

Ciao



Belli



## Preface

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*One cannot think well, love well, sleep well,  
if one has not dined well.*

~ [Virginia Woolf](#)

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For three months, we ate our way through Italy. We hope that as you devour this book and recreate the recipes you are able to savor a small bit of what we have experienced. We invite you to join us in our quest to unwrap Italy as Americans; in translating menus, challenging our taste buds, and, most importantly, dining well.

Buon Appetito!

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# Sapere Il Nostro Cibo

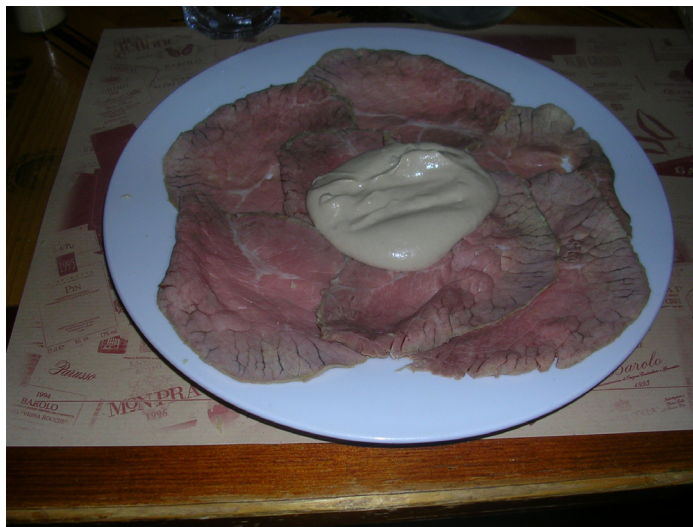
"Wine is the intellectual part of a meal while meat is the material."  
-Alexandre Dumas



# Vitello Tonnato: A Summertime Treat

by Matt Barr

Summertime in the Piemonte and the weather is perfect, with low humidity, the temperature around the mid 70's, with a cool mountain breeze coming down from the nearby mountains. You are eagerly anticipating your first authentic Italian meal outside on the streets of a small town. The waiter knows you are a foreigner the moment you sit down and he cheerfully guides you through the menu, showing you what to order for your multi course meal beginning with the antipasto. It's the vitello tonnato, one of the true specialties of this area. While you wait for the waiter to return with your bottle of local red wine, you causally check your Italian-English dictionary to see what it was you just ordered. Vitello, it turns out, is veal and tonnato is tuna. Veal! Something you've never experienced in the States, way too much controversy over it to order veal in a restaurant back home. Animal rights activists and hot headed vegetarians are more than likely to give you a lecture on what sort of horrible businesses you're supporting by ordering that dish. But you are in Italy, where veal has been part of the cuisine for ages. Food here is all about the taste, not efficiency, or controversy over what people should or should not eat. While you do battle with your conscience, the first course arrives. A plate of thinly sliced pieces of meat, brown on the outside, pink and then red towards the center, with a scoop of what looks like mayonnaise in the center. Not wanting to cause a fuss and remembering that you're on vacation and should indulge yourself, you cut a piece of meat off, put a little sauce on it and take a bite.



There are literally hundreds of ways that vitello tonnato can be made and presented. The only real standards are that the veal is always boned and served thinly sliced, that the tuna sauce has lemon in it and that the dish is served cold. As an appetizer that is most popular during the summer months, having the dish served cold is key. At the beginning of the meal in the hot summer, no one is looking for something hot and heavy to start off their meal, but something cool and light to arouse their appetite. Most restaurants will serve vitello tonnato on a plate with thinly sliced pieces of veal loosely arranged around a spoonful of the tuna sauce. If the restaurant is fancy or the vitello tonnato is homemade then the dish may be dressed up a

bit more. The veal could be elegantly arranged with different garnishes or it can be folded up on a piece of bread with a dollop of sauce in the middle. Lemon slices will sometimes accompany the veal to add a little sweetness to it and give the dish a greater taste of summer.

The veal takes time to prepare. It's a very fine and unforgiving meat and needs time and attention. It should be boned and then marinated overnight. Many different vegetables can go into the marinade: carrots, onions, celery, garlic, parsley, basically any typical vegetable that helps bring out flavor, and then, of course, white wine.

The sauce can be made in a variety of ways. It is also kept fairly light as the dish shouldn't be too filling. The most basic sauce consists of tuna fish, anchovies, lemon juice or zest and vinegar or olive oil. It then should be blended to form a smooth texture. Other recipes will also call for mayonnaise, eggs, mustard, and many types of garnishes. The sauce can be spread over the pieces of veal or just left alone in the center or off to the side of the platter.

### **Ingredients:**

For the meat: 1kg. of top round of veal  
1 onion, 1 carrot, 1 stalk of celery, 1 clove of garlic, a little parsley  
1 bay leaf, rosemary, sage, thyme, two cloves, 1-2 juniper berries, peppercorns  
1 litre of dry white wine  
1 anchovy

For the sauce: 4 hardboiled eggs, 150 g. canned tuna, half a glass of olive oil, 1 tbs of capers, 3 anchovy fillets, vinegar, salt and pepper.

### **Preparation:**

Marinate the meat for twelve hours in the wine with all the vegetables and spices, turning it a couple of times so it absorbs all the aromas.

To cook, bring the marinade to a boil with enough water to cover the meat, adding another anchovy, cleaned, boned and cut into pieces.

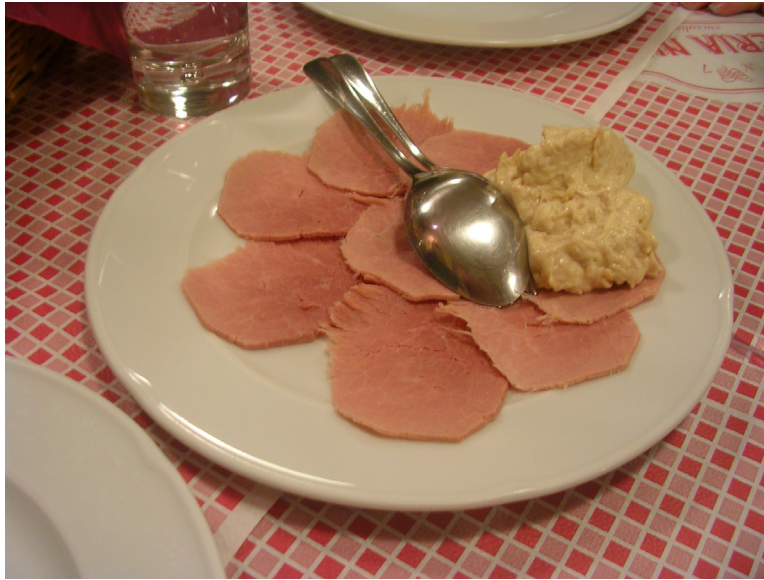
Cook the meat without salting, and let the liquid thicken.

In the meantime, shell the hardboiled eggs and place in the blender with the anchovies, capers, and tuna. Blend to a paste with all the oil and adjust the flavour with a few drops of vinegar. If necessary, add salt and pepper.

If the sauce, which should be creamy, is too thick, dilute it with the meat broth.

Cut the meat in thin slices and cover with the tuna sauce. Chill and serve.

A variation of the sauce is made using mayonnaise (egg, olive oil, lemon juice and salt) flavoured with tuna, capers, anchovies and a few drops of balsamic vinegar or Worcester sauce blended together.



Vitello tonnato is said to have been prepared by Piedmonte chefs for about 200 years. Purists call for the veal and tuna sauce to be layered on top of one another and then kept sandwiched together overnight for the flavors to meld. But it is hard to find a real authentic vitello tonnato anymore. Most restaurants don't go through the trouble of preparing the dish ahead of time only preparing the two parts, veal and tuna, separately. There has also been a drop in the popularity of the dish. It could be that the only place where the dish is done right is the Piedmonte. And if that's the case then not too many people may find the unlikely delicious combination of veal and tuna appealing when it is available. It doesn't quite fit most people's idea of "Surf n' Turf".

Veal is found more in northern Italy because it is such a light dish. In southern Italy the meals tend to be heavier than northern cooking. The north also tends to be more industrial and western so ordering veal can show others what your social class or financial standing are. Italians credit themselves with having introduced veal to France. They claim that Italian born Catherine de Medici brought the dish over when she left Italy to become queen of France. Also in Italy, veal was considered so luxurious that if it appeared on a wedding menu, no other meat could accompany it.

Veal has been eaten as a delicacy for hundreds of years in both French and Italian cuisines. "Italy" in Greek even means "land of little calves" or "veal". It shows up for special occasions and is always prepared with the utmost care. In these cultures, food is more than just fuel for the body. Good food is part of the lifestyle. Big family dinners are commonplace on weekends, and if the occasion calls for it, veal may very well be on the menu. The fact that the cow never grew up to adolescence doesn't play into effect at all. Veal is just another meat, the same as a chicken or pork.

