

LIFE FOOD

# Third annual Sopressata Night held in Thorold on Thursday 2



By [Dave Johnson](#), The Tribune  
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Giovanni Del Priore, co-owner of Crivellers Cakes in Niagara Falls, gets dessert ready for the third annual Sopressata Night at John Michael's Banquet and Conference Centre.



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THOROLD - Smell, composition, texture, and taste.

That's what goes into judging a sopressata.

What goes into a sopressata? Well, that's usually a family secret handed down generation to generation.

Sopressata is a dry-cured, uncooked salami made of pork, salt, black pepper, chili peppers, and roasted or smoked red pepper puree; fennel is also an acceptable ingredient.

How all of those ingredients are combined is what determines a good sopressata



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How all of those ingredients are combined is what determines a good sopressata from a not so good sopressata.

Chef Massimo Capra used smell to determine whether entries in the third annual Sopressata Night at John Michael's Banquet and Conference Centre would move on for further judging in the annual contest.

Capra, of the Rainbow Room in Niagara Falls, joined judges Mario Pingue Jr. of Niagara Food Specialties, Toronto chef Gabriele Paganelli, and chef and George Brown College professor Dario Tomaselli, as they went through 70 entries.

If the smell was right, Capra would look at the composition of the meat, to see if there were holes in it, the fat content and whether it was the right colour. The shape of the sopressata, which is compressed when made, was also looked at.

Pingue said a sopressata should be well-balanced with all of the ingredients.

Once all the components were judged, and the meat was determined to be taste-worthy, it was on to sampling each.

The four judges picked their top three or four entries and tasted all.

As they talked about each one, the men switched back and forth between English and Italian, sometimes in mid-sentence.

Giovanni Del Priore, one of the event organizers and co-owner of Crivellers Cakes in Niagara Falls, said it was an honour to have Pingue, known for his prosciutto, Capra, Paganelli and Tomaselli, judging the event.

"We're so proud to do this every year," said Del Priore. "It's about getting the Italian community together, showcasing our heritage, and the pride and joy of homemade sopressata."

The first event came after Del Priore and his partner at Crivellers, Leonardo Priore, won a sopressata contest at another club. They tried to enter the event again the following year, but it was sold out, so they created their own. That was seven years ago.

"There were 50 or 60 of us at the first event we held, now we're expecting 500 people," he said, adding the two men, along with Oscar Turchi, of Savoia Hors D'Oeuvres, partnered up with John Michael's owners, chef Lino Collevicchio, chef Vincent Sica and Mike Credico, three years ago because of the growing crowd.

People came from Welland, Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Toronto, Hamilton and Markham to take part in this past Thursday night's event.

"We're not the only ones to hold a sopressata night," said Del Priore. "The reason why ours is different is the food we feature. It's a high-end, seven course meal that shows what the chefs at John Michael's can do."

While the chefs prepared the meals for the night, Del Priore and Priore made the nearly 500 desserts, ahead of time, that were served at the end of the meal, with Del Priore putting the finishing touches on each a couple of hours before people started filling the banquet hall.

During the meal, Capra, Pingue, Paganelli, and Tomaselli, were in back, said Del Priore, judging. None of them, he added, knew who any of the entrants were in the contest. Each entry was presented on a plate with a number on it, with only Del Priore and Priore knowing which number matched which entry.

"It's funny, throughout the year we see people who ask us 'What do I have to do to win? What did I do wrong last year?' They get pretty serious about it and say, 'I thought mine was the best.' Of course everyone thinks theirs is the best," said Del Priore.

After the winners were announced, he said the winning meats, and all of the meats brought in, would be put on display in the lobby for everyone to sample. He said if people were lucky they'd would get the chance to try the winning sopressatas.

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"If there's any left," he said with a laugh.

The winners were

1st — Armando Stranges

2nd — Orazio Marcon

3rd — Carmen Cocciamiglio

4th — Angela Del Priore

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