strong sales performance, exceptional customer support and remarkable events and marketing in 2023, which also saw them unveil a state-of-the-art showroom. The significant accomplishment is a fitting tribute to a year of hard work. •



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SPRING SCENTS

STEP INTO THE SEASON WITH THESE FINE PERFUMES.
BY HELEN HAWKES

Italian luxury and contemporary allure pack an aromatic punch in these scents for spring. From fougère to fruity, and barber shop to femme fatale, each tells a story of style and seduction.

SANTA MARIA NOVELLA L'IRIS EAU DE PARFUM

In Greek lore, Iris was the messenger of the gods, and this parfum sends out signals that are overwhelmingly feminine. It takes no less than six years to decant the iris essence needed to create this timeless scent, which also features top notes of galbanum, timur pepper and neroli, heart notes of geranium, magnolia champaca and sambac jasmine, and a base of musk and ambergris. A soft, sweet floral.

100ml \$425

Stockist: au.smnovella.com



GIARDINO SEGRETO EXTRAIT DE PARFUM BY FORNASETTI

The iconic bottle, featuring the face of opera singer Lina Cavalieri and a lush green malachite cap, is reason enough to splurge on this top-tier fragrance. A harmonious fusion of myrrh, oud and sandalwood base notes with top notes of black raspberry, blackcurrant, rhubarb and tomato, and heart notes of carnation, bourbon, geranium and petitgrain. The resulting scent is green and fruity with exceptional appeal.

100ml \$819

Stockist: libertineparfumerie.com.au



**PERFUMER H LEATHER
EAU DE PARFUM**

Bergamot from Italy helps deliver an irresistibly clean finish along with lavender and birch tar in this aromatic fougère fragrance for any gender. A heart of rose essence, iris absolute and cardamom seed on a base of cedar and oak moss deliver an unconventional, olfactory dream.

50ml \$315

Stockist: mecca.com



**EAU D'ITALIE JASMINE
LEATHER EAU DE
PARFUM**

Enjoy a passionate romance between jasmine and leather in a love story also scented by elemi, saffron, patchouli and cedarwood. The heady fragrance, from the Amalfi Coast jewel of Positano, captures the classic Italian tradition of scenting leather with flowers.

100ml \$298

Stockist: mecca.com



TORINO23 BY XERJOFF

It's love all to this dynamic scent that is a sponsor for the Nitto ATP Finals in Turin. Imagine a fresh hit of bergamot blended with rose, cardamom and nutmeg; a heart of heady neroli, jasmine, tuberose and ylang ylang; and some earthy base notes like musk and cedarwood. Game, set, match to the chosen wearer.

50ml \$339 Stockist: libertineparfumerie.com.au



LA PERLA LUMINOUS

An almost criminally sensual mix of florals and woody musks, inspired by the peek-a-boo style of La Perla's lace bralettes. The top note of ambrette seed absolute Orpur couples with jasmine sambac, cedar and sandalwood to create the Sophia Loren of scents. Even the bottle is somehow reminiscent of the iconic Italian screen goddess, making it a must-have for any boudoir.

90ml \$230

Stockist: libertineparfumerie.com.au



**D.S. & DURGA BURNING
BARBERSHOP EAU DE PARFUM**

Molto maschile this, with its zesty spearmint, lime and spruce evoking blackened cologne and the rugged charm of a classic barbershop. Lavender, pine, mint, rose and vanilla intertwine to add a distinctly modern twist, while herbal lavender and a bitter green base of oakmoss up the fragrance ante.

50ml \$291

Stockist: mecca.com •

~ watches ~

FASHION FORWARD



MAJOR FASHION HOUSES ARE TAKING ON SWITZERLAND'S
FINEST IN A PLAY FOR YOUR WRIST. BY **FELIX SCHOLZ**

WHEN YOU THINK of Hermès or Louis Vuitton, your first thought might be for iconic bags such as the Birkin or the Speedy. After all, it's luxury luggage and apparel that put the major fashion houses on the global map.

Increasingly, though, these giants and others of similar ilk are making a concerted play for your wrist, and are perfectly positioned to teach the Swiss a trick or two.

In this new sartorially geared generation, the once-derogatory description of 'fashion watch' takes on new meaning, flagging a combination of the best watchmaking techniques with a design sensibility that's fresh, stylish and even a little cheeky. Backed by the clout of the world's top fashion houses, they're a force to be reckoned with.

CHANEL

Chanel invests heavily in watchmaking. Not content with simply owning its own production facilities, it holds stakes in independent watchmakers Romain Gauthier and F.P. Journe, among others.

The most famous watch to carry the Chanel name is the J12, a 24-year-old design that takes an instantly recognisable dive watch silhouette and gives it a fashionable twist. The J12 is defined by its black or white ceramic case, which serves a base for a level of creative expression that's often hard to find in the po-faced world of horology. It's impossible to argue with the charm of a cartoonish caricature of Coco Chanel, scissors in hand.

But just because Chanel's watches know how to have fun, don't assume the watchmaking that powers them is trivial. Chanel's development of high-end movements is incredibly sophisticated, creating shaped, open-worked movements with sophisticated finishes and aesthetically flawless architecture. This level of watch construction is comparable with the highest levels of haute couture. So really, it makes perfect sense for Chanel.



Chanel demonstrates its playful side with a sophisticated J12 model.

Gucci's 25H model lets craftsmanship do the talking.
BOTTOM: Hermes captures a casual yet chic feel.



GUCCI

The intertwined Gs of the Italian house of Gucci are more often seen on elegant Marmont clutches or iconic Horsebit loafers. The brand has actually been making watches for more than 50 years, as one of the first fashion houses to strategically expand into horology. Its early watchmaking was an uncomplicated affair, leveraging its elevated status to create well-designed quartz timepieces. In recent years the brand made a concerted move upscale and now boasts a comprehensive catalogue, with novel designs such as the skateboard-inspired jump-hour display of the Grip, and the more classic G-Timeless, a round watch often adorned with house emblems.

The line creating the most noise is the 25H collection — an on-trend cushion-cased sports watch with an integrated bracelet that makes for an appealing profile. Gucci is clearly confident in the power of this design, easing back on the branding to let the craftsmanship do the talking. And there's plenty to say about the quality and scope of the 25H; it's offered with a range of complications, including a well-executed in-house automatic movement, all the way up to sophisticated slim tourbillons and even a minute repeater.

HERMÈS

When it comes to luxury goods, Hermès is the kingpin. The French fashion house aspires to offer its customers the very best, whatever the category. Its watches, dating back to 1912, are highly accomplished pieces, although it wasn't until 1978 that the powerhouse brand established a dedicated Swiss watchmaking subsidiary. In 2006, Hermès doubled down on its commitment to fine watchmaking, buying a stake in Vaucher Manufacture Fleurier to ensure a steady supply of some of Switzerland's best commercially produced movements.

Upon this strong foundation, Hermès has built a formidable lineup of timepieces. There are incredibly smart regular production pieces, such as the sporty H08 and the more feminine Cut, as well as astonishing Meter's d'Art creations often echoing the designs of iconic scarves. Unexpectedly whimsical dials use refined craft skills, such as marquetry and enamel painting.

Other Swiss brands can do all this, but what Hermès brings to the table is an assured design sensibility that manages not to take itself too seriously. The result is watches that are casual, chic and downright cool.





The versatile Louis Vuitton Escale looks the part.

LOUIS VUITTON

Louis Vuitton is such a giant in the luxury space that it's no surprise the brand has a well-defined footprint in the high-end watch market. When the LVMH group announced Jean Arnault, scion of group owner Bernhard Arnault, as its watch director in 2021, it was clear the category was a top priority. Arnault wasted no time, announcing a prize for up-and-coming independent watchmakers, as well as shining a light on La Fabrique Du Temps, a highly skilled and experienced manufacturing facility acquired by Louis Vuitton in 2011.