The European Union (EU) keeps strict standards on veal. The age, diet and life of the cow all must be tailored specifically to EU regulations or the meat cannot be considered veal. In 2006 the EU decided that to be considered veal the animal must be slaughtered before the age of 8 months. It also must be fed a diet of milk and dairy products, as in France, and Italy, or a diet of cereals and corn supplements as in the Netherlands, Denmark and Spain. In France, Belgium and Luxemburg, beef that has been aged 8 to 12 months can be considered young beef. The biggest suppliers of veal in the EU are France, Italy and the Netherlands.

Tuna is just as important to vitello tonnato and to the cuisine of Italy as veal is. Bluefin tuna is a prized catch in the Mediterranean. Every year the fish migrates from the Atlantic through the strait of Gibraltar and into the Mediterranean where hundreds of fishermen are



waiting to catch them. The Italians are fortunate to have more coastline boarding the Mediterranean than any other country.

As Italy is riddled with coastline, hundreds of fishing villages have provided a stable way of life for generations of fishermen. Tuna is a vast and important industry in Italy which makes eating the fish all the more culturally tied. Bluefin tuna is nicknamed red tuna because of the color of the meat. It takes a long time for a bluefin tuna to mature, but they can live at least 15 years, and as many as 30 if not caught beforehand. They are massive fish, and one fish can weigh anywhere from about 60-100 pounds, and some much more. These tuna have a quality that is unlike any other and is in high demand all around the world. The fish are prized for its large size, color, texture, flavor and high fat content. Italy has been blessed with an amazing commodity to its cuisine right off its shores.

In Italian cuisine tuna turns up all over the place: in salads, pastas, casseroles, filets, and of course in sauces. Tuna can appear in antipasti, primi, and secondi dishes. But recently the bluefin tuna industry, like many other fishing industries, has declined considerably due to over fishing. The bluefin tuna are more susceptible to over harvesting because of their long maturation time and their high demand. Italy has recently exceeded their catch limit of bluefin tuna that the EU allows. Because they exceeded the limit, Italians will have less tuna allotted to catch next season. But with these safeguards in place, and with a single fish going for prices in the thousands of US dollars, hopefully the industry will stay strong.

Vitello tonnato combines two completely different main ingredients, one from the land and one from the sea. The veal has to be from a cow under eight months of age, while the tuna takes years to mature to be considered for consumption. The dish itself is an appetizer but both the tuna and the veal can stand alone as a secondo dish. Both the veal and tuna are prepared separately but with equal care and time. The result is a dish that is cold and light and extremely tasty, the perfect beginning to a wonderful authentic meal cooked in the Piedemonte region of Italia.



# The Wines of Alba

by Thomas Perkins



A mountain top view of a valley full of vineyards.

Italy has become a country known for its wines; almost every acre of suitable hillside is covered in grape vines. Wine has been being produced there since the Greek and Etruscans started settling there. As you wander down any street window-shopping, bottles of wine appear in each window. It doesn't matter what the store is selling, it could be clothes, or watches, or shoes, and there is a bottle of wine in the window.

The wines of Italy have a very local feel to them. Each wine is only produced in one region or one town. Tuscany has its Chianti, Calabria has its Cirò, and Piedmont has its Barolo and Barberesco. All are wines that are found in no other region in Italy. Barolo and Barberesco are only produced near the towns they are named for.

Italian wine is at the end of a rebirth, in the 1980's and 1990's Italian wine began to under go many changes that enabled it to compete in quality and consistency of French wines. The winemakers started to employ modern techniques to produce superior grapes and superior wines.

There are many laws governing wines in Italy. Many of these laws are reflected in the labeling of the wine. There are four basic labels or appellations that are found on Italian wine bottles. The first is *Vino da Tavola*, this just says that this wine was produced in Italy, but it does not fit into any of the tight guidelines that would allow it a different label. This does not necessarily mean that it is a low quality wine. The next label is *Indicazione Geografica Tipica* this label means that the wine follows a new set of guidelines that were laid out. These are the newer style wines. The next appellation is *Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC)*. A wine that is labeled DOC is a wine that is produced in a certain place from a grape that is grown in a certain region and aged for a certain number of years. *Denominazione di Origine Controllata Garantita (DOCG)*. These are the most strictly regulated wines and must meet a taste test by the government.

In the Piedmont region there are several different varieties of grapes and wine, but probably the most common wines in and around Alba are the dolcetto, the barbera, the nebbiolo, the Barolo, and the Barbaresco. All of the wines carry *Denominazione di Origine Controllata* label and the Barolo and Barbaresco carry the *Denominazione di Origine Controllata Garantita* label. Most of the wines in the region are named after the grape they come from. A major exception is the Barolo and Barbaresco, which is produced from the nebbiolo grape.



A view of the wine barrels at the Cavallotto Vineyard. Photo by Daniel Blair

### Dolcetto d'Alba:

Dolcetto means "little sweet one" but rarely are these wines sweet. A typical Dolcetto d'Alba will be light and very dry. They are not very acidic and are high in tannins, but these tannins are soft, making it a wine that can be drunk early as the majority of the varieties are and not aged. There are a few vineyards experimenting with aging because the high tannin content makes possible for aging. It is a very dark wine with color ranging from purple to black, with very fruity undertones. I have drunk dolcettos so dark that I could not see my hand on the other side. A typical dolcetto will have hints of blackberries, red plums, coffee and even violet. The grapes are usually grown in areas that are not suitable for the later ripening barbera and nebbiolo grapes, as the dolcetto grape ripens extremely fast. This is a standard table wine in Alba and pair well with just about all foods. In my experience it is the best wine to drink with pizza as it does not overpower the pizza, but it is also not pushed to the side by the pizza either.



### Barbera d'Alba:

The barbera grape is the most popular planted grape in the Piedmont region and the second most planted grape variety in all of Italy. The reason for this is that it is a very strong grape that grows well and can resist many bacteria and fungi.

The grape is very acidic, but very low in tannin, if there is any taste of tannin in the wine it is because it was aged in an oak barrel, which imparted tannin into the wine.

The color of the wine can vary from light to dark depending on the type of soil that it is grown in. For example the Barbera d'Alba *Superiore Vigna d'Ines* from I Calici vineyard is a very dark red color due to the fact that it was grown in a white clay, while their grapes for the regular Barbera d'Alba were grown in a darker clay and sand soil which gave it a lighter color. Another factor that affects color of the wine is the age. A young wine is, typically, a deep purple but as it ages becomes lighter and takes on a deep ruby color. The wine tends to taste of cherries, blueberries, currants and blackberries. There are different levels of barbera wines depending on age and time spent in oak barrels. There are the rustic level wines that are rough and acidic and relatively young. These wines are earthy and taste of dried fruits. Then there are the wines that are older and have the taste of the oak barrels they have been aged in. These also have an intense fruity flavor. The barbera vine has been exported to many different countries such as the United States, Australia and several South America countries. In these countries and in Italy it is often used for blending with other wines because of its high acidity. Barbera wines are good with most all foods, and they work extremely well with tomato dishes.

### Nebbiolo, Barolo, and Barbaresco:

The nebbiolo grape is responsible for not one style of wine but three. There are the Nebbiolo, the Barbaresco and the Barolo. The Barolo is often considered the king of Italian wines. Long aging hard to produce and strong tasting, it is a masterpiece wine. All three of these wines are strong, acidic, high in tannin and earthy. The name nebbiolo comes from the Italian word for fog, *nebbia*. And no other word could describe the conditions where nebbiolo is found better than that. In late October and early November, Piedmont is shrouded in fog, this also happens to be when the nebbiolo grape is ready for harvest. It is the very last grape to be harvested.

Langhe Nebbiolos and Nebbiolo d'Albas are younger versions of Barolos and Barbaresco or wines that were not produced within the regions necessary to be named a Barolo or Barbaresco. They are very strong and acidic and high in alcohol. They are fresh and taste of fruits like raspberries and plums. They also may have a hint of violet. In my experience nebbiolos are very strong and go very well strong cheeses and strong foods, as they will easily overpower many foods.

There are a few regulations that make a Barolo a Barolo and a Barbaresco a Barbaresco. One is that the grapes have to be grown in a certain geographical location near the town of their namesake. Another is that Barolos must be aged for at least 3 years, two of which must be in an oak barrel. With Barbaresco, it must be aged two years, and at least one of those must



be in an oak barrel. But in reality most of these wines are not consumed until many years after their vintage, because they are so acidic and high in tannin that they need a long time to mature. Nebbiolo grapes never produce very dark wines, but as these wines age they become lighter and lighter. But they pack a strong punch. They are spicy, sweet, and have a high alcohol content.

