

# CIVILTÀ TAVOLA

ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA



**ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA**

ISTITUZIONE CULTURALE DELLA REPUBBLICA ITALIANA  
FONDATA NEL 1953 DA ORIO VERGANI

[www.accademia1953.it](http://www.accademia1953.it)



**INTERNATIONAL EDITION**

DECEMBER 2025 / N. 387

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**  
PAOLO PETRONI

**COPY EDITOR**  
SILVIA DE LORENZO

**LAYOUT**  
SIMONA MONGIUI

**TRANSLATOR**  
ANTONIA FRASER FUJINAGA

**THIS ISSUE INCLUDES ARTICLES BY**  
GIUSEPPE BENELLI,  
ROBERTO MIRANDOLA,  
GIANCARLO SARAN,  
PAOLO PETRONI.

**PHOTO CREDITS**  
ADOBE STOCK.



**PUBLISHER**  
ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA  
VIA NAPO TORRIANI 31 - 20124 MILANO  
TEL. 02 66987018 - FAX 02 66987008  
PRESIDENTE@ACCADEMIA1953.IT  
SEGRETERIA@ACCADEMIA1953.IT  
REDAZIONE@ACCADEMIA1953.IT  
WWW.ACCADEMIA1953.IT



MONTHLY MAGAZINE  
REG. N. 4049 - 29-5-1956  
TRIBUNALE DI MILANO

**REGULATIONS REGARDING PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION**

The Italian Academy of Cuisine, in its capacity as data controller, hereby informs its members that their personal data are handled with respect for the principles of integrity, lawfulness and transparency as well as protection of privacy and members' rights, to implement the management of the member-association relationship as delineated by the Association's Statute and By-laws, and for any related purposes where applicable. The processing is carried out by authorised parties, in paper and computerised form, in compliance with the provisions of the aforementioned EU regulations and current national legislation. To view all the information provided under EU regulations, and in particular to learn what members' rights are, please visit the Association's website.



Rivista associata  
all'Unione Stampa  
Periodica Italiana



## Table of contents



### L'ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA

È STATA FONDATA NEL 1953 DA ORO VERGANI

E DA LUIGI BERTETT, DINO BUZZATI TRAVERSO,  
CESARE CHIODI, GIANNINO CRITERIO, ERNESTO DONA  
DALLE ROSE, MICHELE GUIDO FRANCI, GIANNI MAZZOCCHI  
BASTONI, ARNOLDO MONDADORI, ATTILIO NAVA,  
ARTURO ORVIETO, SEVERINO PAGANI, ALDO PASSANTE,  
GIAN LUIGI PONTI, GIO PONTI, DINO VILLANI,  
EDOARDO VISCONTI DI MODRONE,  
CON MASSIMO ALBERINI E VINCENZO BUONASSISI.



**On the cover:** graphic elaboration of *The Holy Family with Mary Magdalene and a Plate of Fruits* (1610-1614) by El Greco; Museo Soumaya, Mexico City

### Focus of the President

- 2** UNESCO recognition:  
a stunning result for Italy  
and our Academy  
(Paolo Petroni)



### Territories • Tourism • Folklore

- 3** The Neapolitan Christmas meal  
(Giuseppe Benelli)



### Cuisine • Products • Food Technology

- 5** The turkey triumphant  
(Giancarlo Saran)



- 7** Marron glacé:  
sumptuous and refined  
(Roberto Mirandola)







# UNESCO recognition: *a stunning result for Italy and our Academy*

*Celebrating this memorable  
milestone together.*

I delayed having this issue of *Civiltà della Tavola* printed because we were awaiting the result of the vote by the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee, gathered in New Delhi this 10 December. The moment I learned that Italian Cuisine has obtained the desired Intangible Cultural Heritage recognition, I immediately published a special Newsletter to inform all Academicians of this magnificent news. As I have already had the opportunity to emphasise, **this is the first occasion when UNESCO has granted such recognition to the entire cuisine of a nation, rather than just some aspects or particularities thereof.**

## *The long journey of candidature*

The Italian nomination was formalised through a **dossier** presented by the communities formed by the **Italian Academy of Cuisine**, the **Casa Artusi Foundation** and the magazine **La Cucina Italiana**; it was then officially submitted for UNESCO's assessment by the Italian government, with support from various luminaries and eminent experts in the field, among whom I would like to acknowledge our Honorary Academician, **Massimo Montanari**, and Professor **Pier Luigi Petrillo**, an expert about UNESCO protocol. Warm thanks go to **Maddalena Fossati**, editor-in-chief of *La Cucina Italiana*, and **Laila Tentoni**, outgoing president of the Casa Artusi Foundation, all of whose



