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Peter Brunel's Culinary and Design Journey

The Michelin-starred chef has been redefining hospitality with his restaurant nestled between the Dolomites and Lake Garda, experimenting with ingredients and innovative recipes in a design-filled space.

By **LUISA ZARGANI**  SEPTEMBER 6, 2025, 12:01AM



The Peter Brunel Ristorante Gourmet COURTESY OF PETER BRUNEL RISTORANTE GOURMET

Peter Brunel leaves nothing to chance. “I am obsessive about the tiniest details,” he admits.

Indeed, Brunel personally designed the interiors of his namesake restaurant, inspired by his favorite artists, from **Gio Ponti** and Bruno Munari to composer Gioachino Rossini and poet Gabriele D’Annunzio.

Eclectic and imaginative, Brunel experiments as much with decor as he does with **food**, with the goal of offering a truly unique sensorial experience.

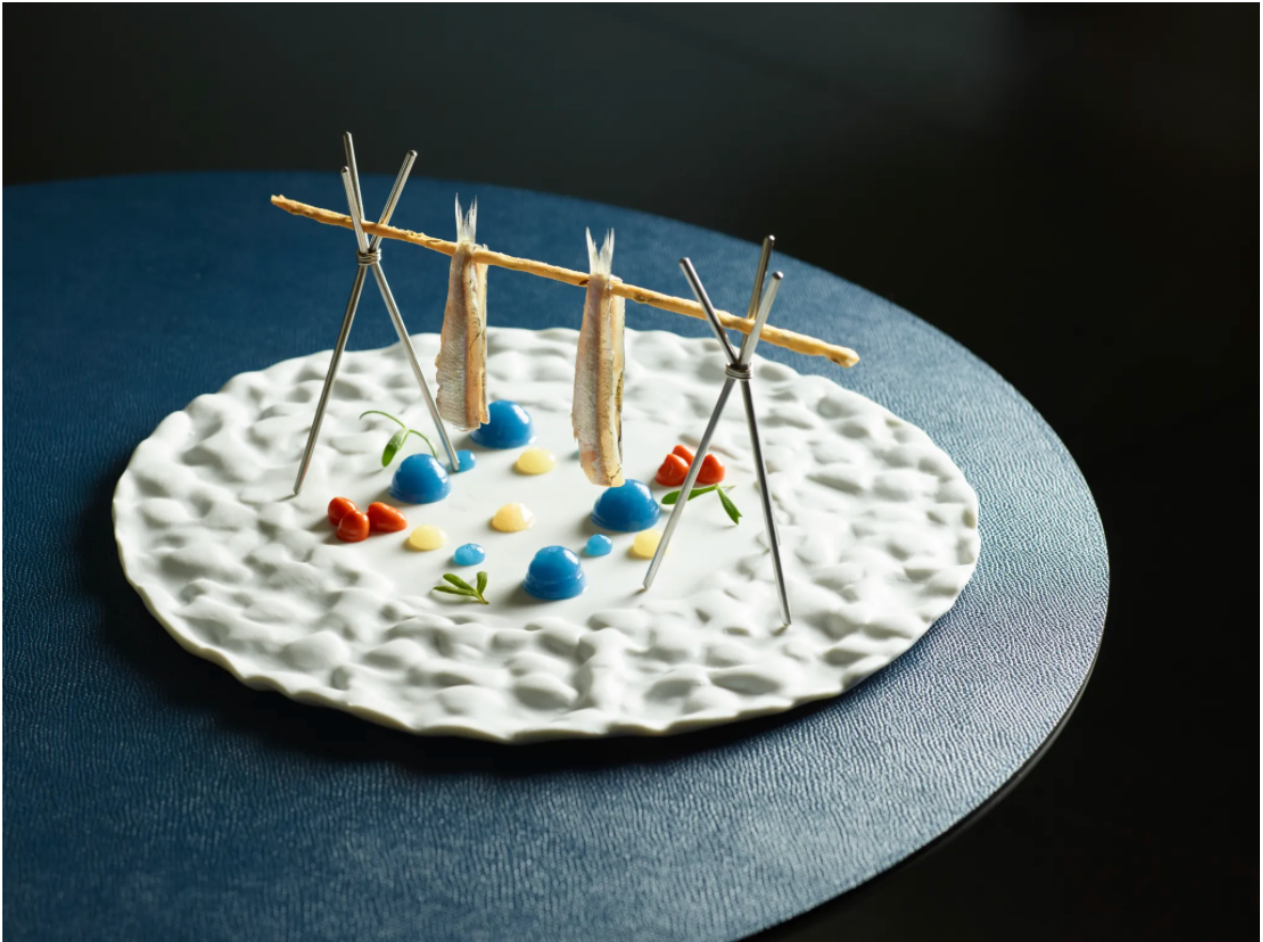
The restaurant has been designed as a home, where each space is dedicated to different convivial moments, including a music room — music being another passion of Brunel's — and a privé for birthdays or special celebrations.

