



Off the menu: the fast-food chain says it was unfairly kicked out of Milan's Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II arcade

Alamy

McDonald's sues over Milan eviction

After 20 years of serving burgers in Milan's plush 19th century Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II shopping arcade next to the likes of Louis Vuitton, Prada and Gucci, McDonald's has been booted out to make way for another Prada store, **writes Eric Sylvers in Milan.**

The restaurant, McDonald's third-busiest in Italy – after one at the base of Rome's Spanish Steps and another in Milan's Piazza Duomo – turned off the hamburger cooker, the chips deep fryer and the soda dispensers for the last time yesterday afternoon.

Determined not to go quietly, in its last two hours of operations McDonald's

offered everybody free burgers, chips and drinks. Equally determined to call in the lawyers, McDonald's is suing the city of Milan, which owns the Galleria, for €24m in damages connected to what it has called an unfair public tender for the renting of the space that hosts the restaurant.

McDonald's contends the city ensured the restaurant would have to close by fixing a public tender with clauses that automatically excluded the restaurant, including one calling for a "business showing excellence in innovation, technology and communications".

McDonald's says it was the only business in the Galleria

not to receive a right of first refusal on a new rental contract.

The city contests the restaurant chain's accusations regarding the public tender.

"We don't want to fight with the city, but we were kicked out unfairly," said Roberto Masi, chief executive of McDonald's in Italy.

Despite its discrete signage, the Galleria McDonald's has always stood out with Louis Vuitton to its right and Prada in front, both of which this week have purses in their windows for sale at more than €1,000.

With the McDonald's

€7.80 McMenu and €6.60 caprese salad no longer an option, the nearest dining alternative will be Savini, a famous Milanese restaurant offering €27 salads and a similarly priced risotto Milanese.

The Galleria McDonald's has secured a spot in the hearts of many Milanese, as evidenced by the more than 1,500 messages left on the Facebook page set up by the company two weeks ago. Rossana Commissari wrote: "This is the McDonald's where I ate on the first date with my boyfriend, now my fiancée, and where we eat every time we come to see the duomo. A true pity."