HOW TO DRINK EMILIA
The Foodist explains

When it comes to the oh-so-precious art of pairing food and wine at home, I have little patience. But that doesn't mean I'll grab just any vino to go with any dish.

My wine rule is: If it grows together, it goes together. With the hearty food of Emilia, you'd be wise to drink the local favorite, **Lambrusco**, the slightly fizzy, purplish-red wine with a crisp acidity that cuts through all those rich flavors. (For more on Lambrusco, see page 144.)

For something with a bit more heft, choose a wine made from **Sangiovese di Romagna** grapes, grown in nearby Romagna. Expect black-cherry fruit flavors and soft tannins that, when paired with this menu, will please a roomful of wine geeks.

—ANDREW KNOWLTON

(continued from page 128) recipes, studying their history and evolution. He and his wife, Lorenza, have farm roots and are legendary home cooks. When I visit them in their kitchen in the small town of Calcara, we make creamy carrot soup, luscious, layered asparagus lasagna, and classic *ragù*. Nowadays these simple but exquisite dishes are found only in a handful of country trattorias and in certain Emilian homes, and I couldn't wait to get home to make them again myself. After lunch, Claudio and I set off to learn more about Emilia's cuisine.

In Castelfranco Emilia, Cavallieri shows me a priceless Guido Reni canvas hanging in the empty parish church. According to him, outsiders come to the town to gawk at something else. "The tortellino is sacred here," he quips. We peer into a crowded *pasta fresca* shop nearby on the Via Emilia. I can't help wondering aloud whether the tiny, navel-shaped filled pasta was really invented here during the Renaissance. Claudio shrugs. Apparently the 20,000 devotees of the annual Sagra del Tortellino, or tortellino festival, are believers.

Saving Bologna for last, I visit the celebrated cooking teacher and pasta maker Alessandra Spisni and tell her of my tortellino musings in Castelfranco Emilia. She shakes her head in friendly disagreement. "Tortellini are as Bolognese as mortadella," she says. "In fact, they're filled with it! You must be able to see the sanctuary of San Luca above the rooftops of Bologna through each transparently thin sheet of *pasta fresca*." Other Emilians joke that the Bolognese see San Luca because they've made holes in the dough by mistake. More than once I try Bologna's tortellini, served exclusively in broth, and find them as exquisite as those of Castelfranco Emilia. Everything I taste in Bologna, a handsome, lively city of almost 400,000 inhabitants, is remarkably delicious. By the time I leave, I know the old Italian adage still holds true: "It's impossible to eat badly in Bologna"—or anywhere else in Emilia, for that matter. •

David Downie is the author of *Quiet Corners of Rome* and *Paris, Paris: Journey into the City of Light.*

CLASSIC RAGÙ BOLOGNESE

4–6 SERVINGS *A certain magic happens as the beef and aromatic vegetables slowly cook down with wine, tomato paste, and broth.*

- **2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **2 medium onions, finely chopped (about 1½ cups)**
- **2 celery stalks, finely chopped (about 1 cup)**
- **2 carrots, peeled, finely chopped (about ¾ cup)**
- **6 oz. ground beef (85% lean)**
- **6 oz. ground veal**
- **3 oz. thinly sliced pancetta, finely chopped**
- **½ cup dry red wine**
- **3 cups (about) beef stock or chicken stock, divided**
- **3 Tbsp. tomato paste**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **1 cup whole milk**
- **1 lb. tagliatelle or fettuccine (preferably fresh egg)**
- **Finely grated Parmesan (for serving)**

Heat oil in a large heavy pot over medium-high heat. Add onions, celery, and carrots. Sauté until soft, 8–10 minutes. Add beef, veal, and pancetta; sauté, breaking up with the back of a spoon, until browned, about 15 minutes. Add wine; boil 1 minute, stirring often and scraping up browned bits. Add 2½ cups stock and tomato paste; stir to blend. Reduce heat to very low and gently simmer, stirring occasionally, until flavors meld, 1½ hours. Season with salt and pepper.

