

THE MEDITERRANEAN TABLE EXPERIENCE

RESTAURANTS, BARS, CAFÉS & CATERING — WHAT'S NEXT?

Friday, 27 November 2026 | Hilton Malta | 15:30–18:30

Action Lab Facilitator: Quinton Scerri — Television Presenter & Media Personality | Malta (TBC)

THE OPPORTUNITY

Building on the morning plenary, “From Counting People to Making People Count”, this Action Lab asks how restaurants, bars, cafés, caterers and hotels can create food and beverage experiences customers value more. Mediterranean ingredients, culinary heritage, storytelling, premium drinks and outstanding service can strengthen brands, increase spending and improve profitability. Two live experiences — Lefteris Lazarou’s seafood show cooking and the Lavazza Italian Coffee Experience — bring the ideas to life.

FROM INGREDIENTS TO EXPERIENCES. FROM TRADITION TO INNOVATION. FROM FOOD TO GREATER VALUE.

15:30–15:35 | OPENING — THE MEDITERRANEAN TABLE

Welcome and connection to the morning plenary

THE OPPORTUNITY

How can Mediterranean food culture create greater value for hospitality businesses and destinations?

Quinton Scerri — Action Lab Facilitator | Malta

Maltese broadcaster and television presenter experienced in interviews and live events. Introduces the link between Mediterranean food culture, memorable hospitality and business value. *Perspective: Connecting Mediterranean food culture, memorable hospitality and stronger business value through a lively, audience-focused discussion.*

15:35–16:00 | PANEL 1 — TELLING THE STORY OF MEDITERRANEAN FOOD

Broadcasting • Podcasts • Tourism Journalism • Destination Identity

THE OPPORTUNITY

How can restaurants, producers and destinations use broadcasting, podcasts and journalism to turn authentic food traditions into stories that attract visitors and strengthen brands?

Gianfranco Zinzilli — Director, Specialised Digital Radio & Podcasts, RAI | Italy

Senior RAI executive involved in specialised radio and original podcast programming. Explores how digital storytelling can connect chefs, producers and culinary traditions with new audiences. *Perspective: How radio, podcasts and digital storytelling can bring chefs, producers and Mediterranean culinary traditions to wider audiences.*

Eng. Keith Chetcuti — Chief Executive Officer, Public Broadcasting Services | Malta

Broadcasting and production executive leading Malta’s public broadcaster. Examines the potential of television and public media to showcase local food brands and gastronomy. *Perspective: How public-service television and digital media can showcase Maltese food, local producers and distinctive gastronomic experiences.*

Delal Tahsin Atamdede — Vice President, ATURJET and FIJET | Türkiye

International tourism journalist and media leader involved in cultural exchange and destination promotion. Explores the role of tourism journalism in making culinary identity visible internationally. *Perspective: How international tourism journalism can promote authentic culinary identity and connect Mediterranean destinations with travellers.*

16:00–16:30 | PANEL 2 — ROOTED IN TRADITION, REIMAGINED THROUGH CREATIVITY

Farm-to-Table • Heritage • Michelin Excellence • Restaurant Success

THE OPPORTUNITY

How can traditional ingredients, seasonal produce and creativity become distinctive, commercially successful dining experiences?

Simon Rogan MBE — Founder, Simon Rogan Restaurant Group | United Kingdom

Internationally acclaimed chef whose L'Enclume holds three Michelin stars and a Michelin Green Star; his group includes ION Harbour in Malta. A leader in ingredient-led, farm-to-table gastronomy. *Perspective: How seasonal produce, farm-to-table principles and rigorous culinary standards can build distinctive, commercially successful restaurants.*

Heritage Malta — National Cultural Heritage Agency | Malta

The national agency responsible for preserving and interpreting historic sites and collections. Explores how food traditions, recipes and heritage can inspire authentic new menus and visitor experiences. *Perspective: How culinary heritage, traditional recipes and historic settings can inspire authentic menus and visitor experiences.*

Victor Borg — Culinary Director, AX Privilege; Michelin-Starred Chef; Judge, MasterChef Malta | Malta

A Maltese chef and resident judge on MasterChef Malta, Victor led Under Grain to its first Michelin star and previously worked at The Phoenicia Malta. His career spans fine dining, culinary leadership and mentoring emerging talent. *Perspective: How Michelin-level discipline, creative cooking and the visibility of MasterChef Malta can inspire culinary careers and successful restaurants.*

16:30–17:00 | FEATURED LIVE CULINARY SHOW — FROM SEA TO PLATE

30-minute show cooking • Reinventing Mediterranean seafood

THE OPPORTUNITY

How can chefs turn traditional Mediterranean seafood into memorable premium experiences that attract higher-spenders?