The natural next step was for Arnault to reimagine Louis Vuitton's most iconic timepiece, the drum-inspired Tambour, which it first released in 2002. The new Tambour debuted in 2023 and makes a powerful proposition, pairing the brand's prestige with a refined take on the ever-popular integrated sports watch. The slender case is subtly tapered, and the lugless design allows for a seamlessly flowing shape on the wrist.

However, if you're looking for something dressier, look no further than this year's big release, the Escale. It's already promising to be a versatile platform for experimentation — the travel trunk-inspired case looks the part with pared-back refined dials, or incredibly detailed artistic creations in enamel and miniature sculpture. Louis Vuitton is clearly making a concerted push in high-end watchmaking, and has the skills and resources to make it work.●



IMBUING A HOME with a touch of Tuscany, or even design accents reminiscent of Florence or Rome, is one way to boldly create la dolce vita.

Quality, simplicity and superior function are hallmarks of Italian design, says Shona McElroy, principal of Smac Studio Interior Design.

“Italian architecture and design is definitely one of my happy places,” she surmises.

That extends from the elegance of Venetian plaster and opulence of Arabescato marble, to the stylish efficacy of kitchen appliances from Officine Gullo or Bertazzoni.

“Venetian plaster elevates spaces without overpowering them and provides a perfect backdrop for curated furniture and accessories,” McElroy says. Think curvaceous, not angular – like the fluid arches of ancient Rome, or the majestic dome of Florence’s Santa Maria del Fiore.

“Arabescato marble, from the quarries in the Tuscany region, is my choice for luxury spaces as it has dramatic, textured veining that adds interest to any room.”

And that really does mean any room, with marble finding its place not only in kitchens and bathrooms, but also in statement pieces like powder room vanities and fireplace surrounds.

In a recent transformation of a traditional Italianate-style home, McElroy used the distinctive marble in a powder room vanity where it beautifully complemented grasscloth wallpaper and the sophisticated aesthetic of gold Parisi tapware. She advocates using tapware in bronze or a colour – the more detailed, the better – to elevate form and function.

In the entrance foyer, she opted for the dark green of Verde Alpi marble – also used in the dining room fireplace – combined with Carrara marble to form a stylish checkerboard floor.

The limewash oranges and terracottas used originally for the home were replaced with a white and bright colour palette, yet McElroy remained true to an Italian-decor principle. Punches of colour

HAPPY PLACES

TO RECREATE A LUXE ITALIAN FEEL AT HOME, THINK QUALITY, SIMPLICITY AND SUPERIOR FUNCTION. BY HELEN HAWKES



LEFT, ABOVE AND RIGHT: DAVID WHEELER/SMAC STUDIO

BELOW AND OPPOSITE:

Balance comfort and style in living spaces by complementing curved surfaces with touches of marble and bronze.

layered in different patterns and textures were used to add visual interest throughout; a cigar room was renovated to include a decadent bronze-clad bar painted a dark, warm grey with a hint of green, as a nod to more traditional sitting rooms.

“Clients can be hesitant to use colour, but rooms don’t have to be white to feel bright, generous and elegant,” McElroy notes. “The dark shades in the home office and cigar room are unexpected, but still calm and cohesive with the rest of the house.”

Sunset browns in stylings and furnishings supply more of the Tuscan feel, while detailed panelling and corncicing provide a stylish juxtaposition to smooth marble surfaces.

“I love all the different layers, materials and shifts of light as you move through the home. I like to think this house is like a little black dress with a pearl necklace – a timeless aesthetic.”

In achieving an Italian look, lighting that functions as art is also a must, says McElroy. Think Articolo, Benit Sculpted Chandeliers from Aerin, or something as sublime as Vistosi’s Plisse Pendant.

When bringing the entire look together, mixing vintage furniture with new pieces not only demonstrates an innate sense of style, but creates conversation pieces in a room. For those who own pieces by Gio Ponti, Vico Magistretti or Ettore Sottsass, this is an opportunity to pair them with modern choices.

Finally, remember that sleeping spaces can also be enhanced by a touch of Italian style. An antique European tapestry from Parterre makes a luxurious and interesting bedspread, and layers of pillows and curtains in a neutral linen add a sense of Italian ease. •



MCELROY’S INSPIRED DESIGN COMBINES ITALIAN MARBLE WITH TIMBER ACCENTS AND ARCHED DOORWAYS FOR AN OPEN-PLAN EFFECT.

~ cocktail ~



RAISING THE BAR

HAILED AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S BEST, THE CONNAUGHT BAR IN LONDON HAS CHANGED THE WAY WE ENJOY COCKTAILS. **BY FRED SIGGINS**

IN A CITY known for its iconic hotels and the world-class cocktail bars that inhabit them, no establishment speaks to the opulence, creativity and sheer quality of London's luxury drinking culture quite so well as The Connaught Bar.

The hotel itself dates back to 1815, with much of the current construction built in the 1890s at the height of Victorian architecture. Home to grand, chandeliered suites, mahogany staircases lusted after by Ralph Lauren, thousands



of original artworks, and three-Michelin-star restaurant Hélène Darroze, The Connaught has played host to rock and Hollywood royalty, as well as the literal, coronated type.

In 2007, a new jewel was added to The Connaught's crown – a pearlescent, platinum-plated cocktail bar designed by David Collins Studio to evoke the English and Irish Cubist art of the 1920s, known simply as The Connaught Bar. Behind a pair of darkened glass doors tucked

away down a hallway on The Connaught's first floor, the almost-hidden bar is decorated in shades of soft gold, blue-veined marble and forest green leather, the space warmed by genuinely welcoming service.

The Connaught Bar quickly established itself as one of the world's premier cocktail venues. In 2010 it won the title of World's Best Hotel Bar, and Director of Mixology Agostino Perrone was named International Bartender of

the Year. Since then, the bar has been a perennial entry in the list of the world's 50 best, including taking top spot in 2020. Its talented bartenders are considered among the globe's most respected drinks personalities, with countless accolades to their names.

The Connaught Bar has been hugely influential in the resurgence of world class hotel bars, the global revival of classic cocktails and craft spirits, and the influence of Italian expatriate bartenders and their specific brand of hospitality.

The rejuvenation of the martini as a popular cocktail is also a legacy The Connaught Bar proudly upholds; its signature version is legendary the world over for lovers of this most elegant of drinks. Ordering a martini at the Connaught Bar is an experience imbued with a sense of ceremony. The ritual begins as a black-lacquered martini trolley is wheeled to your table, from which guests may choose from a collection of gins, vermouths and aromatic bitters to create their own ideal martini, or experiment with new flavours such as the house-made 'Dr Ago' bergamot and ginseng bitters. Poured from high into a hand-etched crystal glass, this martini is suffused with a depth and texture that is far more than the sum of its parts.

The martini ceremony is just one example of what makes this more than a mere bar. It is theatre, music, dance, ritual, artistry, hospitality and liquid archaeology. Perhaps best of all, The Connaught Bar is open to all, not just hotel guests. This means the opulence and luxury of The Connaught and the world class service of its staff can be had by anyone for the price of a martini.

A new book, *The Connaught Bar – Recipes And Iconic Creations* (Phaidon), details the creation of 100 of their most iconic cocktails, a few of which we detail here – including the iconic martini.

If you can't make it to Connaught Bar in person, whip up the following cocktails at home – as written by the Connaught's own bar staff – for a taste of their signature style. ●

THE CONNAUGHT MARTINI

Difficulty: 2

ABV: 3

DRY

2ml (½ teaspoon) bitters of choice

15ml vermouth blend

75ml gin or vodka of choice

Lemon twist or green olive

Whether it is the gin or vodka version, The Connaught Martini is an aromatised martini that has been served following the same ritual since the day we opened the newly refurbished bar. It's a distillation of the Connaught Bar ethos – it's about approaching our guests. We want our new guests to get excited about what we do with our classic service, and we want our regular guests to feel comfortable and yet excited about trying something new.

