



CASE STUDY

Building the Brand

Marketing at Bistrot 82, Milan

In 2018 I co-founded Bistrot 82, a few steps from Piazza Sant'Ambrogio in the centre of Milan, and for four years I ran all of its marketing: traditional and digital, inside the venue and out on the street.

Direct ownership: this was my own company — no third-party confidentiality applies.

WHAT'S INSIDE

The Starting Point

One venue, two businesses, two audiences

Offers and Pricing

A line for every audience and every moment

Inside the Venue

The space and the people tell the brand

In the Neighbourhood

Flyers, events and local alliances

Online and Digitalisation

The same care, on screen — and what customers said

The Exit and the Team

Knowing when to stop, and what held

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THE STARTING POINT

One venue, two businesses, two audiences.

Nothing existed yet: no audience, no brand, no story to tell. And the venue had two identities to reconcile.

By day it served students from the Università Cattolica and the offices nearby; by night it was a high-end restaurant. Two audiences with opposite needs, habits and budgets, calling for two distinct strategies under a single brand.



The entrance, a few steps from Piazza Sant'Ambrogio.

OFFERS AND PRICING

A line for every audience and every moment.

For the daytime I designed lines dedicated to students and offices: sharing plates, tasting portions, weekly and monthly offers, often tied to city events or to the Cattolica's academic calendar.

For the evening, an entirely different offer, with menus, prices and proposals built for a high-end clientele.

Offers changed constantly: each one was built, tested and adjusted based on how customers responded.



The dinner menu: a different offer and a different audience, under the same brand.

INSIDE THE VENUE

The space and the people tell the brand.

I designed the space down to every single detail, together with the logo and the visual identity: the same mark on the door, on the flyers and on social media.

I trained the staff with the same care, from the smallest things, like how to greet a customer who reaches out to shake your hand, to the most important one: telling every member of the team who we were and what we stood for, so that every gesture on the floor came from that idea.



The counter: a space designed in detail, with digital booking and ordering at the till.



The daytime counter: sharing plates and tasting portions.

IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Flyers, events and local alliances.

Outside the venue I worked with flyering and events in Piazza Sant'Ambrogio, designed to reach the student population.

I built partnerships even with competitors: a neighbour specialised in salads supplied us with theirs, and we supplied them with the cooked ingredients for their recipes.

We offered dedicated menus to the offices nearby, and for some clients we handled catering, birthdays and private events.



Graduation party offer, tied to the Cattolica's calendar (2020).

ONLINE AND DIGITALISATION

The same care, on screen.

I built the social media and search presence from scratch, and brought the venue onto takeaway platforms, TheFork and Too Good To Go. In parallel I digitalised operations: inventory, till and internal procedures.

THE RESULT

More than 800 ratings across review platforms, still online years after the venue closed — and customers describing the positioning in their own words:

“Great for breakfast, a working or quick lunch — set menu, single dish, focaccia or piadina — and in the evening, dinners with top-quality food. Prices naturally vary between lunch and dinner.”

Customer review, December 2019, translated from Italian · restaurantguru.it/Bistrot-82-Milan

THE EXIT

Knowing when to stop.

The model that made Bistrot 82 work was also its exposure. Everything depended on people being physically there: students and offices by day, dinners by night. The first lockdown made that dependency impossible to ignore, and turned the real question from whether the venue could survive another closure into what another closure would cost.

So after the first lockdown we decided to sell — not in a hurry, but while the business still carried its full value: the brand, the customer base, the reputation built over those years. Selling a restaurant takes time, and we ran it properly until the deal was done. It was a good exit, and it came from the same reading that built the place: understanding exactly what it depended on.

THE TEAM

What held when the business stopped.

When Covid closed the doors, the team stayed — not out of obligation, but because they trusted I'd do right by them. That trust came from having been the first to take a risk, every month before. What I asked for in return was simple: that everyone hold up their side of the work. They did, and so did I. It's the part of those four years I'm proudest of.

HOW I THINK ABOUT IT

A brand is every touchpoint, including the ones nobody measures.

A brand isn't the logo and it isn't the social feed: it's every moment a person meets a business. The flyer kept in a pocket, the handshake at the door, the offer designed for exam week, the salad swapped with the neighbour. I built all of it because, in a business that size, nobody else was going to do it for me.

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