



Message from the Ambassador of Italy
H. E. Alberto Bradanini

I am pleased to catch this opportunity to congratulate the project “Italian Hospitality – Italian Restaurants in the World”. Promoted by Unioncamere in cooperation with the National Tourist Research Institute (IS.NA.R.T.) and the Italian Chambers of Commerce Abroad and supported by the Ministries of Heritage and Cultural Activities and Tourism, Foreign Affairs, Economic Development, and Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies, the project aims at conferring a certification of quality to those Italian restaurants abroad offering a genuine Italian cuisine, thus guaranteeing the same qualitative standards of the Italian Hospitality.

High-quality food, as acknowledged, is one of the aspect that contributed to make Italy popular around the world. “High-quality” refers both to the taste and the genuineness of the products. For this reason, in China, in the promotional activities realised by the Italian companies in cooperation with the Embassy of Italy, we highly pay attention to comply to food safety rules and standards, an aspect Chinese consumers are considering more and more important and that is the focus of a close bilateral dialogue.

High-quality diet is the result of a culinary tradition rooted in past times, thus originated in Countries with an ancient civilisation such as Italy – cradle of the western world – and China, outpost of the eastern culture. Since centuries these two schools of thoughts have been exchanging ideas, culinary and taste experiences. We can just think about pasta, iconic food of both the Italian and Chinese cuisine!

Worldwide mostly reknown for pasta, pizza and ice-cream, the variety of the Italian cuisine is indeed much broader. Thanks to the contribution of the many regional specialities and influences by the different populations that dwelled in the Peninsula, the Italian recipes are countless by number and variety. It is a diversified, nourishing and healthy cuisine, that has been handed down from one family of humble origins – mostly farmers, therefore close to the land and its products – to another over the centuries. Italian cuisine is plentiful of full meal combinations of pasta and vegetables or beans, but also of many kinds of meats, fishes or cheeses.

Nonetheless, although food and wine belong to our culture since millennia and represent relevant Italian exports to the world, we have not been always appropriately valuing them abroad, and, in same way, guiding foreign consumers. From this point of view, the role played by the Italian restaurants

abroad is a pivotal one, since they are the first place where to experience our culinary tradition. If such an experience is satisfying, the client is more likely to fidelize and, eventually, direct his attention to the domestic consumption of Italian agricultural products, thus embracing the typical cookings methods of our cuisine.

For this reason, the Italian Hospitality project has a fundamental value, with its aim at valuing the Italian culinary culture by selecting those Italian restaurants that comply to the highest qualitative standards, by meeting requirements and mechanisms of guarantee for the use of the ingredients, professionalism, procedures and customer service standards of absolute excellence. In 2014, in China, 35 restaurants deserved this certification (20 in Shanghai, 8 in Beijing and 7 in Guangzhou). In 2015, we expect this number to growth.

Italian restaurant abroad represent – and they have do that better and better – the physical place (but, if we like, also the imaginary one) where all consumers feeling an interest and a curiosity for Italy shall be surrounded by the convivial atmosphere and attitude characterising our people, finding “a sensitivity, an attitude, a skill to relate to the raw material in a direct, clean way, to tell about Italy, its history and its encounter with other Countries. Something that is intangible and, in the meantime, very recognisable” quoting Antonella de Santis on the Gambero Rosso’s website. At the Italian restaurants, food shall be tasted as an expression of Italian culture and daily life and as time of sharing and fun.

This way, Italian restaurants abroad will tangibly contribute to the growth of our Country: the Italian agricultural system, with a total value of 260 billion of Euro, is a fundamental asset for the national economy. In this light, I have to emphasize that 2015 is an extraordinary year for the promotion of all agribusinesses, since at Milan Expo food and sustainable feeding are the core topics of an international debate and, within such a framework, the unique capability of our entrepreneurs of blending tradition with innovation, in terms of both food safety and sustainability, will gain an unprecedented visibility.

Milan Expo will additionally be a particular important opportunity to exchange “best practices” about the relationship between nutrition and growth model. The theme “Feeding the Planet – Energy for life” calls to consider the quality of food in relation to the resources available on earth. All these topics are of the upmost interest amongst the Chinese public, as testified by the relevant Chinese participation to the Milan Expo, with three national pavillions and some others in the sectorial pavillions.

Milan Expo will therefore become a platform to further enhance Chinese people’s respect and friendship towards Italy, thus facilitating broad cooperations between the two Countries and a deeper mutual understanding. The many Chinese tourists of Milan Expo shall catch this opportunity to discover the beauties of our Country, its artistic masterpieces, countrysides, cities, wines and food treasures, strenghening even more the historical closeness between the two Nations, China and Italy.

H.E. Alberto Bradanini, Ambassador of Italy to the P.R.C