

RICOTTA GNOCCHI, OR GNUDI DI RICOTTA

BY CHRISTOPHER LEE

London's River Café claims to have originated ricotta gnocchi in the 1980s. Although the café makes a wonderful version, its claim is upended by a recipe for ricotta gnudi published in 1894 by the Italian writer Pellegrino Artusi in his Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well, which gives us this dish, and with clarity. The name gnudi comes from ricotta ravioli filling without its usual pasta cloak, served instead with butter and herbs. In Rome, gnocchi are baked in tomato sauce; in Florence, they're tossed with porcini; in Torino, they're in brodo. I serve them with "milk butter," the name I've given the delicious, buttery whey made from melting whole butter and drawing off the butter fat portion. The fragrant, floral Lacrima di Morro d'Alba from Santa Barbara is a dream with these wonderfully light gnocchi.

10 ounces fresh sheep's milk ricotta,
pressed overnight in a fine sieve to drain
1 large whole egg, whisked
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted
4 tablespoons finely grated Parmesan,
plus more for finishing
¼ teaspoon sea salt

Pinch nutmeg
Scant 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour,
plus ¾ cup for dusting
½ pound unsalted butter, melted
12 small sage leaves or 12 one-inch pieces
cut from large leaves

Press ricotta overnight in a cheesecloth-lined sieve to remove whey. Discard whey, or save to use for bread baking. In a mixing bowl, add egg, melted butter, Parmesan, salt, and nutmeg to ricotta and mix gently. Work in flour with a spatula. The ricotta will resemble a light dough. (You may need a little more flour, if your ricotta is wet after pressing.) Do not overmix dough. Test a teaspoon-size nugget by tossing it gently in flour, then simmering in salted water for 5 minutes to see if dough holds; if it crumbles, work a little more flour into dough and test again. Scoop dough into 1½-tablespoon nuggets and toss onto a flour-dusted sheet pan lined with parchment. Roll gnocchi gently in flour to coat. In a cupped hand, gently jiggle gnocchi into ovoid shapes about 2 inches long. Place gnocchi in even rows on another floured, parchment-lined sheet pan, cover with more parchment, and refrigerate for 2 hours. Melt ½ pound butter over low heat until separated. Pour or scoop fat off milky portion. (A little butter fat will remain.) Warm butter in a small pan and add sage leaves. Hold in a warm spot. Cook gnocchi at a gentle boil for 5 minutes in lightly salted water, until dough loses its translucent center. Carefully scoop out with a slotted spoon or smooth-edged sieve, draining water off, and placing on warm plates. Drizzle gnocchi with sage-infused milk butter and shower with Parmigiano.

Makes about 30 small dumplings







Christopher Lee is a former head chef of Chez Panisse and Eccolo restaurants in Berkeley and co-founder of Pop-Up General Store in Oakland. Visit his website: oldfashionedbutcher.com.

**2019 GRAVES BLANC
CHÂTEAU GRAVILLE-LACOSTE**

Bordeaux is often thought of as red-wine territory. One of France's most renowned wine regions, it boasts many of the most coveted Cabernets and Merlots in the world. Yet this slice of the country's Atlantic coast also produces very worthy whites that are perfect as apéritifs or paired with the local catch, like cod. If you want to sample the region's best *blancs*, look no further than Graves, an appellation south of the left bank's prestigious châteaux. Although the view here is not as awe-inspiring as it is in various other wine regions—Bordeaux is relatively flat—the ground is hallowed, with clay-and-limestone soils that are ideal for growing Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc, and Muscadelle: grapes that are used for both sweet Sauternes and dry Graves. All three varieties feature in this white from Hervé Dubourdieu's Château Grville-Lacoste. Because Hervé's vines are five decades old and therefore have access to deep water reserves, and because their location is in one of Graves's cooler microclimates, this *blanc* is incredibly consistent, year in and year out: crisp, fresh, and refreshing with notes of citrus, cut grass, and subtle tropical fruits. It remains among the best values in all of France and a wonderful expression of Bordeaux's white-wine possibilities. —TOM WOLF

\$21.00 per bottle \$226.80 per case



					
2019 Graves Blanc Château Grville-Lacoste	75% Sémillon, 20% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Muscadelle	45–48-year-old vines Clay, limestone on fissured rock	Serve cold 46–52° F Do not decant	Lime, chalk, grass Crisp, zingy, refreshing	Drink now
2018 Lacrima di Morro d'Alba Azienda Santa Barbara	Lacrima	Vines planted 1980–1990 Clay	Serve slightly cool 56–60° F Decant optional	Lavender, roses, wild berries Exuberant, joyful, fragrant	Drink now

**2018 LACRIMA DI MORRO D'ALBA
AZIENDA SANTA BARBARA**

Until now, the only wines we have imported from the region of Le Marche have been whites made from Verdicchio, but when we tasted this hedonistic red from central Italy's Adriatic coast, we couldn't resist. There are two theories for the origin of the grape's name, Lacrima, which means "teardrop." It is so named either because the grapes resemble teardrops, or because the skin breaks easily and juice seeps like a tear. The only sad aspect to Lacrima is that it almost went extinct—its tendency to seep invites disease and pests—until the 1980s, when a handful of local *vignaioli* revived it. This grape, however, produces not a brooding wine but a *rosso* that is all about exuberance and joy, especially in the hands of Stefano Antonucci, who also crafts a Verdicchio that is among our best values. After harvesting his Lacrima di Morro d'Alba grapes, planted in clay soils in the 1980s, Stefano ferments and ages the juice for eight months in stainless steel, retaining all of its inherent freshness, vibrance, and divinely floral perfume,



which is perfect for all kinds of fare, including Chris Lee's ricotta gnocchi.

—TOM WOLF

\$24.00 per bottle

\$259.20 per case



LEFT
The winery at Santa Barbara.
© Azienda Santa Barbara

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

To reorder any of our Wine Club selections, please give us a call at 510.524.1524 to speak to a salesperson, or send us an email at wineclub@kermityllynch.com.