Some wine producers have started to use smaller French-style barrels to age their wine because this produces a wine that is ready to drink faster than with the Slovenian oak barrels. When these smaller barrels were introduced there was a lot of debate about if modernist were ruining the wine by making it to oaky, while the modernist said that it was only speeding up the process of making the Barolo drinkable. This caused the "Barolo Wars" and led to a division in the way that Barolo is produced today. You can find still find many traditional producers of Barolo but there are also many modern producers. As Barolo is normally very expensive my

exposure to it was limited, but of the three bottles I have tried one bottle I drank had a strong taste of oak, where as the other two only had a hint of oak. The second two were from a traditional barrel, so I can only assume that the other one came from a French style.

The wines produced from these three different grapes are each very different from each other. Each one offers something that the others do not have. The Alba region can supply the perfect red wine for every occasion. If you are serving some strong cheeses, serve a nebbiolo or a Barolo. Serving pasta with tomato sauces? How about a nice barbera? If you are having a simple dinner, why not a simple dolcetto?

## Americani in Italia



"The trouble with eating Italian food is that five or six days later, you're hungry again."

- George Miller

*Rick Steves'*  
**ITALIAN**  
PHRASE BOOK & DICTIONARY



# Sono Americana: An American in Alba

by Jennifer Cognard-Black

Somehow I've never felt American. Midwestern, yes—at the age of two, my family moved from Texas to Nebraska, and I wound up living there until the age of twenty-two. Even now, after attending graduate school in Iowa and Ohio and then taking a teaching position in Maryland, I still think of myself as a dyed-in-the-wool corn-crowder, a landlubber who somehow



made it out of the cornfields and all the way to the East Coast. Almost a decade in Southern Maryland, and these tree-people, these waterfolk continue to confound me. Pines and oaks and sugar maples and dogwoods line the roadsides like blinders; my eyes ever seek a horizon, a long and continuous line to seal the sky to the land like a giant Tupperware lid.

Mostly I ignore the boats, shade my brow and gaze at them from afar, tiny groups of bobbing white corks in rivers and bays of brackish champagne. Even the charm of crabbing eludes me (all those wild limbs and beady eyes), the sharp taste of a crabcake or a bowl of hot crab dip finds me wishing for an Emyrean Ale (brewed in Nebraska), a baked potato right out of the field, and a corn-fed slab of beef, medium well.

And, yet, although I proudly hale from the horizontal world—even despite my blue-state leanings and on-going shame over Midwestern racisms and sexismes masked by killing kindnesses—when abroad, I cringe at being dubbed “American.” If anything, my national allegiance is British. My mother was born in Glasgow at the bitter end of WWII, immigrated with her family when she was eleven, and I grew up surrounded by my these relatives, all of whom had left the Scottish lowlands for the feral frontier of Omaha, Nebraska and bought snug one-story houses within a three-block radius of each other. Growing up with their tea and scones (pronounced “on” not “own”), their neeps and tatties, their pasties and puddings built me a thorough Scot from the inside out; I toasted Robbie Burns with the rest of them, ate my share of haggis, and got a little misty whenever I heard a bagpipe play “Amazing Grace.”

But American. No—not me. Baseball, burgers, Bambi, Barbies, the A-bomb: I so often find myself horrified (Iraq) or embarrassed (McDonald’s) or contemptuous (Disney) of what has come to represent American culture. Of course, at the very same time I hypocritically consume



this culture (movies, gas, restaurants, fashion, Starbucks) and live in what is really ridiculous wealth. (The last time I got my hair highlighted and cut in Georgetown, I spent almost as much money as my students and I raised putting on a creative reading to benefit Share our Strength, a D.C. organization that fights child hunger.) "American." Surreal. Uncanny. Like playing at my adult life, performing it. As an American, I'm primarily taught to look with avarice or smugness at the world around me. I want that car. God, doesn't she know how terrible she looks in that shirt. Judging, judging.

Europe, though. Italy, England, France. The world is smaller; people take up less space. Refrigerators, markets, cars, even cans of Coke or coffees—they are human-size; they fit the hand, the heart, the stomach. Teaching a three-week college course in Alba, Italy, on the literatures of food ("Books that Cook: Italian Edition"), I walk everywhere, and that feels right: my legs meant for it, meant to carry me to work, to the store, to the phone booth, to the church, the concert, the restaurant, the café, the student center, the park. Because I stride this city of Alba, I know its paces, I've measured it with my body, its shape is lived. And all this walking means I see people—really see them. They're not a blur or invisible, clamped tight in their houses, their offices, their cars like coffins. We speak. Strangers, yes, but we say "Buon giorgno"; we greet the human in each other, the weather, the street; we articulate the moment, "Buona sera" on our tongues in the evening, "Come va?" from our lips when I am brave enough to ask a question, even when I might have to say "Mi dispiace! Non capisco" the moment a native answers me. In my car in Southern Maryland on my way to work or the grocery store, the radio does the talking, or silly songs on a CD, or the tires against the blacktop. I "see" no one, just other car-dwellers. We muffle ourselves, tape our mouths with road and speed.

Even though Europe is certainly all about tourism—as much about selling an idea of Europe to those who seek it as my country is about selling "America"—somehow I'm still less self-conscious, less uncomfortable in who I am, in who I present myself to be. I still cringe at being the "Americana," which is something I simply cannot hide—my pronunciations are all wrong, spread and flat, and I don't do the right things with my clothes (my jeans should be tucked into my boots, my scarf looped through itself and worn outside my coat, my hairstyle doesn't look like a gelled porcupine)—and so, of course, I'm made aware of my difference from Italians every day (stares, smiles, even whistles). And yet I don't feel judged. I'm not scrutinized—merely looked at, observed. In turn, I find myself seeing alternate beauty: not what consumer culture wants me to see, youth or attractiveness or a pink-orange sunset behind a mountain. Instead, I see beauty in a shopkeeper's little dog, in the old man who holds the door for me every morning after I have my cappuccinos ("due," always "due," they are much too small; I'm sheepishly used to a Starbucks' "venti," twenty ounces), the peeling melon-colored facades of the apartment buildings, the clementine rinds in the street (such orange against such gray). In Alba, my eye adjusts. Re-visions. As such, I feel more beautiful to myself—less out-of-shape, less old, less middle-age mom, these markers that have measured me, in America, for almost a decade (a month and I'll be 39).

Then there's eating. In America, I rarely eat for itself. I eat because I'm ravenous after teaching, so there's an apple (tasteless), a coffee (weak), a granola bar (chemical and hard). Or I eat with guilt: pizza, pastries, butter, chocolate. Or I refuse food: I displace muscle and mass with nothingness, not light or air—just black nothing, "niente." Or I eat for show: a fancy restaurant, a dinner party, a job candidate dinner, a holiday. My students and I, in Alba, are reading certain Italian food books, both novels and memoirs, and so I now know that there is much that's been written about Italians as indigenous chefs. They cook what's local, what's in season. Their food tastes of the place from whence it came, the sea and soil in their mouths. As Barbara Kingsolver writes in her book *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, "Tuscans and Umbrians

have had a lot more time than [Americans] have . . . to recognize the end of the frontier when they see it, and make peace with their place. They were living on and eating from this carefully honed human landscape more than a thousand years before the Pilgrims learned to bury a fish head under each corn plant in the New World. They have chosen to retain in their food one central compelling value: that it's fresh from the ground beneath the diners' feet. The simple pastas still taste of sunshine and grain; the tomatoes dressed with the fruity olive oil capture the sugars and heat of late summer; the leaf lettuce and red chicory have the specific mineral tang of their soil; the black kale soup tastes of a humus-rich garden." Despite pages and pages in any American phonebook dedicated to Italian restaurants and Italian pizzerias and where to get the very best Italian sub sandwich, here in Italy there is no such thing as "Italian food": there's Tuscan food, Piedmont food, food from Rome, the wines and truffles and cheeses of Alba. Whether purchased from a stall or at a café or in a restaurant, that's why the food here is superb, "squisito."

And yet what strikes me even more than the fresh, subtle tastes is how unselfconsciously I eat. I don't look for a "lite" section of a menu (there is none) or weigh options between desire and need. I guess; I take a risk. I eat "carne cruda" (raw meat) because I've accident-ally ordered it, bright pink and glistening in its meaty curls. At the *Vincafé*, I try a local wine (the expensive one, a Barolo) and veal with tuna sauce, "vitello tonnato." Heaven. When my eight-year-old daughter Kate and I order the local pasta, "tjarin" (because the only thing she'll



eat in Italy is "pasta al burro"), I don't think "carbs"—I think how curious, long, flat noodles, thinner than fettuccini, yellow-rich. (Kate calls them "sun spaghetti.") Or "gnocchi"—yes, it does look like a plate of potato knuckles. Or "crespella alla zucca" (pumpkin crepes), a bite of autumn. These foods are surfaces and colors and temperatures and tastes, not fashion or convenience or guilt. Taste: the secret pocket of my mouth, this sensation that fills my whole head and is mine alone. My sense of taste, here, now. This. It is experience without thought, pure feeling.

