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FIERA MILANO RHO • 28-29 MAY 2025

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Colophon

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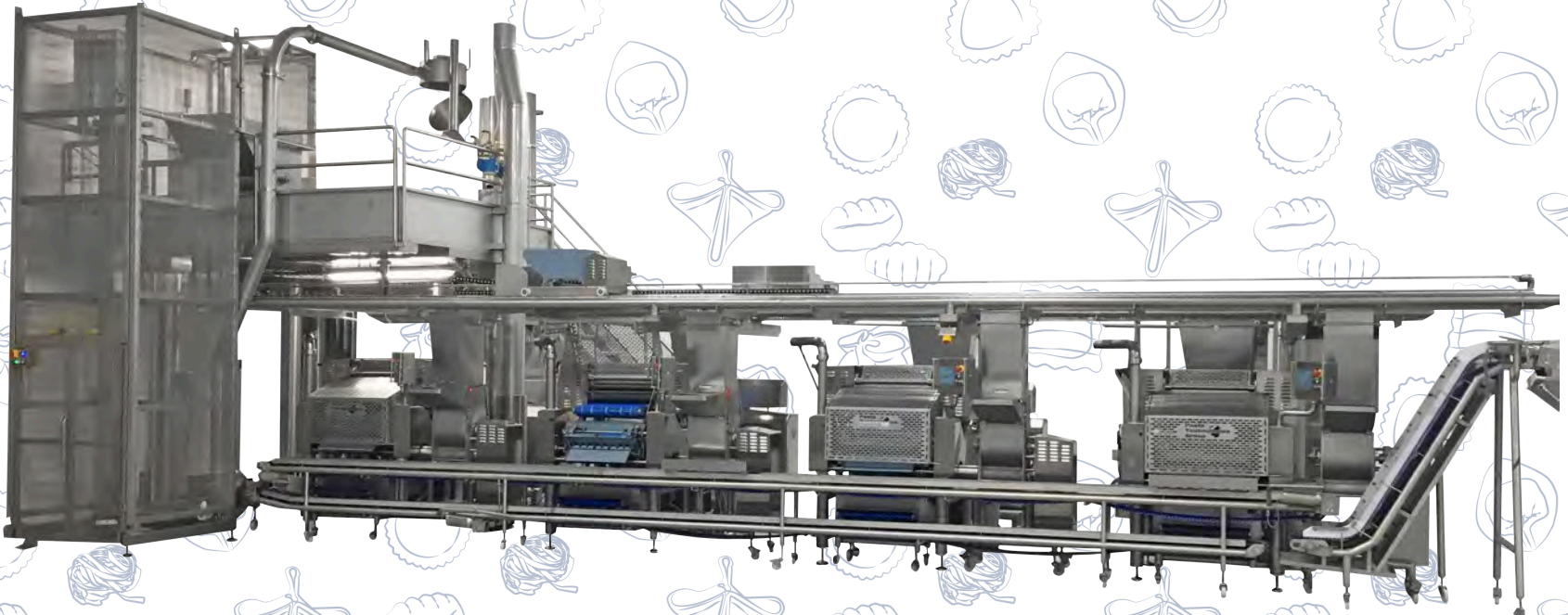
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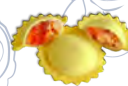
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NPA Annual Meeting 2025: pasta looks towards the future prioritising innovation, health and sustainability

Editorial team



Nora Stabert, Chair
of the National Pasta Association

An up-to-the-minute picture of the pasta industry emerges from the NPA Annual Meeting in Florida: spotlight on the latest regulations, sustainable packaging and global nutritional trends.

From 16 to 18 March, the Annual Meeting of the National Pasta Association (NPA), one of the most eagerly awaited events in the American pasta industry, was held on Amelia Island, Florida. The event was attended by some 90 professionals from the US, Canada, Brazil and Italy: pasta factories, mills, ingredient suppliers, plant manufacturers, distribution and foodservice companies. The meeting offered a unique opportunity to get up-to-date on regulations, consumer trends, sustainable packaging, technological innovation and nutritional strategies for a changing world. Pastaria took part in the event as an official media partner.

A global vision

Proceedings were opened by NPA President, Nora Stabert (Winland Foods), who was re-elected to lead the association. In her opening speech, she emphasised how pasta is at the centre of global transformations involving taste, health and sustainability. She went on to mention the demanding activities of the technical committees, which are working on key issues such as tariffs, contaminants and heavy metals, while engaging, in a timely manner, in targeted communication to members and in the coordination of regulatory affairs, research and finance.

She also introduced the new executive team, with Esteban Abascal (La Moderna - Interamerican Foods Corporation) as Vice President, James Meyer (Italgrani USA) as Treasurer, and Melissa Tendick (Barilla Americas) in the newly-created role of Secretary.

US regulations: new pressures and uncertain scenarios

In her talk, Veronica Colas (Hogan Lovells) outlined a complex picture of the US regulatory environment, marked by the emergence of the so-called “MaHA movement”, a new policy approach aimed at a more aggressive regulation of ingredients, industrial processes, and chemical substances, shifting the focus from the nutrients traditionally under



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observation (such as sugars and salt) to broader control over aspects related to the perceived healthiness of food. The approach envisages swift action through executive orders, including revision of the GRAS (Generally Recognised As Safe) procedure, without going through Congress. The repercussions for the pasta industry are not negligible.

Non-wholewheat pasta, for example, may not meet the new criteria for the “healthy” label set by the FDA. Furthermore, while not being “ultra-processed foods”, some pastas risk entering this category when enriched with certain ingredients. The

most tangible risk is related to regulatory fragmentation: in the absence of a federal preemption, individual states (such as California, Texas or West Virginia) are introducing bans or additional labelling requirements on ingredients that are perfectly legal nationwide.

Another sensitive issue is the environment. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws, already active in Oregon and California, impose registration, traceability and tariffs related to packaging. “The deadlines are imminent,” warned Colas, “and the risk of finding ourselves unprepared is high: we



Esteban Abascal, Vice Chair
of the National Pasta Association

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Colleen Zammer (Bay State Milling) at the NPA Annual Meeting 2025



need cross-functional teams involving R&D, procurement, legal, communication and sustainability.

The last piece of advice to the audience was clear: remain vigilant, plan legal and communication strategies, and possibly consider targeted litigation against measures devoid of a solid legal basis.

The GLP-1 challenge: functional pasta for a changing consumer

In her talk, Colleen Zammer (Bay State Milling) analysed the implications of the rise of GLP-1 drugs (such as Ozempic and

Wegovy) on the diets of American consumers. This concerns a growing segment of the population – over 30 million estimated by 2030 – that tends to eat less, but with a greater focus on the functional value of each foodstuff. The resulting market is huge and is estimated to reach \$190 billion in the next few years. Zammer clearly summarised the priorities of these consumers: energy from “good” carbohydrates, cognitive support, muscle health through protein, and digestive health through fibre and prebiotics. But it showed that 35% of GLP-1 consumers claim that they have reduced their intake

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of rice, cereals and pasta. Hence the challenge for the industry: “To be included in their choices, we have to rethink pasta as a functional food, rich in fibre and protein, with a nutritional profile that speaks directly to their needs”.

Pasta against hunger: the Billion Meals Challenge

In his presentation, Tom Quinn (Nuovo Pasta Productions) renewed the pasta industry’s commitment to the international campaign known as the Billion Meals Challenge, promoted in collaboration with the International Pasta Organisation (IPO), with the aim of combating global food

insecurity. The numbers quoted by Quinn are dramatic: in 2023 alone, 47 million people in the United States – one in six – were food insecure, including 14 million children. Globally, over 700 million people went hungry in the same year and 4.7 million children died of malnutrition in 2022. Thanks to the mobilisation of the industry, 32.4 million meals were donated in 2023; by 2024, the count had already reached 39.2 million, an increase of 21% over the previous year. The target set is ambitious: 50 million meals by the end of June 2025 and 100 million globally as an intermediate step towards the goal of one billion meals in ten years.



Tom Quinn at the NPA Annual Meeting 2025

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Quinn also reminded participants how to join the campaign: each pasta maker can contribute with cash donations, product donations (in any shape) or they can volunteer hours. Contributions are converted into meal units according to UN criteria. You can also get directly involved in the project task force or contact the organisation via the shared contact details. His appeal struck the audience with its force and simplicity: “Pasta brings joy, but pasta also brings sustenance and life”. An invitation to the entire supply chain – from producers to equipment suppliers – to act with social responsibility and actively take part in this global challenge.

