

LUCQUES OLIVES MARINATED WITH LEMON AND HERBS

BY CHRISTOPHER LEE

This elegant, beautiful hors d'oeuvre is easy to prepare and delightful to eat. Some people hesitate to serve unpitted olives, but I urge you to simply warn your guests about the pits. Whole, unpitted olives are more delicious and visually more appealing than hollowed-out ones. Often, pitted olives have had their flavor removed with their pits.

For this recipe, look for Lucques olives. From the Languedoc, they are prepared in a gentle brine that requires them to be refrigerated. If you prefer, choose a mix of olives—brined green ones, such as Castelvetrano and Cerignola; purple-skinned Gaetas from along the Tyrrhenian Sea coast; Taggiasca olives, small and brownish, from Liguria; Niçoise olives from Provence; ripe, wrinkled, black, Moroccan, oil-cured olives. I avoid highly seasoned olives that have their own dominant character, such as Greek Kalamatas or olives covered with herbes de Provence. Both are tasty, but neither is the correct choice for this dish. Some cooks crack their olives before marinating, which has its own rustic beauty.

The flavor of the olives deepens when they've had time to marinate—a few hours or an afternoon. They'll last a week or two refrigerated, and you can make more than you need for one service.

If you're fortunate enough to have fresh bay leaves, with their enchanting perfume, substitute them for dried ones. Wild fennel pollen—the best is from Tuscany and Umbria—is completely different from domesticated fennel. You can find wild Tuscan fennel pollen at the Kermit Lynch shop in Berkeley or at your local spice shop.

2 cups Lucques olives	6 small bay leaves, dried or fresh
4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil	6 sprigs fresh thyme
6–8 thin strips lemon peel from 1 lemon, cut with a vegetable peeler	6 small cloves garlic, peeled, or 3 large cloves, thinly sliced
½ teaspoon red chili flakes	½ teaspoon wild fennel pollen

Rinse olives in lukewarm water and drain in a large sieve, then rub dry with a paper towel. Transfer olives to a wide, shallow saucepan and add olive oil, lemon peel, chili flakes, bay leaves, thyme, and garlic cloves. Stir with a wooden spoon to mix. Warm over low heat until olives, herbs, and spices give off their exotic fragrance. Stir in wild fennel pollen. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Makes 2 cups

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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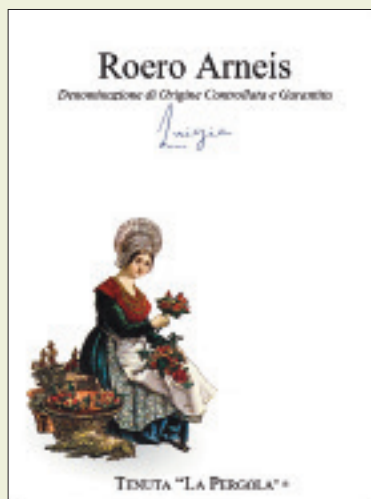
ADVENTURES



2020 ROERO ARNEIS TENUTA LA PERGOLA

Tenuta La Pergola makes some of our most beloved weeknight reds, but it was this white wine that drew us to the *azienda* in the first place. Years ago, having stopped at a hole-in-the-wall trattoria for lunch near Aosta—where Italy meets France and Switzerland—Kermit ordered a pitcher of Arneis hailing from the neighboring region of Piemonte. Coming across a stellar wine in such a setting is rarer than you might think, but that time, the pitcher delivered an exemplary, honest, and pure expression of this Piemontese white grape. It was the perfect complement to charcuterie and salad at the beginning of a relaxed lunch. Fifteen years later, this cuvée supplies that same original charm and versatility, proving Piemonte isn't *just* about red wine. This lusciously plump Roero Arneis is full of zesty flavors of grapefruit, lychee, and peach that last long after you've taken a sip. Pour it alongside Chris Lee's marinated olives for an ideal summertime *aperitivo*. —TOM WOLF

\$16.00 per bottle \$172.80 per case



2020 Roero Arneis <i>Tenuta La Pergola</i>	Arneis	Vines planted in 1995 Sand	Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52° F Do not decant	Grapefruit, lychee, peach Zesty, medium- bodied, luscious	Drink now
2019 Vittoria Frappato <i>Portelli</i>	Frappato	Vines planted in 1982 Clay	Serve <i>cool</i> 56–60° F Decant optional	Red fruit, tobacco, spice Elegant, fragrant, versatile	Drink now

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2019 VITTORIA FRAPPATO PORTELLI

Mount Etna may be home to the hottest wines in Sicily right now, but by no means is it the only slice of the region worthy of our attention. In the southeast of the island lies a town and appellation called Vittoria, home to notable native grape varieties such as Calabrese (aka Nero d'Avola) and Frappato, which are often blended into a delightful red called Cerasuolo di Vittoria. In this bottling, however, Salvatore Portelli and his son Alessandro have isolated some of their Frappato to highlight the distinctive nature of this incredibly fresh, exuberant, and perfumed red. Perfectly suited to the hot and dry region of Vittoria, Frappato converts southern heat into Mediterranean elegance. Evoking red fruit, tobacco, and spice, this cuvée has the right balance of low tannin and high acid that makes it versatile enough to pair with a wide range of dishes, from swordfish with tomatoes, olives, and capers—one of Alessandro's local favorites—to burgers or shish kebab. —TOM WOLF

\$25.00 per bottle \$270.00 per case



COVER Harvest at Tenuta La Pergola. © Tenuta La Pergola
ABOVE Salvatore Portelli, right, and his son Alessandro. © Portelli