To make a martini with a twist: Using a dropper, gently pour the bitters around the rim of a frozen martini glass or coupette. Combine the vermouth and spirit in a mixing glass filled two-thirds with large ice cubes and stir until well chilled. Strain into the prepared martini glass, raising the mixing glass high to add aeration to the drink and squeezing the lemon twist into the drink as the liquid passes into the glass. Garnish with the lemon twist.

To make a martini with an olive: Using a dropper, gently pour the bitters around the rim of a frozen martini glass or coupette. Prick the olive three times with a toothpick and let a little juice run out into the glass. Combine the vermouth and spirit in a mixing glass filled two-thirds with large ice cubes and stir until well chilled. Strain into the prepared martini glass, raising the mixing glass high to add aeration to the drink.

Garnish with the olive skewered onto the cocktail stick.

KEY

ABV 1

Under 10% ABV
(alcohol by volume)

ABV 2

10–20% ABV
(alcohol by volume)

ABV 3

Over 20% ABV
(alcohol by volume)





LA LAMBADA

Difficulty: 1

ABV: N/A

MILKY, CITRUSY

30ml fresh pineapple juice

30ml coconut cream

15ml fresh lime juice

3 fresh lemongrass straws, one cut in half

100ml bitter lemon soda

Mint sprig, to garnish

A star was born at the Caribe Hilton in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in the summer of 1954, when pineapple juice met coconut cream. The combination is so delicious that the rum seems almost an afterthought, as this rich and indulgent non-alcoholic drink demonstrates. The fresh lemongrass, lime juice and bitter lemon soda add a completely new dimension. The result is irresistible and was featured on our first menu.

Muddle the pineapple juice, coconut cream, lime juice and the halved lemongrass straw in a cocktail shaker filled with ice, then shake vigorously until the drink is sufficiently chilled. Double strain into a highball glass over crushed ice. Top up with the bitter lemon soda and garnish with the remaining lemongrass straws and a mint sprig.

ITALIAN JOB

Difficulty: 1

ABV: 1

FRUITY, BITTER

50ml vodka

15ml sugar syrup

20ml fresh lime juice

30ml passion fruit puree

30ml pineapple juice

10ml Campari

½ passion fruit, pulp scooped out

½ passion fruit, to garnish

This drink appeared on our first menu as a seasonal option. Fruity with a light, dry finish, the Italian Job can be customised to suit your mood or to express a special moment. Although the recipe appears to be a passion fruit martini with an Italian touch of the most famous bitter aperitif – Campari – you can make it your own by trying it with a different fruit puree such as mango or papaya. The possibilities are endless.

Combine the vodka, sugar syrup, lime juice, puree, pineapple juice, Campari and passion fruit pulp in a cocktail shaker filled with ice and shake vigorously until the drink is sufficiently chilled. Double strain into a chilled cocktail glass, then float the half passion fruit on top.



LATINA DAISY

Difficulty: 1

ABV: 2

SOUR, CHOCOLATY

*100% organic cocoa powder,
for decorating the rim of the glass*
1 lime half, for moistening the rim of the glass
10ml Galliano l'Autentico
25ml fresh lime juice
1–2 barspoons white caster sugar
2 barspoons fennel seeds
50ml white Cuban rum
20ml dark creme de cacao

You may have experienced and loved many modern classics that fall under the drink category known as the daisy – a sour cocktail sweetened with a liqueur or flavoured syrup. The cosmopolitan, the daiquiri and the margarita (Spanish for 'daisy') are all daisies. I crafted this Latina Daisy in 2008, to embrace the sensual experiences of Latin and Cuban culture – the colours, aromas, flavours and lifestyle. A classically crisp, fresh sour cocktail, it pairs dark chocolate liqueur with the crisp, fresh, lightly fruity character of white Cuban rum plus its distinctive notes of marzipan, citrus and allspice. This experience is heightened by the anise notes from the fennel seeds as well as the anise and vanilla dominant liqueur. Every sip of the Latina Daisy imparts a distinctive complexity, sophistication and richness to the palate. It can be served as an aperitif, digestif or simply as a delightful afternoon refreshment with a piece of rich, dark chocolate. My Latina Daisy was the winning creation at the 2009 Bacardí Legacy bartending competition.

Spread some cocoa powder out on a plate. Prepare a coupette by moistening the rim with a lime half at a 45-degree angle and then dip the rim of the glass in the cocoa powder until coated. Pour the Galliano l'Autentico into the coupette to give the drink a silky texture and clear appearance. Combine the lime juice, sugar and fennel seeds in a cocktail shaker and lightly muddle to dissolve the sugar and express the character of the fennel seeds. By mixing the sugar and lime juice in this way, you get a crisper texture and flavour. Add the rum and creme de cacao and some ice cubes to the shaker, then shake and double strain into the prepared coupette.



**This is an edited extract from
The Connaught Bar: Cocktail
Recipes and Iconic Creations
(Phaidon), \$59.95 from
phaidon.com**



HEALING HOMES

IMAGINE THE BENEFITS OF
INNOVATIONS THAT CAN TURN
YOUR HOUSE INTO A WELLNESS
HUB. BY **HELEN HAWKES**

Wellness-focused homes – including spas, treatment rooms and even sound therapy – have been having a moment ever since Covid-19. Now digital tech and AI are elevating the at-home health experience further still.

Today's luxury homes are becoming high-tech, multifaceted health hubs set to merge advanced nanotechnology and empathetic architecture for living spaces that capture our biometrics to create environments dynamically extending from our own psyches.

According to Jessica Smith from the Global Wellness Institute, this shift might involve everything from the rise of medical-grade home health monitoring systems to smart furnishings that adjust in real-time to individual wellbeing needs.

"Imagine you're under stress and your environment intuitively responds," Smith says.

That may involve adjusting light exposure, suggesting a yoga session via a health device connected to a universal circuit, or designing a customised meal plan that utilises the ingredients in your refrigerator.

Samsung's Family Hub Smart Fridge already uses AI to identify up to 33 fresh food items, helping you to manage shopping lists and get recipe suggestions.

Looking forward, kitchen appliances integrated with biotechnology will tailor meals based on users' genetic profiles to optimise nutrition and taste, predicts Professor Rocky Scopelliti, author of "The Conscious Code: Decoding the Implications of Artificial Intelligence".

"Integrating biotechnologies and the internet-of-senses in the home of the future will create an environment that is not only deeply immersive and personalised, but also highly sustainable and health-conscious," he says.

"Home environments could adapt based on epigenetic information, optimising light, sound and scent to enhance wellbeing and productivity."

PURE AIR, PERFECT LIGHTING

Smart air purifiers that adjust settings based on air quality readings are already changing the environment in luxury homes, says Amit Segev of Switch Home Automation in Sydney.

And according to Scopelliti, such systems could also be used to release beneficial bacteria or probiotics to enhance respiratory health or specific scents to counteract pollutants.

For those conscious of wellness-impacting germs, the Italian-designed Lema Air Cleaning System can be installed in closets or cupboards to sanitise clothing and footwear.

Charu Gandhi, the founder and director of London interior design studio Elicyon, says specialist air filtration systems can minimise the threat of viruses, while also cleansing garments of odours, bacteria, and air pollution.

How about UV disinfection lights that sanitise surfaces, sensors that identify if occupants are running a fever or a range of other diagnostic medical tech?

It's all destined for future homes, says futurist David Shrier, a lecturer in technology and innovation at the University of Oxford.

From a company based in Italy's Lake Como comes a lighting product that is designed to positively impact psychological processes by recreating natural light, and can even be programmed to follow circadian rhythms.

Douglas Frost of lighting store dedece says the CoeLux Sky Line is an optical system based on nanotechnology that artificially reproduces the visual appearance of sun and sky.

It diffuses natural light throughout the room in a sleek, rectilinear structure that projects "sunlight" onto the wall as a soft, yellow band of light.