**by Paolo Petroni**  
*President of the Accademia*



Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forestry

numerous meetings and suggestions facilitated our arrival at this final goal. Special thanks to the Undersecretary of State for Culture, **Gianmarco Mazzi**, who followed the whole process with ability and commitment. For this, too, he has received the **Orio Vergani Prize** for 2025.

## *Success was not a foregone conclusion*

Success was not a foregone conclusion, because Italy is often perceived, especially by poorer countries, as a nation of gluttons who think of nothing but food and who talk about food even while eating. Then there are various historical rivalries and envies and political resentments. Also, frankly speaking, some Associations' and politicians' repeated insistence on the putative economic advantages of UNESCO status, with clever estimations of GDP growth and profits for companies and restaurants, not only creates a poor image of us **but obscures the true significance of this recognition, which is eminently cultural** and worthy of the plethora of local traditions which, together, form our culinary mosaic. **Our Academy must now prove itself as an interpreter of this excellent result.** Each Delegation and Legation must therefore honour this prestigious acknowledgement as they see fit, inviting our diplomatic representatives abroad and our administrative authorities in Italy, as well as the press, to witness our Academy's role. An **Extraordinary Ecumenical Convivial gathering** will also be planned soon so we can all celebrate this memorable milestone together.



# The Neapolitan Christmas meal

by Giuseppe Benelli  
Lunigiana Academician

*The writer Domenico Rea recounts an 'appointment with a dream'.*

**"F**or Neapolitans, Christmas is an appointment with a dream", wrote **Domenico Rea** (1921-1994); a dream that survives, nowadays, as a distant memory before the empty rituals of shopping centres. Rea was one of the twentieth century's most intense and original Italian authors, able to transform daily southern Italian life into fleshy, visionary narrative matter. Remembering him over a century after his birth is not only a chance to read and re-read the work of a great writer, but also to discover food as "a truthful and cruel representation of hunger", and contemporaneously **the "upending of a cuisine which**

**transformed poverty into genius"**. Rea was an acute observer of the South: he narrated its sufferings and contradictions without ever indulging in pietism, using a style in which anger and love, condemnation and nostalgia coexist.

*A condition of the spirit composed of anticipations and presences*

**The book *Crescendo napoletano* (Neapolitan Crescendo), published in 1990, documents the last Christmas before the Second World War. Domenico Rea's Christmas is not only a unique and crucial festivity, but a condition of the spirit composed of anticipations and presences: a backwards voyage into an entire people's collective memory, towards the recollection of smells, tastes and sounds that reconstruct the 'old days' at the root of all melancholia. "At one time,**

but not so long ago, for instance in a 1938 still unaware of another world war and populated by gentlemen in boater hats and barefoot street urchins, Christmas in Naples began in autumn, when women would gather in homes for sewing bees and listen to tales of witches and portents, **preparing to perform the annual magic of setting out an epic meal at any cost"**.

**The description of the food** is almost always an excuse for the author to present the many expressions of Neapolitan culture. "The Neapolitan man, able to suffer all manner of privations during the year, cannot endure, tolerate, envy and sustain disappointment at Christmas. The poorest man who fails to reach home on Christmas Eve laden with eels won't be acknowledged as a husband and father. He will have lost his honour. So, even by taking extreme measures, he must by hook or by crook acquire those foods which 'make Christmas'". While the head of the family arranged the nativity scene on Christmas Eve, "the women filled whatever served as the dining room and kitchen with frantic activity". **Little pizzas must be prepared, and leafy broccoli, and fried baccalà** for midday. Awareness that there would be *baccalà* (dried salt cod) for lunch, or *mussillo* (fillet of *baccalà*) with garlic, parsley and lemon, or boiled stockfish with tomatoes and potatoes, meant living in heightened anticipation.

