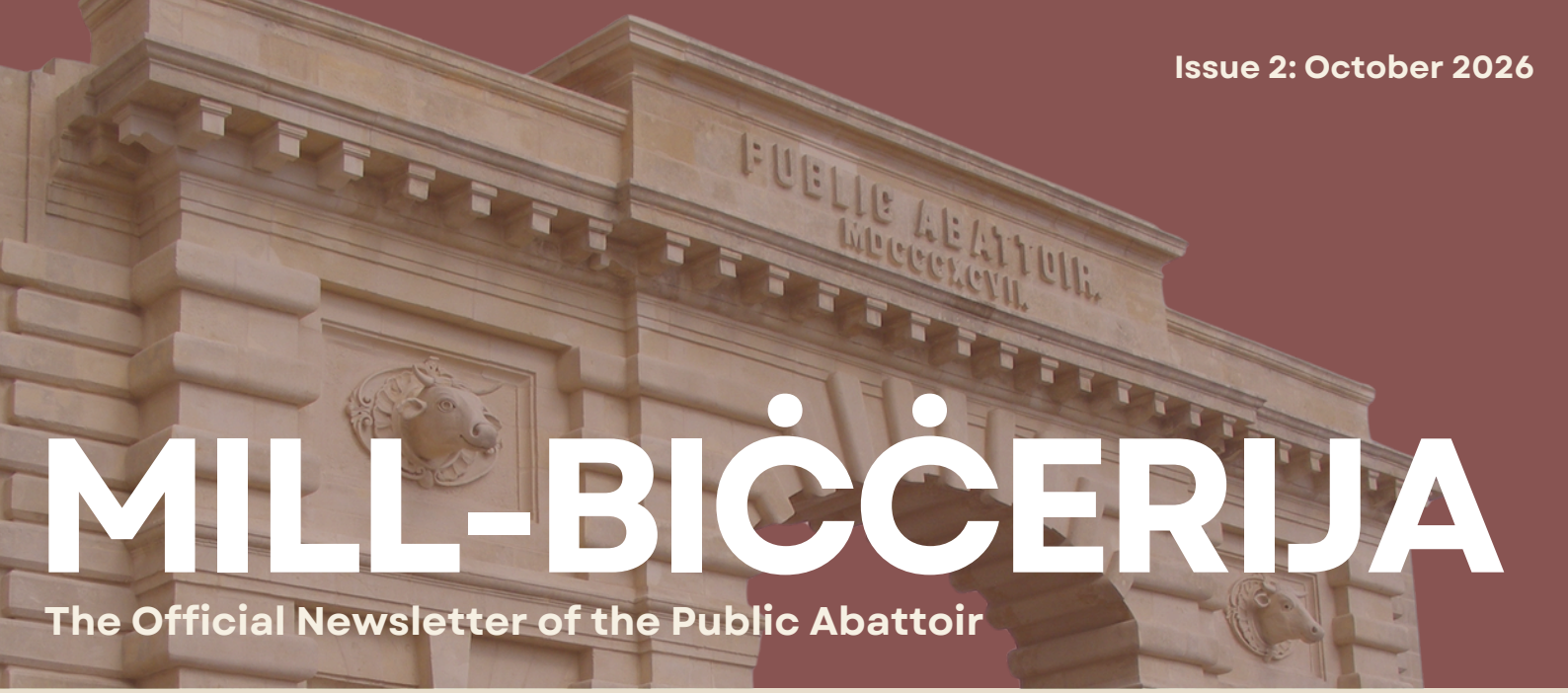
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MILL-BIĊĊERIJA

The Official Newsletter of the Public Abattoir

IN THIS ISSUE



PROTECTING FOOD HERITAGE



REDUCING OUR WASTE



RECIPES FROM CHEFS

PROTECTING IZ-ZALZETT TAL-MALTI

Zalzett tal-Malti has cleared a major milestone on its journey towards Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status.



The public consultation on the application has now concluded, bringing this much-loved Maltese product one step closer to formal recognition and protection.

The consultation ran from 30 April to 30 June 2026, giving interested parties the opportunity to submit comments, representations or objections to the Food Safety and Security Authority.

For *Zalzett tal-Malti*, PGI recognition is about more than a label. It is about safeguarding a product that forms part of Malta's culinary identity, while protecting the connection between the product, its traditional production and its place of origin.