The human-centric lighting can be installed in rooms with no access to natural light, such as interior bathrooms, home gyms in basements or where townhouses are split by an interior wall.



CoeLux Sky Line's nanotechnology simulates the effect of natural daylight.

IOT-ENABLED RELAXATION AND FITNESS

Segev says “Internet of Things” (IoT) products used in many top-tier homes can intelligently control lighting systems or play soothing music in a chill-out space after an intense day at work.

These functions can be controlled from an app and are often paired with automated actions such as lowering the blinds or turning on the heating under themes such as “relaxation”, or “night in”, he says.

Taking that a step further, companies such as Getsound.ai use state-of-the-art algorithms to create personalised bio-soundscapes that can reduce stress or help you to focus. And each soundscape is generated for you in real time based on your environment.

In the fitness realm, tech products such as the LiTMUS LAB Smart Fitness Mirror allow you to do live and pre-recorded classes from Pilates to HIIT via touchscreen capability. Bluetooth heart monitoring and headphone connectivity can help show you the moves and take you through a workout. The BBalance smart bath mat not only reads weight, body composition, posture and balance, but can also suggest guided exercises.

INTERACTIVE TEXTILES

A new generation of textiles means the very fabrics surrounding us at home will come alive as interactive interfaces.

Scopelliti says textiles embedded with bio-responsive materials could react to the wearer's physiological state to provide warmth, cooling, or therapeutic stimuli based on real-time health data. Meanwhile, fabrics that use biotechnology could break down odours.

This, he says, is just the beginning of a trend towards personalised home environments that will make everyday life richer and more enjoyable. ●

***TODAY'S LUXURY HOMES ARE BECOMING
MULTIFACETED HEALTH HUBS SET TO
MERGE ADVANCED NANOTECHNOLOGY AND
EMPATHETIC ARCHITECTURE.***

MASERATI SPECIAL SERIES MC20 ICONA & MC20 LEGGONDA



THE MC12 HAS GIVEN LIFE TO TWO NEW EXPRESSIONS OF NATURAL-BORN RACERS.
A MASERATI SPECIAL SERIES AS EXCLUSIVE AS ITS PREDECESSORS. A DESTINY OF EVOLUTION.



Maserati

THE SPARKLING NEW
GRANCABRIO CARRIES ON
MASERATI'S GLORIOUS
DROP-TOP HERITAGE. NOW
WITH ALL-WHEEL-DRIVE,
EXTRA CUTTING EDGE
TECH, AND EVEN AN
ALL-ELECTRIC VERSION.
BY **JOHN MAHONEY**



The stunning new Maserati GranCabrio is open for business on the shores of Lake Maggiore, Italy.

- driving -



REACH FOR
THE SKY



Eye-catching red leather provides a wonderful visual reference to Maserati drop-tops of the past.

Few places in the world cater better for fast cabriolets than the areas surrounding Lake Maggiore. Tucked away in the Italian Alps close to the Swiss border, the country's northernmost lake offers breathtaking views in just about every direction, plus fresh alpine air and a charm mostly missing from tourist-occupied Lake Como, just an hour's drive to the east.

Then there's the roads. They're simply glorious. Head north and there's almost an uncountable number of mountain passes to explore that offer long sweeping bends, tricky switchbacks and hairpin after hairpin, with dramatic landscapes aplenty.

I have a fondness for Saint Bernardino, which can be busy on a hot summer's day but allows you to drive up as high as the snowline to cool off, with the added bonus of being able to then visit the Saint Bernard sanctuary to watch the famous rescue dogs romping about on the slopes.

In other words, this is true Maserati territory, and the perfect place to first encounter the stylish GranCabrio – especially when positioned in front of the resplendent Lake Maggiore.

What I hadn't quite prepared for was an unseasonal burst of hail in early June adding extra drama to proceedings, fleetingly creating a winter-like backdrop. Still, even that presents no great difficulty for a car designed to be enjoyed every single day, with or without its fabric roof in place.

Convertibles are nothing new to Maserati. The company first peeled the roof from one of its fast sports cars more than 60 years ago, so it seems fair to say it has mastered the art of making jaw-droppingly beautiful drop-tops.

As the summer storm finally breaks and the sun peeks through, golden rays of light dance off the stunning frozen blue, Night Interaction-hued paint, highlighting the muscular shoulders and intricate design details along the GranCabrio Trofeo's sculpted body.

Roof up or down, it's clear that the striking lines of its sister model, the GranTurismo coupé, haven't been diluted in any way in making the transition to this glamorous convertible.

As always, proportions are key, with designers referencing the carmaker's past masters, such as the striking 1954 Maserati A6GCS. But, make no mistake, this is no retro rehash or pastiche of previous models.

The design of the new GranCabrio is thoroughly contemporary – which is as it should be, given what lurks beneath the skin – including the choice of a technologically advanced all-electric powertrain.

Speaking of which, the all-electric, triple-motor GranCabrio Folgore variant has already been crowned the world's quickest luxury four-seat drop-top.

It's no wonder, as it musters an astonishing 610kW of power and 1350Nm of torque, delivering a hypercar-troubling

~ driving ~

*GOLDEN RAYS OF LIGHT DANCE OFF THE STUNNING
PAINT, HIGHLIGHTING THE MUSCULAR
SHOULDERS AND INTRICATE DESIGN DETAILS.*



~ driving ~

**PRODUCING 405KW OF POWER AND 650NM OF TORQUE,
THE TWIN-TURBO V6 DELIVERS AN OPERATIC
SOUNDTRACK AND EXPLOSIVE PERFORMANCE.**



0–100km/h sprint of just 2.8 seconds. It also sets new standards for charging, with a top-up from 20 to 80 per cent taking just 18 minutes, and a five-minute charge adding as much as 100 kilometres of range.

If you're not quite ready for the electric revolution, the new twin-turbo 3.0-litre V6 will not leave you wanting. After all, it's the same sophisticated Nettuno engine that powers the latest Maserati MC20 supercar.

Producing a healthy 405kW of power and 650Nm of torque, the twin-turbo V6 in the GranCabrio Trofeo delivers an operatic

soundtrack and explosive performance, with 0–100km/h taking just 3.6 seconds before topping out at 315km/h – both new standards for its class.

With the rain and hail a distant memory, it's time to drop the triple-layer fabric hood – a job that takes just 14 seconds at speeds of up to 50km/h, making roofless motoring even more accessible than ever before.

For those looking for more than just ease-of-use, Maserati's latest cabriolet replicates its GranTurismo sibling with the promise of a driving experience worthy of the Trident badge.



**Sun shining or not,
the GranCabrio is set
up for comfortable
and captivating
year-round motoring.**

Weighing in at just 100 kilograms more than the coupé with which it shares architecture, engineers have managed to retain the platform's near-optimum 51/49 weight distribution. In addition, both the air springs and the front double wishbone/rear multi-link suspension arrangement transition across from the exceptionally capable GranTurismo.

Crucially for those who live in colder markets, traction-boosting all-wheel-drive is now standard. Expect the GranCabrio to be both agile and entertaining when you want it to be, but also as stable and sure-footed as you need in damp, slippery conditions.

Braking is another headline achievement. Thanks to a set of enormous stoppers developed by Brembo, Maserati says its drop-top can shrug off 100km/h in just 37 metres of road.

But most owners will rarely scratch the surface of the GranCabrio Trofeo's prodigious driving potential. They'll prefer to wind back the pace, peel off the roof, and soak in the unmatched refinement, smoothness and cultured soundtrack provided courtesy of that supercar-sourced V6.

And if the weather happens to be on the chilly side, there's a powerful heater, heated seats and an integral neck warmer that directs a toasty stream of air down your back, allowing you to enjoy alfresco driving, even in nippy temperatures. With the roof down, there's also a standard wind stopper to alleviate buffeting.