*The Christmas table: an expanse populated by symbols*

Through his Italian larded with erudite references and snippets of dialect, the Christmas meal becomes a chorus, a liturgy, a story. **In his volume *L'universo mangereccio del presepe* (The Edible**





*Universe of the Nativity Scene*; 1974), Rea describes the Christmas table as a scene populated by symbols: **minestra maritata** ('wedded soup'), **baked pasta**, **baked meats**, **humble desserts**, **dried fruit**. These are not simple culinary elements but veritable cultural signals, **residues of a farming and artisanal past which resists modernity**. To the Neapolitan palate, the flavour and fragrance of sea and seaweed is enough. They suck the mollusc, get it on their tongues and swallow it. Whether murex or limpet, whelk or date shell, mussel or warty clam, palourde or venus clam, all are suitable for inflaming the senses. A few Neapolitans don't eat these raw for fear of typhoid fever; Rea reminds them of the legend whereby "typhoid fever attacks those who suck molluscs half-heartedly, while those who devour them with a pinch of bread and abundant lemon and cheer will remain invulnerable".

Again in *Crescendo napoletano*, he writes that for **Christmas Eve** "spaghetti, boiled at the last moment, were prepared with tomato sauce and **warty clams**, or wedge clams, or venus clams, or capers and olives, alongside sea bass, fried or stewed **capitone** (large female eel) or **smaller eels**, **insalata di rinforzo** ('fortifying salad': sliced *papacelle* peppers, anchovies, cauliflower, olives and capers) and **fruit**, **both fresh and dried** (raisins, citron, simple or stuffed dried figs, almonds, walnuts and hazelnuts) for the evening meal". However, one must consider the morrow: the **Christmas luncheon**, "that majestic meal which must include **tagliolini**, mandatorily hand-made (from flour, water, salt and eggs), and especially **the sacred struffoli and the croccante con sorpresa** ('surprise brittle') made of browned and crushed almonds. The preparation of these two sweetmeats, in an era without the shadow of a *panettone*, required a full day's work by two women and ability of epic proportions". The Neapolitan origins of **sfogliatella** (cream-filled flaky pastry) are demonstrated by "its curlicues which recall the staircases and convolutions of many stately homes". **The babà** is so soft "that it brings to mind Neapolitan laziness,



because here, sometimes, even eating is too much work. And the *babà* is practically drinkable".

### *A little theatre of the southern world*

The Christmas meal narrated by Domenico Rea is a little theatre of the southern Italian world, where food, gestures and words become symbols of an ancient culture forged through poverty and pride, strong affection and hidden conflict. **The abundance of the meal**, often requiring sacrifice, contrasts with daily scarcity: a temporary suspension of poverty, a momentary truce allowing the family to appear better than what reality allows. As often happens in his tales, Rea uses a domestic occasion to reveal the complexity of the human soul and show, in living detail, the social reality of the South. His descriptions of food - traditional recipes, mingling fragrances, chipped crockery brought out "for the holidays" - not only create atmosphere, but become indicators of an economic condition alongside

**communal rituals which resist the ravages of time.**

At the centre of the story there is almost always a large, noisy family traversed by both petty resentments and profound affection. Rea observes all from a participatory but lucid perspective, able to detect the flippancy but also the melancholia of the scene. It is precisely this innocent but attentive gaze which makes **his Christmas tales particularly touching, suspended between nostalgia and awareness**. Through a rich, baroque writing style woven from strong, sensory images, **the author adds his 'variations' on the theme of culinary creations**: stuffed pepper; aubergine *parmigiana*; the "dark and muddy" ragù; *mozzarella in carrozza* (fried mozzarella sandwich); calzone with ricotta; vermicelli with clams, garlic and oil; the "triumphal" *sartù di riso* (baked stuffed rice timbale); and *minestra maritata* ('wedded soup', referring to the 'marriage' of meat and vegetables), also called *pignato grasso* ('fatty clay pot'). And last but not least, the indispensable fish soup: "a veritable compendium of ichthyology".

**Giuseppe Benelli**



# The turkey triumphant

by **Giancarlo Saran**  
Treviso Academician

*Gioacchino Rossini's  
hungry hyperbole:  
"Turkey eating  
is for two:  
me and the turkey".*

**I**ts history is an oxymoron of sorts, beginning from **its imposing appearance** and plumage whose chromatic abundance has, rightly, attracted the attention of artists through the centuries. **Its delicious and prized flesh** enriched **the banquets of Renaissance aristocrats** with an exotic touch, while **in modern times it often goes unremarked** and perceived almost in more penitential than nutritional terms, considering its indubitable health benefits.

