



*Chef Fabrizia Lanza, who heads up the school; right: expertly prepared Sicilian cassata*



*A chef working with fresh ingredients; left: looking down across the undulating Veneto countryside*

**VENETO**

**STIRRED**

Al fresco dinners underneath a chestnut tree, face time with some of the area's top chefs, truffle-hunting excursions and foraging trips through Venice's Rialto market: Stirred, launched this summer, is a consummate hands-on holiday for lovers of rustic Italian fare. Hosted in a 15th-century villa in the foothills of the majestic Dolomites, guests – when not busy trying their hand at local staples like osso buco or saffron risotto – can relax poolside or kick back in estate's individually designed bedrooms. [stirredtravel.com](http://stirredtravel.com)



*Handling fresh crab; right: the hotel's historic canal-side facade*

**VENICE**

**GRITTI PALACE EPICUREAN SCHOOL**

While the Gritti Palace – recently plucked from the brink of fustiness and relaunched in grand style by Starwood – sets the bar for Venice's upscale hostelry scene, its in-house Epicurean School and executive chef Daniele Turco, too, maintain the highest of standards when it comes to imparting the magic of Venetian cuisine to its hungry students. In half- or three-day courses, students learn how to craft fanciful Venetian cicchetti after extensive exploratory tours through the Rialto. [thegrittipicureanschool.com](http://thegrittipicureanschool.com)

**SICILY**

**ANNA TASCA LANZA**

The school's eponymous founder and local gastro icon counts as one of Sicilian cooking's earliest ambassadors. Today, Anna's daughter Fabrizia helms the 25-year-old institution set on the family's ancestral home in Palermo. Students are encouraged to not just follow a recipe, but to immerse themselves in the flora and fauna that surrounds them, taking cues from nature, rather than a book – a sentiment treasured by Sicilians for centuries. [annatascalanza.com](http://annatascalanza.com)

**MASTER CHEF**

**BUON APPETITO**

The renaissance in Italian cookery spans up and down the country, as this quartet attests.

BY CLAUDIA WHITEUS



*Countrified surrounds at Desinare*



**FLORENCE**

**DESINARE AT RICCARDO BARTHEL**

A passion for good food and a love of design are paramount at this new Florentine culinary school. A self-described contemporary space with an old soul, the institute is housed in the showroom of interiors maverick Riccardo Barthel. Here, students engage in courses ranging from cookery and wine selection to food photography and table design, with the odd trip to the market or neighbourhood deli, all led by an all-star team of local gastro-biz movers and shakers. [desinare.it](http://desinare.it)

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: SEAN KNOTT (2), MIRCO TOFFOLO, ALESSANDRO MOGGI (2), ANNA TASCA LANZA, MELISSA KRONENTHAL