A PGI recognises products whose distinctive qualities or reputation are closely linked to a specific geographical area, with at least one stage of production taking place within that designated region.

With the consultation stage now complete, *Zalzett tal-Malti* has taken another important step towards securing formal protection for a taste of Malta's culinary heritage.



WHY IS A PGI-STATUS IMPORTANT?

The ultimate goal of this application is to safeguard the genuine *Zalzett tal-Malti* from illegal imitations. The PGI status prevents unfair competition, while also protecting the traditional methods of production.

Iz-Zalzett tal-Malti is a traditional sausage which originates from the Maltese archipelago. It is primarily made of pork as well as a combination of coriander, black pepper, sea salt and parsley. Historically it was used as a source of quick protein by the working Maltese. Due to its substantial salt content, it would not spoil easily and thus, used as a lunch item, especially for rural occupations.

In the case of *Zalzett tal-Malti* what grants its "proof of origin" is the technical process which has to be performed in Malta for creating the product which includes sourcing from the geographic area with provisions that when demand outweighs the supply, certain imported ingredients may be used to sustain the local market.

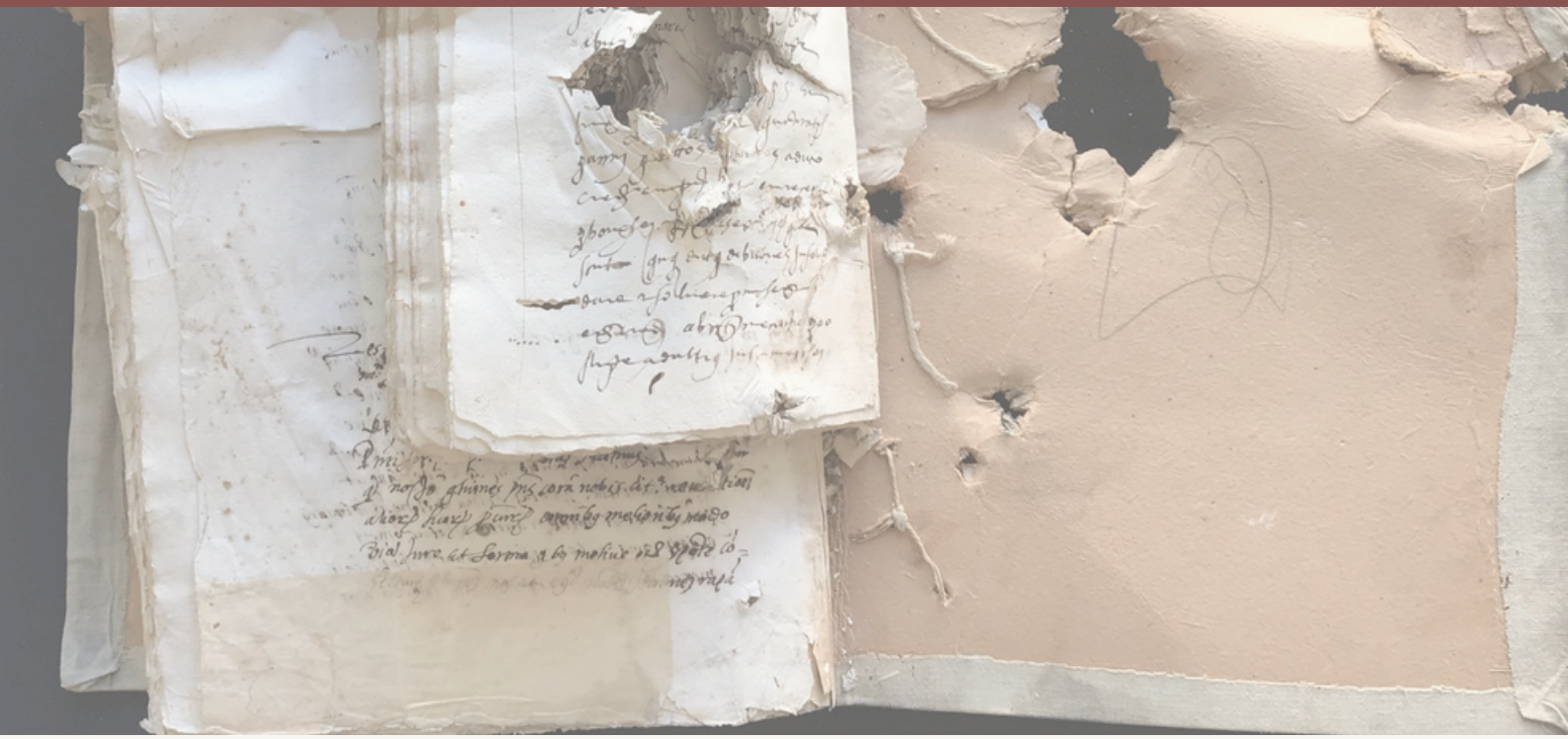
With its close ties to Maltese cultural identity, *iz-Zalzett tal-Malti* represents a longstanding culinary tradition. The PGI status would at a fundamental level, secure and promote this facet at a European standard, formally recognising its Maltese heritage.