The wonderfully appointed cabin incorporates all of the quality, design and craftsmanship long-associated with the luxury Italian brand, and if you choose the crimson red leather you could almost convince yourself you were driving a classic Maserati from the past.

Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. Whether you're a young tech entrepreneur from Silicon Valley or a mature business owner, Maserati's designers have your back, cleverly incorporating cutting-edge tech into an interior that's warm and elegant but also distinctly contemporary.

There's a 12.2-inch digital instrument cluster, plus the fast and intuitive 12.3-inch infotainment screen; a third 8.8-inch touchscreen to operate the climate control; and a configurable head-up display to ensure you never need take your eyes off the road.

Many owners will also consult Maserati's bespoke Fuoriserie Program, whose team of designers and artisan craftspeople are more than happy to go to extreme lengths to create a car that's truly your own.

That could mean choosing the world's finest woodgrain trims or leather finishes, or perhaps even opting for my car's wonderful Night Interaction frozen blue paint, a specially curated finish that Maserati brand ambassador David Beckham plumped for when ordering his MC20 supercar.

Indications are that it's primed to arrive just in time for the start of spring; but, after a day spent in this car's captivating presence, I'm pretty sure its future owners will relish life with the GranCabrio, whatever the weather. •

~ driving ~



The Maserati Grecale Folgore on the limestone-cobbled streets of Lecce.



COPPER LIGHTNING

ON A SWING THROUGH SOUTHERN ITALY'S SCENIC PUGLIA REGION, THE FIRST ALL-ELECTRIC SUV FROM MASERATI, THE GRECALE FOLGORE, REVEALS IRRESISTIBLE ATTRIBUTES. BY **VINCE JACKSON**



Car launches tend to abide by an unwritten rule: show the star in its natural habitat. Hence, race circuits with long, speed-building straights are used to scrutinise snarling hypercars, and corrugated outback tracks are a fail-safe testing ground for four-wheel-drives that frolic in dust like hippos roll in mud. It's a no-brainer.

Very occasionally comes an outlier. An event that takes scissors to the rulebook.

As Maserati's first fully electric SUV, the Grecale Folgore might easily have made its debut in a dazzling metropolis; a forward-thinking city brimming with state-of-the-art buildings constructed using groundbreaking engineering and sustainable materials.

Today, however, the landscape surrounding this cutting-edge model is old and crumbling – in the nicest possible way.

Lecce may not be the first name to roll off the tongue during conversations about the Italian Renaissance, but the baroque gem, located in the Puglia region on Italy's anatomical heel, is regarded as "the Florence of the South".

Travellers with an aversion to tourist traps serving €20 glasses of Aperol spritz can enjoy palazzi, basilicas and monuments arguably as beguiling as those of Lecce's more celebrated compatriot to the north. The town drips with the kind of soul-stirring antiquity that only historic European centres can muster, its gnarly laneways and time-worn facades offering an intriguing contrast to the Grecale Folgore's highly contemporary demeanour.

While not Maserati's first adventure into the brave new world beyond combustion – that accolade sits with 2023's lauded GranTurismo Folgore – this model marks another milestone in Maserati's long-term commitment to electrification. For its part, the Grecale Folgore SUV assumes a role as one of the brand's volume sellers, charged with passing the electric torch to coming generations of Maserati owners.



~ driving ~

Lucury accents extend to the Grecale Folgore's interior, which incorporates a cutting-edge 12.3-inch infotainment system. LEFT: Maserati global brand design manager Alessandro Silva, who drew inspiration from classic Italian architecture.



We first set eyes on the car in the formal gardens of Lecce's La Fiermontina hotel, among rows of stately olive trees and lawns so manicured they look like they've been trimmed with nail scissors. The aero-driven styling, including a new inverted front grille, the iconic trio of side vents and Trident-inspired wheels, is designed to seduce. But as dusk approaches, it's impossible to ignore the Grecale Folgore's copper hero body colour, dubbed Rame Folgore, meaning "copper lightning" in Italian.

For more than 500 years, local architects and sculptors have used an endemic limestone, called Lecce stone, to bathe the region and buildings in this city in a distinctive golden-sand patina. The designers of the Grecale Folgore seem to be channelling the same spirit of Italian individuality by utilising iridescent pigments to create a body paint that can subtly change colour between warm and cool tones, according to prevailing light conditions.

Pacing around the car like a proud father, Maserati's Global Brand Design Manager, Alessandro Silva, explains that his baby was inspired by the facade of the Guggenheim in Bilbao, where the sun dances between various sections of the building, altering the museum's appearance.

BELOW: Modernity and style in every detail.

OPPOSITE: Casting an irrepressible presence amid the old-world splendour of southern Italy.

The following day, as the stone facades of Lecce glow in the morning sun, it's drive time. We leave the hotel and snake out of the city, following a path deep into the heart of Puglia and along the coast. In some ways, it's unfortunate the secret is out about this region and its many treasures (thanks a lot, social media), but it nevertheless retains an undeveloped, rustic charm. No high-rise glass apartment blocks, no faceless global chains. And since the summer tourist influx from the big northern cities is still months away, the roads are thankfully relatively empty.

First available chance, not another vehicle in sight, foot down. In GT and Sport modes – one of four driving settings, including Max Range and Offroad – the Grecale Folgore accelerates in the thrilling manner you expect from a brand steeped in racing



~ driving ~



**TODAY IN PUGLIA, THE GRECALE FOLGORE REVEALS
ITSELF TO BE A MASERATI FIRST, EV SECOND.**



THE HANDLING COMES INTO ITS OWN COURTESY OF ADAPTIVE AIR SUSPENSION, TO MAKE LIGHT WORK OF THE CRUDE BITUMEN.

history. Official figures proclaim 0–100km/h in 4.1 seconds, on the way to a top speed of 220km/h. That’s quick for a mid-size SUV. As the car is 100 per cent electric, thrust arrives immediately with a pulse-raising jolt.

Equipped with a 105kWh battery, a maximum of 410kW of power is generated, alongside 820 Nm of torque. Driving range is up to 500km on a full battery charge. Customers can choose from home or public charging options, or both. The former involves a wallbox that supplies between 3 and 22kW, while the latter can be controlled by the Maserati Charge app, which helps drivers to locate, plan and manage charging via their smartphones. You can even adjust the car’s cabin temperature remotely – say, while out shopping or enjoying a coffee.

Did someone mention coffee? To not stop for caffeine and sugar every hour is considered sacrilege in Italy. Not that anyone is complaining about the distraction. This first pause of the day in the cobblestoned seaside village of Otranto, in view of rough, foaming waves and biting wind, means a chance to poke around the Grecale Folgore’s cabin – a sleek, tech-savvy, but ultimately

cosseting cocoon that, unlike some electric vehicles, doesn’t feel like a reconstituted iPhone.

In keeping with the cutting-edge exterior design, and that otherworldly iridescent body paint, Maserati has sourced an innovative seating material. Made exclusively in Italy from recycled fishing nets, fabric scraps and unwanted carpets, Econyl is a stylish nylon-fibre surface that forms the headliner and carpets, neatly complimenting the copper trim.

With the rate of technological change now so relentless, just keeping pace with the automotive trailblazers is not enough. Maserati has positioned the Grecale Folgore ahead of the curve with a raft of advanced features. That includes an intuitive digital cockpit; a 12.3-inch central display screen from which drivers can, among other things, integrate Google Calendar; and a 21-speaker sound system from Italian audio brand Sonus faber, delivering 1200kW of sonic punch.

While it’s hard to argue with those numbers, the issue of sound is a thorny topic when it comes to electric motoring. Aware that the bellow of engines and bark of exhausts play a key



Drivers can locate public charging stations via a smartphone app.
LEFT: The Grecale Folgore proves to be a highly capable coastal cruiser.

