

It should come as no surprise, then, that Italians have wide knowledge of and deep pride in their regional pasta specialties. Ask a Piemontese what pasta dish they'd recommend and you won't hear *carbonara* or *pasta alla norma*—a Roman and Sicilian specialty, respectively—but *agnolotti del plin*, a small pasta filled with meat or vegetables and folded into a divine pouch. This specialization holds for every region from northernmost Alto Adige to southernmost Sicily. This deep connection between Italians and their regional pastas is mirrored in their local wines, too. When in Tuscany, it almost wouldn't make sense *not* to eat pappardelle topped with a wild-boar ragù and pair it with fresh and fruit-forward Chianti Classico. Or have you really visited Liguria if you haven't washed down the freshest and most fragrant pesto you can find with a crisp and saline Pigato made a stone's throw from the coast?

In truth, you don't need to travel to these places to appreciate their cultural and culinary beauty. Now, at home, I find it enriching to prepare Italy's nearly endless pasta dishes in my kitchen and pair them with wines that come from their place of origin. Exploring the regional bounty of Italy in this way is a transportive experience and a joyful way to elicit memories of prior trips or prepare for those you are planning! —TOM WOLF



PASTA AL PESTO

BY CHRISTOPHER LEE

Pasta al pesto is definitive, particularly *trofie pasta*, which is traditional in Liguria. I learned from a historian, whose family has lived in the Genova hills for generations, that walnuts are traditionally used in Ligurian pesto. Walnut trees cover those hills. You'll hear vigorous opposition to this claim, even locally, and I do not try to argue it anymore. Whether you use pine nuts or walnuts, do not toast them; in cooking, their oils are broken down, and their thickening quality vanishes along with their sweetness. The following method (to keep water remaining on the leaves) creates a smooth, bright green, silky pesto. Culinary "cheats" that attempt to preserve color—such as blanching the basil, or mixing in an amount of parsley or carrot tops—all result in a less flavorful sauce. Look for Genovese basil, *ocimum basilicum* "Genovese." It should be young, with tender, fragrant leaves. *Piccolo fino* basil, a small-leaf Genovese variety, makes a sublime pesto. Purists still make pesto by hand, in a mortar and pestle, a Stone Age tool that produces a sauce of perfect consistency. The basil is pounded together with a little salt to a coarse-but-not-too paste. Everything else is pounded separately and then combined with the basil. The resulting sauce has an unassailable integrity, unattained by other methods of preparation. Serve with confidence!



- 2 cups basil leaves, loosely packed
- 3 ounces extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 ounces pine nuts or walnuts
- 1 small clove fresh garlic, peeled
- 2 teaspoons sea salt
- 2½ ounces Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated
- 2½ ounces Pecorino Romano cheese, grated, plus some to finish
- 1 tablespoon water
- 200 grams (approximately 2 cups) trofie pasta

Rinse the basil in cool water. Shake off water, but do not dry completely. If you don't want to use a mortar and pestle, combine oil, nuts, garlic, sea salt, and ¼ cup basil in a blender. Pulse to a coarse paste. Add remaining basil in small batches, pulsing to a paste each time. Add cheeses, 1 tablespoon water, and pulse again until smooth. You should have about 1½ cups pesto. Cook pasta *al dente*. Toss with pesto and 2 tablespoons pasta water. Serve with grated Pecorino Romano.

Makes 4 appetizer-size portions

CHEVALIER



ITALY'S REGIONAL PASTAS

JULY 2024



ITALY'S REGIONAL PASTAS

Even though I grew up loving pasta, I had no idea how essential it is to everyday Italian life until I studied abroad in Florence many years ago. Back home, pasta represented a main dish, a sort of simple treat eaten once or twice a week, especially in the lead-up to an athletic endeavor. In my Tuscan homestay, by contrast, forks full of linguine, tagliatelle, or tortellini were a daily indulgence, served up and eaten every night not as a main event but as the first course, an opening act! And I wasn't living in some old Medici palazzo staffed with a cook, but in a humble apartment on the outskirts of town! This, I quickly—and enthusiastically—learned, is simply how Italians eat.