Project Ġilduża

"One man's trash is another man's treasure." This old adage encapsulates the core ethos behind the initiation of the *Ġilduża* project. This project is a collaborative effort between the Public Abattoir, Notarial Archives Foundation (NAF) and *Xirka Produtturi Nagħaġ u Mogħoż* focusing on the production of parchment from previously discarded ovine hides.

Parchment is a rather niche product. It is used extensively within the conservation world but is not so commonly used in day to day applications. In essence, parchment is treated animal skin which historically was used instead of paper but which has a multitude of purposes including book binding. It is made from animal hides (especially ruminant) which are treated in lime and stretched over a number of days. As the main input for parchment is ovine and caprine hides, the Public Abattoir identified an opportunity to divert its waste stream towards something more productive as a previously untapped potential resource.

The beginnings of this project were in 2024 during another project conducted by the Abattoir under the title *BiċċerijaTrain*. The course was initially envisioned to equip Maltese farmers with the necessary skills to meet an ever shifting and intertwined global market. The course also envisioned teaching skills to farmers which would allow them to utilise these previously discarded animal by-products by processing them into usable materials or edible foodstuffs.



One of the courses for *BiccerijaTrain* dealt specifically with parchment creation and a world renowned expert on parchment Dr. Jiří Vnouček was engaged to teach applicants. The initial course also saw early collaborations with the Notarial Archives Foundation who showed keen interest in the course due to their own interest in parchment as a conservation material.

The course was well received by the participants and following this feedback, the Director General held talks with the NAF and Xirka on a future project which would focus on the valorisation, production and marketing of parchment.

In 2025 this envisioned project would start under the name *Ġilduża*. As part of the project the NAF utilised the skills learned under BiċċerijaTrain in order to conduct further trials for the production and application of parchment within the Maltese archival landscape. These processes were further helped by the engagement of Dr. Jiří Vnouček to the project who continued to provide his assistance.

The Abattoir in turn conducted various meetings with other potential shareholders for parchment, looking to open up potential new markets in order to increase the economic opportunities available to Maltese Farmers. One of these potential markets is in the restoration and production of traditional Maltese instruments. Significant strides were made in collaboration with traditional instrument producers to start utilising parchment for traditional instruments.

As part of the project, a workshop was held between 27th – 30th April where academics of the parchment sector; belonging to various research projects throughout Europe; were invited to observe and learn the actual process of parchment production. The workshop was well received and a network was established for knowledge sharing with regards to parchment between the participants of the workshop.



ġild uża

What are the tangible benefits of this project?

Firstly, there are economic gains which are to be made by farmers through ovine skin, which normally constitute 15% of the animal's weight which is currently being discarded. This project would serve as a value added when establishing demand patterns when included in supply chains such as those in the conservation of manuscripts, production of musical instruments as well as the tourism sector.

For the Public Abattoir, the project has led to cost reduction as the hides are no longer incinerated. The project is also a great step forward for the Abattoir's continued environmental efforts as it presents a significant reduction in CO_2 emissions.

For the NAF and other archival and historical institutions, the advent of Maltese made parchment presents a nexus between a historical practice being brought back to life which has modern conservation applications of historical manuscripts.

This also means that parchment would no longer need to be imported from abroad, presenting these institutions with significant cost savings which can contribute to greater conservation efforts of our national and cultural heritage. In fact Maltese parchment has already been successfully used for the conservation of manuscripts related to the Order of Saint John.

As the project continues to grow in scope we continue to explore further ways to valorise hides and sustain our efforts through further planned action points such as workshops which will be open to the public so that we can further disseminate the knowledge gained from this project.



