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Italy naming 'authentic' Italian restaurants; so far three in Chicago pass test

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The Italian government is in the process of determining which U.S. restaurants serve true Italian cuisine, and so far three Chicago restaurants — Coco Pazzo on Hubbard Street, Piccolo Sogno on Halsted and Tocco in Bucktown — have been given the seal of authenticity.



Robert Allegrini

Among other criteria, they must have Italian-speaking staff, serve and prepare their food according to Italian tradition (extra-virgin olive oil is a must) and offer an Italian wine list.

A few more Chicago restaurants may be added in the coming months as Italian officials waded through thousands of applications from restaurants in 75 cities worldwide.

"There are certain restaurants that don't deserve to say they're authentic," says **Robert Allegrini**, the Hilton Hotels executive who serves as president of the Italian American Chamber of Commerce for the Midwest. "They overcook the pasta and drown it in sauce."