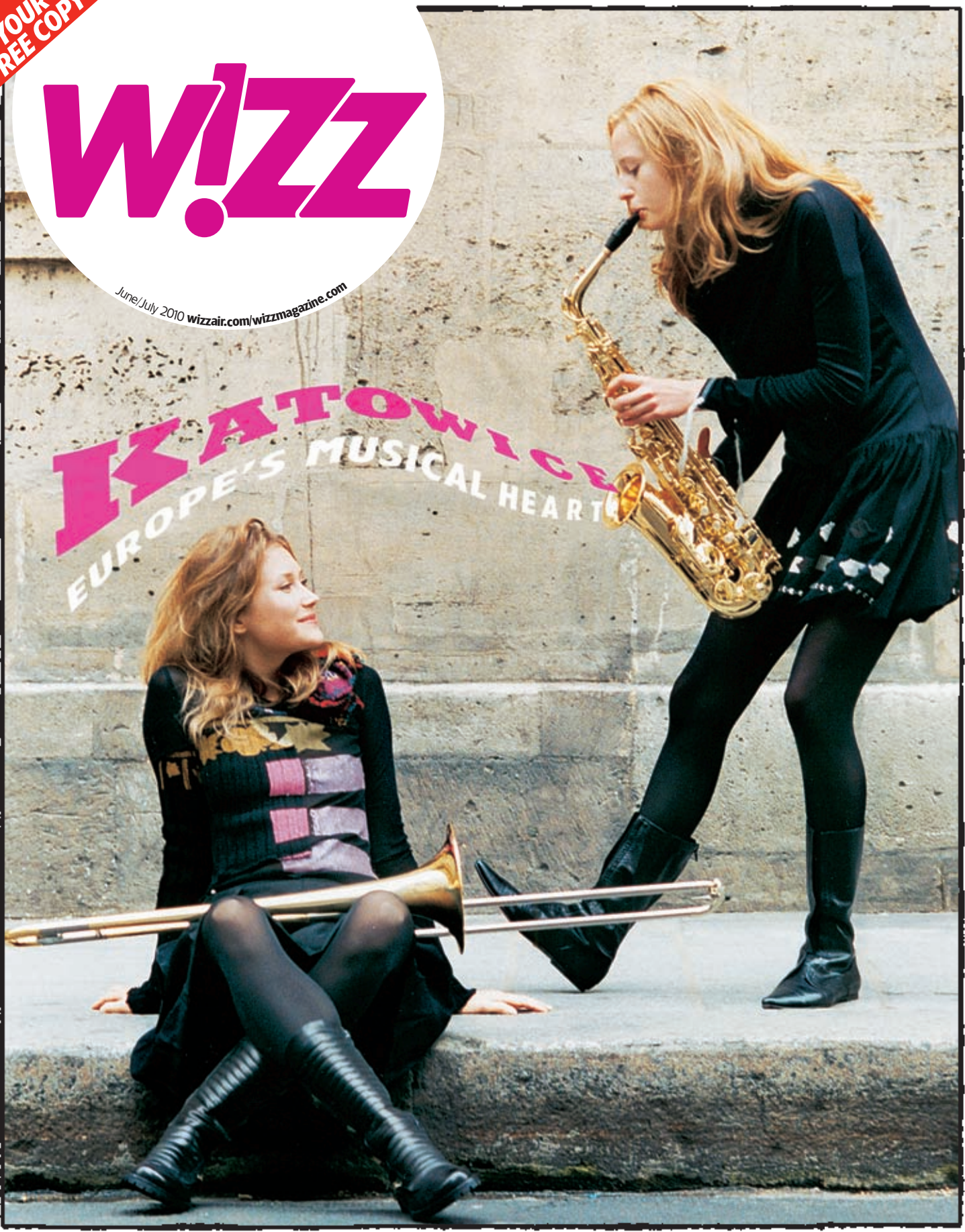


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W!ZZ

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KATOWICE
EUROPE'S MUSICAL HEART



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Luciano Ferrari

He teaches Italians how to make gelato in Bologna

Words **Catherine Cooper**

● **Working at an ice-cream university might sound like the kind of job a child might dream about, but for Luciano Ferrari, 52, it's a reality. Luciano is an instructor at Carpigiani Gelato University in Bologna, where he teaches everyone from complete novices to experts how to make artisan-style gelato to sell in ice cream parlours.**

Luciano's first job after training as a mechanical engineer was with manufacturing food equipment developing an ice cream unit. "After a few years I realised that I was much more interested in what came out of the machine rather than what went into it," he says. "So I changed direction."