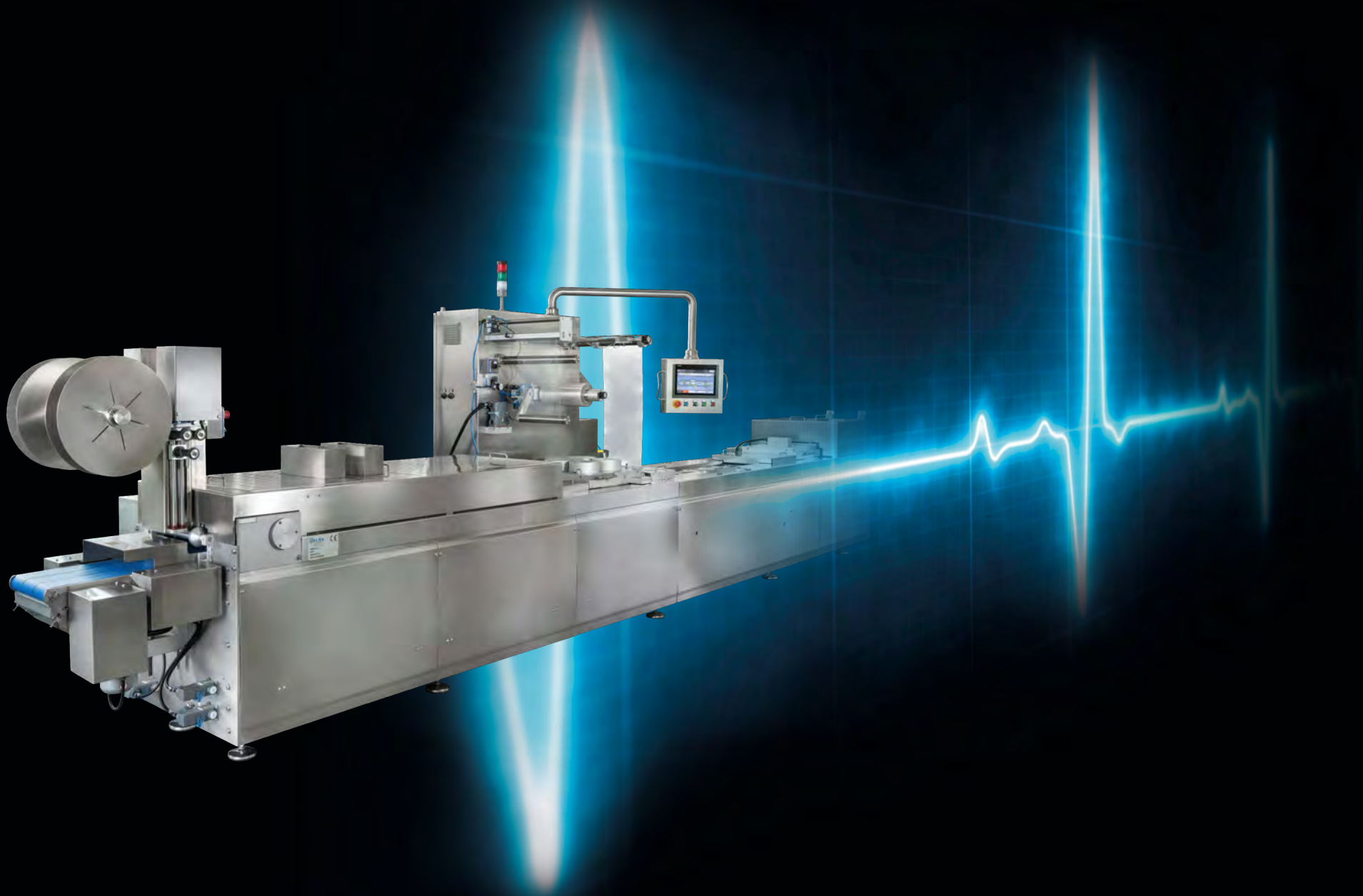
Sustainable packaging, its challenges and opportunities

One of the most technical panels was that dedicated to packaging and sustainability, with talks by Stefano Giusti (Policarta), Giovanni Frosini (Ricciarelli) and Lon Pschigoda (Inspired Fiber). Today, 59% of European consumers choose brands with sustainable packaging, and 80% have abandoned products not aligned with these values. The slides presented showed the environmental performance of the materials: paper has a recycling rate of over 80%, compared to a mere 9% for plastic. The speakers underlined the



From left: Giovanni Frosini (Ricciarelli), Lon Pschigoda (Inspired Fiber), and Stefano Giusti (Policarta) at the NPA Annual Meeting 2025

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Rosario Del Nero
at the NPA Annual Meeting 2025



importance of working with certified materials and planning ahead to comply with the new EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) regulations, which are already in place in Oregon and California, with differentiated taxes per type of packaging.

Technology, safety and new formulas: the pasta of the future

“Many of today’s gluten-free formulations were developed in our laboratories.” Proudly, Fatemeh Zare (Northern Crops Institute) explained the potential of the new research centre in North Dakota. The goal: to offer safe and scalable solutions for

traditional and alternative productions, from protein to gluten-free pasta. Zare also demonstrated the tools which his institute uses for training: pilot lines for small-scale trials, international courses and consultancy activities with a hands-on approach.

Pasta is enjoyed with all the senses

Chef Rosario Del Nero captivated his audience with a multi-sensory reflection on the role of pasta in contemporary cuisine. “Pasta speaks to all the senses: sight, touch, smell, sound, taste and memory”. He encouraged exploration of global ingredients – from *nduja* to *harissa* – and

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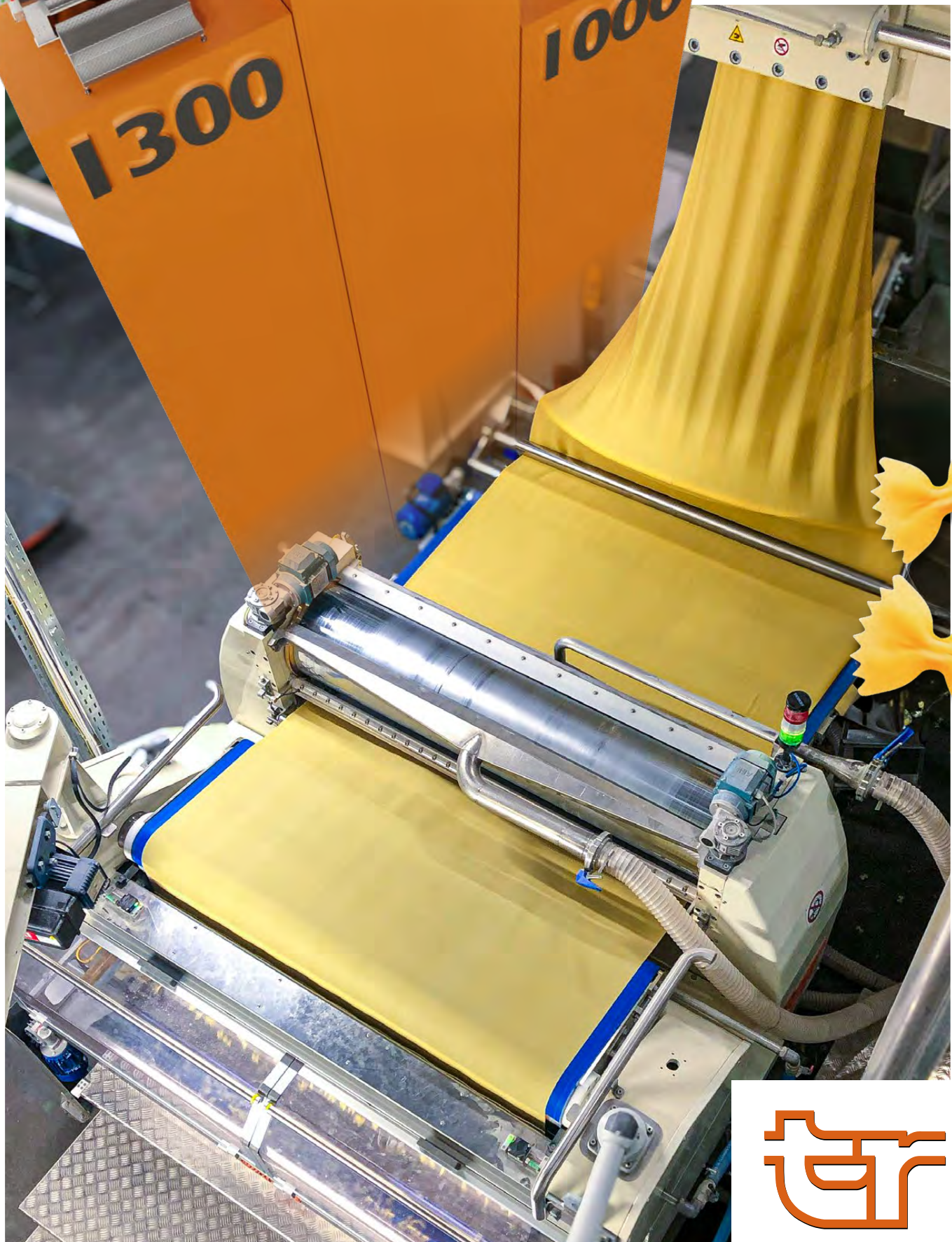
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revealed his chef's trick: "Cooking water is free, magical, and transforms every dish".

What really drives consumer choices?

With her typical analytical lucidity, Suzy Badaracco, president of Culinary Tides, led the audience in an exploration of the psychological and gastronomic drivers likely to affect consumption trends in the 2025-2026 biennium. Its approach combines data from economics, health, social behaviour and cooking, and is based on a key principle: "Trends can be interpreted as maps of human behaviour. And to interpret them you need to understand where emotions – and not just markets – are headed".

Among the main drivers of food choices identified by Badaracco include the desire for control and gratification ("better for me"), authenticity, the need for discovery and reimagined nostalgia. Following the pandemic, consumers have become more cautious but no less curious: the demand for bold sensory experiences has grown, while traditional comfort food is in decline. Spices, acidity, fermented and strong flavours are in vogue, along with alternative types of pasta (legume-based, protein-enriched, and upcycled) and sauces inspired by international cuisines.

The slides presented highlighted the rise of artisanal and bronze-drawn shapes, the popularity of functional ingredients (legumes, vegetables, spices), and the growing demand for "restaurant-like" experiences to be enjoyed at home. In terms of purchasing, there is growth in retail, private label and so-called doom spending: the tendency to stockpile for fear of scarcity.

One final tip: promote authenticity, simplicity, versatility and combine trends with one another for projects that will stand the test of time.

Conclusions

The NPA Annual Meeting 2025 confirmed the role of pasta as a global food that strikes a balance between tradition and innovation. Regulatory challenges, opportunities related to health and sustainability, the power of storytelling and the potential for solidarity outline a dynamic horizon for the sector. A horizon that Pastaria will continue to describe with heartfelt enthusiasm in its pages.



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2



Pastaria Festival 2025: two days to reflect on where the pasta world is heading

Editorial team



The full programme of the main event dedicated to pasta professionals. Two days of in-depth discussion and networking at Ipack-Ima, with the Pastaria editorial team in Hall 3.

The Pastaria Festival, the most important professional development event for the pasta sector, is back. It will be held on Wednesday 28 and Thursday 29 May 2025 against the backdrop of the Ipack-Ima exhibition (Fiera Milano Rho, 27-30 May). Organised by the Pastaria editorial staff, with the collaboration of associations, universities, companies and experts in the supply chain, the Festival offers two days packed with content, analysis and discussions, with technical-scientific sessions, company presentations and

economic conferences addressing crucial issues for pasta producers: research and development, process and product innovation, the market and consumption trends, sustainability and technology. The whole programme will take place in the Pastaria Festival area (Hall 3, stand C128-D127), where it will be possible, for the entire duration of Ipack-Ima, to meet the magazine's editors, pick up free copies and back issues, and find out about forthcoming initiatives related to the pasta industry.