**Yet the turkey deserves a comeback:** by learning its history and extreme culinary versatility **we can enjoy it with eager curiosity.**

*It reached Europe after contact  
with the Americas*

**It is the only animal food brought to Europe across the Atlantic.** It was already raised by the Aztecs and appreciated not only for its flesh but also its plumage, for ornamental and arrow-fletching purposes. **In North America, in 1621, it came to the rescue of the Mayflower pilgrims,** who initially found considerable difficulty replicating European farming practices but then learned about the turkey from the locals. Thus **the turkey came to symbolise Thanksgiving,** a national feast established in the USA by **George Washington** in 1789. With its average five-kilogramme weight, it could satisfy the festive appetite of an entire family. It reached Europe after the Amer-

ican voyages of **Christopher Columbus** who, in 1502, tasted it as a gift from the local population and called it *gallina de la tierra* ('land hen'). Never before was a fowl deemed so fair, so that soon **the Bishop of Valencia ordered every ship returning from the New World to carry a certain number of turkeys to breed.** An exponential crescendo followed. In 1520 the Bishop of Hispaniola, in the Antilles, sent a breeding pair of turkeys to Cardinal **Lorenzo Pucci** in Rome. **Swiftly turkeys became a prestigious gift exchanged between potentates:** ambassadors from the New World lending an exotic flourish to the parks and villas of the gentry.

Before gracing regal banquets, **turkeys were immortalised in art.** In 1522, **Giovanni da Udine** painted a turkey among the various decorations of Palazzo Madama, then owned by Cardinal Medici. Another Medici, **Cosimo I,** commissioned **Agnolo Bronzino** to create an arras with a turkey as the centrepiece and a symbol of abundance. The following year, he had **Giambologna** make another turkey, this time in bronze, for his villa in Florence. In 1570 we find a turkey in Venice, entering Noah's Ark in a painting by **Jacopo da Bassano.** A dozen **diplomatic turkeys** were given to Pope **Gregory XIII** by **Charles IX** of France.

*The time was ripe for entry  
into recipe books*

By then, the time was ripe for turkeys to make their entrance into recipe books. The Bolognese **Vincenzo Tanara** recommended boiling and then skewer-grilling their innards, and roasting the deboned bird stuffed with spicy meat,







raisins, pine nuts and spices. **Bartolomeo Scappi**, master of the Vatican kitchens under **Pius IV** and **Pius V**, thought the fowl acquitted itself well spit-roasted with capers and sugar. In southern Italy, **Antonio Corrado's** *Il Cuoco Galante* (*The Chivalrous Cook*) dedicated an entire chapter to the *gallo d'India* ('Indian rooster'). Those were the days when people still believed that Columbus had visited the Indies, and thus **the majestic bird was called *pavón de las Indias* by the Spaniards and *coq d'Inde* by the French**. In Italy, names varied from the *pirillo* of Campania to the Piedmontese *pito*, the Ligurian *bibbin* and the Friulian *dindio*. **The modern Italian term *tacchino* arrived later**, as an onomatopoeic rendering of the 'toc, toc' sound with which mother turkeys call their chicks, while adults gobble to each other. **Turkeys possess considerable genetic elasticity**, so that in Italy, numerous variants have developed, **with a plethora of colour palettes in their plumage**. **It was but one small step from patrician courts to rural courtyards**. Already in 1764, the price of turkey in the market of Trent was half that of veal and around the same as duck. **Turkeys rapidly multiplied in farmyards**, being docile, undemanding animals whose gregarious habits facilitate breeding. They were kept as a higher-tier species **reserved for special occasions** in contrast with more common chickens. It is instructive that **with intensive breeding, turkey flesh went from red to white**, with evident effects on its nutritional properties. It is

**low in cholesterol and rich in minerals**. It has **more protein than chicken** and is **easier to digest** because it contains **less muscle fibre** and is therefore more pleasant for 'lazy' children, and elders with chewing problems, to eat.

