

Press Release
For Immediate Release

“A Slice of Tuscany” - Authentic Culinary Encounter with Chef Domenico Francone and Banfi Wines at WHISK

3 November 2016, Hong Kong: This winter The Mira Hong Kong welcomes an acclaimed Guest Chef from Tuscany's charming **Castello Banfi** restaurant **La Taverna** to showcase the authentic taste of Tuscan cuisine paired with award-winning Banfi wines. For three nights only, from 1 - 3 December 2016, Chef **Domenico Francone** takes over the design hotel's ingredient-driven Western restaurant **WHISK** to serve a **6-course dinner tasting menu**, available from 2 - 14 December, while the first night is reserved for a special wine pairing dinner with 5 selected Banfi wines. Along with the tasting menu, a short a la carte selection of dishes will be offered at lunch and dinner from 2 - 14 December.

Bringing a 'Slice of Tuscany' to Hong Kong for the first time in his culinary career, Chef Domenico will present some of the flavors one could only discover at his classical Tuscan restaurant built in the former barrel cellars of the castle. The menu showcases **unique ingredients** coming from the local *terroir* of Montalcino that Chef Domenico is so well familiar with, starting with authentic house made condiments. Think extremely rich and fruity extra virgin olive oil "Poggioalle Mura Fruttato Intenso" and the impressive balsamic vinegar "Condimento Balsamico Etrusco" made of Moscato and Trebbiano grapes which is aged for 12 years and decanted in sequence in barrels made of different woods every 24 months allowing it to infuse hints of distinct flavors.

A true Tuscan expression on its own – further enhanced with the optional wine pairing – the tasting dinner menu features **six artistically garnished dishes** that are all about seasonality and a constant pursuit of the ultimate flavors. *Cannolo di Branzino, Sedano e Melone* is a thin crispy fried sea bass roll accompanied by brunoise of sweet melon and celery paired with full-bodied, refreshingly fruity *Castello Banfi 'Fontanelle' Chardonnay*. Followed by homemade *Lobster Tagliatelle, Aglione Sauce and Burrata Foam*, a modern take on classic pasta with silky garlic-tomato sauce and fresh herbs, the menu also includes rich *Pork Belly Ravioli with Peas Cream and Pistachios*.

The highlight main course introduces one of Italy's most prestigious red wines, **Brunello di Montalcino**, in a form of a jus covering a delicate *Duo of Veal (cheek & sirloin) Stuffed with Mushrooms and Potatoes* on a bed of garden vegetables. Uplifting ending to the flavorful Tuscan journey is the restaurant's signature *Tiramisù del Castello with Vanilla Gelato*, presented as a "deconstructed" composition of flavors found in this ever-popular Italian dessert. Home-baked traditional almond cookies: the chewy *Ricciarelli* and crunchy *Cantuccini*, are specific to Tuscany biscotti served with coffee or tea as a sweet "arrivederci".

Representing the riches of the idyllic region of Italy renowned for some of the best preserved and evocative sites with UNESCO Heritage status, the menu curated by La Taverna's head chef is harmonized with the wines of **Castello Banfi**, a family-owned vineyard estate and winery located in the Brunello region of Tuscany famous for their signature 100% Sangiovese grape wines. Among 3 wines to be tasted are deliciously rich Super Tuscan red Cum Laude 2012 featuring long and characterful finish rated with 92pts by James Suckling, as well as intense ruby red *Brunello di Montalcino 2011 DOCG* praised by the 'Wine Spectator' for its ripe and meaty character as well as complex aromas. An award-winning estate, Castello Banfi has been named **Europe's #1 Wine Destination** by Fodor's Guide as well as **2001 European "Winery of The Year"** by Wine Enthusiast Magazine.

“We are excited to be showcasing some of the most authentic flavors of Tuscany at WHISK with Chef Domenico Francone,” says Gerhard Aicher, General Manager of The Mira Hong Kong. “By inviting an award-winning guest chef with such strong passion for territoriality, seasonality and quality of local produce – similar to the sunny stint of Australian celebrity chef, Ben O’Donoghue, who featured the bounties of Queensland earlier this season – we aim at bringing the finest ingredients and most authentic culinary encounters and distinctive flavors from around the world to the tables of WHISK for Hong Kong foodies to discover.”

Welcome wine dinner inclusive of 5 selected Banfi wines on the first night (Dec 1) is priced at HK\$888. The 6-course tasting menu is available at WHISK from 2 – 14 December 2016 (Mon – Sat), from 6:30pm till 10am, at HK\$888 per person (food only) with an option of wine pairing of 3 wines (HK\$358). Chef Domenico’s a la carte selection is available from 2 – 14 December 2016, at lunch and dinner (Mon – Sat).

Booking Enquiries: 2315 5999 or dining@themirahotel.com and online www.themirahotel.com
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All prices subject to 10% service charge

About Chef Domenico Francone

Born to a family with a strong food culture, Chef Domenico Francone has been exposed to the authenticity of flavors through his grandmother’s fresh pasta and his mother’s flavorful dishes cooked with the freshest produce from the family’s vegetable garden. Prior to settling in back in the heart of Tuscany to pursuit his culinary dreams, Chef Domenico Francone gained precious exposure to the world of fine dining under the wings of Europe’s most respected three star Michelin Masterchef Heinz Beck at his famed Apsleys in London. Humbled by the challenges of this magical but exhausting time in his career, upon his return to Castello Banfi, the ambitious head chef of La Taverna is proud of having been able to make this excellent restaurant a perfect conciliation between traditional and gourmet cuisine.

