

ADVENTURES CLUB

by Anthony Lynch • AUGUST 2015

2014 CHIGNIN BLANC • A. & M. QUENARD

Upon arriving in Chignin, I sighed with relief as the very first sign I laid eyes on pointed me in the direction of the nearby Quenard cellars. But wait . . . hold on: at the next intersection, several more signs indicated Quenards and Quénards left, right, and every direction imaginable. After four or five tours of the roundabout, I finally located *A. & M. Quenard* and dizzily made my way to the correct winery, where André, his son, Michel, and a third generation, Guillaume, greeted me at the door. Masters of Alpine viticulture, these Quenards work some of Savoie's steepest and rockiest slopes, crafting juicy, charming, and bracing wines from Chignin's limestone mountainsides. This low-alcohol white, made from the local Jacquère grape, displays concentrated exotic fruit aromas in perfect balance with crisp, mouth-watering acidity and a telltale stoniness. The perfect match for fondue and raclette, it can also be enjoyed for no particular reason at all.

\$19.00 PER BOTTLE **\$205.20 PER CASE**

2012 BANDINELLO TOSCANA • VILLA DI GEGGIANO



Brothers Andrea and Alessandro Boscu Bianchi Bandinelli run the epic Villa di Geggiano, a stunning estate near Siena that embraces centuries of history with its beautiful gardens, artwork, and furnishings. While the Villa's luxurious guesthouse would make a great place to spend an extravagant Tuscan holiday, the classy brothers in charge are, in fact, quite down-to-earth, steadily focused on crafting

honest wines from the slopes surrounding the majestic Villa grounds. While they specialize in traditionally produced Chianti Classico, they also produce this bargain red for everyday enjoyment. A blend of primarily organically farmed Sangiovese with some Cilieggiolo and Syrah, it delivers plenty of fresh cherry fruit with floral overtones in a medium-bodied and highly drinkable delivery. Pair it with pizza, tomato-based pasta dishes, or grilled meats for guaranteed fun, but don't hesitate to be creative. If the Bandinello strikes your fancy, check out Geggiano's Chianti bottlings for a deeper journey into the Tuscan soul.

\$20.00 PER BOTTLE **\$216.00 PER CASE**

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

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PASTA AL PESTO

by Christopher Lee

*Pasta al pesto is definitive, particularly trofie pasta, which is traditional in Liguria. I learned from a historian, whose family has lived in the Genoa hills for generations, that walnuts are traditionally used in Ligurian pesto. Walnut trees cover those hills. You'll hear vigorous opposition to this claim, even locally, and I do not try to argue it any more. Whether you use pine nuts or walnuts, do not toast them; in cooking, their oils are broken down, and their thickening quality vanishes along with their sweetness. The following method—it's about the water remaining on the leaves—creates a smooth, bright green, silky pesto. Culinary "cheats" that attempt to preserve color—such as blanching the basil, or mixing in an amount of parsley or carrot tops—all result in a less flavorful sauce. Look for Genovese basil, *Ocimum basilicum* "Genovese." It should be young, with tender, fragrant leaves. Piccolo fino basil, a small-leaf Genovese variety, makes a sublime pesto. Purists still make pesto by hand, in a mortar and pestle, a Stone Age tool that produces a sauce of perfect consistency. The basil is pounded together with a little salt to a coarse-but-not-too paste. Everything else is pounded separately and then combined with the basil. The resulting sauce has an unassailable integrity, unattained by other methods of preparation. Serve with confidence, to great expectation!*

2 cups basil leaves, loosely packed
3 ounces extra virgin olive oil
2 ounces pine nuts or walnuts
1 small clove fresh garlic, peeled
2 teaspoons sea salt
2½ ounces Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated
2½ ounces Pecorino Romano cheese, grated,
plus some to finish
1 tablespoon water
200 grams (approximately 2 cups) trofie pasta
(spaghetti or other dried pasta)

Rinse the basil in cool water. Shake off water, but do not dry completely. In a blender, combine oil, nuts, garlic, sea salt, and ¼ cup of basil. Pulse to a coarse paste. Add remaining basil in small batches, pulsing to a paste each time. Add cheeses, 1 tablespoon water, and pulse again until smooth. You should have about 1½ cups pesto. Cook pasta al dente. Toss with pesto and 2 tablespoons pasta water. Serve with grated Pecorino Romano.

Makes 4 appetizer-size portions