

For Travelers Who Want More Than the Official Line!

# U<sup>the</sup>nofficial Guide<sup>®</sup> to San Francisco



The  
Series with  
More than  
**4 Million**  
Copies  
Sold!

- Hotels & attractions, ranked and rated
- Insider tips that save you time & money

Richard Sterling, revised by Elgy Gillespie

"Best Travel Series of the Year" —*Booklist*

## Palio d'Asti ★★★★★

ITALIAN EXPENSIVE QUALITY ★★★★★ VALUE ★★★★★

640 Sacramento Street, Chinatown; ☎ 415-395-9800; paliodasti.com

**Reservations** Recommended. **When to go** Lunch, dinner. **Entree range** \$16–\$33; tasting menu, \$70; 2-course prix fixe, \$29; 3-course prix fixe, \$37; 4-course prix fixe, \$45. **Payment** AE, D, MC, V. **Service rating** ★★★★★. **Friendliness rating** ★★★★★. **Parking** Street. **Bar** Wine bar and full bar. **Wine selection** Excellent and extensive. **Dress** Casual, business. **Disabled access** Yes. **Customers** Locals, businesspeople. **Hours** Monday–Friday, 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. (last seating) and 4 p.m.–9 p.m.; Saturday, 6:30 p.m.–10 p.m.; Enoteca della Douja (wine bar), 5 p.m. until close.

**SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE** Rough concrete pillars, set at odd angles in the dining room of this 1905 building, disappear into the lofty ceiling, leaving the impression that one has entered the streets of medieval Italy. Brilliant banners in the colorful designs of the Palio, the ancient bare-back horse race celebrating the harvest in Italy, are suspended overhead. Vast gray reaches of wall are softened by sound-absorbing cloth panels and a dropped ceiling and are warmed by the extensive use of dark woods and glowing brass fixtures. Comfortable banquettes and strategically placed tables round off this pleasant ambience. The glass-enclosed kitchen provides patrons with an intriguing view of kitchen activities.

**HOUSE SPECIALTIES** Italian, specializing in the Piedmont and Tuscany regions of Italy. The menu changes often but offers such delicacies as grilled Hawaiian swordfish with fried capers, heirloom tomatoes, red onion, red-wine vinaigrette, and toasted breadcrumbs; grilled wild boar chops with a Tuscan-style three-bean ragout of borlotti; thinly sliced, hand-pounded rawahi tuna and the traditional Sicilian sweet-and-sour eggplant relish studded with pine nuts, raisins, olives, and capers.

**OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS** The wine bar at the front of the restaurant, Enoteca della Douja, named after the famous wine competition that takes place in Asti each September. Here, 30 wines, mostly Italian, are available by the glass or by the 2.5-ounce taste.

**SUMMARY AND COMMENTS** A true ristorante Piemontese, known for its pastas, risotto, and freshest and most authentic Italian products. Its wine bar, Enoteca della Douja, is one of the city's foremost gathering places for savvy foodies and society folks. Its location in the Financial District gives it the advantage of relatively easy street parking after hours.