

BAKED SHEEP'S MILK RICOTTA AND ASPARAGUS

BY CHRISTOPHER LEE

Fresh ricotta is a wonderful thing. Delicious eaten in any way, it becomes a wonder apart when scented with a few herbs and some olive oil, baked hot until browned on top, and then served on toast or with a simple salad or vegetable. A small arugula salad on the side is an elegant, tasty elaboration. Local spring asparagus is a perfect accompaniment to the ricotta. Serve the ricotta with Gregoletto's lovely, dry Prosecco for lunch on a warm, sunny afternoon.

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| 1½ cups (one 12-ounce package)
sheep's milk ricotta | ¼ teaspoon sea salt |
| ¾ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
(about 3 ounces) | ¼ teaspoon freshly ground
Tellicherry pepper |
| 1 large egg, beaten | 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil |
| 1½ teaspoons fresh thyme, or 1 teaspoon
savory or oregano, coarsely chopped,
plus 2 thyme sprigs | 1 bunch fresh asparagus
(about ¾ pound) |
| | Juice ½ lemon |
| | <i>Optional: 2 cups arugula</i> |

Drain ricotta overnight, lightly pressed in a cheesecloth-lined sieve. Next day, combine ricotta, ½ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, beaten egg, chopped herbs, sea salt, ground pepper, 1 tablespoon olive oil, and mix well. Transfer ricotta to an oiled casserole of appropriate size. Place the thyme sprigs on top, drizzle ricotta with remaining olive oil, and bake uncovered 20–25 minutes at 400° F, until ricotta is browned and bubbly on top and gently set. Cook asparagus at a low boil in lightly salted water for 3–5 minutes, until stalks can be pierced with little resistance by a small knife. Remove from water to a towel-lined plate. Scoop a portion of ricotta onto each plate (or onto toasted country bread) and drizzle with olive oil. Toss asparagus with a spoonful of vinaigrette and place a few asparagus stalks next to ricotta on each plate. If desired, serve a few leaves of arugula alongside, dressed with the same vinaigrette. *Et voilà!*

Makes 4–6 servings

VINAIGRETTE

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|--------------------------------|--|
| 2 teaspoons chopped shallot | Pinch sea salt |
| 1 tablespoon Champagne vinegar | 4 tablespoons grapeseed or light olive oil |

Macerate shallot in vinegar for 15 minutes. Add salt and oil. Whisk mixture until well blended.

ADVENTURES



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.

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2018 PROSECCO TREVISO “SUI LIEVITI” • GREGOLETTO

For most wine drinkers, “Prosecco” is a stand-in for a cold, crisp, sparkling white wine that should be pretty cheap. There’s nothing wrong with that desire, but there is such a large range of wines bearing the Prosecco DOC and DOCG that they are worthy of as much understanding and differentiation as any other style of wine. The Gregoletto family, who makes this Prosecco, has been tending vines in the hills of Premaor di Miane, near Valdobbiadene, since around 1600. Today, the family farms vineyards in Premaor, Miane, Refrontolo, and Rua di Feletto, all of which are communes in the DOCG Conegliano-Valdobbiadene, a small subzone of the much larger Prosecco DOC. Luigi Gregoletto and his family can’t, however, label their overachieving Prosecco with “DOCG”—the highest classification, generally reserved for sloped vineyards at higher elevation—because they seal their bottles with a crown cap instead of a cork. Nevertheless, they’ve married their excellent, hillside *terroirs* with painstaking, classic *sui lieviti* or *col fondo* vinification practices, whereby they ferment this wine in stainless-steel tanks, bottle it with a little grape must, and allow it to undergo a secondary fermentation in the bottle without disgorging the wine.

Even though this technique is traditional, the difficulty of simultaneously following it *and* making excellent wine means it is avoided by most Prosecco producers today! Gregoletto’s result is a crisp, vibrant, fully dry sparkling wine with notes of fresh apples, lime, and stones. The complexity will remind you more of the better Champagnes you have tasted than of most Prosecco. —TOM WOLF

\$21.00 per bottle \$226.80 per case



					
Prosecco Treviso “Sui Lieviti” <i>Gregoletto</i>	Glera	20-year-old vines, on average Sandstone, marl	Serve <i>cold</i> 46–52° F Do not decant*	Apple, lime, stones Crisp, vibrant, fully dry	Drink now
2018 Beaumes-de-Venise Rouge <i>Domaine de Durban</i>	70% Grenache, 25% Syrah, 5% Mourvèdre	47-year-old vines Clay, triassic limestone	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62° F Decant optional	Black cherries, tapenade, smoke Hearty, versatile, savory	Drink now through 2025

*Allow sediment to settle and pour off lees, or gently invert bottle before opening for a cloudier pour.

2018 BEAUMES-DE-VENISE ROUGE DOMAINE DE DURBAN

If you ever find yourself on the wine route in the southern Rhône, around Châteauneuf-du-Pape or Gigondas, and make a stop for lunch, order a glass of red Beaumes-de-Venise. Like the best *rouges* of those more prestigious appellations, it is made mostly of Grenache and possesses the quintessential notes

of dark fruit and spices that make this region’s reds distinct and irresistible. Beaumes-de-Venise bottlings are, however, juicier and not as structured, and therefore serve as nice midday sippers. Domaine de Durban lies ten minutes south of Gigondas, atop a picturesque plateau sheltered by the Dentelles de Montmirail, just above the village of Beaumes-de-Venise. The Leydiers have been farming here since the 1960s, and today they make a Gigondas, a dessert wine called Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise, and this dry red Beaumes-de-Venise. Evoking black cherries, tapenade, and smoke, it is hearty, but also approachable and versatile enough to drink even when the weather gets warmer. —TOM WOLF

\$20.00 per bottle \$216.00 per case



LEFT
Domaine
de Durban

COVER
Gregoletto

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