The Pastaria Festival 2024 in Florence



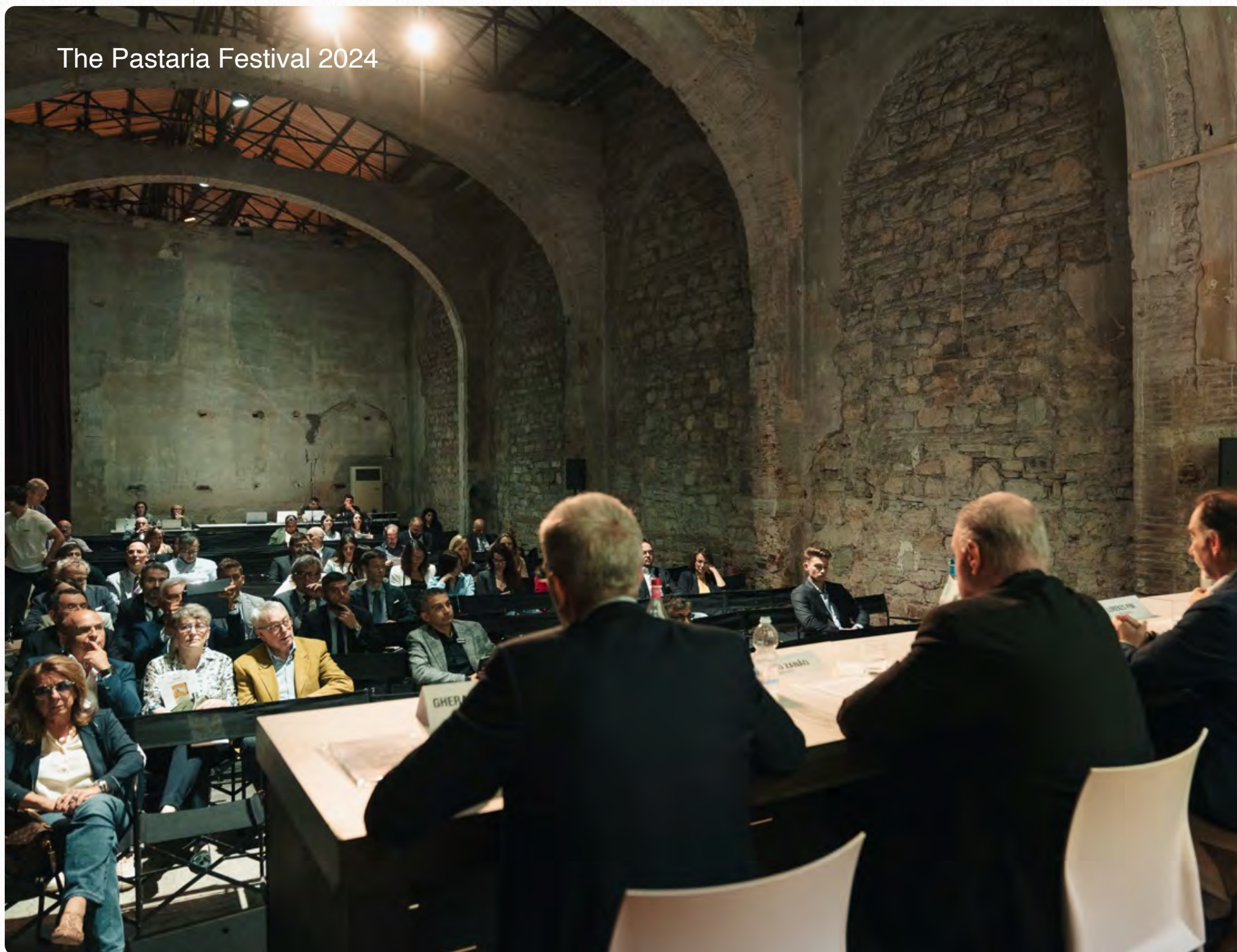
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The programme

Wednesday 28 MAY

9:45 am - 10:45 am

Opening address

Lorenzo Pini (Pastaria), Carl Zuanelli (National Pasta Association, International Pasta Organisation), Fabio Fontaneto (APPAFRE), Gherardo Bonetto (APPF), Margherita Mastromauro (Unione Italiana Food), Claudio Zañao (ABIMAPI)

11:00 am - 12:20 pm

The future unlocked: Innovative technologies in fresh and dry pasta production

- Simone Bertoncetto (GEA), *GEA PureWave Pasteurizer - Microwave technology in the pasteurization process;*
- Marco Ferronato (GEA), Jürgen Spatz (GEA), *GEA Thermo xChange – Energy recovery in dry pasta production.*

GEA conference (Main sponsor of the Pastaria Festival).



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12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

MOSH/MOAH and lubricants: state of play and perspectives

Speakers: Federico Provenzani (Klüber Lubrication) and Giorgio Stagni (Klüber Lubrication)

Klüber Lubrication presentation.

1:15 pm - 1:45 pm

High productivity and innovation: the new 6.000 kg/h spaghetti line

Speaker: Biagio Sala (Anselmo)

Anselmo presentation.

2:00 pm - 3:45 pm

Dry pasta and science: new perspectives from academic research and industry

- Andrea Tobaldo (Mulmix), *Vertical innovation, integrated safety* (presentation by Mulmix, sponsor of the conference);
- Cristiano Laurenza (Unione Italiana Food), *The “re-portioning” of food products: balancing consumer protection and feasibility for businesses*;
- Antonio Derossi (University of Foggia), *Morphing Food for the sustainability of the pasta sector. Design and control of the transformation from 2D to 3D during cooking*;
- Elisa De Arcangelis (Bio-Medical Campus of the University of Rome), *Development of pasta with high dietary-nutritional value: raw materials and processes*;

- Mariamelia Stanzione (IPCB-CNR), *New materials for food packaging obtained by coating biodegradable polymer films with papertouch varnish*.

Academic conference.¹

Thursday 29 May

9:45 am - 10:45 am

Pasta World Trends: consumption and market scenarios between retail and foodservice

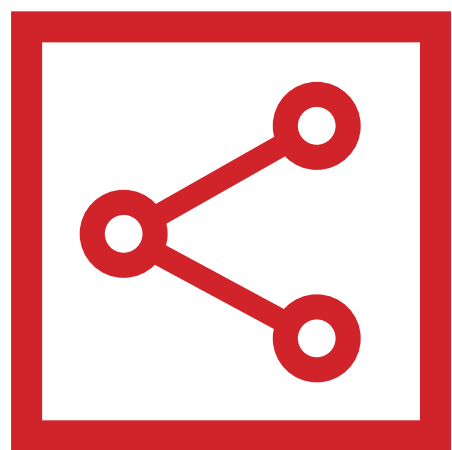
- Francesca Bastanzetti (NielsenIQ), Barbara Mancini (NielsenIQ), *Pasta, Queen of the First Course: a role to defend*;
- Matteo Figura (Circana), *Pasta consumption outside the home in Italy and Europe*.

Conference prepared by the Pastaria Centre for Economic Research.

11:00 am - 12:20 pm

Plant-based protein and pasta: new frontiers for the industry

- Stefania Perosa (MartinoRossi), *Analysis of market trends and developments in the plant-based protein sector for pasta*;
- Erika Martinelli (MartinoRossi), *The ideal solutions for plant-based protein supplementation in pasta and the value of MartinoRossi proteins*;
- Giorgia Spigno (Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Piacenza), *The nutritional*



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benefits of plant-based protein supplementation;

- Alessia Felicetti (Pastificio Felicetti), *Case history sulla lavorazione e applicazione delle proteine vegetali nella produzione di pasta.*

MartinoRossi conference.

12:30 pm - 2:15 pm

Fresh pasta between science and innovation: quality, safety and the future of the product

- Stefano Zardetto (Gruppo Voltan), *Effect of storage methods on water migration in fresh filled pasta;*
- Marco Dalla Rosa (Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna), *Expiry date or Best Before date? Possible revision of the concept of fresh pasta shelf-life;*
- Barbara La Gatta (University of Foggia), *Application of an innovative process for the production of fresh pasta enriched with pomace;*
- Valentina Giovenzana (University of Milan), *Cauliflower gnocchi and sustainability: how ecodesign changes their environmental impact;*
- Alberto Saitta (University of Udine), *Active packaging obtained by impregnating an olive leaf extract using supercritical CO₂;*
- Luigi Cattivelli (CREA – Genomics and Bioinformatics Research Centre,

Piacenza), *TEA and genetic innovation: what to expect.*

Moderator: Cristina Alamprese (University of Milan).

Academic conference.¹

2:30 pm - 3:50 pm

Industrial innovation in pasta: systems, research and services to support change

- Renato Dall'Agata (Fava), *From intuition to reality: research as a driving force for extraordinary results;*
- Luca Alberghini (Fava), *Advanced solutions for automatic dry pasta production lines;*
- Alessio Marchesani (Fava), *Technologies and automation for batch dry pasta production lines, fresh pasta, and ready meals;*
- Alessia Lolli (Fava), *Value-based services for the pasta industry: beyond technology.*

Fava conference.

4:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Billion Meals Challenge

Relatore: Tom Quinn (Nuovo Pasta Productions, IPO).

4:45 pm - 7:00 pm

Conclusion of proceedings and closing aperitif



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The Pastaria Festival 2024

The full program can be downloaded in PDF format at the following links:

- [The programme in Italian](#)
- [The programme in English.](#)

It is also available on the Pastaria app, which can be downloaded for free from digital stores.

Association meetings

As part of the Pastaria Festival, the following associations will hold their general assemblies:

- Unione Italiana Food – Pasta Makers (Wednesday, May 28, Beta Room, Hall 3);
- International Pasta Organisation (Wednesday, May 28, Beta Room, Hall 3);
- APPAFRE (Thursday, May 29, Alpha Room, Hall 4).

Access to the assemblies is reserved for members only.

How to participate

Participation is free and reserved for pasta producers, with mandatory registration, subject to availability.

[Pre-registration on-line](#) is possible (and recommended) up until the day before the event.

Alternatively, on-site registration will be available at the Pastaria Space at Ipack-Ima (Hall 3, C128-D127). A business card will be required.

To access the exhibition area, a valid Ipack-Ima ticket is required (available free of charge for the Festival days by registering at www.ipackima.com and using the Pastaria invitation code 5347044004).

