



# PRINCI, LONDON

PRINCI IS NOT JUST A 'BAKERY' AS WE KNOW THEM, BUT A NEW KIND OF RETAIL OUTLET BASED ON BREAD. IN ITALY THEY ARE CALLED 'PANETTERIA'. WITH ITS MASSIVE WOOD-FIRED OVEN AND ARTISAN BREAD A PRINCI WOULD NOT BE OUT OF PLACE IN ANCIENT ROME, EXCEPT FOR THE ARMANI STAFF UNIFORMS, FABULOUS GLASS DISPLAY COUNTERS AND SEE-THROUGH SHOP FRONT.

“In the name of bread” is the motto of founder Rocco Princi. He started with one and grew the concept into a small chain. Each is rigorously managed to maintain authenticity. Highly lucrative ‘roll-out’ deals with retail mall operators have been shunned because they could not meet the quality standards.

Princi locations are in the smarter parts of Milan. There are five in total and the same number is planned for London. The operation will be similar, with four satellite panetteria displaying bread baked from the primary operation. This will be complemented by local baking including pizza and restaurant food.

The Interior Designer is Claudio Silvestrin Architects, whose clients include Giorgio Armani, Calvin Klein and rap artist Kanye West.

London Princi features a sand-coloured stone that matches the colour of flour. The same stone is textured rough for the walls. The effect is softened by a water feature which runs along the full length of one wall behind a customer eating shelf.

At the heart of the operation and weighing in at 80 tonnes when first constructed is the wood-fired oven, fed by artisan bakers using traditional paddles in the same way the Romans did. After a while the oven fabric dries out, reducing the weight by 20 tonnes.

It produces authentically recipied, hand-worked masterpieces. Loaves with a texture, flavour, finish and colouring that only Princi and the wood-fired oven can provide.

Also on sale, fresh-baked pizza, lasagne and all manner of cakes and patisserie. The menu also features a full range of cold and hot items which are based on traditional Italian foods but with Alan Yau’s now legendary influences. Hot and cold beverages, from coffee to cocktails, are on sale. How about a glass of Prosecco with your meal or just simply a drink?

Restaurateur Alan Yau brought the panetteria to London, “inspired by Princi quality”. Renowned for his Japanese and Chinese culinary conquests, (Wagamama, Hakkasan, Busaba

Eathai, Yauatcha and now Cha Cha Moon and Sake no Hana), Yau’s passion for the highest quality and authenticity is matched by that of Princi and they are partners in the business.

“It’s a uniquely different marriage of qualities,” says Ken Winch FCSI of Ken Winch Design who designed the baking and foodservice facilities.

Winch has worked with Yau for many years.

“Working with Ken enables me to focus on the many factors that need to be taken into consideration,” Yau said following Winch’s input to Busaba Eathai. “His knowledge and experience is phenomenal, giving me the confidence and inspiration to pursue new ideas. Having done so many projects with him, we have established a very productive working relationship which I have come to rely on.”

Princi is not fast food but a bakery, restaurant and takeaway open from 7am until 1am, with a 4am licence intended. There are around 60 seats but also plenty of standing room and places to rest drinks and eats.

Operating on two levels - basement and street - the design was dictated by the 80 tonne oven and 12 tonnes of flour storage required. Layout of the basement, where the bulk of meal preparation and cooking is carried out, worked around the support pillars for the oven.

All of the classically Italian bread baking is carried out in full view of the public who can see the oven from the street via a glass-front and from inside, where the view is over the service counter offering bread, pastries, pizza, (sold by slice) and hot & cold food. The back counter offers alcoholic beverages, tea, coffee and soft drinks.

“It’s a pleasure to be involved with two people who have such incredibly high standards,” added Winch.

[www.kenwinchdesign.com](http://www.kenwinchdesign.com)



Top left

Princi’s ground floor design was dictated by an 80 tonne oven and 12 tonnes of required flour storage

Left

Princi’s basement where the bulk of meal preparation and cooking is carried out