

Sotto adds a taste of la dolce vita to Stockbridge

A selection of more than 200 wines will vie with the best of southern Italian inspired cuisine for top billing at a new Stockbridge restaurant.

Sotto – Italian for under – will be up and running on the site of the former much-loved Ping On restaurant in the city's Deanhaugh Street from Friday 4 October.

Heading up by wine expert James Clark and Calabrian head chef Francesco Ascrizzi, Sotto doubles as an enoteca (wine bar) on the ground floor and downstairs a 36-seat trattoria.



Sotto's James Clark (left) and Francesco Ascrizzi – photo by Tina Leahy.

Sotto is the first venture by Edinburgh-born sommelier Clark, who has spent his hospitality career at some of the city's best restaurants, including Divino Enoteca and The Palmerston, as well as at East End Cellars and his brother in law's winery, Poppelvej, in Adelaide, South Australia.

His carefully curated wine list, located "sotto" in the cellar of the prominent Stockbridge location, will mix modern and traditional styles and showcase every region of the world's largest wine producing nation.

Pre-opening Clark said: "I've fallen in love with Italian food, wine and culture over the last decade, and Sotto will hopefully be an expression of the warmth and hospitable nature I associate with the country. There's such variety in the food, wines and landscapes, and we can't wait to share our interpretation of that with the people of Edinburgh.

"It's so exciting to be opening in Stockbridge, the neighbourhood where I've lived for the last 10 years. It has such a vibrant food and drink scene and is a part of the city people love coming to for a day out, and we're delighted to now be part of that."

Enoteca guests can enjoy bottles from Sotto's cellar – with many poured by the glass – as well as coffee, aperitivi, cocktails and light snacks. Wine can be purchased to take away, as well as a range of homemade pickles and chutneys under the label Sott'Olio – deriving from the method of preserving ingredients "under oil" – and a small curated selection of Italian pantry goods.

Seating 25, the wine bar will host complimentary tastings every other Thursday evening, showcasing a particular producer, region or grape variety, with the wines on pour all evening and available to take home. An expansive marble

counter sits at the centre of the bar for convivial wine tastings and casual groups, as well as bar seating at the window overlooking Stockbridge's high street.







Two hundred Italian wines, the best of Calabrian cuisine and cocktails on the menu at Sotto – photos Tina Leahy

In the kitchen, Ascrizzi, who hails from the Calabrian capital Catanzaro, will bring his experience of working at some of Edinburgh's most-respected Italian restaurants, including Divino Enoteca, where he was head chef for seven years, Mono, Tipo, The Plumed Horse, and Mark Greenway.

The restaurant's menu will combine seasonal British produce with classical Italian cookery, with dishes changing regularly to celebrate the best ingredients of both countries and the diversity of Italy's culinary regions.

The à la carte menu starts with Ascrizzi's takes on classic Italian snacks and antipasti, from Gnocco fritto with Culatello (cured ham) to Olives Ascolana (fried olives stuffed with pork), and Aberdeen Angus carpaccio with radicchio, beetroot and gorgonzola.

These are followed by homemade pastas including tagliatelle with porcini, and mezze maniche with venison ragù, and secondi including lamb shoulder with artichokes and lentils, and sole with caper butter and salsa verde.

To finish, guests can enjoy the likes of Marsala poached pear with sweet ricotta and cannoli, or Zuppa Inglese (a type of trifle) with Alchermes liqueur and crema pasticciera.

Guests will also have the option to order "Fai Tu" – which translates as "you do you" – which will bring the chef's choice of four courses of feasting-style dishes to share.

Open from 10am, the restaurant will act as an espresso bar in the weekday mornings, and an Italian-influenced brunch menu will be served on weekends, with dishes including truffle polenta with wild mushrooms and fontina cheese, frittata di pasta with Tropea onions, potato and scamorza, and brioche with gelato.

Reservations are now live at sottoedinburgh.com

Instagram [@SottoEdinburgh](https://www.instagram.com/SottoEdinburgh)

Food is served from noon and opening hours are: Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday: 10am to 11pm. Friday and Saturday: 10am to midnight.