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3



New technological challenges to control cholesterol and its oxidation in tannin-enriched egg pasta

Ambra Bonciolini, Carolina Cantele, Nicolò Ivan Salgarella, Giuseppe Zeppa, Marta Bertolino, Vladimiro Cardenia
University of Turin



Fresh egg pasta contains lipids and cholesterol that can be oxidised leading to the formation of hazardous compounds. In this study, the complexing activity of two condensed tannins (ellagic acid based, A, and gallic acid based, B) against cholesterol was evaluated, alongside their antioxidant activity. Three different concentrations in two fresh egg pasta shapes (square, Q, vs. rectangular, F) were considered. The sterol content, cholesterol loss and oxidation factor were evaluated in raw and cooked pasta. The study was presented at Fiera Pastaria & Festival 2024.

Introduction

Fresh egg pasta is a classic preparation in Italian cuisine, regulated by Presidential Decree No. 187 of 2001¹ and characterised by a high cholesterol content, generating nutritional recommendations regarding its consumption.² High levels of serum cholesterol have often been associated with the onset of cardiovascular disease (CVD)³. However, it should be emphasised that it is cholesterol oxidation products (COPs), pro-inflammatory substances, that play a key role in the development of atherosclerosis.⁴ In fact, cholesterol has an unsaturation structure that makes it susceptible to oxidative effects that lead to the formation of COPs.⁵ Stages in the pasta production process such as mixing, drawing, and cooking can represent critical stages in terms of triggering oxidation reactions, due to both the temperatures involved (auto-oxidation) and exposure to light (photo-oxidation)^{6,7}. In addition, COPs have been shown to be better absorbed by the intestine than cholesterol. Recent studies have highlighted the role of COPs in regulating cellular functions by inducing changes in membrane properties that may promote the onset of neurodegenerative diseases as well as mutagenic effects.⁸ Therefore, adopting strategies to reduce cholesterol content in food is crucial. Consumption of soluble fibres or phytosterols is a valid strategy to counter cholesterol absorption in the intestine. In this context, the use of substances capable of sequestering (complexing) cholesterol could prove to be an alternative approach to reduce the amount of cholesterol absorbed by modifying the physical and chemical properties of the molecule. Tannins are plant compounds, soluble in water, that possess a number of beneficial properties⁹ and could be a viable strategy. Despite their elevated antioxidant properties, their use is still limited because they are considered antinutritional factors: they are known to interact with other macromolecules such as proteins, sequestering them and reducing their absorption.¹⁰

The intent of this study was to evaluate the complexing capacity of two different types of tannins against cholesterol found in fresh egg pasta. Two



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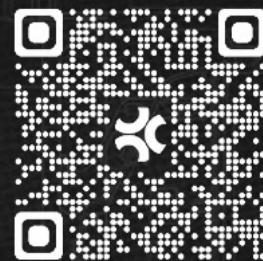
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different pasta formats were examined by evaluating the pre- and post-cooking effects. Finally, the potential antioxidant capacity of tannins in preventing the formation of cholesterol oxidation compounds was assessed.

Materials and methods

Materials

Two condensed tannins were used in the study, an ellagic acid esterified on glucose, from oak wood (A) and a gallic acid esterified on quinic acid from tara gum (B). Both tannins were supplied by a local company while the pasteurised egg product, soft wheat flour (type 00) and durum wheat semolina used in the preparation of the pasta were purchased on the open market (Turin, Italy). All chemical reagents were purchased from Merck (Darmstadt, Germany).

Preparation of the pasta

The dough was prepared in a KitchenAid® planetary mixer (Whirlpool Corporation, Benton Harbor, MI, USA) with 140 g of soft wheat flour (type 00), 60 g of durum wheat semolina flour, 80 g of pasteurised egg and 20 mL of water. The tannins (in powdered form) were added based on various percentages of the overall quantity of flour: 0.25 % (concentration 1); 0.50 %

(concentration 2); and 1 % (concentration 3). Using an extruder (Dolly, Imperia & Monferrina S.p.A., Castell'Alfero (AT), Italy), two pasta shapes were created simultaneously: square (Q) and rectangular (F) spaghetti with the same cross-section area, but different perimeter. In parallel, a control was prepared: pasta without the addition of tannins. Finally, the samples were cooked in ultrapure water at a pasta/water ratio of (v/v) 1:10 for 4 minutes. Three independent experiments (n=3) were conducted.

Determination of total sterol content

The pasta, previously freeze-dried (Lio 5P, Cinquepascal s.r.l., Trezzano s/N (MI), Italy) and ground, was precisely weighed (100 mg), and 3 mL of KOH (4M) + BHT (5 mg/mL) with 1 mg of 5 α -cholestane and 0.5 mg of 19-hydroxycholesterol were added, used as internal standards to quantify sterols and COPs, respectively. The samples were shaken in the dark for 18 hours at 25°C. Subsequently, the unsaponifiable fraction¹¹ was obtained by adding 10 mL of chloroform and 10 mL of citric acid solution (0.1%; p/v). After centrifugation (3,600 x g for 15 minutes at 10°C), the organic phase containing the sterol fraction was collected. Extraction was repeated a second time and the organic fractions combined. The solvent



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was then removed with a stream of nitrogen and the unsaponifiable fraction was silylated to obtain trimethylsilyl derivatives (TMS). Specifically, 200 µL of the unsaponifiable portion was evaporated until dry, then 200 µL of pyridine and 180 µL of BSTFA + 1% TCS (30 min. at 60°C) were added. Finally, a sample of 1 µL was analysed using GC/MS Shimadzu Q2010 Plus (Shimadzu, Kyoto, Japan) equipped with a Rxi-5ms fused silica capillary column (10 m, 0.1 mm i.d., 0.1 µm film thickness; Restek, Bellefonte, PA, USA). The oven temperature was programmed to between 220°C and 330°C (10°C/min) and then at 350°C (20°C/min) using helium as a carrier gas with linear velocity of 47 cm/s. The injection was carried out in split mode (1:30 ratio). Signal acquisition and integration were conducted in TIC (Total Ion Current) and SIM (Single Ion Monitoring) modes, respectively.

Determination of the lipid content in cooking water

After cooking the pasta, the water was collected, weighed, and transferred to a separatory funnel. A mixture of chloroform:methanol (2:1; v/v) was added to the water¹² and, following shaking and phase separation, the organic component was collected and the extraction repeated

a second time. The two organic phases were combined and filtered through a paper filter (Whatman, grade 5). The solvent was removed and the lipid matrix dissolved in 200 µL of *n*-hexane:isopropanol (3:2; v/v) containing 10 µg of 5α-cholestane. A one µL sample was injected into a GC-FID (GC-2010 Plus, Shimadzu, Kyoto, Japan) equipped with an Rtx-5 fused silica capillary column (20 m, 0.10 mm i.d., 0.10 µm thickness; Restek, Bellefonte, PA, USA) in split mode (1:50 ratio). The temperature program was set from 100° to 350°C (5°C/min), with the final temperature maintained for 20 minutes. The injector and GC-FID temperatures were set to 325°C and 348 °C. Helium was used as the carrier gas with linear velocity of 47 cm/s. The main lipid classes (free fatty acids, monoglycerides, diglycerides, triglycerides, sterol esters and free sterols) were identified by injecting a mixture of commercial standards under the same analytical conditions as reported in previous work.¹³

Extraction of the antioxidant compounds

Extraction (repeated twice) of the antioxidant compounds was performed according to Fares *et al.* (2010)¹⁴ with some modifications. One gram of



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freeze-dried pasta was dissolved in 20 mL of a methanol:water solution (80:20; v/v) acidified with formic acid (pH 2.5) and shaken in the dark for 2 h at 25°C. The sample was then centrifuged (12,900 x g, 15 min, 5°C), the supernatant collected and filtered (PTFE filter, 0.45 µm) prior to further analysis.

Total phenolic content

Total phenolic content (TPC) was determined using the Folin-Ciocalteu colorimetric method cited by Cantele *et al.*¹⁵ to fit a 96-well spectrophotometric microplate reader (BioTek Synergy HT, BioTek Instruments, Milan, Italy). Analysis was performed in triplicate and the results are expressed as milligrams of gallic acid equivalent (GAE)/gram of pasta.

Radical-scavenging activity

Radical-scavenging activity (RSA) was carried out through inhibition of the 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH•), free radical, using the method described by Gadow *et al.*¹⁶, adapting it to a 96-well microplate reader. The analysis was performed

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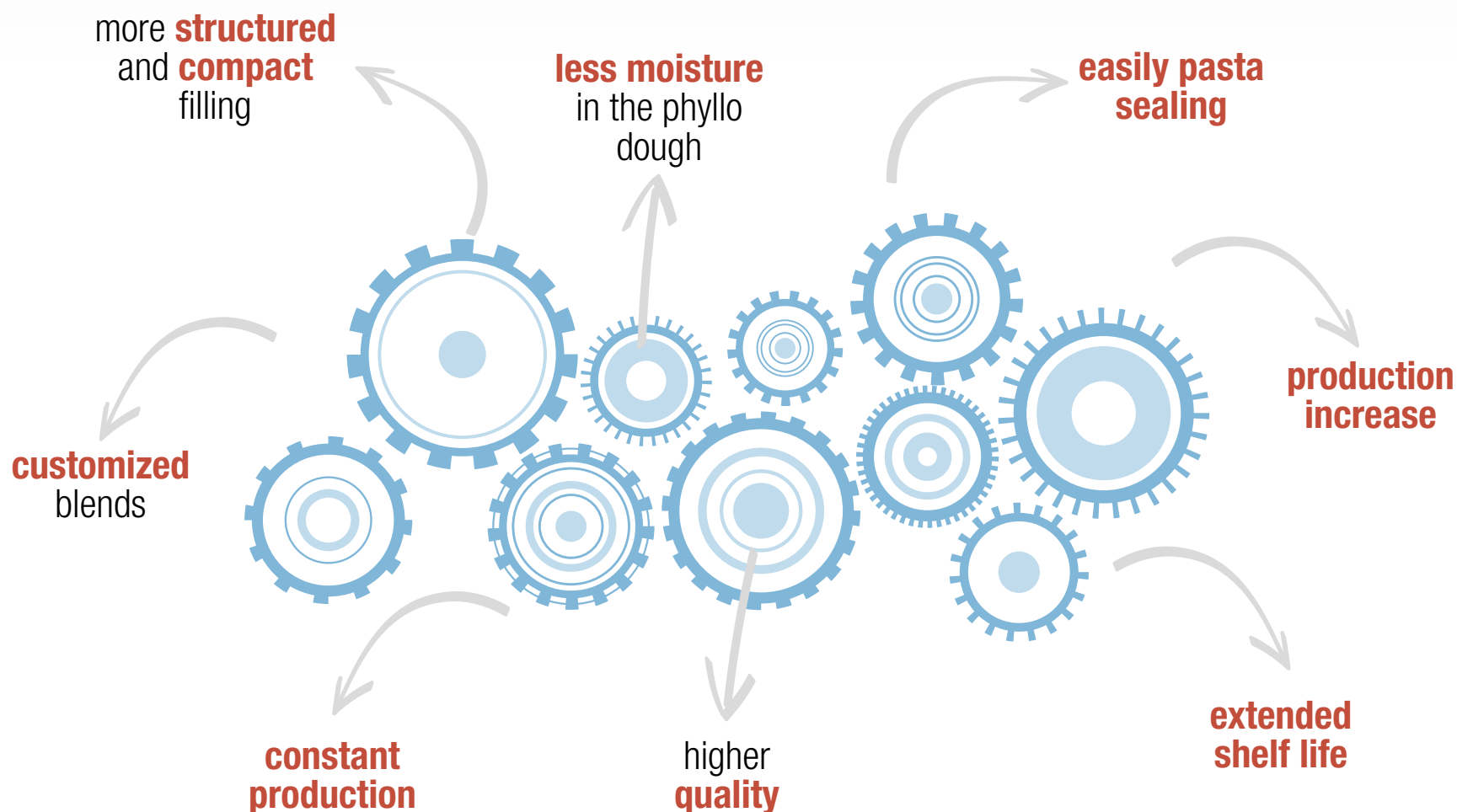
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in triplicate. Results were expressed in mmol of Trolox Equivalent (TE)/gram of pasta.