2023 PINOLETTO DELL'EMILIA *FRIZZANTE*

◆ FATTORIA MORETTO \$24



THIS *FRIZZANTE* WHITE isn't widely known outside of its native Emilia-Romagna, probably because the locals are drinking it all up. It's tart and juicy like a fresh mandarin, with invigorating acidity ideally suited to cut through the region's signature Parmigiano-Reggiano and *prosciutto di Parma*. That's probably not a coincidence.



Pasta Pairing:
TORTELLINI IN BRODO

2022 PIGATO "VIGNETO CA DA RENA" ◆ PUNTA CRENA \$34

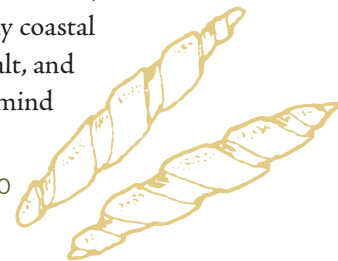
PUNTA CRENA, the Mediterranean abode where the Ruffino family has cultivated the same seaside terraces for more than five hundred years, has become a staff favorite in white wine here at KLWM. Liguria's agreeable climate, colorful coastal towns, and turquoise waters backed by rugged pre-Alpine slopes are reason enough to visit. Its people are laid-back, accommodating, generous—no body more so than the ever-growing Ruffino clan. The scene at the winery justly sums up the family, with children tirelessly frolicking, bottles and other equipment strewn about in total disorder, and smiling



mamma Ruffino calmly selling homegrown vegetables and lemons amid the habitual chaos.

The 2022 Pigato takes its rightful place on the Ligurian table, where it marries perfectly with *fritto misto*, grilled fish, *pesto alla Genovese*, and any other product of sea and Mediterranean sunshine. Crisp and mineral-driven, this cousin of Vermentino exudes a lovely coastal vivacity. White flowers, sea salt, and a lemony kiss of freshness remind you of where it's grown.

Pasta Pairing: TROFIE AL PESTO
(Recipe on back)



2021 TERRE SICILIANE CARRICANTE "SCIARE VIVE"

◆ VIGNETI VECCHIO \$42

FEW PLACES CAN PRODUCE a white that is an island wine, a volcanic wine, and a mountain wine all at once. But when the vineyards are situated high on the slopes of Etna, the active stratovolcano that towers almost eleven thousand feet over the Mediterranean, the stage is clearly set for something special and totally unparalleled in the world of wine. Factor in ancient practices and own-rooted vines surpassing a century in age, and Etna is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating grape-growing regions on Earth.

Carmelo Vecchio and Rosa La Guzza's white captures every element of this spectacular setting, from the fresh herbal and lively citrusy notes that come from being so high up, to the subtle grit and salinity only achievable from volcanic vineyards in the middle of the sea, to the textural intrigue born from a brief skin maceration, as Etna tradition dictates. Serve it cool—not cold—and let it breathe as it slowly uncoils and brings all its intricacies to the table.

Pasta Pairing: SPAGHETTI AL NERO DI SEPPIA



2020 LAGREIN RISERVA "DI ORA IN ORA"

◆ FERRUCCIO CARLOTTO \$41



FERRUCCIO CARLOTTO and his daughter Michela farm a tiny estate of several hectares in the Alto Adige town of Ora, south of Bolzano. The specialty of this village is Lagrein, a red grape native to the region. They chose to produce only one Lagrein Riserva that is aged in large oak casks, and we were pleasantly surprised when we were able to talk them into selling us a pallet for the United States. Unfortunately, there is not much of these finely crafted beauties to go around, but with this bottling you will be experiencing some of the best of what Alto Adige has to offer the wine world.