***AS DUSK APPROACHES, IT'S
IMPOSSIBLE TO IGNORE THE
GRECALE FOLGORE'S COPPER
HERO BODY COLOUR,
DUBBED RAME FOLGORE.***

role in defining not just the driving experience, but also the emotional connection with a brand, Maserati has undertaken countless hours of R&D to replicate a Maserati-like sound. The payoff is a pure, rousing soundscape that's pumped into the Grecale Folgore cabin at all the right moments.

Rejoining the coastal drive route, the seasonal invaders from the north have managed to leave their mark, judging by the pockmarked state of the tarmac. As the roads narrow and become more twisty, and a fierce crosswind whips off the ocean, the Grecale Folgore's handling comes into its own courtesy of adaptive air suspension, to make light work of the crude bitumen. It proffers a firm ride, but this only enhances the dynamic experience; in combination with precise steering feedback and substantial grip from aerodynamically designed wheels, driving confidence remains high, even as the sea's white horses multiply.

Before we know it, it's time for more refreshments. Followed by more caffeine. Then more driving. Then another stopover which, somewhat regrettably, is the last on the itinerary. In a buzzy waterfront café, over a mug of tarry Americano and a local biscuit delicacy stuffed with almonds, we recount the day's exploits.

Since the company's birth in 1914, the charter of every Maserati model has been to stay as faithful as possible to the brand DNA: uniqueness in design, innovation and performance. Today in Puglia, the Grecale Folgore reveals itself to be a Maserati first, EV second. The core message has not been lost in translation during the switch from petrol to electrons, thanks largely to the driving experience and the sounds that accompany it. The future of electrification is in safe hands.

We step out onto the pavement where our convoy of test cars is parked, ready to leave the windswept seaboard and mosey back to the limestone walls of the city. On the opposite side of the road, clogging up the promenade, a crowd of dyed-in-the-wool locals are busy with their smartphones, taking photos of our chariots, their excitement palpable.

Granted, these are not exotic supercars; but the magnetism of the Trident badge is clearly still irresistible to regular Italians. The Grecale Folgore will become part of their fabric. Part of their heritage. And, despite its modernity, a part of this ancient, authentic landscape; easily on par with Lecce stone and strong coffee. ●



~ driving ~

The Grecale Folgore creates a
stunning counterpoint to Lecce's
Piazza del Duomo.





PRESTIGIOUS PASTA

PAPPARDELLE ARETINA

PAPPARDELLE ALL'ARETINA

Serves 4

THINK YOU KNOW PASTA?
THERE'S MORE TO THIS
CENTURIES-OLD FOOD
STAPLE THAN MEETS THE EYE.

IT SEEMS HARD to believe, but there was once an era in Italy when the simple pleasure of sitting down with loved ones over a freshly cooked pasta meal was a luxury accessible to only the very few.

After it was first produced in a form we might recognise today – in Sicily around the 11th century – pasta spread across the Mediterranean to southern Italy. The oldest documented evidence for the use of dried pasta points to the northern port town of Genoa in 1316, where the world's first pasta maker, Maria Borgogno, is said to have run the house in which *faciebat lasagnas*, or "lasagna was made".

As Genoa's fortunes faded, so did the popularity of pasta and for hundreds of years, it was an uncommon and costly dish. It wasn't until the 17th century that "noble maccherone", a generic name for all types of pasta, rose to prominence.

Reasserting the role of this iconic staple as a dish of luxurious virtue and almost endless variety is *The Silver Spoon Pasta* (Phaidon), a compendium of contemporary pasta recipes from agnolotti to zite, along with a history of the gastronomic staple, and preparation notes on prepping pasta that's authentically "al dente", or firm to the bite.

Each of 46 different pasta types is explained – orecchiette, for example, means "small ears" and hails from the Puglia region in southern Italy, where locals assert its shape is based on the cylindrical houses with conical roofs found in the region.

Featuring more than 300 wonderful pasta dishes, each displayed in mouth-watering detail, *The Silver Spoon Pasta* is proof – if any were needed – that pasta this good truly is a luxury we all need in our lives.

PREPARATION TIME:

30 min

COOKING TIME:

1 hour 50 min

2 tablespoons olive oil
generous ½ cup (100g) chopped prosciutto
1 onion, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
1kg duckling, liver reserved, cut into serving pieces
scant 1 cup (200ml) dry white wine
200g canned chopped tomatoes
1 sprig fresh sage
1 sprig fresh basil
275g pappardelle
2 tablespoons butter, chilled
½ cup (40g) grated Parmesan cheese
salt and pepper

Heat the oil in a shallow pan. Add the prosciutto, onion, celery, and carrot and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Add the pieces of duckling and cook, stirring frequently, until lightly browned all over. Pour in the wine and cook until the alcohol has evaporated. Stir in the tomatoes, add the sage and basil, and season with salt and pepper. Cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 1½ hours until the meat is tender. Ten minutes before the end of cooking, add the liver. Remove the pieces of duckling from the pan and keep warm. Pass the sauce through a strainer into a bowl, pressing with the back of a wooden spoon. Cook the pappardelle in plenty of salted boiling water for 2–3 minutes, or until al dente. Drain and return to the pan, then pour the sauce over, add the butter, and toss. Sprinkle with Parmesan, transfer to a warmed serving dish, and serve immediately. Serve the duckling separately.

REGINETTE WITH LANGOUSTINES

REGINETTE CON GLI SCAMPI

Serves 4

PREPARATION TIME:

20 min

COOKING TIME:

20 min

1 cup (100 g) baby peas (petit pois)
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 small shallot, very finely chopped
16 small langoustines, shelled and deveined
350g reginette
2 tomatoes, blanched, peeled, and diced
salt and freshly ground white pepper

Cook the peas in lightly salted boiling water for about 5 minutes until tender, then drain. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a saucepan. Add the shallot and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes. Add the langoustines, season with salt and white pepper, lower the heat, and cook for 6–7 minutes. Cook the reginette in plenty of salted boiling water until al dente. Drain, tip into the pan with the langoustines, add the peas, and stir. Add the tomatoes and cook for 2 more minutes, shaking the pan. Transfer to a warmed serving dish and serve immediately.





SPAGHETTI PARCEL WITH CLAMS

SPAGHETTI AL CARTOCCIO CON VONGOLE

Serves 4

PREPARATION TIME:

30 min

COOKING TIME:

40 min

1kg clams
2 garlic cloves
1 sprig fresh flat-leaf parsley
scant 1 cup (200ml) dry white wine
scant ½ cup (100ml) olive oil
350g spaghetti
*25g bottarga (salted pressed grey [striped] mullet or tuna roe),
grated*
1 teaspoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
salt and pepper

Preheat the oven to 220°C. Scrub the clams under cold running water. Discard any with damaged shells or those that do not shut immediately when sharply tapped. Put them into a large pan with the garlic cloves and parsley sprig. Pour in the wine, cover, and cook over high heat, shaking the pan occasionally, for 3–5 minutes until the clams open. Drain, reserving the cooking liquid, and discard any clams that remain shut. Set aside a few whole clams for the garnish and remove the remainder from their shells. Pour the reserved cooking liquid through a strainer lined with cheesecloth (muslin) into a clean pan. Add the olive oil, season lightly with salt and pepper, and bring to a boil over medium heat. Continue to boil until reduced and thickened. Cook the spaghetti in plenty of salted boiling water until al dente. Drain, tip into the reduced cooking liquid, and toss. Turn off the heat and stir in the bottarga, parsley, and shelled clams. Spoon the mixture into the middle of a large sheet of wax (greaseproof) paper, garnish with the whole clams, bring up the sides of the paper, and fold over the edges securely to seal. Put the parcel onto a baking sheet and bake for 5 minutes. Transfer the parcel to a warmed serving dish, open slightly at the top, and serve immediately.

TIP: Chopped parsley should be added after the sauce is cooked, otherwise it loses some of its colour and flavour.

