

THE FINE WINE COMPANY WESTPORT



CURATED WINES & CRAFT SPIRITS

ORGANIC · SUSTAINABLE · BIODYNAMIC

Fratelli Alessandria Rosso

From a great Barolo producer, this is their blend of Nebbiolo, Frasia and Barbera, a blend that they make and keep mostly for themselves and import a small amount to the tri state market. It's right at home with my Sunday sauce. This is a sauce that has very basic ingredients, if there is a secret to making it, it would simply be not to rush it letting the flavors truly develop and cook the sauce low and slow. I could make this sauce with my eyes closed, I've made it so many times it's an absolute favorite dish of my son Ben.

Sunday Sauce

- Serves 6 easily
- 2Tbsp olive oil & more for serving
- 4 Italian sweet sausages
- 4 Italian hot sausages
- 1 medium onion, minced
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes
- 1 Tbsp dried oregano
- 1 Tbsp tomato paste
- 1/2 cup white wine, dry & not oaked, I use either either a simple Italian white such as Verdi cchio, Vermentino or a French Sauvignon blanc
- 2 cans whole San Marzano tomatoes, crushed by hand
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 inch rind of Parmesan Reggiano
- 1/2 cup fresh minced parsley, plus more for serving
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Best Extra Virgin olive oil to serve
- Freshly grated Parmesan Reggiano to serve
- 1 lb best quality semolina linguini

Method

Oven to 325 F. Heat a Dutch oven or large sauce pot with a tight fitting lid, add oil and when hot brown sausages on all sides. Remove sausages from pan, add onion and cook until translucent, add garlic, red pepper flakes and tomato paste stirring let it coat the bottom of the pan, add wine scraping any bits from the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon. Reduce wine by half. Return sausages to pan. Add tomatoes, Parmesan, bay leaf, parsley and bring to a boil. Cover with tight fitting lid, place in oven and cook for 1 1/2 -2 hours, sausages should be meltingly tender. Cook pasta in salted water, reserving 1/2 cup pasta water if needed to loosen sauce. Toss pasta with sauce, finishing with best quality extra virgin olive oil and Parmesan, twirl pasta out onto a warm platter, surround the pasta with sausages and serve.

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Vignerons Ardechois Cotes du Rhône Blanc

The wine is lively and bright, a blend of Grenache Blanc with a small bit of Viognier & a hint of Marsanne. It's zesty, light on its feet and refreshing. The vineyard is located on the terraces overlooking the village of Bourg Saint Angelo and the Rhône Valley from young 15 year old vines. Farmed organically from clay and limestone soils. It is direct pressed, fermented and aged in stainless steel and concrete.

Herb & zested white bean crostini

with roasted cherry tomatoes, shaved Parmesan & truffle oil

Crostini- serves 4 as a 1st course or serve with mixed greens vinaigrette for a light dinner.

There are times that using tinned beans would be fine, this isn't one of those times. With such few and simple ingredients, quality is paramount. Simply throw them in a bowl, cover with water and put in refrigerator over night. Next morning, strain, place in sauce pot and cover by 2 inches with fresh water. Put on stove bring to boil, skim any scum and simmer until cooked through. For doneness, always check several beans to make sure they are not undercooked. Three quarters will be mashed so go on the side of lightly over cooked if necessary.

For ease, there are packets of herbs available at Whole Foods that have all three herbs in one small container labeled as seafood blend should you be concerned about using up 3 bunches of different herbs. To roast the tomatoes, I like the super sweet petite cherry tomatoes on the vine, toss lightly with oil, season with salt and pepper and roast at 375 for 20-25 minutes until they begin to collapse. Reserve the small bit of oil and tomato juices for garnish, it holds great flavor. This crostini is best served warm, if making ahead of time, wrap up & refrigerate the herbed beans. Upon serving, toss beans in a sauté pan on stove to warm through and cherry tomatoes in a small pan to warm through.

Ingredients

- 1/2 bunch flat leaf parsley
- 1/2 bunch chives
- 1/2 bunch dill
- Herbs should equal 2 cups total finely minced herbs & additional tablespoon for garnish set aside, if using the packets (see note above) you'll need 2 packets, again setting 1 Tbsp aside for garnish
- 1/2 pound dry Cannellini Beans, cooked, drained, and placed in mixing bowl
- Zest and juice of lemon
- 1 clove garlic, finely minced
- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan & 1 Tbsp reserved shavings for garnish
- Pinch of red pepper flakes
- 8 slices baguette or country loaf, grilled, toasted or seared lightly on both sides.
- Oven roasted tomatoes, cooked & reserved oil, see above note.
- 1 tsp drizzled truffle oil to garnish

In a food processor or large mortar and pestle, combine herbs, lemon zest and juice, garlic, oil, salt, pepper and combine until a pesto is formed. Add 3/4 of the beans to the food processor, pulse several times. Not looking for a creamed paste, still want some nice texture. Combine the herbs and smashed beans with the whole beans and mix well. Add the grated Parmesan & red pepper flakes toss well and check for seasoning. Pile the beans onto the grilled bread pressing lightly. Add the cherry tomatoes and their juices on top of the beans. Garnish with shaved Parmesan, reserved herbs and a drizzle of truffle oil. Serve on platter and enjoy with a glass of Cotes du Rhône Blanc. Cheers!

