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Local author brings taste of Italy to Bird Key Yacht Club

Chef Robert Gaglio's new book documents his tours of Italy and journey of self-discovery following the 2008 financial crisis.

By **Observer Staff** | 2:45 p.m. January 12, 2024



Robert Gaglio addresses the audience at Bird Key Yacht Club.

Courtesy image

LONGBOAT KEY

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He lost everything in the market crash of 2008, but Sarasota resident and former banker Robert Gaglio found a new purpose thanks to a trip to Italy where he revived family ties, rediscovered his heritage and stoked his passion for Italian cuisine.

Now, the founder of Italian Culinary Tours is taking a tour closer to home to share his love for cooking and the story of his self-discovery documented in the chef's new book, "Freedom to Wander."

The most recent stop on his junket was Jan. 10 at the Bird Key Yacht Club, where he taught more than 100 club members the art of pasta making.

Part of the Bird Key Yacht Club Seafarers Speakers series, Gaglio selected two club members for a hands-on cooking demonstration.

Donning aprons as they took center stage, club members Kathi-Ann Gage and John Dieter learned the ins and outs of crafting pasta, with Gaglio directing their efforts.

Afterward, club members enjoyed an Italian-themed meal prepared by Executive Chef Richard Mendoza and his team. Mendoza and his team capped off the meal with a Tiramisu inspired by Gaglio's cousin, who had helped reveal the joys of Italy years ago.

Gaglio concluded the night with stories from his many tours of Italy highlighted by beautiful photographs.

'Freedom to Wander' area events

- **"The Other Italy: A Journey Beyond Italy's Grand Tour."** 2-3:30 p.m. Jan. 26. Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Ringling College, 1001 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. \$15. Registration required. Visit OlliRinglingCollege.org/course-catalog.
- **Special book talk and concert.** 7-9 p.m. Jan. 29. Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, 1012 N. Orange Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: From \$49; includes a pre-event reception at 6 p.m. with Italian aperitivo, a signed hardcover book and a handmade Italian Culinary Tours apron, made in Sicily. Visit ItalianCulinaryTours.com.



Robert Gaglio and Kathi-Ann Gage

Courtesy image