

POLENTA WITH OSSO BUCO RAGÙ

by Georgeanne Brennan

On Christmas Eve in a small mountain village on the border of France and Italy, some villagers gathered for a celebratory dinner at the lone restaurant. The only dish served was creamy polenta, spread on round boards with stubby handles, and topped with a meaty ragù like this one. The distinct boards were the same kind used by villagers to carry their flatbreads to the communal bakery every Saturday, just as I had done all winter. A bottle of red wine was set on every table. Sesti's Monteleccio would have been right at home that night.

RAGÙ

2 thick, meaty veal shank pieces,
cut crosswise, about 1 ¼ pounds
½ cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon sea salt
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium yellow onion, diced
2 stalks celery, diced
1 large carrot, peeled and diced
4 to 6 garlic cloves, chopped
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 cup dry red wine

1 ½ cups homemade or low-sodium
beef broth
1 cup crushed canned tomatoes
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
¼ cup minced parsley, for garnish
(optional)

POLENTA

1 cup polenta (not instant)
5 cups water
1 teaspoon sea salt
2 tablespoons butter

RAGÙ

Preheat oven to 350°F. Dredge veal shanks in the flour and sprinkle with half the salt. In a heavy-bottomed casserole, over medium-high heat, warm the olive oil. When hot, add the shanks. Cook both sides 4 to 5 minutes until lightly golden. Remove shanks and add onions, celery, and carrots. Sauté until onion is translucent. Add garlic and cook for another 1 to 2 minutes. Add tomato paste, stirring a little. Pour in red wine to deglaze. Add broth, tomatoes, pepper, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt.

Return shanks to the pan, along with any collected juice. Cover, and cook in the oven until meat easily separates from the bone, about 2 hours. Remove. When cool enough to handle, remove the meat from the bone, coarsely shred it, and return it to the sauce. Using the handle of a wooden spoon, remove marrow from the center bone and add to the sauce. Discard the bones. Taste and adjust for seasoning. This can be done up to two days ahead. If you choose to do this ahead, bring to room temperature before reheating to serve.

POLENTA

Preheat oven to 350°F. In an 8-inch-square baking dish, add polenta, water, salt, and half the butter. Place in oven, uncovered, and cook for 40 minutes. Stir with a fork. Add remaining butter and cook for another 10 minutes. The polenta will be soft. To serve, spoon some polenta onto a serving platter or individual dishes and top with the osso buco ragù. Garnish with a sprinkle of parsley, if desired.

Serves 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.









NOVEMBER 2024

ROUGE

2021 TOSCANA ROSSO “MONTELECCIO” SESTI

FOLLOWING THE PASSING last month of Giuseppe Sesti, there is no better time than now, with a glass of his family’s exuberant Monteleccio, to revisit and celebrate his legacy in Montalcino. When “Giugi” moved to this slice of southern Tuscany with his wife Sarah in the 1970s, they bought a piece of land so overgrown that skeptical neighbors called it the “viper’s nest.” Over many years, they returned some order to this once-glorious estate. They cleared brush by hand and machete, planted vines, and restored the dilapidated twelfth-century Castello di Argiano, just a stone’s throw from the farmhouse where the family lives. Rather than clear-cut the property’s forest in order to maximize their vineyard acreage, they left most of the woods to support a thriving, vibrant ecosystem, a decision informed by the couple’s naturalist, back-to-the-land bent. Giuseppe’s training as an astronomer further guided him to apply his knowledge of the moon’s influence on living things to his vineyard management and practices in the cellar—a methodology that is increasingly common today, but wasn’t at all when he started making wine in the ’80s. For the last several years, his daughter Elisa has managed the estate, but always in conversation with her father and with respect for his guiding principles. We will miss him, but we will savor his family’s beautiful expressions of their Montalcino slopes for years to come. —Tom Wolf

\$29.00 PER BOTTLE \$313.20 PER CASE

					
2021 Toscana Rosso “Monteleccio” Sesti	Sangiovese	15-year-old vines Oceanic sediment	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62°F Decant recommended	Cherries, rhubarb, mint Earthy, inviting, zingy	Drink now through 2028
2022 Bourgogne Epineuil “Les Fauconniers” Roland Lavantureux	Pinot Noir	Vines planted from 1969 to 1978 Clay, limestone	Serve <i>cool</i> 56–60°F Decant recommended	Crunchy red fruit, flowers, peppery spice Bright, finessed, mineral	Drink now through 2032

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2022 BOURGOGNE EPINEUIL “LES FAUCONNIERS” ROLAND LAVANTUREUX

AMONG ALL THE PRODUCERS we work with in France and Italy, perhaps no one has transformed their domaine as comprehensively—and tastefully—in the last decade as brothers Arnaud and David Lavantureux. Shortly after joining their father, who had produced excellent Chablis and Petit Chablis for decades, Arnaud and David added a handful of beautiful *premier* and *grand cru* cuvées to their lineup, quickly turning 4 rue Saint-Martin in Lignorelles into one of the region’s most respected addresses. But rather than simply acquire holdings in the appellation’s most obvious heavy-hitting terroirs, they’ve been more creative, identifying vineyards full of extraordinary promise throughout Chablis and beyond. In the last few years, the brothers have turned their sights to Epineuil, a small village twenty kilometers east of Chablis, which teems with incredible potential for Pinot Noir. Once thought to be too cold to produce charming reds, Epineuil has been reconsidered in recent years as an exciting terroir for red Burgundy. The Lavantureux brothers’ “Fauconniers”—falconers—cuvée shows why with

Pairs well with mushroom risotto, mustard chicken, or baked salmon.

its beautiful notes of crunchy red fruit, flowers, and peppery spice, which are so evocative of Pinot Noir grown in Burgundy’s northern reaches. —Tom Wolf

\$55.00 PER BOTTLE
\$594.00 PER CASE



LEFT David Lavantureux. © Jimmy Hayes
COVER Giuseppe Sesti with his daughter Elisa. © Sesti