Pasta Pairing:
CANEDERLI TRENTINI



2019 CHIANTI CLASSICO RISERVA "FONDATARE"

◆ PODERE CAMPRIANO \$64

ALMOST ALL OF THE GROWERS with whom we work manage "small family farms." Then there is Podere Campriano in Greve, who proves the statement more literally than just about anyone. This Tuscan family lives in a humble farmhouse atop a small hillside of two hectares of Sangiovese vines. From this organically pampered backyard, they craft delicious Chianti Classico in the stone cellars beneath their home.

Named after Valerio Lapini, the late, great "founder" of the Campriano family farm in Greve in Chianti just south of Florence, this Riserva is made from the family's highest-altitude vineyard above their home. Always a standout in their range as a symphonic Chianti with lots of higher-register strings, it is lithe, racy, and elegant, while not lacking the stony backbone for which great Greve is known. Serious and fun, much like Valerio himself.

Pasta Pairing: PAPPARDELLE AL RAGÙ DI CINGHIALE

2019 BAROLO "VIGNA LAZZAIRASCO" ◆ GUIDO PORRO \$63

THE HUMBLE, RESERVED Guido Porro has taken his small family farm and turned it into one of the great traditionalist estates of Barolo. Not much has changed here since Guido—the fourth generation of Porros to make wine in Serralunga—took over from his father in 1996. The wisdom passed down from his ancestors guides his approach to viticulture, and he still ages his Baroli extensively in huge Slavonian oak casks. The only real changes of late have been the acquisition of a prime slice of Serralunga's most legendary *cru*, Vigna Rionda, the decision to revert to the estate's magnificent historic label design, and the increasing presence in the cellar of Guido's passionate son, Fabio.

The majority of Guido's production comes from the Lazzarito *cru*, a steep slope that abuts the Porro *cantina* at its highest point. The Lazzairasco is a mouth-filling, authoritative Barolo with trademark Serralunga tannins and extensive cellaring potential, particularly in a top vintage like 2019. If you are unfamiliar with Guido Porro and his world-class Baroli, this bottle is an ideal way to become acquainted.

Pasta Pairing: AGNOLOTTI DEL PLIN



2023 Pignoletto dell'Emilia <i>Frizzante</i> <i>Fattoria Moretto</i> EMILIA-ROMAGNA	Pignoletto	30-year-old vines Sandy clay	Serve <i>cold</i> 46–50°F Do not decant	Apples, mandarin, almonds Crisp, taut, refreshing	Drink now
2022 Pigato "Vigneto Ca da Rena" <i>Punta Crena</i> LIGURIA	Pigato	37-year-old vines Red clay	Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52°F Decant optional	Lemon, sea salt, white flowers Zesty, saline, textural	Drink now
2021 Terre Siciliane Carricante "Sciare Vive" <i>Vigneti Vecchio</i> SICILY	90% Carricante, 10% indigenous varieties (Minnella, Inzolia, Grecanico, Catarratto)	40- to 100-year-old vines Volcanic, clay-limestone	Serve <i>cool</i> 50–54°F Decant optional	Saffron, beeswax, Mediterranean herbs Rich, fleshy, focused	Drink now
2020 Lagrein Riserva "Di Ora in Ora" <i>Ferruccio Carlotto</i> ALTO ADIGE	Lagrein	Vines planted in 1946, 2003, 2006, 2012 Porphyry, limestone, clay, alluvial stones	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62°F Decant optional	Brambly fruit, plum, white pepper Dark, velvety, age-worthy	Drink now through 2030
2019 Chianti Classico Riserva "Fondatore" <i>Podere Campriano</i> TUSCANY	Sangiovese	Vines planted in 1980 <i>Galestro</i> , clay, limestone	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62°F Decant recommended	Dark fruit, mint, undergrowth Juicy, fresh, racy	Drink now through 2028
2019 Barolo "Vigna Lazzairasco" <i>Guido Porro</i> PIEDMONT	Nebbiolo	Vines planted in 1962–1963 Clay, limestone	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62°F Decant recommended	Cherries, roses, spice Succulent, structured, earthy	Drink now through 2040

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