

Because of its strategic location, the little French harbour village of Sète on the Mediterranean Sea has a rich history. Here we found a very classic cake.

Frescati

In Sète, we are getting a lesson from Serge Aprile, who together with his wife Michelle owns the patisserie shop Bladier Aprile. A cake called Frescati has been the life for Serge. The cake's history goes back to Paris in 1914, the era of La Belle Epoque. At that time it seemed a cake named Frascati had always existed and was made by just about everyone. Pâtissier Fourniol made them for banquets and they were served after an opera performance. Fourniol was a famous pâtissier who had many students, including Gaston Bladier. He took the recipe to Sète and taught

it to his sons Louis and Fernand, the father of Michelle Aprile. The cake was forgotten in Paris but not in Sète and this is the only place in the world where you will find it. According to Serge, the cake is very sweet and therefore doesn't have to be refrigerated. Sète cuisine had a lot of Italian influence and thus the cake was made with Italian foam; so Frascati was re-named Frescati.

Three elements

The fire in Serge's eyes tells everything about his passion. He won't share the recipe here, but he is willing to tell us everything about the cake. It starts with the bottom. This is made of dough that first looks like normal sablé dough (sand dough). Serge: "The bottom consists of a very hard and heavy dough. It is different than the sablé that is too delicate and would break under the weight of the cake. For the dough I mix the flour and the sugar and blend in some liquids." Italian meringue is piped

onto the baked bottom. If you think that foam is foam, it is not true. Serge comes up with a story that makes us really think. "Recipes don't always work; this is because you have to have the right proportions. Sometimes a recipe asks for 3/4 egg, but that doesn't exist. A lot of factors are involved that will make or break a recipe. First you have to look at the ratio in a recipe, like how many parts of sugar does it need to make a great meringue. For example, the weather! It might seem unimportant but humidity in the air plays a big role. In that case you have to change