

# MARCO EAGLE

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Going Out - Dining

## “Chef Q & A: Alberto Varetto”

By JENINE C. OUILLETTE

Alberto Varetto, Executive Chef  
Sale e Pepe  
Marco Beach Resort, 480 South Collier Boulevard  
Phone: 239-393-1600

**Began working at present restaurant?**  
In June 2001.

**Who or what inspired you to become a chef/cook?**  
I was born in Torino, the capital of Italy’s Piedmont region. When I was a child – five- or six -years-old – the school food was terrible, so I cooked my meals with my mother. I suppose you could say I was inspired to cook because the food was bad at school.

**What was your first restaurant job?**  
I was very young. I started working in the appetizer station in a Torino restaurant – the Il Pavia – then I got promoted to garde manager, the cold pantry.

**How long have you been cooking professionally?**  
For 21 years, both in Europe and the United States. My first job in the U.S. was in Washington D.C., and then I came to Sale e Pepe in June 2001.

**How would you describe your cooking style?**  
Definitely traditional Northern Italian.

**What is your most popular dish?**  
All the fresh pasta. Today, I made tortelloni with scallop-edged pasta pillows and stuffed with fresh scallops and thyme, then sautéed with fresh tomato and basil-infused butter sauce. Another one of our guest favorites is ravioloni stuffed with roasted veal and vegetables tossed in sage-infused butter and veal glaze. You know, all our food is authentic. We import the basic ingredients such as the flour, tomatoes, herbs and Parmesan cheese from Italy.



Sale e Pepe Executive Chef,  
Alberto Varetto

Everything is made fresh, the breads, sauces and sausage are made daily just like in Italy.

**What is your favorite wine/food?**  
My favorite wines are all from Piedmont – Barolo, Barbaresco, or dolcetto – a nice, dry every day red wine. I also love traditional pasta, like a Piedmontese, made with one kilo of flour and 24 yolks.

**Do you cook at home? If so, what would we always find in your fridge/freezer?**  
I don’t really, I’m always working. Now I have two little girls – Isabelle and Bianca, two and a half years old – so I make purees with all kinds of fresh fruit and fresh produce.

**What is your secret ingredient? Why?**  
For me, it’s salt – a special kind of sea salt from Italy.

**What would you like to be doing if you weren’t a chef?**  
I don’t know, maybe an actor? Because in both professions, you need to be creative.

**What annoys you most in the kitchen?**  
When the kitchen is not organized. The kitchen must always be clean and organized, and the floor must always be clean. Before you eat somewhere, ask to inspect the kitchen. If the chef doesn’t want you to, then the food can’t be good.

**What do you enjoy most about your profession?**  
A kitchen is not like an office. Here you can improve what you’re doing and be creative. I also enjoy the different challenges every day.