At the start of the 1980s he achieved his dream by opening La Dolce Vita parlour in Modena, which he ran for 20 years. Today, as well as teaching in Bologna, he also travels all over the world teaching people to make fantastic ice cream.

So what is it about ice cream which has held his interest for more than 30 years? "When you eat a good gelato you have five minutes when you are totally switched off and start to skydive into a sphere that is totally emotional – perhaps your childhood or simply a feeling of wellbeing.

"And this happens each and every time you have a good gelato!"

The courses in Bologna have seen a huge surge in popularity lately, through the fluid work situation; jobs under threat or those seeking alternative employment. "Of course, we always have lots of people come who think to themselves, 'I don't like sitting behind my desk in an insurance office anymore – I'd rather go and make ice cream!'" comments Luciano. People come from all over the world for the courses which are taught in Italian, English, French, German and Spanish.

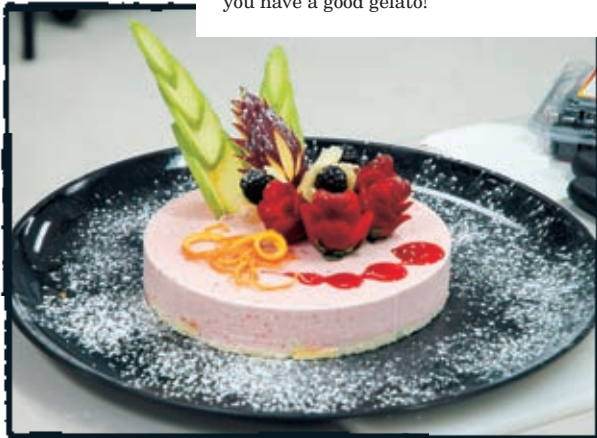
The main difference between artisan-style gelato and commercially produced ice cream is, says Luciano, down to the creativity that the former allows. "The artisan is creating small batches so can easily adjust the flavours as he wishes. In a big commercial operation, this isn't possible."

Preferring delicately flavoured, light ice creams, Luciano admits he is "not a fan of gelato flavour perversions" but that isn't to say he doesn't like to experiment with flavours. "I enjoy gelato with carrot, celery or red beet elements – not just as they are but perhaps mixed into a fruit cocktail – red beet and apple works well.

"Cheese is also a good base for gelato – everything from cream cheese all the way up to Parmesan, mixed perhaps with apple or pear."

"I recently taught a course to some farmers in Torino to give them ideas

● *Below: Luciano's work takes him all over the world, including Antigua in the West Indies*





“Blue cheese can make a great gelato – it has a sweet note. It’s not what you’d eat in a park”

→ about how to use up their extra milk and cheese. Even blue cheese can make a great gelato – it has a sweet note to it. It’s not the kind of thing you’d eat from a cone in the park of course – it’s one you might find in a restaurant.”

As well as teaching students the nuts and bolts of making gelato, Luciano’s students also work in a purpose-built shop at the university which is open to the public. “Going to an ice cream parlour isn’t just about having a perfectly made gelato. It’s also about the presentation – the cone it comes in or even the ice-cream spoon stuck in the top. It’s all important.”

Who makes the best ice-cream? Luciano laughs. “The Italians of course! We have a 500-year ice cream history and at last count, 35,400 gelato shops.” But he adds that excellent gelato can also be found in Argentina and India. “In both countries it is very much part of their heritage. I don’t

believe the Italians necessarily invented ice cream – it probably originated in different places all over the world. Taking snow and putting flavour in it is an instinctive thing.”

As for what makes a good gelato, Luciano says it should have an intense flavour which lasts (but not too long), it should be neither too hard or too soft and have a very smooth, creamy texture. “One person’s favourite gelato will be different to the next person’s. But what they will all agree on is that eating a gelato will always make their day a little bit better.” ●

For details of Carpigiani’s courses in Bologna and around the world, visit www.carpigiani.it



“Luciano was so passionate about hand-made gelato he has inspired me to eat as much of it as I possibly can this summer, which can only be a good thing.”

WIZZ writer Catherine Cooper



● Above: Luciano takes his skill around the world, here teaching in Dallas, USA

