

## Italian Kitchen in the Heart of Harlem

Iwona Adamczyk (March 12, 2014)



North of Italy meets North of Manhattan in this lively restaurant quickly growing its crowd of followers and establishing itself as a neighborhood's favorite Italian meeting place.

Getting off the number 1 train on 125 Street, I proceed down Broadway passing random old fashion bodegas, barbershops, a Chinese restaurant and a New York style pizza joint. Once I enter through the doors of Bettolona the outside seizes to exist.

It almost feels surreal as I hear the loud Italian conversation lead by a group of friends sitting at the bar to the right. Approached by one of the employees I kindly ask to be seated at the bar as the dining room to the left seems to be filled to its capacity, and I order a glass of wine while I look through the menu.



I strike a conversation with my neighbor who quickly suggests I should try the fried calamari and I shouldn't miss the imported buffalo mozzarella. So I go with his recommendation and order both. Soon I become part of the crowd seated at the bar and learn that they are not friends but have met here at the restaurant today.

The barman chimes in stating that everyone is family at Bettolona! I ask him where he's from and he says: "I'm from Turin, it's up north." The barman is Sandro Giusiano, and he is one of the owners of Bettolona. Together with chef Sebastiano Cappitta they have ventured into the heart of Harlem in order to create a piece of Italy in this rapidly developing neighborhood.

"We decided to invest in this area because of its constant evolution. We are ahead of time, as Columbia University plans to expand its campus. A true Italian pizzeria and restaurant is a great meeting place for the young student crowd. Here they can experience what is truly Italian: food and culture. It's not by chance that most of the staff is Italian, I want Italian to be spoken here, yelled out loud and heard," states Giusiano.

The chef has created a menu based on classic Italian recipes, revisited in a modern way. The lasagna verde di spinachi (spinach lasagna in a béchamel and ragu' sauce) is prepared fresh every day, as are various daily specials. So stop in and experience Sandro's Piedmontese hospitality, his knowledge of wine and Sebastiano's culinary creations.

[Bettolona](#) [2] 3143 Broadway New York, NY (212) 749-1125

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