Determination of the cholesterol oxidation products

The cholesterol oxidation products (COPs) were purified from the unsaponifiable portion as indicated by Rose-Sallin *et al.*¹⁷ Nine-tenths of the unsaponifiable portion was added to a SPE-NH₂ cartridge, activated with 3 ml of *n*-hexane. The sample was then eluted with 6 ml of *n*-hexane:ethyl acetate (95:5; v/v) and 10 ml of *n*-hexane:ethyl acetate (90:10; v/v), and the COPs were collected by eluting 10 ml of acetone. The latter was removed with a nitrogen flow and the COPs derivatised as described in the section *Total phenolic content*. Finally, the trimethylsilyl derivatives were recovered in 100 µL of *n*-hexane and injected into a GC/MS (Shimadzu Q2010 Plus GC/MS, Kyoto, Japan), equipped with an Rxi-5ms fused silica capillary column as described by Cardenia *et al.*¹⁸ Injection (1 µL) was conducted in splitless mode. The temperature was programmed from 250° to 325°C (20°C/min). The injector temperature and ionic source were set to 325°C and 340°C, respectively. Helium was used as the carrier gas carrier at a linear velocity of 43 cm/s. COPs were

identified through the mass spectrum (TIC) and quantified through the most abundant ion (SIM).

The oxidation factor (F_{ox}) was calculated according to the following equation:

$$F_{ox} = \frac{\text{cholesterol} - \text{COPs}}{\text{cholesterol}} * 100$$

where cholesterol represents the cholesterol content in the pasta sample and COPs the content of cholesterol oxidation products.

Statistical analysis

The results were processed statistically using SPSS Statistics software (version 25.0; IBM, Chicago, USA). The analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the Duncan post-hoc test, with a 95% confidence level, were used to identify the significant differences between the average values of the samples, in relation to various tannins, their concentrations, the pasta shape and the effect of cooking.

Results and discussion

Total sterol content

The sterol component was identified and quantified in both uncooked and cooked pasta, with a range of concentrations of between 21.98 mg/g (Q-format control) and 50.52 mg/g (concentration 3 of

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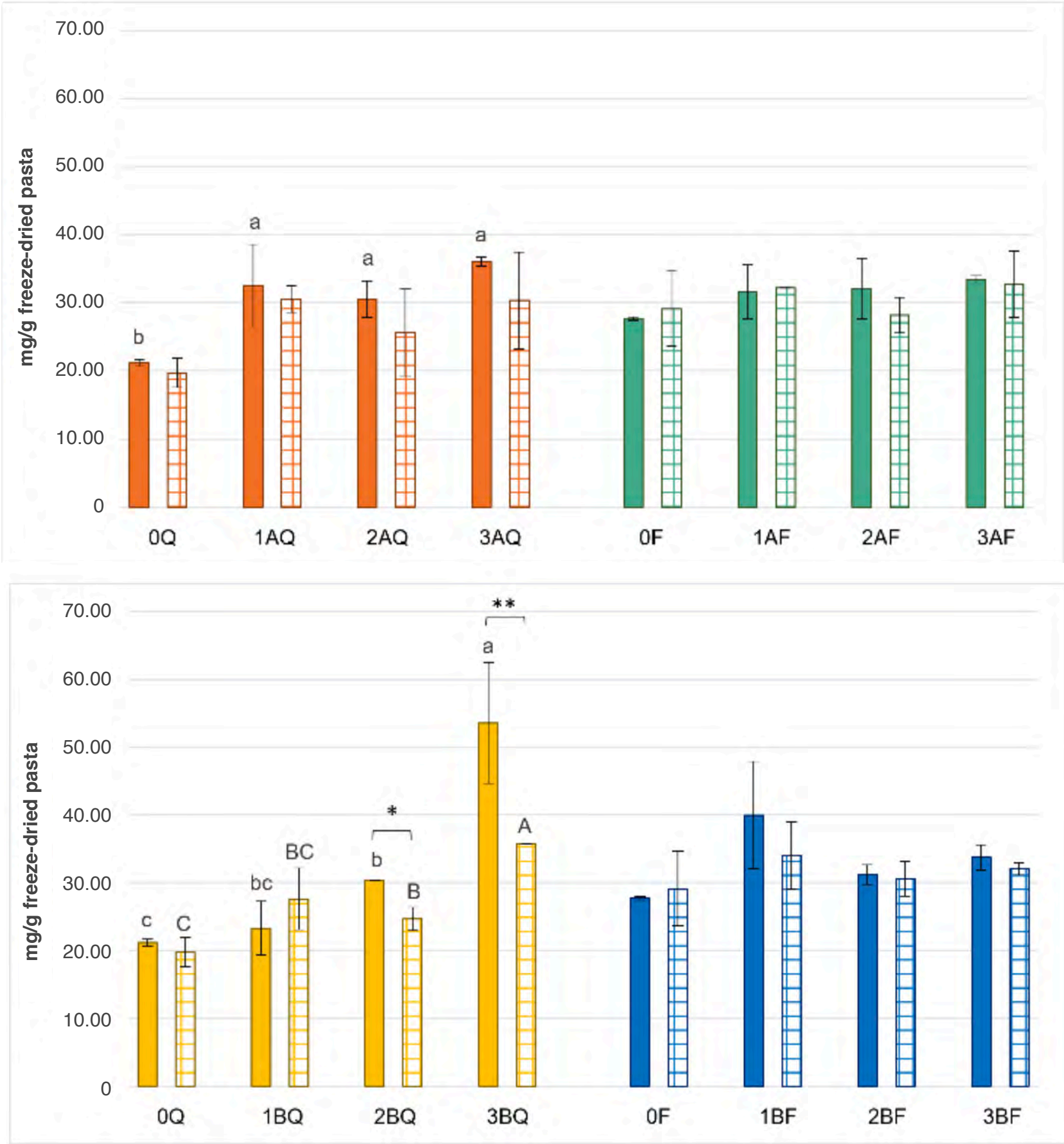
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Figure 1 TOTAL CHOLESTEROL CONTENT (mg/g FREEZE-DRIED PASTA) IN RAW (COLOURED HISTOGRAM) AND COOKED (CROSS-LINKED HISTOGRAM) Q- AND F-FORMATS WITH TANNINS A AND B



Each value represents the mean $\pm$ standard deviation of 3 independent replications. Bars with different letters and character indicate significant differences (Tukey test, $p < 0.05$).

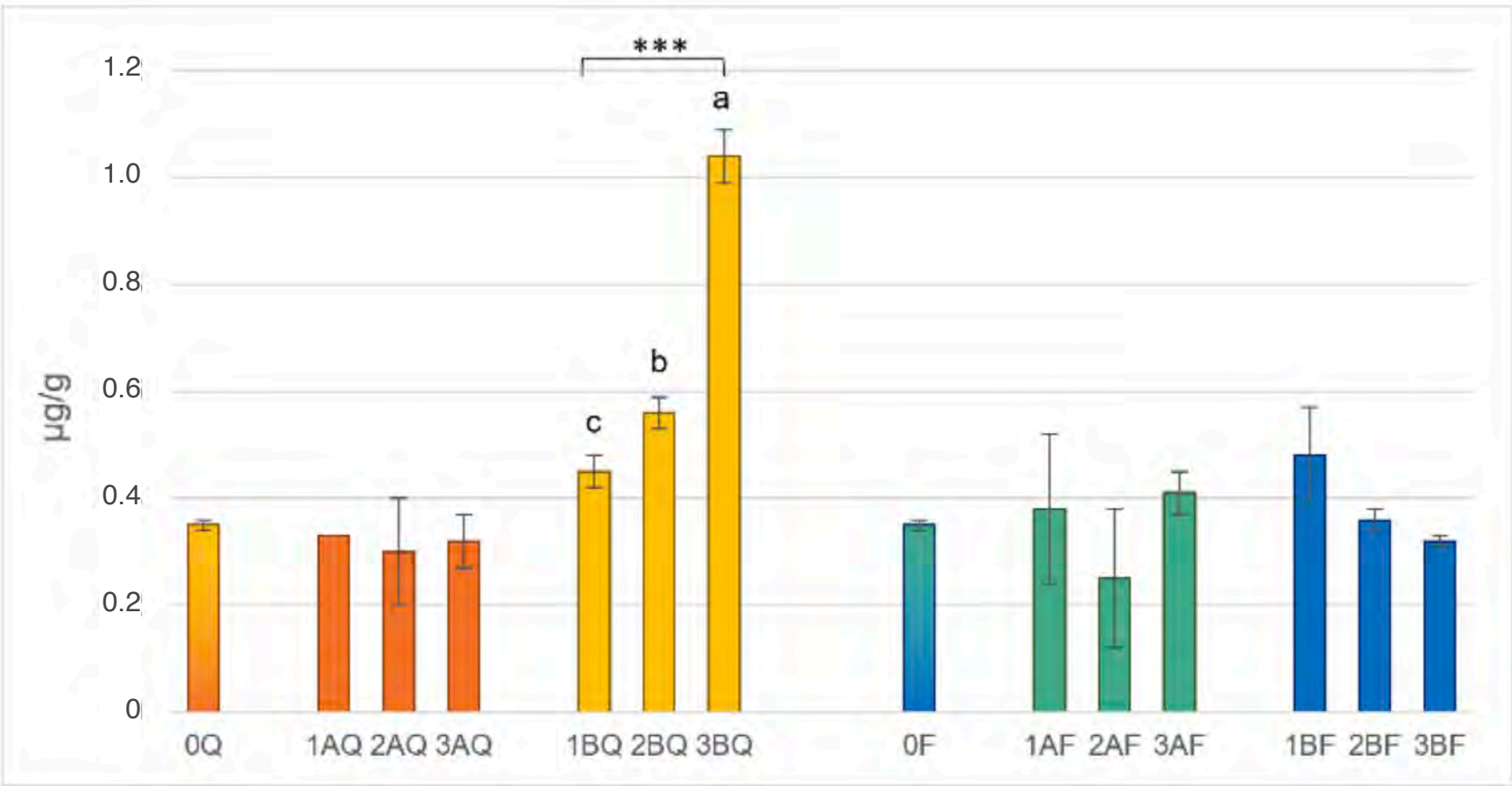
Abbreviations: A, ellagic acid ester; B, gallic acid ester; Q, square format; F, rectangular format; 1, 0.25%; 2, 0.50%; 3, 1.00% tannin. Asterisks indicate the level of significance: *, $p < 0.05$; **, $p < 0.01$.