Perhaps because my mother is an immigrant, I recognize Italy—a place I've never seen before now, one I've long associated with meatballs, the mafia, and the Mona Lisa. Tourist Italy. And while I know this Italy I'm living, this "Europe," isn't real either, it's like the truth of fiction: a reality truer than fact. A paradox: the illusion that teaches you how better to see yourself, the real self: small, selfless, petty, generous, jealous, guileless, manipulative, straightforward, worldly, transcendent. Contradictory, containing multitudes. All of me.

Perhaps even that part of me I don't want to recognize—my Americanness, my own participation in, and enjoyment of, the privileges of the richest country on the planet.

It's probable, however, that my recognition, my strong sense of Italy or Europe as my soul's "home," is mere wishful thinking, a kind of irresponsible displacement of responsibility. While I can pick my home country, of course, meaning the place where I choose to reside, I can't make the decision (passive or active) to live in America and then shirk that nationality, pretend that I'm merely Midwestern or a displaced Scot or a would-be Italian. I can't order venti café lattes at my local Starbucks and then laugh that off as a silly caffeine addiction when my routine, the iterative choices I make on a daily basis, contribute to national landfills, to global poverty, and to a lifestyle shaped around comfort and numbness.

So it's possible that what I recognize—or, rather, what I long for—in Italy is simply this: to build a better self. And to make such a self, I might begin by admitting that for worse (greed, selfishness, arrogance) or for better (the possibility of grace), I am American. "Sono Americana."

### Recipe for Pasta Alla Americana

- 4 cups chopped, ripe tomatoes (preferably your own or bought at a farmer's market)
- 8 large basil leaves (again, easy to grow or to find locally)
- A large clove (or one heaping tablespoon) of garlic, minced
- A tablespoon of extra-virgin olive oil (no Italian imports—look for an American label)
- Pepper and salt
- A pound of your favorite pasta (again, you might try making your own)
- Half a pound or so of fresh mozzarella, cut into half-inch cubes
- Grated parmesan cheese

Boil a large, covered pot of water. Put aside one cup chopped tomatoes and two basil leaves, pureeing the rest of the tomatoes, basil, garlic, and olive oil until smooth. Add pepper and salt to taste.

At a rolling boil, add pasta and cook until al dente, about 8 or 9 minutes. As the pasta cooks, cut the remaining two basil leaves into small strips.

Drain the pasta and toss it immediately with the mozzarella cubes, then add sauce and mix well. Top with basil strips and chopped tomatoes as well as grated parmesan. Serve.

# Under the Piedmont Sun

by Adam Zimmerman

I am about to begin an adventure in Europe. Tomorrow, I will finish packing my bags and leave my parents at the airport and head to Alba, Italy to study abroad for the fall 2007 semester. I am looking forward to beginning a different life being away from my parents, learning a new culture and developing new friendships with my fellow school mates. Even though I am excited and looking forward to leaving, I am going to miss the comforts of being at home, my family, and my friends.

The first true Italian meal I ate in Alba was from Vincafé, a small café in Alba. On the first evening we were had a large group dinner with all the and school faculty. For my first meal, I vitello tonnato as my appetizer. *Vitello* is a platter of thinly sliced veal with a tuna As I would later find out, *vitello tonnato* is specialty of Piedmont, the region in which living for the next three months.

For my second plate, I ordered butter and sage sauce. The ravioli was with a variety of meat, and served in a large bowl, with a butter and sage sauce. When I took my first bite of ravioli, I was taken to a new place. It was almost like heaven. It was like something I had never tasted before. Each bite exploded with the freshness of the sage and the butter; no two pieces of ravioli were shaped the same. I believe I know the reason as to why Italian pasta tastes so much better than pasta in the United States. No matter from what restaurant in Italy you order pasta, it is traditionally hand made the day before and allowed to dry before being served.

While traveling, I was fortunate enough to visit Alessandro's Restaurant in La Morra. While at this restaurant, I was given cooking lessons to show how various Italian dishes were made. However, the most intriguing part of this whole experience was watching the pasta being made. The chef, Alessandro, simply mixed together flour, eggs and olive oil. After a few minutes of mixing the ingredients together, a semi-sticky dough was created. From there, he placed the dough in a machine that rolled and flattened it. After several times through the machine, the dough was finally thin enough to begin making pasta. While on my visit to the restaurant, Alessandro and his assistant, Danielle, made both *tajarin* and *agnolotti*. *Tarajin*, rich yellow pasta, is handmade from egg yolks rather than whole eggs. They are thin strips which look exactly like spaghetti. However, *agnolotti*, resembles ravioli. *Agnolotti* are little "envelopes," which are usually filled with some type of meat and served with butter and sage. As I stated earlier, Italian pasta puts American pasta to shame for one simple reason: Italian pasta contains a secret ingredient which cannot be found in American pasta; each piece is handmade with devotion by the chef.



while in located here, we students ordered *tonnato* sauce. a I will be

ravioli in filled

Over the course of the next several weeks, I broadened my horizons, and began trying dishes that are not readily available in the United States. At first, I was somewhat apprehensive to try the *coniglio*, rabbit. After ordering and tasting the herbs and spices in each bite, it was no different from eating rotisserie chicken.

One interesting thing to note about Italian cuisine is that each of the twenty Italian regions has their own specialty dishes, which cannot be found anywhere else. For example, over the course of my stay, I learned that the Piedmont region had many specialties. One of my favorites would have to be the *vitello tonnato*. However, the *brasato al Barolo*, braised beef in a Barolo wine sauce, gave the vitello tonnato a run for my favorite dish. One of the most interesting local specialties I had while studying abroad would have to be the *fonduta*. *Fonduta* is the equivalent to fondue in the United States. The Italian *fonduta* is just a large bowl of melted cheeses with a loaf of bread on the side. Needless to say, it was quite delicious, but probably the most interesting dish I had while living in Italy.

Over the course of my three month stay, I visited several other cities in addition to Alba. I visited Pisa, Rome and Venice. These excursions showed me some of the most famous places in the world: Saint Mark's Square in Venice, the Roman Forum and Coliseum in Rome and the Leaning Tower of Pisa. There were two purposes for these trips. First, I was going to sightsee like any typical tourist would do. Secondly, and most important, I was going to see how other Italians viewed food.

After my week long journey through these cities, I came to a conclusion that I know will hold true for no matter where one travels in Italy. In Italy, unlike in America, dinner is the most important and slowest meal of the day. Dinner in Italy is unlike dinner in the United States in many ways. For one, most restaurants do not even open until 7:30 or 8:00 p.m. for dinner. When I first arrived, this was a major adjustment for me. I was used to eating dinner around 6:00 p.m. back home.

Secondly, unlike in the United States, dinner in Italy is an extremely slow meal. In the states, restaurants try to get the customers in and out as quickly as possible in order to maximize profits. However, in Italy, dinners can range anywhere from one to three hours. Italian dinners usually consist of three to five courses. The first dish is the *antipasti*, literally "before pasta." The *antipasta* is normally a salad or *vitello tonnato*, or any other small plate to hold you over until the second plate. The second dish is called the *prima* plate, first plate. The first plate is usually pasta. After the *prima* comes the *segundo*, second plate. The second plate is traditionally some sort of meat: chicken, rabbit or roast beef. Finally, after the *segundo* comes the *dolce*, dessert.

Over the course of the last three months, I learned that if a restaurant is full when a patron shows up, the owner/manager will turn that person away. Unlike in the United States, there are no waiting lists because the owner does not know for certain how long dinner will take. As I stated earlier, our first group dinner lasted roughly three hours. While in Italy, I have had several other dinners that have lasted well over two hours.

Finally, some Italian restaurants, not all of them, do not have a menu. This was most surprising when I first visited Osteria Nuova, a small restaurant located in Alba. As an American, I was used to the idea of going into a restaurant, perusing the menu and ordering what I wanted. However, at Osteria Nuova, the owner, Fabio, brings out whatever he is in the mood to make. In addition, if you are unsure as to whether or not you would like a particular dish, he would bring out a small sample for you to try before



hand. I have come to support this dinner practice. Each and every time I dine at Osteria Nuova, it is a totally different experience. I look forward to the surprises of what is being served for dinner because I know that no matter what it is, it will be extraordinary. The United States needs to adopt restaurants of this type.

Another conclusion that I came to after finishing my week long tour of Italy was that Italians only use fresh ingredients when they cook. Unlike in America where most fruits and vegetables are imported from California, Florida and other states, most Italian restaurants only use local ingredients. Throughout the Piedmont region and all regions of Italy for that matter, there are an abundance of vineyards and corn fields. Italian restaurants often serve wine from the local vineyards and use fruits and vegetables from the local farms, as well. This was quite a change to what I was used to. Living in Maryland, we do not have any "local" specialties, except seafood. Granted, we do have several vineyards, but when one orders wine with dinner it is usually imported from Napa Valley, California. Our fruits and vegetables are usually also imported from other states throughout the nation. I would say the second secret ingredient used in Italian cooking is the fresh and local ingredients.