FUSILLI IN CUTTLEFISH INK

FUSILLI AL NERO DI SEPPIA

Serves 4

PREPARATION TIME:

20 min

COOKING TIME:

1 hour 15 min

675g baby cuttlefish, ink sacs reserved

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 onion, very thinly sliced

scant 1 cup (200ml) dry white wine

2 tablespoons tomato paste

350g fusilli

1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

salt and pepper

To clean the cuttlefish, cut off the tentacles just in front of the eyes, squeeze out the beak from the middle, and discard. Separate and skin the tentacles and pull off the skin from the body. Cut along the back and remove and discard the cuttlebone. Remove and discard the innards and head. Cut the cuttlefish into strips. Heat the oil in a pan, add the onion, and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until softened. Add the cuttlefish and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned. Add the wine and cook until the alcohol has evaporated. Stir in the tomato paste, season with salt and pepper, lower the heat, cover, and cook for 1 hour, checking occasionally to make sure the pan isn't getting too dry. Cook the fusilli in plenty of salted boiling water until al dente. Pour the cuttlefish ink into the sauce and stir in the parsley. Drain the pasta, tip it into the sauce, mix well, and transfer to a serving dish.





ORECCHIETTE WITH BROCCOLI

ORECCHIETTE CON BROCCOLI

Serves 4

PREPARATION TIME:

12 min

COOKING TIME:

20 min

800g broccoli, cut into florets
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 garlic clove, chopped
1 fresh chilli, seeded and chopped
275g orecchiette
grated Parmesan or pecorino cheese, to serve
salt

Cook the broccoli in boiling salted water for 8 minutes, then drain. Heat the olive oil in a pan, add the garlic and chilli, and cook for 3 minutes, then add the broccoli, and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes until tender. Meanwhile, cook the orecchiette in plenty of salted boiling water for 2–3 minutes until al dente, then drain, and toss with the broccoli. Serve with Parmesan or pecorino.

TIP: Alternatively, the broccoli may be cooked with the orecchiette. In this case, drain everything, then drizzle with olive oil, and sprinkle with grated pecorino. This recipe also works well with short dried pasta, such as rigatoni.

DITALINI WITH ZUCCHINI

DITALINI CON ZUCCHINE

Serves 4

PREPARATION TIME:

20 min

COOKING TIME:

5 min

4 tablespoons (50g) butter

2 tablespoons olive oil

½ small onion, chopped

*50g smoked bacon,
cut into strips*

1 ¾ cups (200g) shelled peas

6 young zucchini (courgettes), sliced

300g ditalini or ditali

grated Parmesan cheese, to serve

salt

Melt the butter with the oil in a skillet or frying pan. Add the onion and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Add the bacon and cook for 4–6 minutes, then add the peas. Cover and cook gently for 20 minutes. Add the zucchini (courgettes) and stir, then re-cover the pan, and cook for another 15 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Meanwhile, cook the ditalini in plenty of salted boiling water until al dente. Drain, tip into the pan and toss. Serve immediately, with the Parmesan alongside.



This is an edited extract from
The Silver Spoon Pasta (Phaidon),
\$59.95 from phaidon.com





SEASIDE GEMS

CRUISING INTO ITALY'S HISTORIC PORT
CITIES OFFERS A FASCINATING
ALTERNATIVE TO THE STANDARD
TOURIST TRAILS.
BY **UTE JUNKER**

Looking towards the
Church of San Pietro in
Porto Venere.

Forget those famous Roman roads. Long before the rise of the Roman republic, it was the ports of the Italian peninsula that connected it to the wider world. Today, many of them shine brighter than ever. Discover some of the waterfront wonders that make Italy such a memorable cruise destination.

THE SAFE HAVEN: PORTO VENERE

When the afternoon draws to a close, the harbourfront at Porto Venere is the place to be. Locals and visitors alike head to the al fresco restaurants and bars to sip an Aperol spritz or pick at a fritto misto, flanked on one side by the water and the other by a row of towering gaily-painted houses.

Those colourful buildings are not what they appear, however. Take a closer look at the way the narrow houses squeeze up against each other and you realise the only thing that interrupts their smooth facades is tiny windows. These dwellings doubled as fortifications, built as an impenetrable wall to protect the town against hostile fleets that used to patrol these seas.

Sitting just to the south of the much-loved Cinque Terre, the 1,000-year-old town of Porto Venere shares many of the region's signature touches – Gothic churches with striped facades, terraced lemon and olive groves, restaurants serving up super-fresh seafood – without the tidal flows of tourists that wash through its neighbours.

Time it right and you may even find yourself alone in one of the town's most famous sights: the sea cave known as Grotta Arpaia, or Byron's cave. The celebrated poet found more than inspiration in this spot where the emerald waters surge against the rock: legend has it that he swam from here to Lerici to visit his friend and fellow poet Percy Shelley, a distance of more than 7 kilometres.

See it for yourself: Seabourn's 17-day Riviera Gems & Mediterranean Magic aboard the Ovation visits some of the most alluring ports along the coasts of Italy, France and Spain, including stops at the islands of Sardinia, Corsica and Elba. *Departs April 8 2025, see seabourn.com*



Oceania's newest ship, The Allura, will depart from the historic port of Trieste next year.

THE GRAND DAME: TRIESTE

Sail into Trieste and it's instantly clear this city was once a serious player. The elegant wharfs and warehouses lining the quays speak a language of power, conjuring up days when Europe's empires spanned the globe. Which is a little bewildering, frankly, since Trieste is so little-known these days, few of us could find it on a map.

Sitting on the Adriatic coast, this city is a true melting pot. The mix of Latin, Slavic and Germanic influences is evident in the way terracotta-toned buildings sit next to art nouveau apartments and ornate cafes reminiscent of Vienna's great *kaffeehäuser*.

Trieste's history stretches all the way back to the Romans, but it was as the most important seaport in the Austro-Hungarian Empire that the city reached its cosmopolitan peak. After World War I it was annexed to Italy; after World War II it was almost completely surrounded by what was then Communist

Yugoslavia (now Slovenia and Croatia), connected to the rest of Italy only through a tenuous sliver of land.

Beyond Trieste's grand main square, the Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia, highlights include the Museo Revoltella, a collection of modern art housed in a majestic mansion, and the opulent Castello di Miramare built by the Emperor Franz Josef's ill-fated younger brother Maximilian. Just a year after the palace was built, Maximilian was sent to Mexico to become its emperor, but instead ended his life in front of a firing squad of revolutionaries.

See it for yourself: For its maiden voyage next year, Oceania's newest ship, Allura, will depart from Trieste. Guests on the six-day Trieste to Athens voyage will stop in ports including Ravenna and Dubrovnik, and will also have plenty of time to explore the ship's impressive range of restaurants, including a new creperie.

Departs July 18 2025, see oceaniacruises.com

THE LITTLE WONDER: CHIOGGIA

There is no such thing as a passeggiata in Venice. The classic Italian early-evening ritual, when neighbours stroll the streets and catch up on gossip, has disappeared in the floating city, where early evenings are dominated by bewildered tourists searching for the restaurant they booked for dinner.

In Chioggia, the passeggiata is alive and well. Located on an island south of La Serenissima, the town known as Little Venice – for its canals and eye-catching architecture – is a place where tradition still thrives. Its wholesale fish market, the Mercato Ittico all'ingrosso, is one of the largest in Italy, selling thousands of kilograms of seafood each day. A smaller market, the Mercato Ittico al minuto, is where locals pick up a fish or two for their dinner.

In the centre of the town sits Piazzetta Vigo, with its gorgeous lagoon views, and the Ponte de Vigo, a stone bridge dating back to 1675. Perched atop it is a symbol anyone who has been to Venice will recognise, St Mark's lion – or, as locals cheekily refer to it, "el gato de Chiosa", or Chioggia's cat.

Other highlights include the Torre di Sant'Andrea, home to one of the world's oldest clocks, and the Church of San Domenico, sitting on its own island at the northern end of the city. Apart from works by Tintoretto and Carpaccio, the church's most distinctive feature is the rather gruesome wooden sculpture of a crucified Christ above the high altar, a copy of which used to be found on every local fishing boat.