Supreme Hygiene

CARCASS STOCKINETTES

Hygiene and food quality are synonymous, with proper hygiene practices playing a fundamental role in ensuring safe, high-quality meat. The Public Abattoir continues to invest in improving hygiene throughout the slaughtering process, with the introduction of stockinettes during carcass chilling being one of its latest measures.

Stockinettes are tubular, food-grade textile coverings made from materials such as cotton, polyester or a combination of both. Fitted over the carcass like a sock, they provide an additional physical barrier against airborne contaminants, handling and contact between carcasses.
Their tubular design also allows effective airflow during chilling, supporting more efficient cooling while reducing condensation and the conditions that can encourage bacterial growth. At the same time, controlled drying helps preserve the carcass's colour and surface quality, contributing to a more appealing end product.

Stockinettes can also reduce moisture loss during chilling. Studies indicate approximately a 3% reduction in weight loss, creating an economic benefit for farmers, particularly when applied across multiple carcasses.

During transportation, the coverings provide additional protection against scratches, scuffing and markings caused by contact with other carcasses or vehicle surfaces.
Through continued investment in measures such as stockinettes, the Public Abattoir is strengthening hygiene, protecting carcass quality and supporting the production of safer, higher-quality meat for Malta.



PORK COLLAR TAGLIATA, TEXTURES OF PEACHES, MAZZIT & CRISPY POTATOES

Chef Robert Cassar
Root 81

*This dish was created to celebrate local produce, from the dairy in **Chef Cassar**'s Pecorino Cracker to sautéed peaches that glaze his pork; all ingredients were sourced locally.*

METHOD

01. Start by heating your frying oil. In the meantime, thinly slice your potatoes, skin-on and lightly dust in corn flour for added texture. Deep fry potato crisps for 5-6 minutes or until golden brown. Salt and allow to rest.

02. While the potatoes are crisping, heat a frying pan for the pork. Place the bone-in pork collar in the hot pan, making sure it's flat to create a nice hard sear on the outer surface. Cook for 5 minutes. Flip the pork chop to cook the other side and add the butter and rosemary, cook for another 5-6 minutes, basting with butter. Add minced garlic to the butter and continue basting for 2 minutes. Add white wine to deglaze the pan and a little vegetable stock to create a nice jus. Allow pork to rest.

03. Take your sliced mazzit and fry it in butter for about 3 minutes on each side. Season to taste and set aside.

04. Take your peeled and sliced peaches and add them to a saucepan where the pork jus, made from wine and stock earlier can be used to add flavour. Add more wine and stock if necessary, cook down to a chunky sauce.

05. Once rested, slice your pork chop, removing the bone for plating. Combine all elements and prepare your plate.

INGREDIENTS

- 250g bone-in pork collar
- 50g mazzit
- ½ peach, peeled and chopped
- 1 large potato, sliced thin, skin-on
- 20g butter
- 1tsp minced garlic
- Rosemary
- White Wine
- Vegetable stock
- Frying oil
- Corn flour





Plate like a Pro: as the Maltese saying goes; *l-ewwel ma tiekol l-għajn.*
Give it your best shot and let your inner artist out.

Tag @agrikolturamt for your chance to be featured.



STICKY BBQ RIBS & PORK, MALTESE SAUSAGE & LOCAL VEGETABLE SKEWERS

Chef Anthony Dowling
Is-Simenta

Local summers and local pork are the perfect pair; especially when they meet on the outdoor grill. ***Chef Dowling*** *brings pork ribs, Zalzett tal-Malti and local vegetables to the table.*

METHOD

01. This dish starts with marination. Add the minced garlic, olive oil, paprika, cumin and sesame seeds to a bowl, this combination will compliment the aromatics in the Maltese sausage.

02. Chop the pork fillet into cubes; aiming for about 16 pieces. Portion the *Zalzett tal-Malti* into another 16 pieces; add both pork products into the marinade and allow to rest for maximum 2 hours.

03. Portion the vegetables accordingly. Once the meat has marinated, assemble the skewers and hit the grill.

04. Start off by boiling or steaming your trimmed pork rib rack for 50 minutes. Once steamed, your ribs are ready for marination, which can range from 2 to 8 hours, the more they marinade, the deeper the flavour.

05. To make the marinade, simply combine all wet and dry ingredients and massage into the steamed ribs. Cover your dish and allow to rest as required.