Lefteris Lazarou — Michelin-Starred Chef Patron, Varoulko Seaside | Greece

A pioneer of contemporary Greek seafood cuisine and the first Greek chef to receive a Michelin star for Greek cuisine. From working aboard ships alongside his chef father, he built the acclaimed Varoulko restaurant. His live demonstration will explore authentic seafood, creative techniques and fine-dining presentation. *Perspective: How Mediterranean seafood traditions and innovative cooking techniques can create premium experiences rooted in local ingredients.*

17:00–17:20 | PANEL 3 — THE ART OF WELCOMING & HEALTHY DINING

Service Excellence • Etiquette • Nutrition • Special Diets

THE OPPORTUNITY

How can hospitality businesses deliver more personalised, inclusive and memorable service while responding to changing dietary needs?

Nadine Daher — Founder, Nadine Daher Training Center for Etiquette & Image Consultancy | Lebanon

International etiquette and protocol specialist who has advised diplomatic missions, institutions and corporate clients and contributed to regional television. Focuses on cultural awareness and outstanding service. *Perspective: How etiquette, cultural awareness and attentive service create a genuinely welcoming experience for guests from different backgrounds.*

Dr Mario Caruana Grech Perry — Senior Lecturer, University of Malta | Malta

Registered dietitian, nutritionist and biomedical researcher whose work connects clinical nutrition, food science and dietetic practice. Focuses on special diets, food intolerances and guest wellbeing. *Perspective: How nutrition knowledge, food-intolerance awareness and inclusive menus can improve guest wellbeing and broaden restaurant appeal.*

17:20–17:50 | PANEL 4 — THE FUTURE OF AUTHENTIC MEDITERRANEAN FOOD & DRINK EXPERIENCES

Emerging Trends • Genuine Experiences • Mediterranean Lifestyle • Wine & Craft Beverages

THE OPPORTUNITY

As travellers increasingly seek genuine local experiences, how can restaurants, bars, cafés and hotels turn Mediterranean food and drink traditions into distinctive, commercially successful experiences? This panel explores local provenance, independent producers, wine tourism, craft brewing and changing consumer expectations, while protecting the values and authenticity of Mediterranean hospitality.

Alexandros Kouris — Founder & Owner, NISSOS Beer / Cyclades Microbrewery | Greece

Founded the Cyclades Microbrewery on Tinos in 2012 following a career in marketing, communications and innovation. Its internationally awarded NISSOS beers celebrate Greek island identity and Mediterranean gastronomy. *Perspective: The Soul of the Mediterranean Table — Authentic Food, Drink & Lifestyle Experiences.* The Mediterranean table is more than food and drink: it is a way of life shaped by local traditions, genuine hospitality, shared moments and a sense of place. Drawing on NISSOS Beer, Alexandros will explore how local products, independent producers and the spirit of togetherness create memorable visitor experiences. The value lies not only in what is served, but in the culture and human connections behind it.

Prof. Haiyan Song — Tourism Economics & Wine Tourism Research, Hong Kong Polytechnic University | Hong Kong

International tourism economist recognised for research in demand forecasting and visitor expenditure. *Perspective: What tourism economics reveals about wine tourism, visitor spending, premium pricing and the commercial value of food-and-drink experiences.*

Konstantinos Psaroulis — Psaroulis Winery, Messinia | Greece

Winemaker continuing a family viticulture tradition dating to 1948. *Perspective: How family winemaking, provenance and the character of Messinia can become genuine Mediterranean experiences for visitors.*

17:50–18:10 | LAVAZZA — THE ITALIAN COFFEE EXPERIENCE

20-minute featured experience • From Espresso to Experience

THE OPPORTUNITY

How can exceptional coffee service increase customer satisfaction, loyalty and commercial value?

Lavazza Coffee Specialist / Brand Ambassador — To Be Confirmed | Italy

A featured demonstration of Italian coffee culture, barista craftsmanship, coffee quality, presentation and premium service. Designed to show how hotels, restaurants and cafés can elevate an everyday drink into a distinctive guest experience. *Perspective: How barista craft, Italian coffee rituals and consistent service can transform an everyday beverage into a premium guest experience.*

18:10–18:20 | MEDITERRANEAN HOSPITALITY EXCELLENCE — REFLECTIONS & FUTURE TALENT

Pearl of the Sea • Culinary Competitions • Skills • Future Talent

THE OPPORTUNITY

How can culinary competitions, training and professional standards develop young talent and strengthen Mediterranean hospitality?

Željko Neven Bremec — President, ŠKMER; MTF Senator | Croatia

Croatian master chef, international culinary judge and educator. As President of ŠKMER, the organisation behind the Pearl of the Sea (Biser Mora) competition, he will reflect on professional excellence, hospitality skills, international cooperation and opportunities for the next generation.

18:20 | MEDITERRANEAN SERVICE EXCELLENCE OLYMPICS — MEDAL PRESENTATION

Celebrating Hospitality Skills & Professional Excellence

THE CELEBRATION

Presentation of medals recognising achievement in culinary arts, restaurant service, barista skills, reception and housekeeping. Competitors, trainers, employers and Forum delegates are invited to celebrate the talent, teamwork and professionalism of Mediterranean hospitality.