Speaking of which, don't leave without trying some of the island's famous delicacies, from seafood such as fasolari clams to produce such as Chioggia pumpkins and the rosa di Chioggia radicchio.

See it for yourself: Uniworld's eight-day Venice & The Jewels of Veneto itinerary lets you dive deep into the floating city and many intriguing towns that surround it. Your ship, the S.S. La Venezia, adds to the atmosphere with interiors that feature local accents including Murano glass and Fortuny fabrics.

Departs April 6, 2025, see uniworld.com



ABOVE: Chioggia's Piazzetta Vigo.

LEFT: The S.S. La Venezia in port.

THE SHAPE-SHIFTER: NAPLES

Don't believe everything you hear. Naples has left its high-crime past behind, but many people still love to trash-talk the city. I suspect the sardonic locals don't mind all that much. It allows them to enjoy the delights of their city – there are many – untroubled by the hordes that flock to Rome and Florence.

Some areas are a little run-down, but it is precisely the balance between the grand and the glorious and the shabby-chic that makes this city so appealing. Depending on your mood, you can stroll the palazzi-lined streets of elegant neighbourhoods such as Chiaia or explore the narrow alleys of the Quartieri Spagnoli.

That blend of high and low also applies to the art scene. For old-school classics, head to the Pio Monte della Misericordia for Caravaggio's "The Seven Works of Mercy" masterpiece, or the Cappella Sansevero for the exquisite sculpture, "The Veiled Christ". (While you are there, detour to the nearby Gesù Nuovo, home to Naples' most ostentatiously eye-catching interiors.)

If you prefer contemporary art, the city's street art scene has attracted some of the world's best-known practitioners. Their pieces range from the compact – such as Blub's takes on Amy Winehouse and Vermeer's "Girl with a Pearl Earring" – to Jorit Agoch's portrait of Naples' patron saint, Saint Gennaro, that covers the entire side of a house. Naples' greatest culinary treasure – aside

from its famous pizzas – is its sweet treats. The counters of the city's many pasticcerie are piled high with tempting pastries such as sfogliatella, a delicate pastry shell stuffed with ricotta and candied fruit. If you want to team it with coffee, be aware that Neapolitan coffee is equally sweet: if you want yours without sugar, order it amaro (bitter).

See it for yourself: Take a deep dive into the delights of Italy's often-overlooked south with Ponant's nine-day Cruising Southern Italy and Sicily, with Smithsonian Journeys. Travelling from Malta to Livorno aboard the Le Dumont D'Urville, the program includes talks and discussions by experts and a shore excursion in each port. *Departs 27 August 2025, see au.ponant.com*

Ponant's Le Dumont D'Urville offers a nine-day southern Italy cruise, including Naples.





Cruising and dining aboard the Silver Ray. BELOW: The Silver Ray takes in intriguing ports including Livorno.

THE COMEBACK KID: LIVORNO

Livorno has seen its fair share of glory days. Under the rule of the Medici – the immensely wealthy banking family that made Florence a cultural hub during the Renaissance – this Tuscan coastal town near Pisa served as Florence’s port, equally famous for its grand architecture and its multicultural population.

In the 18th and 19th centuries it was reborn as a summer resort frequented by the Italian royal family, but its glamour fell victim to massive bombing during World War II.

Now Livorno is ready to retake its place in the spotlight, reminding travellers that there are still plenty of reasons to visit. They include the Terrazza Mascagni, an elegant seaside walkway with chequerboard tiles, and Piccola Venezia, a tangled 17th-century neighbourhood built around a knot of canals. Hop on a boat tour to admire its slightly rundown charms, then return in the evening to explore its lively bars and restaurants.

The city’s must-visit churches include Chiesa di Santorini where the splendid interiors, including an altarpiece by Giorgio Vasari, contrast with the unfinished exterior – the Medici clan ran out of money before the marble cladding arrived, proving that even plutocrats occasionally overspend.

In the church of San Ferdinando Re, a sculpture of an angel freeing two enslaved people is a tribute to the congregation

that freed Christians captured by 17th-century enslavers. The victory over the North African raiders also inspired the nearby Four Moors statue.

See it for yourself: Silversea’s seven-day Monte Carlo to Civitavecchia (Rome) itinerary aboard the Silver Ray takes in an array of intriguing ports, including well-known destinations such as Portofino as well as less famous gems including Livorno and Palermo.

Departs July 15 2025, see silversea.com





MOBILE MAKEOVER

CREATIVITY IS FINALLY COMING BACK INTO STYLE FOR THE DEVICE MOST OF US CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT. BY **FELIX SCHOLZ**

ON JANUARY 9, 2007, Steve Jobs stood on a stage in San Francisco and drew a slender device from his pocket. That was the very first iPhone, and it changed the face of mobile phones forever.

Before the touchscreen revolution, mobile handset design had been a true Wild West. From the first commercially available mobile, a one-kilo-plus Motorola “brick”, it took 24 years for technology to evolve to the iPhone, the basic design of which still leads the market today.

Five years prior to Jobs’ big reveal, there had been a design-led revolution. The technology was developed enough that a wide range of manufacturers who were vying for market leadership were able to unleash some truly wild creativity. If you were a phone user in this era, you couldn’t forget the iconic Motorola RAZR with its exceptionally satisfying flip, nor the lipstick-sized Nokia 7280 or the even weirder lozenge-shaped Nokia 7600. It was an era in which form was not necessarily dictated by function, and manufacturers did whatever it took to stand out.

Fast forward to 2024, and the way phones look and feel is driven by the capabilities of their hardware and software. They’re sold on processor speed, camera quality, screen functionality and the usability of their software and apps. Design-wise, there’s not a lot to choose from between them, beyond minor variations in the layout of the camera cluster or the curvature of the bezel.

But finally, there are glimmers of interesting design on the horizon. As screen technology improves, we’re entering a new era for foldable phones. Samsung has been making the Galaxy Fold since 2019, with an exclusive Olympic athletes-only edition of the Galaxy Z Flip6 getting plenty of attention in Paris. For anyone struggling to fit a plus-sized iPhone in their pocket, the advantages of a clamshell flip phone are immediately obvious. On the flip side – pardon the pun – there are designs like Google’s Pixel Fold, which opts for a more bookish look, maximising screen



OPPOSITE: CMF’s Phone 1 offers outside-the-box thinking. LEFT: A version of Samsung’s Galaxy Z Flip6 was made exclusively for Olympic athletes.

real estate and promising new vistas for increased productivity or (more likely) procrastination.

It’s worth noting that folding phones still represent a single-digit fraction of the market; we’re not likely to be ditching the glossy black rectangles anytime soon. But that doesn’t mean we have to settle for boring, as phone newcomer Nothing seems determined to prove.

The UK-based brand launched its first phone in 2022, but it’s the most recent offering, from budget-oriented sub-brand CMF, that’s particularly interesting. Not only does its \$400

“Phone 1” offer surprisingly competitive specs, but also some distinctive options on the rear. Its innovative design removes the need for an add-on case, offering interchangeable screw-on backplates in a range of hues, including a particularly luscious orange.

The real innovation, though, is the integration of what the brand calls an accessory point – a multipurpose wheel on the bottom-right corner of the phone that allows you to screw on accessories such as a card wallet, lanyard or kickstand. We’ve seen all these elements before, but they’ve been restricted to phone cases. What makes this simple accessory point even more interesting is the possibilities it offers. CMF actively encourages users to think up clever uses for the backplate and attachment point, and has made files available for 3D printing.

Sadly, the market expectation for large-scale, high-quality screens – plus Apple’s continuing market dominance – means we’ll never again witness the wild creativity of 20 years ago. But there’s hope that we might be about to witness a more innovative era of phone design than we’ve seen in decades. ●

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