Chef Domenico admits he loves to explore local markets and delicacies on his travels and he is not unfamiliar with the oriental notes of Asian cuisine such as Malaysia’s famous Char Kway Teow and other street food specialties, having had the opportunity to present his flair to gourmands in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore in the recent years.

About Castello Banfi - Il Borgo

Overlooking bucolic vineyards of Brunello in Tuscany’s countryside, Castello Banfi Il Borgo is an exclusive hotel situated on the grounds of a medieval castle with just a handful of distinctly designed rooms and suites where each detail was looked after by Federico Forquet, one of the most renowned interior designers of all Italy who took the haute couture world by storm in the 1960s. Among numerous accolades this boutique luxury hotel has been selected as #8 on the list of Top 50 Hotels in Italy by the readers of Condé Nast Traveler in 2013. The hotel features 2 restaurants: La Taverna and La Sala dei Grappoli, showcasing the freshness and authenticity of local ingredients.

About Castello Banfi

Banfi, a family owned wine producer based in Tuscany, is celebrated worldwide as “Builders of Brunello.” The Mariani family founded their Castello Banfi vineyard estate in Montalcino in 1978. They assembled a contiguous estate of 2,800 hectares, one third of which is planted to a constellation of single vineyards. Just over a year after, the Mariani acquired the historic Piedmontese winery Bruzzone, today known as Banfi Piemonte. Recently Banfi has approached new Tuscan territories, among the most renowned in the region, such as Bolgheri, Maremma and Chianti Classico.

About WHISK

WHISK is an ingredient focused, contemporary Western restaurant in the heart of Tsim Sha Tsui offering simple, exciting and fresh, seasonal cuisine revolving around quality meats, fish and eclectic wines at an attractive price. The menus rotate with seasons and are served in a modern setting and relaxed atmosphere of the main restaurant and four private dining rooms. Located at the fifth floor of The Mira Hong Kong, WHISK transitions to Vibes - a spacious open-air lounge hidden in the green courtyard - which serves as al fresco setting for WHISK’s lauded Sunday Champagne Brunch.

About The Mira Hong Kong

The Mira Hong Kong is a smoke-free, designer hotel with 492 boldly accented guest rooms, including a collection of 56 suites and specialty suites. Overlooking the lush Kowloon Park and centrally located in Tsimshatsui, the heart of Hong Kong's commercial, shopping, dining and entertainment district, the hotel easily connects guests to all parts of the vibrant metropolis being a short walk from MTR stations and the Star Ferry.

The Mira Hong Kong is a member of Design Hotels™, HIP Hotels and Kiwi Collection.

www.themirahotel.com



Chef Domenico Francone



A sample of Tuscany's most authentic flavors at La Taverna



Always seasonal and fresh, best quality ingredients are incorporated in Chef Domenico's dishes



Castello Tiramisu served with Vanilla Gelato



Overlooking bucolic vineyards of Brunello in Tuscany's countryside sits Castello Banfi Il Borgo



La Taverna is a classical Tuscan restaurant built in the former barrel cellars of the castle

Hi-res images available for [download HERE](#).

For media enquiries or additional images, please contact:

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*** SUPPLEMENT ***

Welcome Banfi Wine Dinner with Chef Domenico Francone (1 Dec; 7pm – 10pm)

Amuse Bouche

Crunchy Sea Bass Cannolo Celery and Melon
Castello Banfi San Angelo Pinot Grigio IGT 2014

Lobster Tagliatelle, Aglione Sauce and Burrata Foam
Castello Banfi Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG 2012

Pork Belly Ravioli, Peas Cream and Pistachio
Castello Banfi Cum Laude IGT 2012 [JS 92pt]

Duo of Veal (Cheek & Sirloin), Mushrooms, Potatoes and Brunello Jus
Castello Banfi Brunello di Montalcino DOCG 2011 [JS 92pt / WS 90pt]

Tiramisù del Castello with Vanilla Gelato
Castello Banfi Rosa Regale DOCG 2015

Coffee & Biscotti (Cantuccini & Ricciarelli)

Chef Domenico Francone's Tasting Menu (2 – 14 Dec; dinner only)

Amuse Bouche

Crunchy Sea Bass Cannolo Celery and Melon
Castello Banfi Fontanelle Chardonnay IGT 2015

Lobster Tagliatelle, Aglione Sauce and Burrata Foam

Pork Belly Ravioli, Peas Cream and Pistachio
Castello Banfi Cum Laude IGT 2012

Duo of Veal (Cheek & Sirloin), Mushrooms, Potatoes and Brunello Jus
Castello Banfi Brunello di Montalcino DOCG 2011

Tiramisù del Castello with Vanilla Gelato

Coffee & Biscotti (Cantuccini & Ricciarelli)

A la Carte Selection by Chef Domenico Francone (2 – 14 Dec; lunch & dinner)

Starters

- Crunchy Sea Bass Cannolo Celery and Melon (HK\$188)
- Pappa al Pomodoro, Beef Tartare and Avocado (HK\$198)

Pasta

- Lobster Tagliatelle, Aglione Sauce and Burrata Foam (HK\$360)
- Pork Belly Ravioli, Peas Cream and Pistachios (HK\$228)
- Tortelli Maremmani (Spinach & Ricotta) on Toscan Beef Ragù (HK\$238)

Mains

- Duo of Veal (Cheek & Sirloin), Mushrooms, Potatoes and Brunello di Montalcino Jus (HK\$368)
- Baccalà Cod, Creamed with Tapenade of Olives, Tomatoes Concassè and Ricotta (HK\$338)

Desserts

- Tiramisù del Castello with Vanilla Gelato (HK\$98)
- Pinolata Senese with Biscotti Ice Cream (HK\$88)