

QUADRI,



PIAZZA SAN MARCO, VENEZIA DAL 1775

A VENETIAN WONDERLAND WHERE MYSTERY, POETRY AND MAGIC
COME TOGETHER WITH EXTRAORDINARY ITALIAN CUISINE

VENICE, February 28, 2018 - **Quadri**, the multi-faceted historic 18th-century **grancaffè and restaurant** in St Mark's Square owned by the Alajmo family since 2010, **reopens its doors after a major restoration**. A transformation revealing the original magic of the place in a romantic and slightly surrealistic atmosphere imagined by **Philippe Starck** and crafted by selected Venetian artisans.

QUADRI, A VENETIAN WONDERLAND

The restoration project was **initiated by Massimiliano and Raffaele Alajmo** based on the need and desire to preserve the extraordinary heritage of Quadri, and to create a legacy making its mark on both contemporary history and the history of Italian cuisine.

"We decided to restore Quadri because the stucco work inside the ground floor café had deteriorated over the years and we felt that it was time to bring back the original splendor of the space in a contemporary context. We felt this was necessary if our intent is for Quadri to represent Italian cuisine on a global level." Raffaele Alajmo, CEO of the Alajmo restaurant group.

To operate this delicate restoration, the Alajmos called upon the French creator Philippe Starck. The brothers and Starck met 10 years ago and already collaborated on the creation of two previous restaurants, *Caffè Stern* a phantasmagoric bacaro in the heart of Paris and *AMO* a mysterious and elegant café located inside the T Fondaco dei Tedeschi building in Venice.

This new collaboration began with a love story; a human love story and a love story for Venice, its mystery and elegance. Quadri is a place that belongs to Venice, completely Venetian in its respected essence, and revealed by magic.

“The concept of Quadri simply is Quadri. Quadri was extraordinary, except it was little sleepy. Out of respect, love and intelligence, we didn’t want to change such a powerful concentration of mystery, beauty, oddity and poetry. We simply looked for its wonders, and we discovered a wonderland.

Everything here is a mental game, with its own magical little music. Hidden fertile surprises come to life everywhere; on the walls with the fabric, in the lights with the surrealistic chandeliers and in the chimeric taxidermy collection that inhabits the place; the animals came here and wings grew on their backs, becoming fantasy creatures like the mythical winged Lion of Venice.

This dream partly comes from my brain, my heart and my folly; yet we needed hands to make it a reality. And the secret of Quadri’s absolute quality is the Venetian artisans.” Ph.S

QUADRI, MADE IN VENICE

Philippe Starck and the Alajmo brothers named Marino Folin, architect and ex-director of the IUAV architecture university, to oversee the work of the best traditional Venetian artisans. Folin was also responsible for contacting local government officials in charge of preserving the artistic heritage of the city and getting their approval on all aspects of the restoration.

“The important cultural investment made with this restoration was that of involving Venetian artisans, many of whose small family business date back to the 1800 and 1900s,” says Marino Folin

Naturally, Venice itself dictated most of the restoration decisions. One major issue was the phenomenon of acqua alta, the particularly high tides that cause temporary flooding. Quadri is located in one of the lowest parts of the city and the water that enters with each peak tide leaves its mark on the walls and furniture. Rather than fight the inevitable, Starck decided to highlight the effects of the high water by selecting unvarnished brass for the legs of the tables, the reception desk at the entrance and everything else in contact with the floor. The idea is that the metal will oxidize and change color over time, revealing by the changing tide levels, the pulse of the city.

The acqua alta parameter is also illustrated in the new graphic identity of the place developed with GBH, a British creative agency that has long been working with Starck. One significant example is the brass lettering that hangs over the entrance on St Mark’s square. Letters were removed and taken to the only foundry left in Venice, Fonderia Valese. The lower half of the letters was left naturally oxidized, while the top half was polished to a gleaming gold, a visual reference to the fine-dining restaurant, Ristorante Quadri, located upstairs which is not affected by the water.

The restoration of the walls of the ground floor café and bistro, Grancaffè Quadri and Quadrino, was carried out by expert art restorers Anna de Spirt and Adriana Spagnol,

who were able to peel back layers of paint to reveal the original stuccowork from the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Inside Ristorante Quadri on the first floor, Starck's influence is evident in the décor and the recovery of original architectural details. The previously deep red wall covering is now a rich golden brown. Tessitura Bevilacqua, a historic Venetian fabric maker, produced both the old and new fabrics. During a visit to the poetically ancestral Bevilacqua atelier, Starck selected a fabric made in around 1550 as his model for a pattern that repeats across the room. Then the French creator twisted it to add humor and mental games into the idea of tradition and quality. The depicted faces are these of the Alajmo brothers, and horse-drawn carriages and gondolas give way to satellites and astronauts.