My time in Italy has taught me about the Italian culture and how truly different it is from that of America. More importantly, however, my three months in Italy have taught me about Italian cuisine and Italian food, in general. Before coming to Italy, I had no idea about the fact that each region had their own food specialties. I also did not know that dinner could range from one hour all the way up to three. Unlike in America, most restaurants are open until at least midnight or later. Finally, at certain restaurants throughout Italy, a menu was not offered. My travels and adventures throughout Italy have truly been a worthwhile endeavor. There is no doubt that I have become much more knowledgeable about how people live in different parts of the world by becoming part this particular culture for the last three months.

## **Recipes** **Piedmont Region Specialty Dishes**

### **Vitello Tonnato: Veal with a Tuna Sauce**

- 2 lbs. veal butt tenderloin
- 3 cups white wine
- 1 celery stalk (sliced)
- 1 carrot (sliced)
- 1 small onion (chopped)
- 2 cloves
- 7 oz. tuna in oil
- 6 anchovy fillets
- 2 egg yolks, hard-boiled
- 2 lemons, 1 squeezed, 1 thinly sliced
- 2 cups oil
- 2 Tbsp. capers
- 1 Tbsp. white vinegar

Marinate veal in white wine with carrots, celery, cloves and chopped onions for one day. Remove the meat from the marinade mixture, wrap and tie tightly in a cheese cloth. Place in an oval pan just large enough to hold it together. Pour marinade mixture over meat and cook slowly, on top of the stove, for approximately one hour. Remove from heat and let the meat cool in its cooking juices.

Use a sieve to de-grease and filter the cooking liquid. Blend the liquid in a food mill with the tuna, anchovies, 1 Tbsp. capers and egg yolks. Dilute the sauce with lemon juice and vinegar and whisk in the oil, at a steady and even pace, until you get a velvety sauce similar to mayonnaise. Slice the veal and arrange on a serving platter in the following manner: Spread a few spoonfuls of sauce on the platter. Add the veal, one layer at a time, with sauce covering each layer. Create as many layers as you would like, depending on the number of people being served. Sprinkle with remaining capers and decorate the rim of the platter with the sliced lemon. Serve.

### **Brasato al Barolo: Beef Braised in Barolo Wine**

2 lbs. top round beef  
2 carrots (sliced)  
2 onions (chopped)  
few celery stalks (sliced)  
2 cloves garlic  
2 Tbsp. oil  
1 bottle Barolo  
spices  
flour for dusting  
salt  
pepper

Salt and pepper beef and marinate with the vegetables, spices and wine for 12-24 hours at a cool temperature. **NOTE:** Do not marinate the beef in the refrigerator.

Drain the meat and heat the oil in a large pan. Dust the meat with flour and brown the meat on all sides over a high flame. Add the marinade mixture. Cover and cook gently in a 375°F oven for 3-4 hours. Remove the brasato from its cooking juices, set aside and keep warm.

Use a sieve to finely separate the cooking juices from the vegetables. Adjust seasoning. Reduce the heat, slice the brasato, arrange on a pre-heated platter and serve with fried potatoes, polenta or mashed potatoes.

# Reflections on Coffee

by Monica Frantz



The day I was to leave for Italy, I woke up with an oversized mug of coffee. Sitting at the kitchen table with my older brother and my dad, my mom was leaning against the counter. We all sipped our coffee with exaggerated attempts to appear routine. Routine is what my family thrives upon, the thing that solidifies otherwise opposing personalities; vacations have been edged out of our summers due to accusations of disturbing the peace. This dependable schedule is unspoken, but if laundry gets done on a Tuesday instead of a Monday or Dad goes metal detecting on Friday morning and not Sunday morning or the hazelnut coffee is brewed before the regular coffee, we spend the rest of the day in a fog, considering the possibility that other natural laws, gravity for instance, could be so similarly violated. If there were one black sheep of the family, one who chose, in a manner too subtle to be noticed by the outside world, to rebel against our self-imposed norm, it would be my mother. None of the six of us enjoy shirking the system like Mom, who every so often sleeps in until ten a.m. and then proceeds to bake a batch of cinnamon rolls, still wearing her pajamas. She is the one who suggests the brewing of a pot of coffee at four on a rainy afternoon, ignoring the gasps echoing through our farmhouse, and fills the refrigerator with exotic-flavored creamers: vanilla-almond praline, anyone?

Packing up the car to leave for the airport, I was envious of my mom's perspective and frustrated at how unlike her I was. This feeling had been growing increasingly; I'd stopped limiting myself to plain, regular coffee about a year earlier, developing an addiction to fancy flavored beans shortly after. Preparing to travel abroad, I had safely researched what to pack and had taken inventory of exactly what was contained inside my bags. Being overly ready, I hypothesized, would keep me in control of this experience thus preventing any harsh awakenings or tough lessons during my semester abroad. Mom would have brought along whatever suited her fancy; there are stores in Italy, she would say. In an attempt to stave off my anxiety, I tried to imitate her; I convinced myself that every new thing would be an adventure, a page in my scrapbook. But I admitted my distress at the impending separation from coffee; I could manage such stress easier than the disappearance of familiar community and comfort which had always been punctuated by copious amounts of coffee, black and bitter or sweet and creamy.

The marble windowsill supports my weight, leaning on my elbows, hands cradling the lime green mug; my eyes linger in the courtyard below. It has become a game for me; I spend a few minutes every few days assessing the progress of the renovations on the building beside the apartment in Italy I call home. Its appearance fails to suggest that the project is moving in a forward motion. The building is home to hundreds of pigeons and seems to sag noticeably



under the weight of their waste, and yet, it has changed radically in the past few months. My mind revels in the steady work of the Italian crew. Recreating is messy; tall, rubber boots keep the sludge from overcoming the workers. In passing, I have heard rumor that the process has been a slow one; it has been three years and it is still not finished. Taking a sip of the black instant coffee (a compromise I'm ashamed to have made), I am captivated by such dedication and vision. Making things beautiful takes time; there have been rainy days and weekends, sometimes the work is obvious and sometimes the men disappear inside for weeks at a time. There are days when I am angry and impatient; being in Italy was supposed to make me more beautiful and sophisticated than the drip-brewed coffee person I still am.

In a dream, there are a few snowflakes falling outside, elusive and teasing; the air smells of snow, the ground is frozen solid, and the sun has been replaced by a faintly glowing cloud covering. My hands are warmed by a hot mug resting in between them; the embrace is a familiar one, my hands comfortably relax into the ceramic. I lift the mug to my lips and the dark, almost-black liquid swooshes through my body. Mom has her own mug; she flirts with her coffee, stirring it round and round with a spoon, her eyes focused on the swirl of light brown. She takes her coffee with cream. We're at the kitchen table, it is December and I'm home again. For a few minutes we are silent, but we've been bridging the separation of the past months, sorting through the other's life and fitting the pieces together; reintroducing what was once a welcome routine with a splash of spontaneity. I'm staring out the window counting snowflakes, but they seem to disappear just as quickly as the last three months did.

When I wake, my room is silent except for the ringing of my alarm clock and the stirring of my roommate. I had fallen asleep to a playful polka wafting up the stairwell but the man downstairs went to sleep hours ago, his accordion carefully put away. I close my eyes briefly, soaking in the morning. Rolling over onto my back, I stretch out seeing how long I can make my body and then relax into the mattress. The dream from last night rushes back through my head. I'm caught up in the realness of it all, hoping that this is a dream and that was reality. I've developed the tendency to regularly evaluate my routine, to assess my normal, with the intention of keeping track of what has changed, what has escaped my grip and become something beautiful. It haunts me to replay that dream; somewhere this semester I let go because, in my dream, there was beauty in the kitchen in December. Would it happen when I flew to Romania on a whim or when I jumped into changing my major? Or had it happened when I first attempted to use my broken Italian in the market or when I had my first taste of a quick, strong espresso? In my dream, I am still drinking the same old coffee. My frustration at the lack of transformation I can presently see in myself had been replaced by a mature sense of security, almost as foreign as the espresso: out of every drink I could choose, I'd chosen the one I know best.

Sipping my first espresso back in September, I was playing make believe. The evolution from tea parties with my dolls to that moment was fairly direct. Holding the dainty cup in the café made me feel Italian; ordering my *caffè normale*, drinking it in two sips without any sugar. Those sips were different from anything I knew or could fully grasp; they were alluring and complex. There was something intimidating about the simplicity and sophistication; something I couldn't have and had no business imitating. I was channeling someone who was adventurous and exciting and cultured and willing to push the limits of habit: my mother.

