



THE GELATO FAMILY

IT'S A LONG WAY FROM ITALY TO ABU DHABI, BUT BOBO GELATI HAS MADE ITS WAY TO THE UAE CAPITAL. IT MAY HAVE STARTED ITALIAN-STYLE, BUT IT NOW HAS A BEDOUIN HEART, WITH EMIRATI FLAVOURS INFUSING THE ICY TREAT

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When Angela Abbatiello picks up the phone she is on a delivery with her father, Lorenzo Bó. "It's a little loud, but we won't be long" she says. Twenty minutes later, Angela and Lorenzo have delivered their load of Bobo Gelati and they are keen to talk about bringing the Italian delicacy to the desert.

"My father has 25-years' experience making Italian ice-cream – *gelato*. He started in Italy, where he opened a couple of shops, and then he expanded to Germany, and that's where it boomed with his gelato-making and café shops, you know, Italian-style. That's where you have an espresso and the cup of gelato next to it," Angela explains.

The family moved to Abu Dhabi in 2011, and it wasn't long before their sights returned to the gelato business. "In 2012 we started. We opened our laboratory where we make our own ice-cream and a few months later we opened a shop where you can come and take the ice-cream with you, but we also set up some tables outside the shop, where people can sit down and eat," says Angela.

"We want to expand. Our main thing is that we want to promote camel-milk ice-cream and we want to open shops where we specialise in that," Lorenzo interjects in

rapid-fire Italian, with Angela translating. "Our local partner here in Abu Dhabi introduced us to camel milk and we tasted it – he loved it," Angela says, indicating her father. "He said 'why not use this milk and transform it into gelato flavours?' Because we do use whole fresh milk for our gelato flavours. We don't use powdered milk like normal ice cream would."

The camel-milk delicacy proved a surprise hit at Abu Dhabi Gourmet recently and both Angela and Lorenzo (as well as Italian culinary maestro Marco Sacco) awarded it their full endorsement. The first time Angela gave the camel gelato the taste-test she was unaware of its origin and eagerly consumed the scoop, discovering the camel's contribution afterwards. "It makes the gelato much smoother, much sweeter and actually there's a lot of vitamins C and D. It's really good. It changes the flavour a little bit, but in a better way," she enthuses.

Not every scoop of the frozen indulgence uses camel milk – this is largely reserved for the Emirati flavours the family are introducing. The fruit flavours feature a minimum of 50 percent fresh fruit and could be paired with camel milk, but Lorenzo believes the sweet milk works particularly well with richer flavours, like pistachio, hazelnut and chocolate, along with

local delights. "One of the flavours we are doing for here is vanilla with saffron and it has black cherries on it – it's really delicious; as well as lemon-mint, but that's more of a sorbet; and dates of course," translates Angela as Lorenzo rattles off his avant-garde regional variations.

"Right now, for fruit-flavoured ice-cream, he is also not going to use normal sugar – he's going to start using date-sugar. You're the first person to know this," Angela confides. This, Lorenzo's current project, is still in the experimental phase, but he's keen to launch date-sugar variations within the next few months – after the family of four have given their nod of approval. It's they who are the guinea pigs for Lorenzo's culinary explorations. "He has to know if it's okay from us," laughs Angela.

Lorenzo doesn't hesitate in selecting his favourite flavours – hazelnut and pistachio with camel milk. For Angela it's the dark chocolate. "It's a little bit bitter, but it's really awesome," she confirms. "The biggest reaction we get, though, is about the camel-milk gelato. People fall in love with it right away."

It's been a long road for the family in establishing gelato in the Middle East, but they are happy to have worked their way gradually through the learning curve. "Now we're ready to expand. We're opening a new shop in Mohammed Bin Zayed City in Abu Dhabi, which will be more like an Italian-style café, with coffee, cake and gelato, and we want to expand that way throughout the UAE and with kiosks in malls. We're looking for investors now," confirms the duo. With their dedication and enthusiasm, there's no doubt gelato will soon be an Abu Dhabi summer favourite. 🍦