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Figure 2 CHOLESTEROL CONTENT ($\mu\text{g/g}$) IN Q- AND F-FORMAT COOKING WATER WITH A AND B TANNINS



Each value represents the mean $\pm$ standard deviation of 3 independent replications. Bars with different letters indicate significant differences (Tukey test, $p < 0.05$).
Abbreviations: A, ellagic acid ester; B, gallic acid ester; Q, square format; F, rectangular format; 1, 0.25%; 2, 0.50%; 3, 1.00% tannin. Asterisks indicate the level of significance: *, $p < 0.05$; **, $p < 0.01$; ***, $p < 0.001$

Q-format B tannin). In addition to cholesterol (about 91% of the sterol fraction), β -sitosterol, campesterol, stigmasterol, and campestanol were also detected, the total of which accounted for less than 10% of the total sterol content. As shown in [Figure 1](#), an increase in the presence of cholesterol was observed in Q-spaghetti as the concentration of tannin B increased (range 21.18-53.59 mg/g). In contrast, no difference was detected in the raw F-format. These results could be a

sign of interaction between tannins and cholesterol, which may be able to complex it and concentrate it within the pasta network. In cooked pasta, a reduction in cholesterol content ($p < 0.01$) was seen in Q-spaghetti with tannin B, with a percentage loss of 33%, while in F-spaghetti with the same tannin, a reduction of 4% was seen. These results could be attributable to two possible causes:

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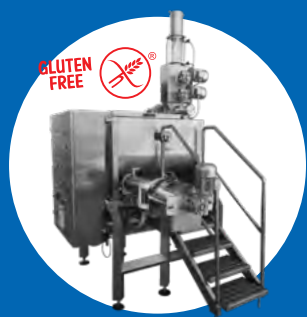
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due to cooking, with resulting reduction of its content in the pasta and formation of COPs;

- a change in the hydrophilic properties of cholesterol as a result of interaction with tannin, which could promote its transfer to the aqueous phase (cooking water).

In addition, the format probably has a significant impact: the microstructure of Q-spaghetti could favour a greater distribution of tannin-cholesterol complexes.

Cholesterol content in cooking water

To test whether tannins could have a complexing effect and interact with cholesterol, the presence of cholesterol in the cooking water was determined ([Figure 2](#)). In order to exclude the possibility that the tannins themselves could be contaminated by the presence of lipid substances, the same analysis was conducted on the extract, but no presence of tannins was detected. The cooking water control samples showed the same cholesterol levels, regardless of format (0.35 µg/ml). Incorporating tannin A in the different concentrations, the cholesterol in the cooking water remained constant. In contrast, with tannin B incorporated into the Q-format, an increase in cholesterol in the cooking water was seen to be positively correlated to the concentration

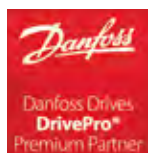
of tannin added to the dough. These values were in agreement with the cholesterol losses observed in the cooked pasta samples, supporting the possible complexing activity of tannins. This hypothesis is supported by the literature, and in particular by the study conducted by Zeng *et al.* (2020)¹⁹, in which the researchers advance the hypothesis of a possible new cholesterol-lowering mechanism of tannins, through direct interaction between the two components. Again, the format seems to play a key role in the transfer mechanisms of the tannin-sterol complex into the cooking water. One possible hypothesis is that the water in the Q-format is more diffuse within the structure, thus promoting the solubilisation of the tannin-cholesterol complexes.

Total polyphenol content and antioxidant activity

Determination of the total phenolic content (TPC) and radical-scavenging activity (RSA) made it possible to assess the protective activity of tannins against the oxidative process, and thus the formation of COPs. The raw controls had TPC values of 1.21 mg GAE/g and RSA values of 0.79 µmol TE/g. In the presence of tannins, both parameters showed an increase, although this was closely related to the



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type of tannin. Specifically, tannin A showed a lower content (TPC range of 1.56-2.46 mg GAE/g; RSA range of 4.11-12.78 $\mu\text{mol TE/g}$) than tannin B (TPC range of 2.76-6.31 mg GAE/g; RSA range of 25.14-81.27 $\mu\text{mol TE/g}$). Moreover, even after cooking, tannin B exhibited better performance.

Cholesterol oxidation products (COPs)

In order to also verify the protective activity of tannins against cholesterol oxidation, the amount of COPs in the pasta was monitored. The COPs identified were: 7 α -hydroxycholesterol, 7 β -hydroxycholesterol, and 7-ketocholesterol. The two tannins showed different types of activity: the incorporation of tannin B led to a progressive decrease in COP content compared to the control, a phenomenon that was particularly accentuated in the F-format (60% reduction) compared to the Q-format (16% reduction). Tannin A, on the other hand, showed the opposite activity, causing COP values to rise as its concentration increased. In fact, with the F-format, values rose from 0.41 $\mu\text{g/g}$ (control) to 0.66 $\mu\text{g/g}$ (0.25% concentration), suggesting pro-oxidant behaviour.

Calculation of the oxidation factor provided greater clarity on the actual role of tannins in preventing cholesterol

oxidation. According to these results, a 1% tannin B supplement showed the best antioxidant activity in both formats (F, 0.5%; Q, 0.7%). In contrast, a 0.25% tannin A supplement in F recorded a higher F_{ox} (2.1%) than the control (1.8%), confirming pro-oxidant activity. As reported by Eghbaliferiz & Iranshahi (2016)²⁰, when subjected to particular conditions (pH and temperature), ellagitannins split, generating quinonic forms while releasing species reactive to oxygen. Finally, the cooking time tested in the experiment (4 min) did not significantly ($p > 0.05$) influence the formation of cholesterol oxidation products.

Conclusions

The formation of cholesterol oxidation products (COPs) plays a key role in the loss of food quality and safety. Therefore, decreasing the presence of cholesterol in food can be a good solution in limiting the intake of COPs. Tannins are compounds with high antioxidant power as well as complexing against various macromolecules. Nevertheless, the choice of tannin type is of paramount importance, as some may exhibit pro-oxidant activity under certain conditions.

This study revealed the potential use of the gallic acid ester as a cholesterol-sequestering