Bring milk to a simmer in a small saucepan; gradually add to sauce. Cover sauce with lid slightly ajar and simmer over low heat, stirring occasionally, until milk is absorbed, about 45 minutes, adding more stock by ¼-cupfuls to thin if needed. DO AHEAD: Ragù can be made 2 days ahead. Chill uncovered until cold, then cover and keep chilled. Rewarm before continuing.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Season with salt; add pasta and cook, stirring occasionally, until 1 minute before al dente. Drain, reserving ½ cup pasta water. Transfer ragù to a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add pasta and toss to coat. Stir in some of the reserved pasta water by tablespoonfuls if sauce seems dry. Divide pasta among warm plates. Serve with Parmesan.

TAGLIATELLE WITH PROSCIUTTO AND ORANGE

4 SERVINGS *Two seemingly disparate ingredients pair perfectly in this brightly flavored and creamy sauce.*

- **Kosher salt**
- **12 oz. egg tagliatelle or fettuccine (preferably fresh)**
- **2 Tbsp. (¼ stick) unsalted butter**
- **2 oz. thinly sliced prosciutto, torn into 1" pieces**
- **Zest and juice of 1 orange**
- **½ cup heavy whipping cream**
- **Freshly ground black pepper**
- **¼ cup finely grated Parmesan**

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Season with salt; add pasta and cook, stirring occasionally, until 1 minute before al dente, about 2 minutes for fresh pasta, longer for dried. Drain, reserving ¼ cup pasta water.

Meanwhile, melt butter in a large heavy nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add prosciutto; sauté until browned, about 3 minutes.

Add reserved pasta water, orange juice, half of zest, and cream; bring to a boil. Add pasta; cook, stirring, until sauce coats pasta and pasta is al dente, about 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in cheese and divide among warm bowls.

HOW TO EAT EMILIA

PARMA

Antica Corte Pallavicina and Al Cavallino Bianco
The imposing farmhouse complex has a luxury restaurant and a B&B as well as a *culatello* ham–making facility. Al Cavallino Bianco is an upscale restaurant serving traditional food. *2 via Sborisi; acpallavicina.com*

Masticabrodo
A handsome restaurant in Pilastro serving exquisite house-made specialties from the Parma area. *45 Str. Provinciale per Torrechiara; masticabrodo.com*

Ristorante Cocchi
Among Parma's finest traditional restaurants. The family also operates a comfortable, recently renovated hotel in the same building. *16A via Gramsci; hoteldaniel.biz*

Trattoria La Buca
An archetypal country trattoria a mile from the center of Zibello. *6 via Ghizzi; trattorialabuca.com*

MODENA

Acetaia Pedroni and Osteria di Rubbiara
The Pedroni family makes award-winning balsamic vinegar and runs this authentic country *osteria* in Rubbiara di Nonantola serving regional specialties. *4 via Risaia; acetaiapedroni.it*

Albergo Ristorante Ca' Cerfogli
Acquaria claims to be the porcini capital of the Modena province. Albergo Ristorante Ca' Cerfogli is its best restaurant, serving mushroom-based specialties and other classics from Emilia's Apennine mountains year-round. Simple, comfortable lodgings upstairs. *6/8 via Montegrappa; albergocerfogli.it*

Hosteria Giusti
In the heart of old Modena, a historic *salumeria* and a four-table restaurant in back serving regional favorites. *75 via Farini; hosteriagiusti.it*

BOLOGNA

Ristorante da Cesari
This lively, upscale spot has been in the Cesari family since 1955. Classic and updated regional food. *8 via de' Carbonesi; da-cesari.it*

Tamburini
One of the city's oldest and most famous specialty foods shops. *1 via Caprarie; tamburini.com*

Trattoria Anna Maria
Some of the best tortellini you'll ever taste, in a classic setting. *17A via Belle Arti; trattoriannamaria.com*

Trattoria da Gianni a la Vècia Bulàgna
A cult trattoria from centuries past hidden down an alley in Bologna's market district, serving irresistible traditional dishes. *18 via Clavature; 011-39-05-122-9434*

FOR A LIST OF EMILIA'S FOOD MUSEUMS, GO TO **BONAPPETIT.COM/GO/EMILIA**