

## Local Gelateria Celebrates 10th Anniversary

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Laura Fontani, owner of Bargello (centre), with her team; Credit: Otilia Dragan/Chronicle.lu

enough to not require additives. She stressed that, although many people think healthier options would taste “*bad*”, this need not be so. Plant milk options and creative blends of flavours can yield “*delicious*” vegan, low sugar and low-fat alternatives.

According to Laura Fontani, Bargello does not currently plan on opening any new shops, but the team is working on supplying local supermarkets and the Benelux area market with a variety of their products. “*We're just getting more and more used to buying in shops and supermarkets. We don't have time to go left and right, you know, people are working from home as well. So, I personally think that as a business, it makes more sense to go towards that... rather than to keep opening shops.*”

She noted that it is preferable to put the ice cream straight into boxes and thus avoid any additional manipulation, as the simple, fresh and local ingredients retain their quality in this manner.

When Ms Fontani started out, she had her father's traditional recipes (flavours such as coffee and pistachio), but over time, and with the knowledge she acquired studying the craft at the University of Bologna, she developed new flavours. Some of these were granita-like cocktail sorbets, such as sorbet mojito and fruit-based flavours, such as mango, strawberry-orange but also the dark chocolate sorbet (containing no milk). Some other new flavours **Chronicle.lu** discovered on the gelateria's tenth anniversary were Aperol Spritz, vegan cashew nut and coffee and a vegan blueberry cheesecake gelato based on coconut milk, with a biscuit crumb topping.

When asked about the challenges facing the business over the years, Ms Fontani described the COVID-19 lockdown period as quite complicated, not because there was no demand for their gelato, but because the suppliers were unable to deliver certain staple ingredients, such as pistachios. As for the highlights over the past ten years, she noted three main ones: the “Sweetbike”, a gelato mobile idea that started in 2014, a partnership with Cactus which led to growth opportunities for the company (and which enabled them to find solutions for sustainable packaging, for instance), and lastly their shop opening abroad, in Brussels.

**Chronicle.lu** recently had the opportunity to interview Laura Fontani, the owner of the gelateria Bargello, whose Luxembourg-based business celebrated its tenth anniversary on Thursday 20 April 2023.

In a private sampling of the so-called gelato (traditional Florentine ice cream with under 10% fat content), Ms Fontani told **Chronicle.lu** about her business' expansion and development plans. Bargello, which is located near Place de Paris in Luxembourg-Gare, is currently working on adding more health-conscious gelato options, including several vegan options. The team did so by substituting dairy with coconut milk, using nuts such as cashews and pistachios for creaminess and by reducing the amounts of added sugar. They currently achieve the latter with the addition of maltitol, a sugar replacement widely used in sweets for

people with diabetes, or via the use of sweeter fruit varieties. Mango, for instance, has 15-17% sugar by itself, Ms Fontani said, thus being sweet