

FOOD IN ATLANTA

REVIEWS & RECIPES

Organic Buffalo Mozzarella on the Amalfi Coast of Italy

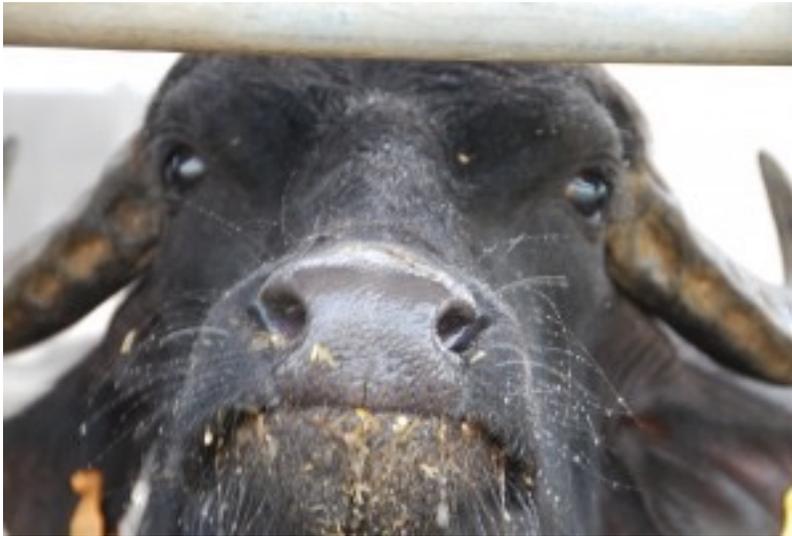
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If you believe in reincarnation, and have higher aspirations than those of Woody Allen to return as Warren Beatty's fingertips, you could do much worse than reappear as a water buffalo on Tenuta Vannulo, a farm in Paestum, Italy, which produces organic buffalo mozzarella, as well as yoghurt and gelato from the milk of water buffalos.

On a recent visit to the Amalfi Coast of Italy (to you travelers I realize this is redundant, but this is a food blog, and for the geographically challenged I wanted to give as much information as possible), Mrs. C. and I visited this farm as part of a small tour group organized by Griffith Gourmet (Google their tours, but keep a towel handy to handle the drool).

The animals stay inside of an enormous covered shed, with food available 24/7. Whenever they feel the urge to be milked, they walk into the milking pen, and if there is a crowd there they form a line and patiently wait their turn, much like the queue in London for the bus . When it is their turn, they walk into the milking stall, where a computer reads the chip on their necklace and sends the automated milkers to locate the udders via robotics.



When that process is through, they are free to wander, dine, recline or obtain a massage. The massager is a machine similar to one utilized by automated car washes, with a massaging sponge at the end of an extended arm. The cow merely places that part of its anatomy it wishes to be massaged against the machine and smiles contentedly. Do not, under any circumstances, make a transmogrification error and wish to return as a bull.

They have a fleet of six on the farm, which also wander around at will servicing the cows as they deem necessary or desirable, but the remainder of the calves with that genetic defect last no longer than six months, after which they are converted to leather products and other goods.

While there, our group was treated to a private lunch of fresh mozzarella, ricotta, salad, bread and the ever present wine. In its simplicity and freshness it was one of the most satisfying meals I had on the trip, holding its own, in its own way, against two tasting marathons at the Don Alfonso 1890 in St. Agata, where we stayed for the week – also worthy of a Google and drool towel. If you are in the area, do not miss this farm, and allow a few extra hours to visit the Greek ruins nearby.