

LAURA FONTANI

## “Gelato for health”: Bargello celebrates 10 years

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Bargello is launching four new flavours on the occasion of its 10th anniversary. For CEO Laura Fontani, the new aperol spritz sorbet was the “most fun” to create. Photo: Romain Gamba/Maison Moderne

**Summer has arrived at Bargello! The Florentine-style gelateria, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary, has launched four new flavours. Delano had a chat with CEO Laura Fontani to hear more about her projects--and, of course, to taste some of the new gelato options.**

Bargello, located just off the Place de Paris, has been serving gelato in Luxembourg for 10 years. How does it feel? I asked founder and CEO  Laura Fontani. “It feels like yesterday, but at the same time, there’s a lot of things that have happened in the past 10 years.”

The business has been developing in “steps.” Things started with the gelateria, and in 2014, Bargello launched its “sweet bike,” a bicycle that goes to parks, museums and events to sell gelato. “It

was one of the first food trucks, in fact.” The next step was to build partnerships with people and companies--such as Pall or Cactus--to distribute their gelato in Luxembourg.

Opening a shop in Brussels was the third step, said Fontani. For diversification reasons, she purposely decided not to open another shop here in the grand duchy. Having lived in Brussels for many years, it was a “natural segue” to establish a shop there.

## “Gelato for health”

“At the same time, there are developments at the level of the gelato itself.” Before starting Bargello, Fontani worked with fixed income derivatives at an investment bank. Her family, however, had owned a famous gelato shop in Florence for many years. After Fontani’s father passed away, the business was sold, but she “really always wanted to relaunch something.”

When she founded Bargello here in Luxembourg, not only did she have gelato-making courses in Bologna under her belt, but she also had all of her father’s recipes. “And that’s what it started with.” These were the “classic” recipes, but since then, Bargello has developed more “modern” and “contemporary” flavours, like the mojito.

## “ GELATO FOR HEALTH MEANS DIVERSIFYING THE PRODUCT. ”



Laura Fontani, CEO, Bargello

But over the past three years--since the start of the covid-19 pandemic--Fontani has started to work on a project that she calls “gelato for health.” “Gelato for health means diversifying the product, but also being aware of making a gelato more and more healthy. Meaning with a bit less sugar, meaning a gelato which has more variety in vegan options, meaning a gelato which has very good nutritional values.”

The challenge here is to “make something which is just as good” and has “a lot of flavour,” but aligns with common trends such as “no-gluten” or “no-lactose” that many clients are looking for. “A number of my gelatos are actually certified vegan,” said Fontani.

## New flavours

Bargello has developed four new flavours, which the CEO

presented with enthusiasm during Delano's visit. The first is an aperol spritz sorbet: this, Fontani noted was the "most fun" to create. The second is a vegan version of their blueberry cheesecake gelato, which uses coconut milk instead of regular milk, and the third is a vegan coffee and cashew sorbet. Bargello's fourth new flavour is a classic, non-vegan gelato based on walnut cream, accompanied by a pear and walnut sauce.



Bargello's four new flavours are: aperol spritz, vegan blueberry cheesecake, vegan coffee and cashew sorbet, and walnut cream gelato with pear and walnut sauce.

Delano can confirm that the new gelatos are fresh, innovative and decadent. The vegan blueberry cheesecake, in particular, is excellent. The use of coconut milk makes the gelato rich and creamy, little "crumbles" of biscuit add texture, and the blueberries contribute extra bursts of flavour--if Fontani hadn't told me that it was vegan, I wouldn't have been able to guess.

### **Fresh fruit is crucial**

Before tasting the gelato, however, I brought a spoonful up to my nose and inhaled deeply. "Yes! Smell it first," Fontani encouraged.

That's the test--to be able to smell the fruit that is used.

All of Bargello's gelatos are made with fresh fruit, a criteria that is "very important" for Fontani. "Any real artisanal gelateria will not use pulps," she emphasised, even if these pulps are sugar-free and contain 100% fruit. "That, for me, is the watershed. I have one person in the summer [who is] only cutting fruit."

Bargello's flavours change with the seasons as well, Fontani said, offering us a taste of her strawberry-orange sorbet. The composition depends on the time of the year--in the winter, for example, there will be more of an orange flavour.

### **"Bilanciamento"**

Finally, in line with the "gelato for health" philosophy, when preparing gelato, "We use a technique that is called 'bilanciamento,' or balance," explained Fontani. "We will first check how much sugar does the fruit have in itself." When fruits that are naturally high in sugar--like mangos--are used in a gelato, they won't need a lot of extra sugar to be added.

It's almost a scientific process. "That is the type of work that we do here," said Fontani. "And this is what makes me proud."