
MANILA CLAMS WITH BACON, CRÈME FRAÎCHE, AND FINES HERBES

BY GARY PODESTO

This rouxless take on chowder is packed with fresh clams and smoky bacon, yielding a broth that is elegant yet comforting. Prized for their sweet, briny liquor and firm texture, cultivated Manila clams are a climate-smart alternative to wild seafood, as they help to filter ocean water. This month's Coteaux du Loir blanc from Pascal Janvier acts as the perfect foil to the salty sweetness of the clams and the freshness of fines herbes.

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil	5 pounds Manila clams, well rinsed (see note)
4 ounces smoked bacon, cut into lardons	1 pound fingerling potatoes, sliced into ½-inch rounds and simmered in seasoned water until fork-tender
2 golf ball-size spring onions, peeled, halved, and thinly sliced	¾ cup crème fraîche or heavy cream
2 stalks celery, sliced	3 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 small celery root, peeled and diced	3 tablespoons loosely packed chervil, roughly chopped
½ teaspoon dried herbes de Provence	3 tablespoons chives, finely sliced
Pinch of salt	3 tablespoons dill, roughly chopped
2 cups clam juice, fish stock, or water	Freshly ground black pepper
½ cup dry white wine	
Julienned peel of 1 small lemon	

In a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat, render bacon with olive oil until a little crisp and fat has coated the bottom of the pan. Stir in onion, celery, celery root, herbes de Provence, and salt. Sauté for about 8 minutes, until vegetables are tender but not browned. Add clam juice, white wine, and half the lemon zest, and bring the mixture to a gentle simmer.

Add clean clams and cooked potatoes to the pot and cover tightly. Steam for 5 minutes, shaking the pot occasionally, until clams have opened wide. Discard any that remain closed.

Lower the heat and stir in crème fraîche and parsley. Simmer gently for another 2 minutes (do not let it reach a rolling boil) to allow the flavors to meld. Taste for seasoning. Add a squeeze of lemon juice and add salt only if needed, as clam liquor is naturally salty.

Garnish with remaining lemon peel, chervil, chives, dill, and fresh black pepper to taste. Serve in warm bowls with plenty of crusty sourdough bread for dipping.

Note: Today's shellfish farmers are good about purging sand from clams, but no one likes to eat grit. Soak the clams in cold water for about an hour, changing the water two or three times along the way. If there's still a lot of sand after three changes of water, keep cleaning until no sand remains.

Serves 6








Gary Podesto is a cook at Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, California, and is the chief culinary collaborator for the Climate Farm School. His work aims to revitalize the ritual of gathering around the hearth and table while promoting the values of edible education and regenerative agriculture. Learn more at www.garypodesto.net.



2024 COTEAUX DU LOIR *BLANC*
PASCAL JANVIER

Many of the growers we work with in France represent the second, third, or fourth generation in their families to make wine, but every now and then, we encounter a first-generation vigneron who is so self-assured, curious, and talented that their wines taste as though they've inherited many decades of wisdom and know-how. Pascal Janvier is one of these producers, and he didn't even turn to wine until the age of thirty! Fortunately for Pascal and his wife, Dominique, his parents had some vines—they rent the rest—around Jasnières in the Val du Loir, a tributary of the better-known Loire River. This area, the most northerly and coldest in the Loire Valley, is planted predominantly to Chenin Blanc. The Janviers' Coteaux du Loir *blanc* is a beautiful expression of cool-climate Chenin, all Meyer lemon, grapefruit, green apple, and a hint of chalk. It will pair beautifully with any baked fish, but you will be especially rewarded if you try it alongside Gary Podesto's chowder. —TOM WOLF

\$23.00 per bottle \$248.40 per case

					
2024 Coteaux du Loir <i>Blanc</i> Pascal Janvier	Chenin Blanc	15-year-old vines Clay	Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52°F Do not decant	Meyer lemon, green apple, chalk Aromatic, mineral, delicate	Drink now
2024 Vino Rosso "Il Gocchetto" Tenuta La Pergola	80% Brachetto, 10% Freisa, 10% Croatina	Vines planted in 1990 Clay, chalk	Serve <i>cool</i> 54–58°F Do not decant	Blackberries, orange zest, herbs Exuberant, ambrosial, versatile	Drink now

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2024 VINO ROSSO "IL GOCCETTO"
TENUTA LA PERGOLA

Although the northwestern Italian region of Piemonte is famous for its single-variety reds, it produces incredible blends, too. Tenuta La Pergola excels at both, but we particularly love their ability to blend joyous and fragrant beauties from Piemonte's lesser-known red grapes. This bottling puts a spotlight on the ambrosial Brachetto grape, an aromatic variety that is used in all sorts of styles, including sparkling and sweet Piemontese wines. Mixing in a splash of Freisa and Croatina, this rendition is a straightforward and delicious dry *rosso*, swirling with blackberries, orange zest, and a faintly herbal finish. Pair it with a roast chicken or carbonara for a simple weeknight feast! —TOM WOLF

Pairs well with carbonara, fennel salami, and grilled mushroom skewers.

\$16.00 per bottle \$172.80 per case



ABOVE Pergola-trained vines. © Tenuta La Pergola

COVER Pascal Janvier shows off his rocky soils. © Gail Skoff