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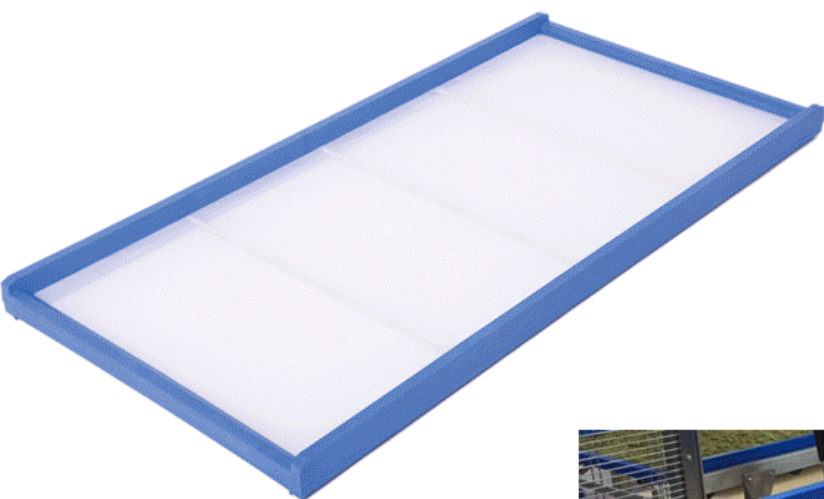
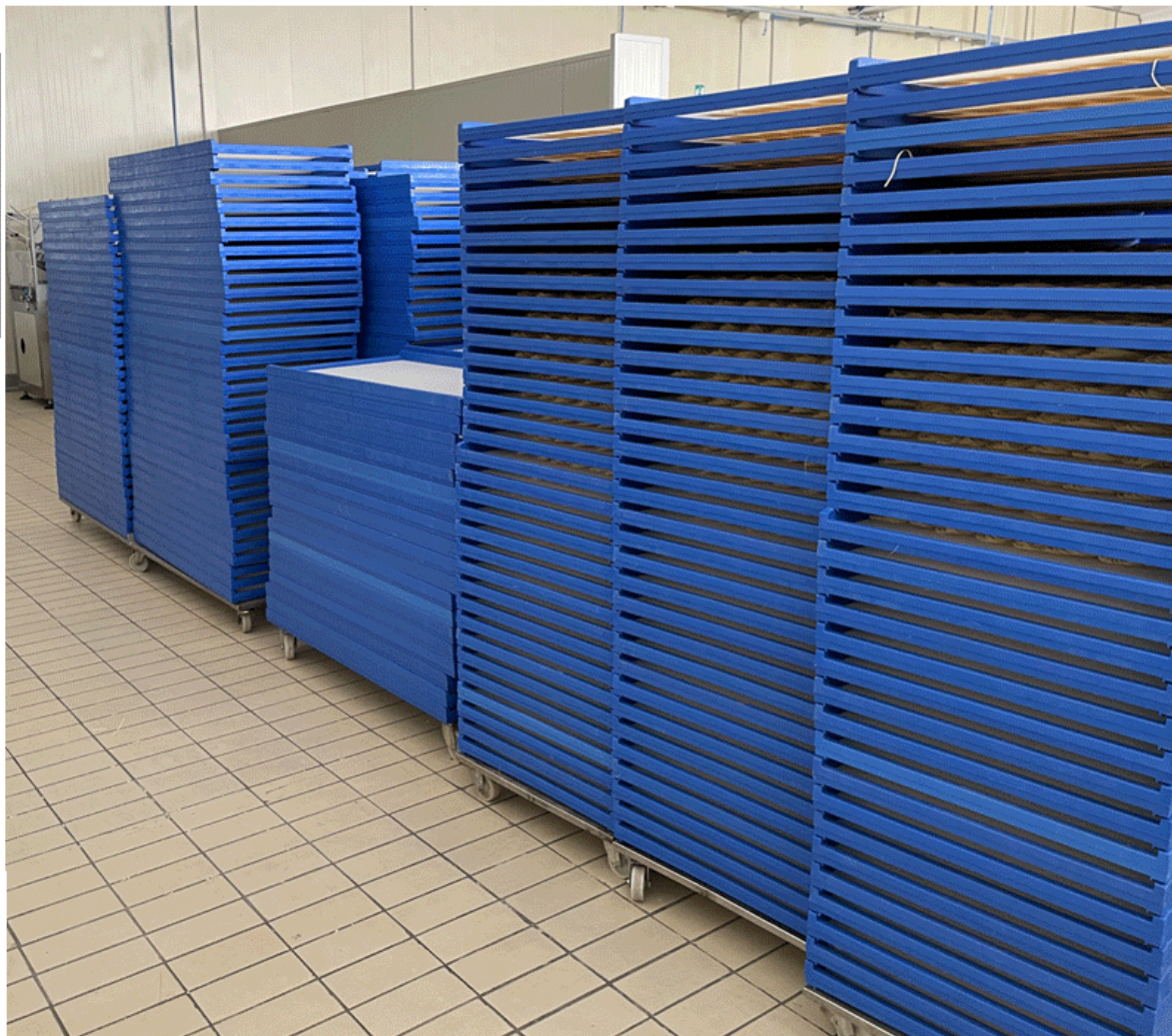
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agent, capable of modifying cholesterol solubility by reducing its content in fresh egg pasta after cooking, as well as providing high cholesterol protection from oxidation by limiting the formation of COPs. However, the physical characteristics of fresh egg pasta, such as its microstructure, is a key point in the distribution of macro- and micronutrient molecules within the dough and, consequently, their interaction.

This study suggests a potential strategy in the formulation of fresh egg pasta with a cholesterol-lowering effect to improve its nutritional qualities by limiting the risk of intake of oxidised forms of cholesterol through the natural process of interaction by tannin-derived molecules.

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4



Smile and make pasta: when making pasta becomes therapy

Maria Antonietta Dessì



From the personal story of Alessandra Lauria, a project was developed to bring fresh pasta workshops to paediatric cancer wards. An initiative that combines manual skills, resilience and sharing, to restore hope, smiles and dignity to young patients.

We have always known that pasta was a magical product! What we didn't know, before we met Alessandra Lauria, is that she too can perform miracles, such as uplifting the mood and outlook on life of young cancer patients.

We learnt this when attending the activities of Smile And Make Pasta, an association dedicated to creating happy moments through fresh pasta workshops in paediatric cancer wards. The original name “Sorrìdi e fai la pasta”, which translates to “Smile and make pasta” reflects the commitment of the founder and her partners to motivate children to strive, grow and become strong, just like the pasta they create with their own hands. It also aims, among other things, to fill the void experienced by those who are compelled to be away from home for long periods of time due to hospitalisation. This magic art not only entertains and distracts them, but they also experience the joy of learning in the kitchen while improving their manual dexterity. It helps them grow in harmony with others, and generates that precious sense of self-esteem that comes from creating something concrete.

We cannot, however, fully understand the spirit of the project we are talking about today without telling the personal story of its creator and the reasons that drove her to dedicate herself so fully to this project.

Unfortunately, it is a story common to so many young patients who experience the drama of a serious illness at a very young age.

“I was 10 years old when I was diagnosed with cancer. I was very small and obviously did not understand what was happening to me. I was diagnosed with a rare form of sarcoma and had a life expectancy of only three months,” Alessandra Lauria’s poignant account begins ([watch the video](#)). “It was 1996 and at that time in Sicily, being sick was a real taboo, something you couldn’t speak about. At most it was whispered with fear, as though saying the words out loud would spread the disease. At school I was treated like an alien. Many classmates who used to be close friends suddenly disappeared from my circle. Some were transferred to another school “because of me” and without my knowledge. Of course, I did look a bit like an alien: the chemo had made my hair fall out, leaving my head round and smooth, like a little Martian. And the mood around me had also changed. Tumour – such a solemn word! You wouldn’t expect to hear it from the mouth of a little girl! I could only understand that something was wrong. My parents no longer smiled and my mother took refuge in the power of her faith. But I was stronger and today I am back in Milan with

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a project, to create fresh pasta workshops for children being treated at the paediatric oncology ward of the Milan Cancer Institute. In the very playroom where I had received so much kindness and affection, decades before. I experienced a miracle. I was given a second chance and now I want to pay forward all the kind gestures and all the smiles that gave me new life years ago in the face of the worst of diseases”.

Alessandra was not only given new life, but she has grown, studied and founded The Pasta Studio, an online pasta school. She is considered by many to be a culinary entrepreneur and after the pandemic, she was given the opportunity to set up pasta

workshops in cancer hospitals. She called her project Smile And Make Pasta.

The workshops, in which young people up to the age of 24 can take part together with their families, are equipped with everything needed to make pasta. Here you are taught how to set and clear a table, and explanations are given of the various utensils used, both in the workshop and in the kitchen. Young people are given an SMP T-shirt, customised with the name of the wearer. This is how you start kneading macaroni, farfalle, cavatelli: an experiment but also an art that can be passed on even in an unusual setting such as a hospital, just as grandmothers teach their grandchildren at



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home. The pasta we prepare must be “good for people and for the planet”, says Alessandra and “should help people become flexible, adaptable, and resilient.” In other words: the quality of the final product is crucial and children should be taught this. Just as they should be taught about the importance of freshness and the seasonality of the raw materials. The key term is total sustainability.

Once the young people have made the dough with their own hands and with the equipment available, they cook and share the meal together. All this takes place in a multicultural, inter-regional and sometimes even international context, since very often young patients come from different

countries, converging on a single hospital for treatment, especially when that institution is synonymous with excellence in cancer care. The workshop must be an educational space where craftsmanship, manual work, and activities of high nutritional value take place.

Alessandra’s first experience was in Turin, at Casa Ugi, an accommodation facility inside a leisure centre. This was the first experimental project that yielded exciting results, and it is no coincidence that a calendar of activities and events started from there. But the bureaucracy that oversees charitable and non-profit initiatives such as these is as vast as it is daunting, and requires an effort in terms of

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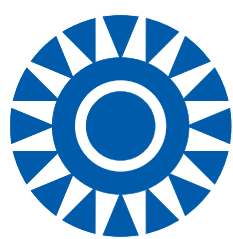


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energy and resources that is very difficult to tackle alone. In view of the families' request to extend the project to other Italian cities and beyond, we are attempting to expand the initiative by building a network of volunteers and pasta makers, driven by altruism and enthusiasm. But it is not easy. Volunteers have to be recruited, involved and trained, and continuous financial resources are needed. For this reason, the association invites people to make regular donations

or to support the project through more structured forms of assistance, such as sponsoring a workshop. To support itself, the association has successfully used crowdfunding in the past, but a project like this can only continue and have a future if there are businesses and individuals who believe that pasta can become the means to change the lives of young people and their families and offer a new perspective to those who have lost theirs.





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Piemonte Nord

5



Vincenzo Agnesi Foundation: winners announced for the “I Am Pasta” competition

Press release
Vincenzo Agnesi Foundation



From juvenile detention centers to pediatric hospitals, from schools to universities: the 25th edition of the National Pasta Museum Award celebrates pasta as a cultural, economic, and social driver. Participation in the initiative has increased by 54%.

Pasta Is More Than Food: It's Culture, Work, Education, and the Future

This is the message conveyed by the numbers and achievements of the 25th edition of the National Pasta Museum Award, which this year saw over 500 students from 42 Italian schools – from kindergarten to culinary and hospitality institutes, and including art, classical, and scientific high schools – celebrate pasta through 611 entries, ranging from essays and sculptures to video clips, poems, and interdisciplinary projects. This represents a 54% increase over the previous edition and a remarkable 543% growth compared to the 23rd edition, when the “Video Clip” and “Photography” categories were introduced.

Theme: “I am pasta”

Chosen in alignment with the candidacy of Italian cuisine for UNESCO intangible heritage status, this year's theme allowed participants to explore pasta as a symbol of identity and a universal language – capable of telling stories, preserving tradition, and inspiring new visions.

2025 Award Winners

The competition features five categories: Education, Journalism, Video Clip, Photography, and, new this year,

University (out of competition; awards to be given in 2026). Each category welcomed diverse works – texts, visuals, videos, and projects – all inspired by the annual theme.

Education

Title: Non è solo un piatto di pasta (It's not just a plate of pasta)

Authors: Liceo Artistico Foscolo, Rome

A visual and narrative piece that turns spaghetti with tomato sauce into a historical journey – from Roger II to Boccaccio, Arcimboldo to the present day. A reflection on the cultural richness in every bite of pasta.

Journalism

Title: La sfoglina dal cuore verde (The green-hearted “Sfoglina”)

Author: Paola Pellai

A journalist's story blending tradition and innovation, featuring a young pasta maker preserving the artisanal craft passed down from her mother and grandmother, in defiance of standardization and AI.

Video Clip

Title: Clandestina – A nomadic cooking project

Author: Alice Bettolo

The story of a life experience that tells of a woman rediscovering her deepest sense of

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self through the search for a nomadic, barefoot existence. A project that travels the world, where pasta becomes the main tool to connect with others, enter homes, build relationships, and teach. An autobiographical narrative that intertwines journeys, roots, and transformation, in which cooking and pasta help rediscover oneself and create authentic connections.