---

*Culinarily, turkeys can be prepared in many different ways*

---

**With modern aviculture practices, turkeys have a continuous breeding cycle**, whereas formerly each female raised one yearly brood of about fifteen chicks. **Turkey meat is extremely versatile** and can thus be used in a plethora of ways: **as cutlets, roasted**, as **roulades** and beyond, filling the low-calorie sandwiches of athletes and even **becoming charcuterie**, for instance in the form of turkey *bresaola*. **Nosing around in our own Academy's volume *La Tradizione a Tavola* (Traditions of the Table)**, we find that **in Veneto** there is **roast turkey with pomegranate**, larded with *pancetta* and served with pomegranate juice and a sauce of its own innards; and **in Abruzzo**, there is ***tacchino alla canzanese*** (Canzano-style turkey), roasted in its own juices with spices and herbs. The residual broth, refrigerated, sets into jelly and is served cold. **In Molise, *tacchinella ripiena*** ('stuffed little turkey') is filled with ground veal, crumbled sausage, *pecorino*, eggs and boiled chestnuts. If in the USA it is the mascot sacrificed for Thanksgiving, **in Monza the Christ-**

**mas turkey** is fortified with a stuffing of minced *pancetta* and veal kidneys. Tradition dictates that half be eaten hot at Christmas and the rest, cold for the Epiphany (6 January) with fruit relish (*mostarda*) and a fresh salad. **San Severo, in Foggia province**, honours Father Christmas with ***zuppetta***: a thick, baked bread soup with alternating **layers of bread, turkey and *caciocavallo* cheese**, all doused in broth.

**Turkey has exalted reviewers**. At his country estate in Sant'Agata, province of Piacenza, **Giuseppe Verdi** offered his friends potato dumplings cooked in turkey broth. During the years of autarky in Italy, the frugal food writer **Petro-nilla** recommended a turkey stuffed with chestnuts, pine nuts and its own innards. The gourmet entrepreneur **Pietro Marzotto** prepared 'Linette's turkey' in homage to his mother-in-law. The innocent bird was coddled all year in the garden at Villa Marzotto, in Valdagno, feasting on sweetcorn and herbs before being apotheosed in its final sacrifice with a worthy stuffing of crumbled sausage, champignons, chicken livers, herbs, chestnuts and eggs.

In 1961, during the third edition of the **Treviso Cooking Festival** conceived by **Bepo Maffioli**, there was a **twining of Treviso and New Orleans cuisine**. So it was that "upon the painted earthenware turkeys roasted the real, American-raised turkeys, roasted and stuffed". Perhaps this exerted a subliminal magnetism upon the flow of migrants from Treviso and environs who sought economic solace in the lands of Uncle Sam. An embarrassment of choices, therefore: a far cry from the tired cliché of turkey as a dreary health food grudgingly swallowed instead of the beloved beef or pork, even if not everyone reaches the hyperbolic transport with which a certain **Gioacchino Rossini** left his mark on turkey history: "Eating a turkey is a job for two: myself and the turkey." His turkey was harmoniously filled with veal rump, ham, *pancetta*, Marsala, chicken livers and black truffle, all enrobed in sliced lard and slow-baked in a casserole.

**Giancarlo Saran**



# Marron glacé: *scrumptious and refined*

by **Roberto Mirandola**  
*Padua Academician*

*Christmas bonbons:  
deliciously retro.*

**T**he more nostalgic gourmets have a special bond with these deliciously retro delicacies. Marrons glacés, a French term for ‘candied chestnuts’ also Italianised as *marroni glassati* or *marroni canditi*, are a strictly seasonal confectionery speciality, **available from autumn and strongly linked with Christmas festivities** as a refined, luxurious well-wishing gift. **They are known as *glacé* for the shiny sugar coating that covers them** after lengthy and laborious preparation.

## *Debated origins*

As with many successful recipes, the origin of marrons glacés is debated. **Were they born in France or in the adjoining**