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The Tinel - Blondelet

estate stretches over 15 hectares of wines divided into three appellations Pouilly Fume, Sancerre and Pouilly sur Loire. The citrus, mineral edged and oh! So lovely “Arret Buffatte” single vineyard Pouilly -Fume is 100 % Sauvignon Blanc from 40 year old vines and flint and limestone soils. The Tinel - Blondelets are a winegrower family for more than 400 years, the current woman running the estate, Annick Tinel -Blondelet represents the 12th generation. Yes, this family makes great wine.

Silken artichoke, leek and Parmesan soup

This is about as sexy as a soup can be while being multi layered in profile and comforting at the same time.

- 6 large artichokes cleaned down to the heart and sliced, or 2 10 oz bags frozen artichoke hearts
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 2Tbsp butter
- 2Tbsp olive oil
- 2 large leeks, cleaned well, diced
- 2 stalks celery, stripped with a vegetable peeler, diced
- 1 cup Sauvignon Blanc
- 2 russet potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 tsp white pepper
- 1/8 tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 quart chicken stock preferably homemade or 1 quart box bone broth, low sodium
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan Reggiano
- Kosher salt to taste
- Truffle dust to garnish - the little envelope in your wine box.
- Parmesan Reggiano shavings for garnish
- Best quality extra virgin olive oil for garnish
- Warm crusty bread & mixed greens vinaigrette to serve.

Put the cleaned artichokes in a bowl being sure it's fully exposed to the lemon juice and zest to prevent browning. Set a Dutch oven or large sauce pot on the stove over medium heat. Melt butter and olive oil and add the leeks and celery and cook until soft, not looking to brown them at all, add the artichokes and lemon juice/zest and the wine and reduce by half. Add the potatoes, bay leaf, white pepper, nutmeg and chicken stock. Bring to boil and then down to a simmer, cover with lid simmer for twenty minutes until all is very soft. Add the cream and Parmesan and in batches purée in a vita mix or blender, looking for absolute silken texture. Check for seasoning. Serve with warm crusty bread in warm bowls garnished with a sprinkling of truffle dust, Parmesan and a drizzle of olive oil.

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Hanger Steaks with shallot - Armagnac pan sauce and creamed Swiss chard Aka Date Night with Frank Family Merlot

Serves 2

The cut of beef for the steak is called onglet, also known as butchers tenderloin (French butchers would bring this cut home for their family). It is the cut for the great bistro dish steak - frites. Ask your butcher for a nice hanger steak, yes -go to a store that you can speak with a butcher.

We are searing it, making a pan sauce and serving it with creamed Swiss chard, a small change to the usual creamed spinach served at steak houses. You'll need to be organized and have already to put in the pan, this steak cooks quickly. I suggest making the creamed Swiss chard first, keeping it warm and then placing all your attention to the steak. Delicious & you are guaranteed to have rock star status.

When clients ask for a wine to have by the fireplace or to cuddle up with, I reach for this wine. It's everything a Merlot should be- soft, weighty & voluptuous, perfect for date night. Frank Family Vineyards in Napa was recently sold to Treasury Wine Estates for \$315 million. It is said that Todd Graff, Frank Family's wine maker is going to stay on. I'm trying to be optimistic, but often when a conglomerate buys a vineyard we see a huge increase in production, buying juice from outside sources and definitive decline in quality. So, while this wine is absolute quality and delicious now, I wanted you all to experience it. Cheers!

For the steak

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 5oz hangar steaks
- Kosher salt and freshly cracked pepper
- 2 Tbsp butter, divided
- 1 shallot finely minced
- 1/4 cup Armagnac or Cognac
- 1/4 cup Frank Family Merlot, reserve the rest for dinner

Method

Set a cast iron pan over high heat, season your steaks on both sides with kosher salt and black pepper. When the pan is almost smoking, put a film of olive oil over the pan and put in the steaks. Reduce the heat to medium high and let the steaks brown well on the first side for about 3 minutes. Keep your hands behind your back if you feel the need to move the steak around, let the pan do it's job. Turn the steaks over, after 2-3 minutes when you see the red juices begin to appear on the surface of the steaks, remove from the pan, place on a warm platter and tent lightly with foil. Add a tablespoon of butter to the pan & the minced shallot. Stir, loosening any brown bits, carefully with yourself away from the pan add the Armagnac, be careful it's going to flame up, stir and add the Merlot to the pan, reduce the sauce by half, turn off the heat and stir in the other tablespoon of butter, check for seasoning and spoon the sauce over the steaks, serve with creamed Swiss chard and the Merlot. Cheers!

Creamed Swiss chard, serves 2

1 large bunch Swiss chard, if skimpy get 2. Stems removed and chopped in large dice.
2 Tbsp butter
1/2 onion finely minced
1 clove garlic, minced
1 1/2 cup heavy cream
Kosher salt & cracked black pepper
1/8 tsp nutmeg

Method

Bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Let cook for 5 minutes and strain & rinse with cold water. Wrap the Swiss chard in a clean kitchen towel and squeeze all the liquid out. In a Dutch oven, melt butter over medium heat, add the onions and garlic and cook slowly until translucent, add the dry Swiss chard and the cream, simmer until thick and rich about 12-15 minutes. Add salt, pepper, nutmeg, stirring well. Keep warm until ready to serve.