

Chef's travels spawn new restaurant

A world of experience has gone into eatery

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CHEF Bruno Soleri of Florentia SARAH RYELAND/TOWNCRIER

You don't have to travel all the way to Italy to enjoy an authentic Tuscan meal.

Florentia, the newly opened restaurant on Mt. Pleasant Road, offers a contemporary twist on rustic Italian fare. Chef Bruno Soleri uses his worldly experience to create food that's outside the box.

Using techniques learned in Italy, Japan and North America, Soleri creates every item from scratch — from the garnish to the gnocchi.

And with a menu that constantly adds new items, you never know what creation will appear next.

"What I like, I cook," Soleri says.

Having been in the restaurant industry for the past 15 years, Soleri has made a name for himself acting as both chef and consultant for many world-renowned eateries.

"In Italy, I was known for my Asian-inspired food," he says. "But I'm known in other countries for my Italian food. The perspective changes depending on where I go."

Here in Toronto, he and business partner Marco Sassone have created a space where guests can sample the flavours of Tuscan cuisine — while enjoying locally grown products at the same time.

"Of course we're inspired by Italian food," Soleri says. "But we use Ontario meats and vegetables whenever we can."