

ADVENTURES

MUSSELS IN SPICY TOMATO BROTH

BY GEORGEANNE BRENNAN

Mussels di Marina di Ravenna, the wild mussels harvested from the Adriatic Sea off the coast of Ravenna, are often cooked in a tomato broth. Here, I've used Washington State mussels and included spicy sausage with the tomato broth to make a Pacific Coast dish that pairs exceptionally well with the light, fruity Rosso Piceno from Colleleuva. Dip a piece of bread into the broth, pop out a mussel, sip the wine, and enjoy the coastal flavors.

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| 2 pounds fresh mussels | ¼ teaspoon dried chili flakes |
| 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil | ½ teaspoon fresh thyme leaves |
| 1 tablespoon unsalted butter | ¾ cup canned, peeled, whole San Marzano tomatoes, with their juice |
| 1 pound spicy Italian sausage, cut into 1-inch pieces | 1½ cups dry white wine |
| ½ cup finely chopped shallots, about 1 large or 2 medium | ⅓ cup fresh basil leaves, cut in chiffonade |

Discard mussels that do not open or that are broken or cracked. Remove beards on the mussels by pulling or clipping them. Rinse mussels well, put them in a bowl covered with a damp kitchen towel, and refrigerate until ready to use.

Over medium-high heat, in a large, wide-mouthed pot, warm olive oil and butter. When butter foams, add sausage pieces and brown them, turning often. When browned, add shallots and sauté until translucent, 2 to 3 minutes. Add chili flakes and thyme, and stir. Add tomatoes and wine, crushing tomatoes with the back of a wooden spoon to break them apart. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook for 10 to 15 minutes to allow the alcohol to burn off and the flavors to combine.

Add mussels and ladle some of the broth over them. Cover the pot and allow mussels to cook just until they open, 5 to 7 minutes. Do not overcook.

To serve, ladle mussels and sausage along with some broth into bowls and garnish with a scattering of basil. Serve with rustic country bread. *Serves 3-4*



The James Beard award-winning cookbook author Georgeanne Brennan is also the author of the best-selling food memoir *A Pig in Provence*. She continues to write about food and cooking from her longtime homes in Provence and in Northern California, where she co-owns an aperitif wine bar. You can find more of her recipes at www.georgeannebrennan.com.









**2024 VOUVRAY
CHAMPALOU**

In the heart of the vast Loire Valley, Vouvray is home to some of the region's most storied expressions of Chenin Blanc. The Loire's great white grape, Chenin is so versatile that, in Vouvray alone, it can yield exquisite sparkling wine, refreshing dry whites, succulent *demi-secs*, and luscious dessert wines. In fact, you can taste all of these just from the Champalou family, who started their domaine forty years ago and have risen to the top of the appellation in the decades since. Reminiscent of a bounty of freshly harvested orchard fruit, this Vouvray might be my favorite fall white. It bursts with notes of ripe apples and pears, which are balanced by a bitter stoniness and a fleshy texture that makes it incredibly food-friendly. —TOM WOLF

Pairs well with pear ravioli,
grilled shrimp tacos,
and butternut squash soup.

\$28.00 per bottle \$302.40 per case

					
2024 Vouvray <i>Champalou</i>	Chenin Blanc	35-year-old vines, on average Clay, limestone	Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52°F Do not decant	Ripe apples, pear, stones Mineral, luscious, floral	Drink now through 2028
2024 Rosso Piceno <i>Colleleva</i>	80% Montepulciano, 20% Sangiovese	15- to 40-year-old vines Clay	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62°F Decant optional	Red berries, soft spice, a hint of smooth tannin Juicy, exuberant, structured	Drink now

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**2024 ROSSO PICENO
COLLELEVA**

With the exception of Venice, Italy's eastern coast gets relatively little love from American tourists and travel websites. Whereas most of us have probably heard of or visited Cinque Terre, Tuscany, or the Amalfi coast, mention Bari or Ancona to a friend and you'll likely get a puzzled look. The eastern regions' comparatively quiet reputation is, however, very fortunate for wine drinkers seeking value. Just on the other side of the Apennine mountain range from Tuscany, the region of Le Marche is home to Colleleva, an *azienda* that produces some of the country's nicest under-\$20 bottles you'll find. For the Rosso Piceno, winemaker Daniele Rotatori



blends mostly Montepulciano with a splash of Sangiovese. While it still has loads of charm and generous fruit, the 2024 vintage is a little more structured than the previous two, so I recommend pairing it with your favorite braises and roasts this fall and winter—not to mention Georgeanne's delicious mussels in broth!

—TOM WOLF

\$17.00 per bottle
\$183.60 per case

LEFT *The countryside of Le Marche.* © Gail Skoff

COVER *Céline Champalou.*
© Jimmy Hayes