

by Gary Podesto

When I want to share an interesting bottle with friends, I put up a platter of snacks like this “little fry.” Inspired by the abundant freshwater fish in the northern Loire, this recipe features sustainably farmed Mount Lassen steelhead along with fresh market vegetables, all dredged in a spiced batter. This super-crunchy batter is my go-to for pretty much anything fried—from onion rings to asparagus to shrimp to night smelt—and it’s gluten-free!

½ cup crème fraîche
 1 cup mayonnaise
 1 garlic clove, grated
 Zest and juice of 1 lemon
 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
 Pinch of white pepper
 Chopped *fines herbes*, such as dill,
 parsley, and chervil
 Salt to taste

- 1 cup chickpea flour
- ¾ cup rice flour
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon Espelette pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup dry wine
- 1–1½ cups sparkling water
- 3–4 quarts rice bran or vegetable oil
- 12 ounces Mount Lassen steelhead
filet, pin bones removed, cut into
1-ounce pieces (skin optional)
- 6 squash blossoms, cut in half
- 2 small summer squash, sliced
lengthwise into ¼-inch thick strips
- 1 small Japanese eggplant, cut into
¼-inch thick slices

For the sauce, whip crème fraîche to medium peaks and then fold in mayonnaise. Stir in remaining ingredients with salt and taste for seasoning. Add lemon juice if you like.

For the batter, combine all dry ingredients in a bowl and whisk in the wine and enough sparkling water to make a batter slightly thicker than crêpe batter.

Fill a large Dutch oven with the rice bran oil to a depth of 3 to 4 inches, but not more than two-thirds the depth of the pot. Set the fry pot over medium-high heat and bring the oil up to 360°–375° F.

Set up a sheet pan lined with a few layers of paper towels to catch the fritters.

Dip a tester piece of fish in the batter and shake off the excess until fish is lightly coated. Gently drop it in the oil and let cook for a minute or two, turning the fritter once. Using a wire spider, scoop out the fish and let it drain on the paper towels. Taste. Add more salt or sparkling water to the batter if necessary.

Proceed with each ingredient in turn, working in batches. Don't overcrowd the pot. For bigger batches, wait for the oil to reach 400°F and then drop in your next batch, letting the heat stay around 350°F.

Once everything is fried, pile it all up on a platter and sprinkle with salt and Espelette pepper. Serve with the sauce on the side and some lemon wedges. *Bon appétit!*

Serves 4–6 as an appetizer

Gary Podesto is a cook at Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, California, and is the chief culinary collaborator for the Climate Farm School. His work aims to revitalize the ritual of gathering around the hearth and table while promoting the values of edible education and regenerative agriculture. Learn more at www.garypodesto.net.









2022 COTEAUX DU LOIR ROUGE “CUVÉE DU ROSIER” • PASCAL JANVIER

IN SOMEWHAT confusing fashion, the Loire Valley—named after the 600-mile river la Loire—is home to another river that sounds exactly the same, only the article is different: *le* Loir. A tributary paralleling the region’s biggest river, le Loir courses almost an hour north of la Loire by the time you arrive at Pascal Janvier’s domaine, halfway between Tours and Le Mans. Whereas most of the region’s producers we work with border la Loire, Pascal’s realm is the riverbank of le Loir, and the red grape that reigns here is Pineau d’Aunis. Compared to the region’s other great red grape, Cabernet Franc, Pineau d’Aunis produces a more delicate and peppery *rouge* that you might mistake for a rosé if you tasted blind. Grown in soils of clay, limestone, and sand just north of le Loir, Pascal Janvier’s rendition is graceful, with notes of blood orange, black tea, and pomegranate. It is the quintessential seafood red and a perfect pairing for Gary Podesto’s *friture* of steelhead trout and summer vegetables. —Tom Wolf



\$26.00 PER BOTTLE \$280.80 PER CASE

					
2022 Coteaux du Loir Rouge “Cuvée du Rosier” <i>Pascal Janvier</i>	Pineau d’Aunis	25-year-old vines Clay, limestone, sand	Serve <i>cool</i> 54–58° F Do not decant	Blood orange, black tea, pomegranate Delicate, peppery, lively	Drink now
2020 Rosso di Montalcino <i>Ferretti</i>	Sangiovese	Vines planted in 1985, 1997, 1998 Clay, limestone	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62° F Decant optional	Brambly fruit, orange zest, leather Sun-charged, lean, energetic	Drink now through 2032

COVER Pascal Janvier shows off his rocky soils. © Gail Skoff

ABOVE © Gail Skoff

RIGHT Winemaker Matteo Perugini works side by side with his uncle Roberto Ferretti. © Joanie Bonfiglio

2020 ROSSO DI MONTALCINO FERRETTI

THE NEWEST ITALIAN PRODUCER in our portfolio, Ferretti is a small estate in Montalcino run by the young Matteo Perugini. Even though his great-grandfather was among the twenty-five founding members of the Brunello Consortium in 1967, Matteo and his family did not start bottling their own wine until the 2016 vintage. Nevertheless, decades of growing Sangiovese on the slopes of Montalcino gave the family the ideal experience and confidence to finally branch out and bottle reds under its own label. Besides experience, Matteo is blessed with a terroir that contributes to the prevailing balance of this *rosso*: the sunny southwestern exposure and incredibly rocky, well-draining limestone soil yield ripeness and heft, while the high elevation and cool nights lend freshness and acidity to the vines. Teeming with notes of brambly fruit, iron, orange zest, and leather, the result is a beautiful and traditional Rosso di Montalcino. —Tom Wolf



Pairs well with pan-seared rib eye,
mushroom pappardelle,
and gamey pâtés.

\$47.00 PER BOTTLE \$507.60 PER CASE



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