Photography

Title: Asciuga spaghetti (Spaghetti dryer)

Author: Michele Fini

A striking photo that turns a fork into a female figure—telling the story of pasta with humor, elegance, and a compelling visual language.

Special Awards: where pasta changes lives

In addition to the artistic and narrative works, three extraordinary stories received special awards for their social and cultural impact. In these cases, pasta becomes a tool for redemption, healing, and education.

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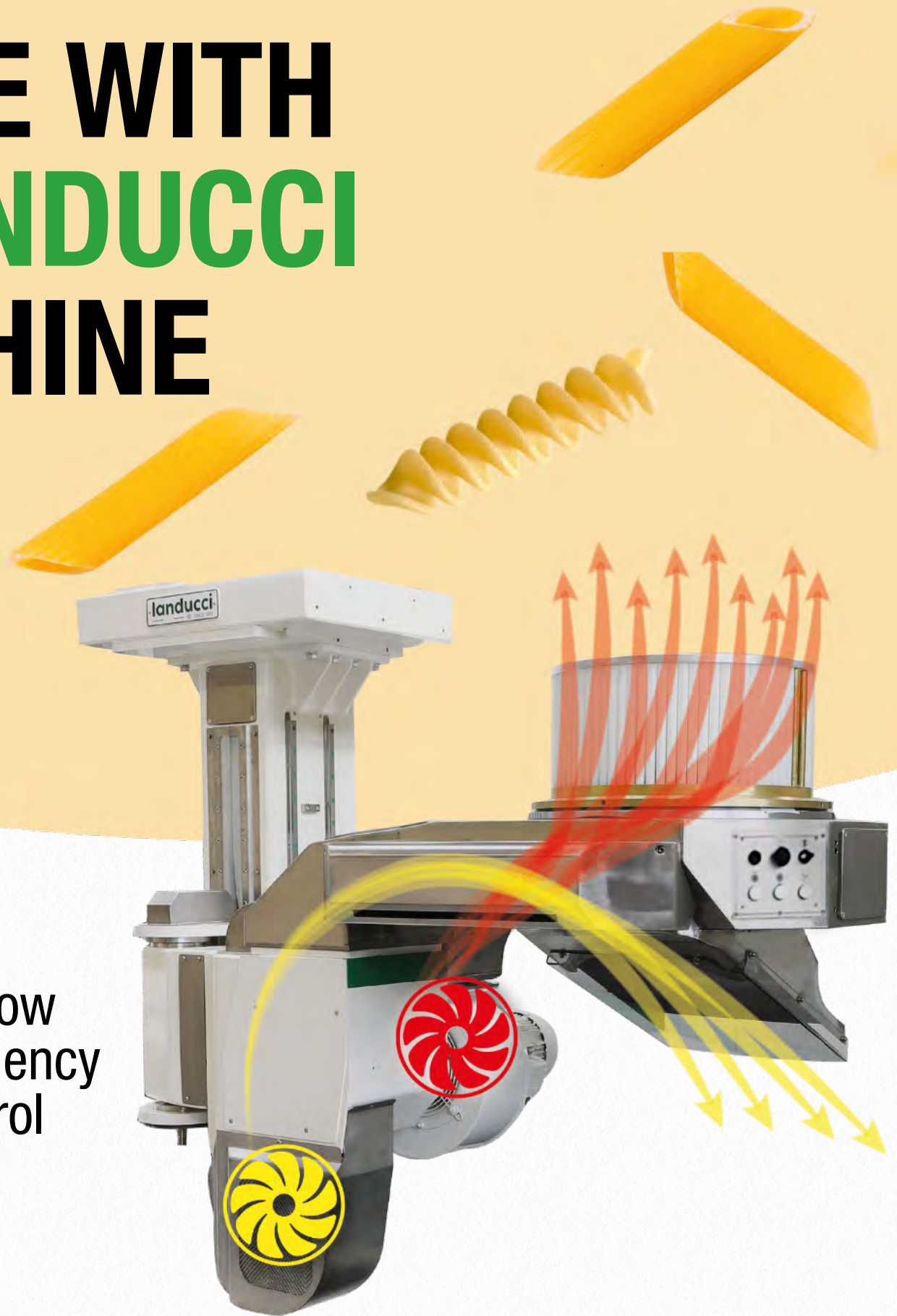
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Pastificio Futuro – Inclusion and social redemption award

A pasta-making workshop inside the juvenile prison of Casal del Marmo (Rome), offering training and a second chance. Run by the GustoLibero Onlus cooperative, it's a model of prison economy and social inclusion.

Smile & Make Pasta – Creative resilience award

Founded by Alessandra Lauria, this initiative brings pasta-making workshops to pediatric oncology wards in Italy and abroad, helping children find joy and strength through dough.

Occhio alla pasta – Education and global awareness award

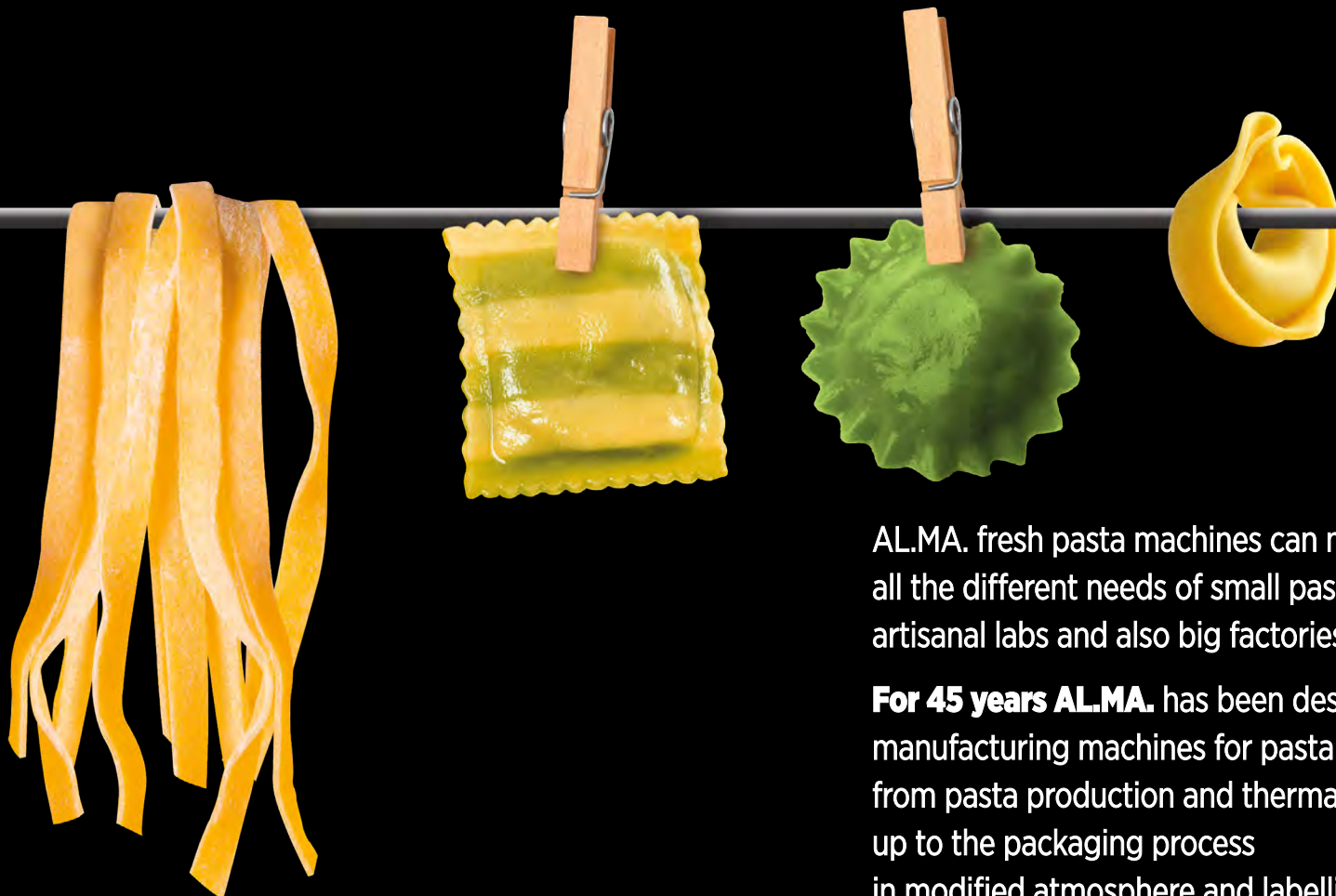
Eight schools in the “Dialogues for Future” network explored pasta as a symbol of emotion, memory, knowledge, and culture—strengthening civic education and generational bonds.

University: pasta culture enters the design of the Museum

This year, the Award launched a dedicated call for universities, aimed at students, recent graduates, and undergraduates from all disciplines. The goal: to conceive

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and design the future National Museum of Pasta not only as a place of memory, but as a living, multidisciplinary, and innovative space.

The University Call invites participants to develop – within one year – architectural, economic, historical, psychological, technological, or creative projects that celebrate pasta as intangible heritage from a contemporary perspective. Particularly encouraged are multidisciplinary works that blend architecture, sustainability, design, literature, marketing, and cultural vision. The winning projects will be awarded in 2026 and displayed within the new Museum, contributing to its identity and storytelling.

Pasta as an Italian common good

“Pasta is much more than food: it’s a cultural code, a shared heritage, a lens through which we can read our history and imagine the future,” said Alberto Falini, President of the Vincenzo Agnesi Foundation. “With this award, we aim to highlight pasta’s narrative power and its role in inclusion, beauty, knowledge, and employment. Each entry contributes to building not just a museum, but a vibrant cultural ecosystem open to the new generations.”

The Jury

The jury for the 25th edition included:

- Arianna Agnesi (Chair): Honorary President, Vincenzo Agnesi Foundation;
- Luisanna Messeri: author and well-known TV personality, with several cookbooks;
- Eleonora Fontaneto: third-generation representative of the renowned fresh pasta company Pastificio Fontaneto
- Federica Bottoli: internationally acclaimed photographer;
- Danilo Giaffreda: architect, photographer, and gastronome.

All winners and awarded projects are available on the official website of the [Foundation](#).

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