

TASTES of **italia**

58 AUTHENTIC ITALIAN RECIPES

**THE NEW
PESTO**
EASY, FLEXIBLE,
AFFORDABLE

**MAKE
A
BETTER
MEATBALL**
4 CELEBRITY
CHEFS SHOW
YOU HOW

**PIZZA
POWER**
THE SECRETS OF
3 OF THE WORLD'S
BEST PIZZA CHEFS

Linguine
With Almond
Pesto And
Goat Cheese

SPRING 2024

Display Until June 18, 2024

\$11.95US

4 1>



0 0928102756 0

PLUS: NEW RECIPES FOR
Grilled Artichokes, Risotto, Grilled Steak, Roast Salmon, Pork
Chops, Cheesecake, Semifreddo, Almond Cake and more!

THE VINEYARD IN THE HILLS

STORY & PHOTOS BY LAUREN BIRMINGHAM PISCITELLI

Asapphire sky and Mediterranean sun warm the air just enough for a morning caffè to be enjoyed on the terrace. Spring is the perfect time to visit L'Azienda Agricola Reale, a small vineyard and osteria nestled in the high hills of Tramonti. Tramonti, which translates to “between the mountains,” is tucked above the town of Maiori on the Amalfi Coast.

On the way there, I am dreaming of a hearty vintners' lunch starting with creamy mozzarella grilled on lemon leaves and filled with gorgonzola cheese. I also love their homemade sausage roasted with potatoes and mountain rosemary — the combination is divine.

In no time my husband Rino and I are driving along a winding road that cuts through the Lattari mountains to a sleepy vineyard. We arrive at the Reale property and the church bells of San Francesco ring in the silence. It's a surreal view like from the eyes of an angel.

Signor Luigi greets us under the pergola and shows us to our table.

Luigi suggests a cheese board showcasing the farmer's formaggi-smoked mozzarella, Provolone, creamy goat cheese and salami paired with the property's white wine Aliseo. He carefully takes his knife to the label, and with one crisp circular cut, opens the cork. He raises the cork to his nose and closes his eyes. There is silence. A winemaker has a language all his own with his bottle of wine.

“È buono,” his sign of approval that the wine is good.

Signor Luigi tells his story of the vineyard. “The Azienda Agricola Reale embraces a century of experience in the field of agriculture on the Amalfi Coast. My father, Luigi, came from a family of winemakers

and lemon growers spanning four generations, and we pray that the fifth and sixth and more generations will follow.”

Today, he and his brother, Gaetano, carry on the family tradition producing limited edition organic wine.

“We produce four labels,” he says. “Aliseo, the white which you are tasting now, is a blend of three different grape varieties: Biancazita, Biancolella and Pepella. The territorial wines reflect our beloved Amalfi Coast between the marine flavor and minerality of the volcanic deposits. The artisan cheese pairs perfectly with Aliseo white. The wine's straw-yellow color has threads of green with a bouquet of peach, apple, melon, Amalfi Coast citrus and almond. As the wine breathes, there is a note of jasmine, broom and Mediterranean scrub,” he says.

A wooden cheese board is placed on the table laden with artisan formaggi made by casarie's hands. The cheese is set on top of grape leaves accompanied with jars of grape pomace and honey. There's also a plate of thinly sliced Prosciutto and farmer's salumi speckled with fennel. We are reassured, even though rosé is considered a summer wine, that it pairs well with Prosciutto and cheese of this kind.

“Getis Rosé is made from two red grape varieties: Per and Palummo, and Tintore, native of Tramonti,” he says. “We've been presented with multiple awards for this wine. In 2014, this wine was named ‘Best Italian Rosé,’ by the Bibenda Guide, the Italian Sommelier Association,” he adds.

Another few wine glasses are filled with Getis Rosé and it bursts with notes of cherry, strawberry, blackberry, clementine, pomegranate, rose and sage.

We all agree the cheese, wine, Prosciutto and salumi are a lunch in and of itself. But we continue to order a primo of paccheri and sausage slow cooked in Cardamone red wine. Paccheri is a type of pasta from Campania originating from the Neapolitan tradition — in the shape of giant macaroni, made with durum wheat semolina, and cut with bronze tools. Its dry white surface makes it perfect for absorbing delicious sauces. We order pollo alla cacciatora, hunter's chicken, for our main course.

Signor Luigi opens a bottle of Cardamone red and lets it breathe. This limited bottle of wine is made with two grape varieties: Per' E Palummo and Tintore. Cardamone is a dazzling ruby red wine with notes of small fruits blended with floral scents and savory earthy finish.

“Cardamone pairs well with pasta, potato and provolone, my favorite,” he says.

There's enough food for a banquet. And even though our pasta has just arrived, there is another bottle — this time it is the reserve, Borgo di Gete Rosso.

“You will appreciate Borgo di Gete Rosso Riserva made with one hundred percent Tintore di Tramonti grapes. They are the oldest ungrafted vines on our vineyard, with plants that range between 150 to 300 years old with a very limited production because the older vines produce a very low yield,” explains Luigi.

Tintore wine was the preferred wine of Roman Emperor Tiberio. He'd travel from Capri to Tramonti to get his wine. He feared if he made his wine on Capri, his enemies could have poisoned it.

“We produce 18,000 bottles and four different labels,” Luigi says. “It's a very limited production. Among the four labels we produce between 1,500 to 2,000 bottles per year of Borgo Di Gete Reserve,” he says.

“The work of the winemaker is extreme and sometimes there are adversities that are out of our control. We work hard but it's the passion from our older generations that carries us on. When you work with passion, it is not a sacrifice at all,” he says.

He tells us about the few hectares of vineyards with centuries-old vines that grow on the hills of Tramonti. His careful growing method produces a limited number of precious bottles using an organic method, characterized by high quality grape varieties and research from a team of expert oenologists from Campania.

Frozen in time, this little village called Gete is the perfect place for a Sunday lunch. Red roses and rosemary stand straight in the sun outside; it feels like spring. This vintners' pranzo with traditional food, wine and storytelling is precious.

Lauren Birmingham Piscitelli is founder and owner of Cooking Vacations Italy which specializes in culinary tours, hands-on cooking classes and cultural adventures in Italy. (617) 247-4112, www.cooking-vacations.com.



Above: Gaetano Reale prepares to serve a bottle of the winery's Aliseo. Below: Cardamone is a medium-bodied wine with notes of small fruits blended with floral scents. It pairs well with pasta, potato and provolone.