The large Rezzonico-style Murano glass chandelier from the 1930s was completely restored and hung alongside a new chandelier of the same dimensions and style, but with surrealistic dripping glass details. For both the restoration and the creation of the new chandelier, Philippe Starck called on Aristide Najean. The incredibly talented Frenchman who studied with the greatest Venetian glassblowers, has been living and working in Murano since 1985.

The painted carpets that lie on the floor of the restaurant were designed by Ara Starck. When painting the carpets, she created a complex game in which central figures move in a phantasmagorical world as a reflection of our subconscious and an invitation to dream. "These carpets are paintings; we cannot describe or name them," says Philippe Starck. "They speak for everything that is inside us and we do not know."

And because Venice would not be Venice without mirrors, the Barbini brothers, a family of master glass blowers that has been working in Murano since 1570 and who produced all the mirrors that hang in the Palace of Versailles, were chosen to craft the entrance large mirror and the smaller ones in the bathrooms, all inspired by century-old designs.

The wooden frames that hold the large windows looking out onto St. Mark's Square were also restored, thanks to the work of Venetian carpentry firm Capovilla.

A CUISINE INSPIRED BY THE CITY

Ristorante Quadri represents the contemporary expression of traditional Italian and Venetian dishes. The fish arrives fresh from the Rialto market each day, as does the produce, based on seasonal availability.

"The cuisine of Quadri is intrinsically tied to and influenced by the space in a process of reciprocal intermingling that occurs over time. Just as the past and the present flow into the future, food and cuisine are influenced by the past not only in terms of ingredients, but also service. So, the gastronomy we offer is based on place, Venetian traditions, the lagoon and its ingredients, historically re-contextualized to the present day through a new luminosity that gives the food greater depth." Massimiliano Alajmo

*The Ristorante Quadri menu is presented as **three tasting menus**—**Max, Raf and Quattro Atti (Four Acts)**—but guests can also choose to order two or three courses, selecting from any of the dishes on the three menus.*

A new addition, the Quattro Atti tasting menu was designed so that all the dishes are served in the center of the table and shared among the guests, making for a convivial experience. The food is presented on a variety of mismatched plates and dishes designed by the Alajmo brothers to have a Venetian feel.

The dining room staff has also been given new uniforms that break with tradition, custom-made to evoke the look of a noble Venetian entertaining guests at home.

Ristorante Quadri, the only restaurant located in St. Mark's Square, received its first Michelin star in 2012.

*As a gift to Venice, a city still home to a wealth of people, professions and ancient skills, the Alajmo brothers have produced a **40-minute documentary on the entire restoration project**. The film will be finished by mid-March and available on www.alajmo.it, while a preview can currently be viewed on the website.*

GRAN CAFFÈ
QUADRI
PIAZZA SAN MARCO, VENEZIA DAL 1775

Open everyday 9.00 -
24.00

QUADRINO
BISTROT VENEZIANO IN PIAZZA SAN MARCO

Open everyday
lunch 12.00 - 15.00
dinner 19.00 - 22.30

QUADRI
PIAZZA SAN MARCO, VENEZIA DAL 1775

Open from tuesday to sunday
lunch 12.30 - 14.30
dinner 19.30 - 22.30

Piazza San Marco, 121

30124 Venezia (VE)

Tel. 041 5222105

www.alajmo.it/Quadri

info@caffequadri.it

FACEBOOK: [Gran Caffè Quadri](#)

INSTAGRAM: [@grancaffequadri](#)

ALAJMO PRESS CONTACT

marisa.huff@alajmo.it

+39 333 9166663

ALAJMO FAMILY

The world's youngest three-star Michelin chef, Massimiliano (Max) Alajmo is esteemed by both his clients and peers for his clever interpretation of traditional Italian flavors. Together with his brother Raffaele (Raf), C.E.O. and maître des lieux of the Alajmo restaurant group, Max oversees the kitchens of the Alajmo family's ten restaurants, a line of food products and a special events business - all from Le Calandre, his vibrant culinary laboratory.

www.alajmo.it

FACEBOOK: [@rafemaxalajmo](#)

INSTAGRAM: [@alajmobros](#)

STARCK

Philippe Starck is an internationally acclaimed French creator, designer and architect. His profound comprehension of contemporary mutations, his determination to change the world, his anticipatory concern for environmental implications, his love of ideas, his desire to defend the intelligence of usefulness - and the usefulness of intelligence - have accompanied one iconic creation after the other. From everyday products such as furniture and lemon squeezers, to revolutionary mega-yachts, individual windmills, electric bikes or hotels and restaurants that aspire to be wondrous, stimulating and intensely vibrant places.

This untiring and rebellious citizen of the world, who considers it his duty to share his ethical and subversive vision of a fairer planet, creates unconventional places and objects whose purpose is to be "good" before being beautiful.

Philippe Starck and his wife, Jasmine, mostly live on an airplane or in "middles of nowhere".
www.starck.com

FACEBOOK: @StarckOfficial

INSTAGRAM: @Starck