



# Love Letter to Mercato Albani

**If the centre of Bologna is a museum of grand porticos and polished brick, Bolognina is the city's workshop. And at its centre sits the Mercato Albani.**

I love this place because it is where the moving borders of the world actually meet. During the day a traditional *pescivendolo* shares a wall with a Moroccan spice stall or a vendor selling Chinese greens. In the evening the market shifts gear, turning into the neighborhood's living room.

## **Market by day**

Eateries and wine bars with names like Vineria Punk, Sbandò and Ligera are spilling out into the aisle. The atmosphere is unpolished, convivial and entirely unpretentious. You can still see the vegetable crates stacked against the wall, now serving as a makeshift table.

## **Living room by night**

The air of lingering fish brine and roasted coffee starts to blend with the smell of a kitchen in full swing. There isn't a spare seat, so we stand, elbows tucked, glass of wine in hand. This is a place of transit and transformation that feels more like Berlin's Kreuzberg than a traditional Italian square.

## **Bologna, no filter**

This is not a gourmet hall designed for tourists. There are no staged displays of truffles or overpriced balsamic vinegar here. This is the city with its guard down: relaxed, honest, and alive.