



CHEF BIO

Chef: Luciano Pellegrini
Executive Chef

Born in Bergamo, Italy, Luciano Pellegrini had little idea that his Culinary training would lead to a settlement in America. Believing like many other Italian men that America was only a dream, he jumped at the chance to come when one of his friends mentioned a possibility for work in Los Angeles.

Friend Paolo Frosio was in contact with Piero Selvaggio, and when a job was offered to Luciano, he quickly booked a flight. Prior to his arrival in America in 1985, Luciano built up an impressive resume in Italy. At the age of thirteen, he began studies at the prestigious San Pellegrino hotel school. During summers, he worked at the Ristorante Bar Centrale, where he took on basically all responsibilities.

After graduation, he began work at another restaurant, Locanda Dell'Angelo. There he worked for one and a half years with Paolo, as well as with, now VALENTINO chef, Angelo Auriana. At the age of eighteen, Luciano was required to complete his one year of military service. He went to Pisa, where he worked as a parachutist with the urban troops. After completion of his service, Luciano went to work in Rimini and then at a restaurant by Lake Garda.

In March of 1985, Luciano arrived in Los Angeles with his friend Paolo. They were greeted at the airport by Piero Selvaggio, despite the six hour flight delay which led to an arrival time of 4a.m. The next day, Luciano had his first American hamburger. In fact, he claims, "I liked it so much that I think I had at least one every day of that month!"

Work in the states began with food preparation in the kitchen of VALENTINO. In 1985, PRIMI opened and Luciano transferred there to work in pasta. In 1987, he became head chef of PRIMI. In 1991, POSTO opened and Luciano transferred there to work as head chef. The first year was very busy, and at times it seemed as though California would fall into the ocean. Despite the riots, earthquakes and floods, however, the business at POSTO began to stabilize.

Luciano Pellegrini is the Executive Chef/Partner at VALENTINO Las Vegas. POSTO manager Santo Selvaggio accredits Luciano for much of the restaurant's success. Expansions have occurred in catering and in special events. Banquet rooms are rented for at least three out of six nights a week. POSTO has been voted "Best in the Valley" by Max Jacobson, and Larry Lipson of the Los Angeles Daily News awarded POSTO four stars. Los Angeles Times reviewer S. Irene Virbila has named Luciano as "a man you can trust with pasta" and has further commented that his kitchen excels at "the kind of rustic main courses you might find in the Italian countryside."

Luciano Pellegrini was born in a scenic mountain village near Bergamo in the Lombardy region of Italy. Like most Italians, his passion for food began at an early age and led to commencing formal education at the renowned hotel school in San Pellegrino at the age of thirteen. His summers were spent getting hands-on experience that gave him a strong foundation for running a professional kitchen.

OWNER / RESTAURANTEUR

Upon graduation, Luciano embarked on a culinary career under **Pierangelo Cornaro** at the Michelin one-star **Locanda dell' Angelo** in Bergamo, one of the only two Michelin-rated restaurants at that time. He served under current **VALENTINO chef Angelo Auriana** for close to two years. Restaurant stints in Rimini and Lake Garda followed to expand his culinary skills.

In 1985, **Piero Selvaggio** offered him a position at **PRIMI**, his innovative restaurant in Los Angeles. After two and a half years, Luciano was heading the kitchen. In 1991, Piero opened **POSTO**, a new restaurant in Sherman Oaks, where Luciano was named executive chef. In preparation for the opening of the rustic Posto, serving simply grilled and prepared Italian fare, Luciano traveled extensively in Italy learning the art of grilling at **Da Toso** in Friuli, known for its open-hearth cooking, as well as sausage making in his native Lombardy. He observed fish preparation at **Bruno Libralon's Antica Zecca**, just outside Turin in Piedmont. **POSTO** was a great success and S. Irene Virbila of the *Los Angeles Times* called him "a man you can trust with pasta!"

Ready for an new project, Luciano became **EXECUTIVE chef at Piero Selvaggio VALENTINO, Las Vegas in 1999**. He brought the fresh flavors and elegant Italian cuisine of Valentino to the fast paced, outrageous landscape of Las Vegas. Under Luciano's sure hand, **Piero Selvaggio VALENTINO Las Vegas** is the showcase restaurant of the Venetian Hotel, and has won two **Epicurean Awards** from *Las Vegas Live Magazine*, in 2001 and 2003.

Luciano has been invited to take part in many high profile events, including the Grammy's, Academy Awards, and Napa Valley Wine Auction. He worked along some to the most renowned Italian chefs on special events: Gianfranco Vissani, Fulvio Pier Angelo, Paola Di Mauro, and Nadia and Antonio Santini of the Michelin three-star Dal Pescatore in Lombardy. He contributed a number of recipes to *The Valentino Cookbook* (Villard, 2001) and was recently featured on the **Food Network** and **Discovery Channel**. Luciano was nominated for **2003 Best Chef: Southwest by the James Beard Foundation**, the only chef in Las Vegas to receive a nomination.

[The James Beard Award](#)

Recipient - "*Piero Selvaggio Valentino Las Vegas - Luciano Pellegrini*"

James Beard Foundation