My evaluation of any particular espresso has less to do with the café or the brand of espresso or even its taste, but instead hinges upon the state of mind in which it is consumed. One Saturday morning, I was an excited tourist in the midst of whirlwind tour of Italy stopping in Alba to peruse the truffle festival, pausing to sip a cappuccino at the bar with a friend, shopping bags wedged between my feet. Two weeks ago, I drank my black espresso alone,

analyzing an Italian soap on the television and eaves-dropping on the conversation of a pair of English-speaking tourists; in my mind, I was masquerading as an Italian. Scattered amongst these occasions are many *caffè* that did not satisfy, tending to prompt my stomach into a pattern of unsettling grumbling. There was the confusion at the cash register which exposed my fraud, my elementary attempt to seem Italian, and left me feeling just as much a part of Italy as a cheeseburger. Lately, I've stopped getting *caffè*. My words convey dwindling finances or a sensitive stomach, but I cannot keep forcing myself to drink something of which I feel so unworthy; something that unapologetically reminds me that this place can never be my home.

A part of me left the states for Italy expecting to never return again. I was resigned, though slightly excited, about not moving home again. I was certain that something was waiting for me, something that would pull me away from my home; I could escape from the routine which lately had begun to suffocate me. In the coming months, I was determined to figure out how I could stay in Europe forever. In wanting to run away from the mundane and the boring, attempting to avoid the uncertainty of my life in the states, I set out to put down roots somewhere new; somewhere I didn't have to bother with weeding out or pruning what had already failed. I didn't freely give out the date of my return; I was reluctant to admit to myself I would come home. An elderly woman at the organic market handed me a pamphlet for a farm stay program, nudging me to wade in a sea of potentialities. Such fancies nagged me for the first month or so of living in Italy, the same month that I was immersed in that affair with espresso; a novelty that soon wore off.

It wasn't until I was halfway between Amsterdam and Detroit that this identity crisis subsided. During my first month in Alba, each new thing was an adventure; even the mundane was worth writing home about because it happened in Italy. I drank espresso to stay in character; it was a well placed act in an epic journey I had begun to narrate and transcribe in my journal. Around the time I had demystified the choices at the café (a task I have yet to accomplish at Starbuck's), the stardust started to settle and Italy, though still magically beautiful, was no longer the object of my anxious desire. If Italy was just another place for people to call home, then it was okay for me not to call it home, it would be okay if I didn't become Italian by Christmas. Perhaps it was an illusion brought on by the time changes and hours in airports but, with this realization, came an odd sensation of relief at being able to openly declare my love of the coffee of my home.

Weighed down by my bags and many hours of travel, I have finally arrived back on my native soil. My mom knows me; she is holding two cups of hot coffee with skim milk and Splenda. She passes me one of the cups as we hug, each of us has a cup in one hand and our embrace is somewhat awkward and yet so familiar. Mom's soapy perfume is a comforting compliment to the coffee. I am home. We start to walk out of the airport in silence; each of us sipping our drink. It is cold in December in Maryland; the sky looks like snow. There is no way to know where to start catching up, but sips of coffee fill in the silences. The action is familiar, but the circumstances are far from routine; normalcy embraces us, but tales of adventure tempt us into being spontaneous. Mom slips in a request for a lesson in espresso drinks: Could I introduce her to the difference between a cappuccino and a macchiato? So, it seems, I haven't come home the same person who left three months ago, even if the only difference is my increased knowledge of coffee drinks I'll never call my own. I wouldn't banish the possibility of the occasional espresso or cappuccino, but there is no shame in my coffee, either. Those months in Italy have become scenes from a distant dream; my taste for *caffè* lingers down cobblestone streets, an ocean away, waiting for my next adventure.

# Espresso Drinks

Cappuccino	1/3 espresso (1 shot), 1/3 steamed milk, and 1/3 foamed milk. The steamed milk mixes with the espresso and the foamed milk rests on top.
Latte	1/3 espresso (1 shot), 2/3 steamed milk.
Macchiato	1 shot espresso with a dollop of foamed milk on top.
Americano	1 shot espresso in a cup of hot water
Breve	1 shot espresso with warm light cream
Con Panna	1 shot espresso with a dollop of whipped cream on top
Mochaccino	Cappuccino with chocolate syrup to taste
Romano	1 shot espresso with a twist of lemon peel





# C'era Una Volta

(Once Upon a Time)



"I like nonsense; it wakes up the brain cells. Fantasy is a necessary ingredient in living, it's a way of looking at life through the wrong end of a telescope, and that enables you to laugh at life's realities."

-Dr. Seuss

# Il Cappelin Verde

by Sara DeSavage

A long time ago, there was a beautiful girl named Giulia. She was the most beautiful girl in Alba. Her *nonna* lived in the woods near the town. Giulia's *nonna* was sick and lonely, but Giulia could not live in the woods, so she visited her *nonna* regularly. Every weekend, Giulia brought a basket of food to her *nonna*. Giulia's *nonna* loved her very much, and one day made her a beautiful green cloak. The cloak was to hide the girl's beauty from evil strangers while passing through the woods.

In these woods, many strange animals and people hid. It was very dangerous to walk through them alone, especially when so beautiful like Giulia. Her grandmother wanted to see her but was afraid of Giulia being taken. She told Giulia to use the cloak every time she went into the woods. People began to call her *il capelin verde* or the green cloak.

When Giulia began preparing to cook her *nonna's* meal, she realized she had no food! She started searching through the house. She looked through the cabinets, the drawers, on the shelves, everywhere! She only found some Semolina flour, a few eggs, and about half a bottle of olive oil. She thought, "What could I possibly make my *nonna* with so little? I can't even make her bread!" If she couldn't make her *nonna* bread, she shouldn't visit her until the next weekend. She had to see her *nonna*! "There must be something else here," she thought. She must at least be able to make bread for her *nonna*. She set the eggs in a small basket on the window sill, the oil next to them and the flour in jar near to that.



While she continued searching for more food, a boy passing by accidentally knocked the eggs, the last of Giulia's eggs, off of the counter and into the flour. Seeing that Giulia was too busy to have noticed what happened, he tried to hide the eggs by pushing the flour over them. He was so afraid of upsetting the beautiful girl. He quickly ran away after covering his mistake.

Giulia, taking no notice of her broken eggs, continued searching for food in the basement. "There must something down here! I always keep extra food here," she thought to herself as she went down the stairs.

A few minutes later, an old lady passed by Giulia's window. She thought she saw eggs being mixed into flour, but with shells! "Who would do such a thing? Surely this girl doesn't mean to keep the shells here!" So the old lady picked out the shells, then covered the eggs with more flour so as not to upset the girl that was preparing what looked

like bread.

Giulia, still downstairs does not know of what is going on upstairs with her "food", as another young boy came by. He saw the large pile of flour by the window and couldn't help himself. He loved to play with flour when his mother made bread, and she never objected so he played with the mixture just as he would play with his mother's flour. As he dug his hands into the pile, he noticed it was wet and not what he expected. This new discovery thrilled him! He kept playing and playing with the things, mixing them together, making what looked even more like bread dough. Suddenly, this boy heard footsteps coming up the stairs and ran away as fast as he could. Even though everyone in Alba is quite friendly, it is never appropriate to play with someone else's food. The boy did not want to get caught, just like the other boy and the old lady.

Giulia had come back up stairs empty handed. "Where did I put all of my food?" she cried. Defeated, she went to put what little food she had away for us another day. To her surprise, there was dough lying on her counters! She didn't know what to do! "This is a miracle! I have dough to make bread for *nonna* after all," she said. As she got closer to the heap of food, she realized this wasn't dough for bread at all. It would never rise. She quickly scanned the counter. Her eggs had been used, and this dough was right where the flour was. Someone had mixed her food together while she was gone. She didn't know who had done this for her, or why, but she figured there was some good reason for it.

Since the mixture looked most like cookie dough, she decided to roll it out and make it like cookies. She figured she could roll out the dough, and then bake it as a yummy treat for her nonna. As she rolled out the dough though, she thought round, un-sweet cookies just wouldn't



be right. She thought about what to do with this new mixture as she continued rolling the dough out. Soon, she had rolled the dough for so long, that she could see the marble counter tops under her! Dough should never be this thin. "What should I do now?" she exclaimed. Not knowing what to do with this thin mixture, she just started cutting it, hoping something would turn up. After a while, she had many long strips of dough.

She didn't know what else to do, so she put them in a basket, put on her green cloak and headed to her *nonna's* home. She passed through the dark forest holding her cloak close to her. She was afraid of the creatures in the forest, and knew to stay close to the path. She also knew not to talk to anyone. Along the way, she saw a large polar bear, named *L'orso*. *L'orso* looked hungry and Giulia thought he saw her as a perfect meal. She quickly began running away, running off the path. As she continued running, it got darker and she couldn't see the camp ahead of her. She tripped over a branch and her basket (strings of dough and all) flew through the air. As she watched her wondrous miracle fall to ruin, she just laid there crying. Then, she looked up because she heard a "splash" and not a "plop"!