06. Preheat the oven to 160°C and cook your pork ribs for 30 minutes. Reserve the marinade, it's liquid gold. Finish on the grill, coat ribs with extra sauce for more caramelization and serve with a fresh salad.

INGREDIENTS

Pork Skewers (makes 16 skewers)

- 1kg pork fillet (trimmed)
- 4 *Zalzett tal-Malti*
- 1 tbs olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves (minced)
- 1 tsp sweet paprika
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp sesame seeds
- 2 green peppers
- 8 tomatoes
- 16 mushrooms

BBQ Ribs (serves 4-6)

- 1kg pork spare ribs (trimmed)
- 1 cup bbq sauce
- ½ cup ketchup
- 3 tbsp honey
- 2 garlic cloves (minced)
- 1 tsp sweet paprika
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tbs apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbs oil
- Seasoning (salt, pepper, chilli)





Grill like a Pro: Make sure your grill is piping hot to build even more flavour. Invite your friends over - *għax għajnejk ikbar minn zaqqek*, as we say in Maltese.

Tag @agrikolturamt for your chance to be featured.

Red Meat Market Observatory

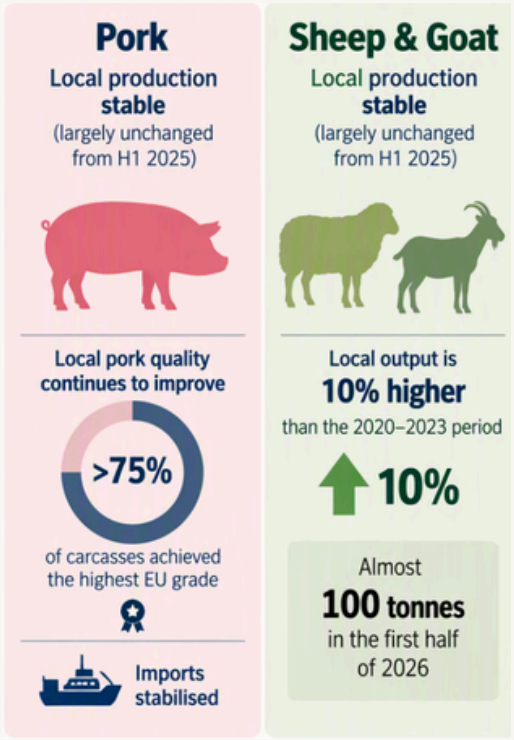
The first six months of 2026 saw stable local production of pig, sheep and goat meat, with levels largely unchanged from the same period in 2025. Beef production continued to decline, reflecting wider European Union (EU) trends, although consumer beef prices fell during the second quarter.

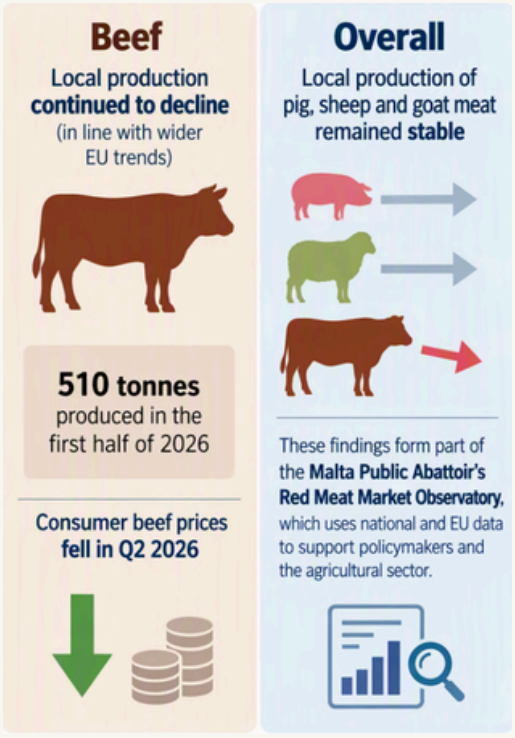
These findings form part of the Malta Public Abattoir's Red Meat Market Observatory, which uses national and EU data to support policymakers and the agricultural sector.

Statistic show that local pork quality has continued to improve, with more than three-quarters of carcasses achieving the highest EU grade, while imports stabilised.

Sheep and goat production also remains positive, with local output being 10% higher than the 2020–2023 period, reaching almost 100 tonnes in the first half of 2026. Beef production stood at 510 tonnes.