**Piedmont?** Their name seems to suggest a transalpine origin. In terms of raw material, the valleys round Cuneo were already yielding abundant chestnuts in the 16<sup>th</sup> century: they were a staple peasant food and an important source of income for the locals. **The Cuneo market was important at the European level, and chestnut-related events arose, including the *Sagra del Marrone* (Marron Festival) still celebrated in Villar Focchiardo (Turin) and the more recent *Fiera Nazionale del Marrone* (National Marron Festival) in Cuneo.** A couple of centuries later, **chestnuts rose from humble fare to a speciality** for refined palates. Candied chestnuts are attributed to the court cook for the Duke of Savoy, **Carlo Emanuele I**, whose recipe appears in the treatise *Il confetturiere piemontese* (*The Piedmontese Confectioner*) printed in Turin in 1790. However, **the French identify their birthplace as the Lyon area**, where a recipe for chestnuts cooked in sugar was prepared by the chef **François-Pierre de La Varenne**, author, a century earlier, of *Le parfait confiturier* (*The Perfect Jam Maker*). It must be noted that, while preserving their authentic peasant roots, historically the most refined Piedmontese recipes have consistently been influenced by the cuisine of neighbouring France, and some appear in another, anonymous cooking treatise of the eighteenth century called *Il cuoco piemontese perfezionato a Parigi* (*The Piedmontese Cook Perfected in Paris*). What is known is that **from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the Enlightenment was in full swing, marrons glacés were a delectable fashion among aristocrats all over Europe and would remain so for decades, even exchanged**





among noblewomen to bring fortune in the new year.

Around 1850, **the Stratta confectionary and bakery in Turin, still active and producing these bonbons today, was appointed 'Supplier to the Royal House of Savoy'**. It was that artisanal workshop that the Count of **Cavour** commissioned to produce 29 kilogrammes of marrons glacés, alongside many other delicacies, for a sumptuous gathering whose purpose was to ingratiate himself with major European diplomats and gain their favour for the future Kingdom of Italy by grabbing them, then as now, by the throat. Curiously, Stratta still retains the order and the invoices for 2,547 lire (around 12,600 euros nowadays) paid for that exceptional undertaking.

### *Several days of preparation*

Preparing marrons glacés requires several days, beginning by choosing **fresh marrons**, preferably the best available from the growers around Cuneo and the Valsusa. **They are plump, with a meaty yellow pulp and a fine texture.** The pulp is not ridged, so **the thin inner skin is smooth and easily comes off** upon being rubbed by hand. Once chosen for their size, the marrons are **immersed in water for nine days** - the so-called *novena* - to complete their ripening and facilitate peeling. They are peeled by making a small cut in the husk and subjecting each fruit to a jet of steam. Then the marrons are cooked, first in water, to which sugar and vanilla are later added. This will be the basis for **candying the marrons in sugar syrup heated** until a temperature of 70 °C. To ensure the right softness, the candying process in progressively more concentrated syrups **must last approximately a week.**

When the marrons are candied, meaning saturated with sugar, they are drained on a lattice for at least a day. **In the final phase, glazing,** they are covered with a mixture of icing sugar and water and **left to rest for another day** before being briefly heated in an oven to decrystallise



the surface, giving it the typical translucent appearance.

### *How to enjoy them*

Savouring marrons glacés - no more than one or two at a time - is a sort of liturgy. Firstly, artisanally produced ones are preferable: their production process has remained as in former times, painstaking and laborious to yield soft, crumbly morsels and a fine, almost imperceptible glaze, preserving the typical flavour of the marron. **They must always be eaten at room temperature, and never in one bite, but broken in half by hand** (cutting with a knife would whiten the pulp, giving the impression of biting into a dried fruit), **letting the signature syrupy drop ooze out of the chestnut's heart** and flow over its translucent pulp.

**The two areas dedicated to high-quality marron glacé production are Turin and the department of Ardèche in south-eastern France.** The first has such acclaimed producers as Damasso, Pfatisch and the aforementioned Stratta. The second has historic producers including Maison Cruzilles, Clement Faugier and Sabaton. All are run by enthusiasts who, from generation to generation, have tak-

en upon themselves the task of **preserving orthodoxy by following ancient artisanal methods and using only raw materials of the highest order** from their respective nearby forests.

### *Some interesting facts*

■ **Marrons** are the prized fruits of the marron tree. Despite popular belief, **they are not simply larger chestnuts, but of a specific variety.** Indeed, they have a rounded rectangular base and, unlike ordinary chestnuts, are not flattened on one or both sides, because **only one marron grows inside** each burr. Their husks are shiny and russet brown (lighter than that of common chestnuts) with vertical striations, and their pulp is fleshy. **They are sweeter and more flavour-some than ordinary chestnuts.**

■ Chestnut or marron trees need **at least 15 years** to begin fruiting, though for truly good fruits it may be necessary to wait 50 years or more.

■ The price of a single, high-quality, artisanal marron glacé, weighing on average 20 grammes, is rather high: between 2.50 and 3.50 euros depending on the confectioner.

**Roberto Mirandola**