As she looked up, the dough had landed in the pot of boiling water the family was heating for a dinner. Afraid of losing the food again, she quickly ran to the pot to save her dough from the hot water. When she got to the pot, the dough hadn't turned to porridge or mush, but to a smooth, solid piece of food. She picked up her bottle of oil and put the food pieces into her basket, apologized to the family and went on her way. She didn't see the bear anymore. He seemed to have disappeared. The forest was safe again.

As she kept walking, she realized her bottle of oil had broken from the fall and was spilling all over her new food. She didn't know what to do other than eat it. Maybe the food would be good, despite the many mishaps. "Che bella!" The food was unlike anything she'd never had before! It was satisfying and light all at the same time. This new food filled her and tasted like perfection itself! Unable to wait to tell *Nonna* what she'd made, she ran the rest of the way there, this time watching closely for branches.

When she got to *Nonna's* home, she burst in without knocking. There sat *L'orso* at the table. He seemed to be a tamed pet that acted human all of a sudden. *L'orso* was *Nonna's* friend. He kept her company and looked after her. He usually left when Giulia visited, but today he wanted to meet the beloved Giulia.



"Your *nonna* tells me you were bringing her lunch today; sorry I scared you in the forest...I was just so hungry I wanted to take the food out of your basket right away." Giulia didn't know what to say. A bear just spoke to her! A horrible beast was just friendly with her! "Your *nonna* sent me to look for you when you didn't show up by the usual time. We were worried about you," he then said. Unsure of what else to do, she pulled the new food out of her basket and put it on the table.

Giulia then explained what she accidentally made, and reassured them

they wouldn't be upset. They each fixed a nice, heaping plate of this new pasta for dinner. When they tried it, they both exclaimed in joy! This was the best food they had ever eaten. *Nonna* was so proud that her granddaughter was the one to make such a lovely creation. It was the perfect food! They wanted more and more; they couldn't get enough of this food. After eating their fill of the food, they decided to call it *pasta* for the mess it was created in. Pasta is a salted mess of food, and what a better way to explain how pasta was created, then to name it a mess. How wonderful a mess can turn out sometimes. How beautiful. Che bella!





This pasta then became the family's secret meal until one day when L'orso betrayed the family and sold the secret recipe to millions of people. The recipe spread all through Italy, and soon the world. Now everyone knows this type of pasta as *Tajarin*. It is the simplest, but tastiest of meals. People of all ages will enjoy it, and it can be dressed in every way imaginable, although the original way of dressing it with olive oil is one of the best because of its simplicity. Here's the recipe so you too can enjoy *Nonna's* delicious pasta.

## Recipe

Ingredients: 1 egg per etto (100 grams) of Semolina flour; olive oil for moisture if needed

To make the pasta: Make well in middle of flour; add eggs; scramble eggs; knead eggs and flour together, adding a small amount of oil if necessary; allow to sit for 2 hours for moisture to soak into flour; roll out thin enough to see table under the sheet of pasta; cut into thin strips; may cook while still "wet" or allow to dry then cook later.

To cook: Boil a pot of water; drop pasta into water; allow to cook until soft and not sticky anymore (until it doesn't stick to the ceiling anymore when you throw it up); put on plate and serve with olive oil and salt (or what you prefer).



# La Bellezza e La Bestia

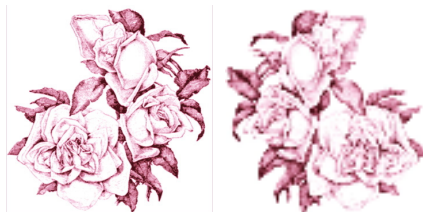
by Ally Bacaj



Bella sat in an unfamiliar room, stunned. Earlier that morning, she had been safe at home with her aunt. Now, she was the prisoner of a monstrous beast in a decrepit old castle. She supposed she should blame her father's cowardice. He had been a famous producer of liquors and wines in Piedmont. However, after an ill-advised foray into bacon-flavored vodka, his finances and reputation were ruined. He had gone off in search of a new job, far from where anyone had heard of the bacon vodka fiasco. However, he had gotten lost in Tuscany, where he had stumbled upon a seemingly abandoned castle. He went down into the wine cellar, hoping to find somewhere to hide and sleep. Instead, he found a great, hairy black beast drinking vodka from the bottle. The drunken, belligerent beast had slapped him around, and held a broken bottleneck to Bella's father's throat. However, when he mentioned his daughter, the Beast seemed to remember something through his drunken haze, and offered to allow Bella's father to trade his daughter's freedom for his own.

And so Bella found herself alone. Her door opened, but no one was there. The scent of roses wafted through the air, and a note materialized into thin air. The note said *You may not be able to see or hear us, but we are at your service. We will bring you anything you desire, as we want you to be happy in your new home.* Bella was not used to servants of any kind, let alone invisible, rose-scented ones. She stared blankly at the note, and then looked to the part of the room that seemed to smell most like roses, and said, "A bottle of wine would be nice, I suppose."

She wasn't expecting anything wonderful. A glass of her father's Nebbiolo, or her favorite rose liquor, would have been ideal. But from what her father told her about the Beast, she would have considered herself lucky to get a mug of gin with a splash of grape juice. She was pleasantly surprised, then, to see a cart with a bottle of aged Barolo and a cheese platter enter the room. She poured herself a glass, and the rich taste of the wine comforted her, and reminded her of home. Examining the bottle, Bella mused, "Perhaps this Beast does have some taste after all."



Bella was wrong. The Beast had once been a handsome young prince. However, like many young men with too much money and too few responsibilities, he lived a hedonistic life filled with cheap women and cheap booze. He did not drink beer or wine, just hard liquor. He didn't like to waste time (or money that could otherwise be spent on hookers), so he only liked alcohol that could get him as drunk as possible, as quickly as possible. One night at a pub, he began aggressively flirting with a beautiful young woman. Disgusted by his behavior and breath, the woman revealed herself to be a fairy. She placed a powerful curse on him. He

became an enormous black, hairy beast with bloodshot eyes and a large beer gut. The fairy told him that unless he learned to appreciate alcohol for purposes other than intoxication, his liver would fail and he would die in ten years. The fairy produced a pink bottle of rose liquor. It was enchanted, and was the only substance that could heal his doomed liver. However, it could only be opened by his true love. The prince briefly and drunkenly considered this challenge: to find true love and enjoy weak alcohol within ten years? He simply shrugged, and turned back to the bar and ordered a pint of pure Domintor vodka.



The night after her arrival, the Beast invited Bella to dinner. The servants prepared familiar Piedmonte foods for Bella: vitello tonnato, brasato al Barolo, and tajarin with shaved white truffles. However, she requested Chianti, a Tuscan wine, to drink. As he got to the table, the Beast swept off his wineglass and water cup, slamming a bottle of Domintor vodka onto the table in their place. He proceeded to swig vodka straight from the bottle. Bella stared, appalled. When she recovered, she turned to where she hoped a servant was standing, and asked for tonic water, a lime, and a glass filled with ice. They appeared promptly on a tray, and Bella walked over to the other side of the table. She fearlessly took the bottle out the Beast's hand, and poured a bit into the glass. She then added the tonic and lime, stirred them together, and handed it to the Beast. Now it was the Beast's turn to stare.

"Drink," she said, pointing at the glass.

"Why did you do that?" the Beast demanded. "That just dilutes the alcohol!"

Bella sighed, and said

"It tastes good. Liquor is meant to be enjoyed, it's not just there to get you hammered."

The Beast looked perplexed, but took a sip anyways. "Not too bad," he said grudgingly. He drank the rest in one big gulp. Bella then poured him a glass of Chianti.

"I don't drink wine," the Beast said defiantly. "It's only, what, 12% alcohol? What's the point?"

"It tastes good, of course," Bella said, exasperated. "It tastes good, and it makes everything else taste better too."

The Beast grunted, and swallowed the entire glassful. "Not too bad," he said again.

"Now eat. I promise, everything you eat will taste even better, and the food even enhances the taste of the wine." Bella returned to her seat, and poured herself a glass of wine. She raised her glass, and said, "to appreciating fine wine and good food!"

As the Beast raised his glass and took a small sip. Bella thought to herself "there may be hope for him yet. . . ."

As he put his glass back down on the table, the Beast looked at Bella and smiled. He had finally found a woman whose passion for alcohol equaled his own.





The next day after lunch, the Beast said to Bella, "I have a surprise for you."

Bella smiled. "What is it?" she asked.