Nestled between the **Dolomites** and Lake Garda, brimming with tourists this time of the year, and blessed with a mild climate, the area is ideal for some crops, including olives and grapes. While endlessly studying, researching and inventing new recipes, Brunel is also mindful of using ingredients from the area, committed to further enhancing its appeal.

The Peter Brunel Ristorante Gourmet, opened in 2019, has helped put the small town of Arco, in **Italy's** Trentino Alto-Adige region, even more on the map, earning its first **Michelin** star in 2021 and seeing it renewed every year since.

Just as he regularly revises the culinary offer, Brunel recently made some changes to the restaurant's interiors and, marking his 50th birthday on Aug. 28, he has created a new 14-course menu, dubbed the PB50.

The Lofoten Island dish, named after the Norwegian location, is one example of Brunel's eclectic and creative nature. Marinated anchovies are delicately placed on a bread stick held high by tiny metal tripods over a sauce that is meant to be reminiscent of the sea. This is evocative of the way cod is dried naturally in the fresh air on wooden racks in northern Norway. "The dish was born from an unforgettable trip in those lands," he explains.



Peter Brunel's Lofoten Island

He revisits ceviche with trout and fruit, and dares to combine cod with leeks and chocolate. Unusual on paper but delectable to the palate, as is the rice with lemon, snails and Vino Santo.

“I want to give dignity to everything that nature gives us, creating an ethical cuisine,” he says.

Brunel was born in Val di Fassa, in the Dolomites, in 1975. His restaurant is the result of years of experience and he is the author of several books dedicated to **food** and the territory. He received his first Michelin star in 2003 as chef of Villa Negri in Riva del Garda. After working in Tuscany and France, in 2014 he was named executive chef of Lungarno Collection, owned by the **Ferragamo** family. In December 2015, he received a Michelin star for the menu of the Lungarno Collection's Borgo San Jacopo restaurant in Florence.



Peter Brunel

Opening his own restaurant was a way to return close to home, mold the locale to his own specific taste and continue to channel his creativity. The kitchen, which is open and visible from the main room, was inspired by the poet D'Annunzio's own at Il Vittoriale, a hillside estate in Gardone Riviera where he lived for almost 20 years until his death in 1938. An image of that kitchen is framed on a wall. "I see him as an example of freedom of expression," Brunel says.

Fortunato Depero, "an innovator and an example of an approach to food as a sensorial and artistic experience," and painter, sculptor and inventor Munari, "a symbol of aesthetic rigor," are all other key references for Brunel.



The Peter Brunel Ristorante Gourmet

For example, the furniture reinterprets Munari's works, in particular the tables, perfectly aligned with the height of chairs inspired by Ponti. "Beauty and design must go hand-in-hand with practicality, because there is nothing worse than wanting to leave a restaurant because the seating is uncomfortable," Brunel says.

He has reduced the number of tables from the initial 10 to five, accommodating eight to 12 guests "to raise the bar on experience," he says, as he personally takes care of patrons.

The desks he designed and dedicated to Ponti and Munari, the Flos Castiglioni and Karman lamps, and the art works by Paolo Colombini and Stefania Simeoni are among some of the standout pieces in the restaurant.



A room is allocated to Porsche, since Brunel is an ambassador for the brand — cars being another passion of the chef's. He has participated in and hosted events with the iconic automaker, and has featured dishes inspired by the brand.

Throughout, there is a focus on personal touches. Brunel is so attentive to his guests that he keeps a selection of prescription eyeglasses on hand for those who forget theirs. "They can go through the menu this way," he explains simply. On a different shelf stand charming small suitcases with dolls and toys to entertain children.

Personal memorabilia and gifts from his loyal guests are displayed in a cabinet over a desk with vases filled with colorful pralines and candies. "You can take the candy away with you when you leave as a souvenir of the experience," he observes.

Through the expansive windows, the view of a garden, Corten steel elements that represent the Dolomites and a miniature reproduction of the Lake Garda — conceived by Brunel — as well as a huge palm tree and a small waterfall help convey “a sort of Zen mood,” he says.



The Peter Brunel Ristorante Gourmet MARTINO DINI

It is a mood Brunel aims to generate with everything in the restaurant, from the cuisine to the 700 wines on offer, the extensive varieties of coffee — and the decor. In his view, they all contribute equally to creating an unforgettable experience. After all, as he says: “Hospitality in my opinion is linked to well-being.”