As Malta is part of the European Single Market, EU production, supply and price movements directly influence local conditions. Recent recovery in EU farm production has contributed to cooling retail prices for beef and pork, while tight European beef supplies continue to support local producer prices.







PORKLICIOUS

THE LOCAL EVENT IN AID OF L-ISTRINA

Now in its fourth edition, Porklicious brings people together to discover the versatility of local pork while supporting l-Istrina. Led by ***Culinary Director Roderick Vella*** *and hosted by the Public Abattoir in collaboration with Malta Marriott Resort & Spa, the event celebrates Maltese culinary heritage through thoughtful preparation and creative dining experiences. In 2025, Porklicious raised more than €7,800 for l-Istrina, with the support of local producers, the Ministry for Agriculture and wine sponsor Delicata. At its heart is a shared belief that hospitality can create memorable moments while making a positive contribution to the community. The 2026 event will take place at the Verdala Palace in Siġġiewi.*

Culinary Philosophy & Pork

What draws you to working with pork as a hero ingredient?

Pork is wonderfully versatile and has a strong place in Maltese culinary tradition. From fresh cuts to sausages and carefully cured meats, it offers so many possibilities. I enjoy helping guests discover that variety and appreciate a familiar ingredient in a new way.

How would you describe your personal philosophy when it comes to preparing pork?

For me, it begins with respect for the ingredient and making the best use of every cut. A nose-to-tail approach encourages us to think carefully about how each part can contribute to the menu and how we can minimise waste. Curing is a particular passion of mine; it takes patience and craftsmanship to bring out the character of the meat.

Technique & Innovation

How do different pork cuts respond to various cooking methods in your experience?

Each cut has its own texture and character, so the technique needs to suit the meat. Working with the whole animal allows me to plan a menu in which every cut has a purpose, whether through slow cooking, roasting or curing. Porklicious embraces this nose-to-tail philosophy, giving guests the opportunity to explore a wider range of flavours and preparations.

What role does precision butchery play in the final outcome of a pork dish?

Good butchery lays the foundation for a well-prepared dish. It influences texture, cooking time and the way flavours develop. Building a strong relationship with your butcher is invaluable: their knowledge helps you choose and prepare cuts with confidence, and discover possibilities beyond the familiar.

Local Sourcing & Community

How important is local sourcing? How does that tie in with your collaboration with Il-Biċċerija?

Local sourcing helps us connect our cooking to the place and people around us. Our collaboration with Il-Biċċerija supports freshness and traceability, while strengthening our relationships with local producers. At Malta Marriott Resort & Spa, sharing the island's culinary heritage is an important part of the guest experience, and this partnership brings that approach to life.

How does it feel to be headlining a culinary event in support of l-Istrina?

It is a privilege to contribute through something I care deeply about. Porklicious is a highlight of our community efforts, bringing our team and local partners together around a shared purpose. It reflects Marriott's spirit of service and the belief that caring for people extends beyond the hotel. Seeing guests enjoy the evening while helping a worthwhile cause makes it especially rewarding.



What message would you like people to take away from Porklicious?

I hope they leave with a greater appreciation of local pork, the skill behind its preparation and its place in Maltese food culture. With care and an understanding of the ingredient, pork can be the centrepiece of an exceptional dining experience. Above all, I would like guests to remember an enjoyable evening shared with others, knowing that their participation has supported l-Istrina.

The Porklicious Experience

What was the inspiration behind the Porklicious concept?
We wanted to celebrate the potential of local pork and give it the attention it deserves. The idea was to take an ingredient people know well and present it with fresh creativity, while keeping its connection to Maltese tradition. Bringing that experience together with support for l-Istrina gives the event a purpose that our team and guests can share.

What can guests expect from the menu in terms of creativity and flavour?
The evening begins with a reception featuring our own sausages, salami and prosciutto, followed by a tasting menu showcasing selected cuts. Each preparation highlights a different aspect of pork, with attention to flavour, texture and presentation. We want guests to feel warmly welcomed, enjoy the craftsmanship behind each dish and discover something new along the way.

Will any traditional Maltese pork dishes be making a modern comeback on the night?
Absolutely. We will revisit familiar Maltese favourites through contemporary techniques and thoughtful presentation, while preserving the flavours that make them special. There will be a few surprises, too, which we look forward to sharing on the night.