"Follow me," the Beast said. He led her down a set of stairs into a dark room. He lit a candle, and Bella smelled lavender and orchids as more candles lit up, illuminating the entire room. Bella's jaw dropped. She was standing in the largest wine cellar she had ever seen. It reminded her of a library, with rows upon rows of shelves filled with every conceivable kind of wine. Bella ran to a row of Barbarescos, and reverently picked up a bottle.

"This is seventy years old!" she exclaimed.

"Probably rotten," the Beast grunted.

"What? No!" Bella cried. "Wine gets better with age!"

"Oh," said the Beast sheepishly.

Bella wandered through the shelves, pausing at a shelf full of dessert liquors. She browsed bottles of limoncello and amaretto, hoping to find her favorite, rose liquor. As she looked, something caught her eye. Against the wall, there was a cabinet with a glass door, empty except for a pink bottle.

"Rose liquor, my favorite! We should have some with dessert tonight, it's delicious!" she exclaimed.

"NO!" the Beast shouted. He quickly composed himself. "It's...not finished," he said hesitantly.

"Oh. It hasn't finished fermenting?" Bella asked.

"No," said the Beast shortly.

Attempting to ease the sudden tension, Bella quickly picked up a bottle of Ligurian limoncello. "Well, we can pour this over some sorbetto al limone for dessert instead," she suggested.

"That sounds like an excellent idea," said the Beast, who led Bella back to a shelf filled with French wines. Bella glanced at the shelf briefly, and then walked back to the Piedmont shelf to take the seventy-year old Barbaresco to drink with dinner.



Dinner was wonderful that night. They started with insalata caprese, followed by heaping plates of gnocchi al ragu and ravioli al plin. They sipped wine, and talked for hours, even after they had finished their food. For dessert, of course, they had sorbetto con limoncello. Bella told the Beast all about her father and his business, and the Beast...didn't care to share much about his own past. Talking to Bella, he felt ashamed of his

behavior for the first time. He was falling in love with her. Bella, too, was starting to feel butterflies in her stomach, and self-consciously played with her hair as she talked.

After dinner, Bella went upstairs to bed, and the Beast went down to the wine cellar to look for a bottle of wine to serve Bella at lunch the next day. As soon as he reached the bottom of the stairs, the Beast clutched his abdomen in pain. His liver was failing. He had run out of time, and he was about to die at the hands of the fairy's curse.

"BELLA!" He shouted, hoping she could hear him.

As Bella walked up the stairs, she suddenly smelled violets, and felt invisible hands tugging her back down the stairs. She followed the scent down to the cellar, where she found the Beast, lying on the floor, nearly dead.

"Oh Beast, what's wrong? What happened?" Bella cried. The Beast remained motionless, and Bella began to cry. "Please don't die," she sobbed, "I love you!" Upon hearing this, the Beast stirred slightly, and whispered two words in Bella's ear:

"Rose liquor."

Bella ran to the glass cabinet, and hastily took out the pink bottle. She ran back to the Beast, opened the bottle, and poured a tiny amount into his open mouth. Suddenly, Bella was no longer looking at a Beast, but a handsome prince!

He sat up and said "thank you, Bella. It's me, your Beast."

Bella could do little more than gape as he told her the story of the fairy's curse. The prince stood up, and took Bella by the hand. They both walked upstairs and back into the dining room, where they shared the delicious little bottle of rose liquor. Of course, they lived happily ever after.



### Rose Liquor

#### Ingredients:

2 dozen roses  
1 quart vodka

3 cups sugar  
2 cups water

Separate the petals from one dozen roses, making sure they are dry. Place the petals in a half-gallon or gallon jar, then pour the vodka over them. Close jar, and put it in a dark, cool place. Stir once or twice a week for 4-6 weeks.

After 4-6 weeks, dissolve 3 cups of sugar in 2 cups of water in a pot with a lid. Put in petals from another dozen roses. Cover the pot well, and bring the liquid to a boil. Let it simmer gently for about an hour. Strain both the rose-petal brandy and the rose-petal syrup into a jar, so that they blend. Cover lightly for about 12 hours, then bottle and cork well

# Principessa and the Magic *Nocciola* Cake by Sarah Fiedelholz

Once upon a time, there was a beautiful girl named Principessa. She had flowing brown hair, soft rosy cheeks, and would sing beautiful songs that even the birds envied. Like most children, Principessa loved the world and everything about it, but what she loved most of all were the steaming hot *nocciola* cakes that her mother would sell. Baskets full of the rich, brown tortes lined the shelves, the sweet smell mixing with the steam and rising up into the air. She loved when her mother would scoop her into her arms and place a little brown cake into her pocket. "A *dolce* for my *dolce*," she would say before sending Principessa out for a day of play. For many years, Principessa lived happily like this, eating sweet *nocciola* cakes and dreaming happy dreams.



One day, Principessa was sent to the fields to help her mother gather the ripe, brown hazelnuts for her cakes. "Before you go," her mother warned, "beware of people you do not know and never give away the hazelnuts that you have gathered." Principessa heartily agreed, eager to explore. She ran merrily out through the door, carrying her basket with her. However, it was not long until she became so enchanted with the sweet smell of the hazelnuts and the bright green of the forest that she began to lose her way. Tears began to stain poor Principessa's face and she realized that she was completely alone.

"I am lost! I am lost! Someone please help me find my way!" No sooner had Principessa collapsed into a fit of tears than a witch stepped out of the forest. She was ugly and scarred, her face twisted and mangled. Principessa jumped in surprise as the witch let out a laugh.

"Who are you?" Principessa asked. The witch continued to cackle and walked towards the young girl who now sat shivering in fear. Immediately, the witch's eyes were drawn to the lovely basket of brown hazelnuts still sitting cozily in the basket.

"Aahh *nocciola*," the witch cooed, "such a big basket for such a little girl."

"Yes they're for my mother," Principessa replied. "She bakes wonderful *nocciola* cakes." The witch smiled and raised an eyebrow. "And your mother sent you out into the forest alone?"

Principessa looked down at the ground, her eyes welling up with tears. "I have lost my way."

The witch eyed Principessa coolly, and the girl grew very afraid. "May I have some of your hazelnuts?" the witch asked. "I would like to bake a cake of my own and you have plenty."

Principessa thought of her mother's words. She would not have liked for her to give away what she had worked so hard to gather. "Mother told me not to give away a single *nocciola*." Principessa sighed.

"Give me a hazelnut, and I will help you find your way," the witch replied.

Principessa thought. She had plenty of *nocciola* to spare. Certainly her mother would not mind. She reached into her basket and pulled out several hazelnuts. No sooner had Principessa placed a brown *nocciola* into the witch's hands than she was transported into a dusky tower where she was locked away without a single *nocciola* cake to comfort her.

And so Principessa spent many years looking out of the small window of the tower watching the villagers pass. She would gaze down at the marketplace below and bask in the hustle of the crowds and the sweet smells that would waft up and gently tickle her nose. "Some day I will return to mother and eat as many *nocciola* cakes as I like!" she would often think aloud to herself, before returning to the dank duskiness of her cell.



It was during one of the market days that Principessa first heard a voice echoing through the town below. "*Nocciola! Fresca! Dolce! Nocciola!*" Principessa looked down to find a beautiful man peddling his basket full of sweet hazelnut cakes. She had never seen anyone like him, his hair the same color of hazelnut brown as hers.

As she sat staring, the young man looked up to her and smiled. "Would you like to buy a *nocciola* cake *signorina*?"

Principessa stared down at him in surprise. No one had ever noticed her before. "I have no money," she said.

The man sighed and shook his head. "Well *signorina*, I will tell you a secret. You do not need to buy hazelnut cakes to eat them. You can make them yourself." His smile faded, and he looked down at the ground. "That is why I am so poor. Who wants to buy something that is better when made with your own hands?"

Principessa thought. She remembered her mother's *nocciola* cakes, the sweet aroma still dancing in her memory. Yet as she looked about the dank cold tower, her heart began to fall. "But I am locked in this tower! I have no way in which to leave!" Principessa let out a soft sob.

"Do not fear *carina*," the young man replied. "I have seen you looking out of the tower for many days now and I want to make a deal with you. I will teach you how to make *nocciola* cakes. When the witch has left for the day, sneak down into the kitchen and prepare the cakes exactly as I have instructed you to do. When you have made the perfect cake, I will rescue you from the tower."

Principessa dried her tears and looked up at the man. "Thank you for your kindness," she said.

That said, the man sent up a basket full of all of the ingredients that she would need to make the finest *nocciola* cakes in the land. Principessa examined the basket carefully. In it was

flour, baking powder, sugar, eggs, butter, a vile of milk, and, of course, delicious hazelnuts. Principessa's heart leapt. How lucky she was! In addition to these lovely things, a card was carefully placed in the basket and read:

"Principessa, in order to make the delicious cakes here is what you will need. You must have 1 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups sifted flour, 2 teaspoons baking powder,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt, 1 and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups of butter or margarine, 3 cups of sugar, 1 egg, 1 cup of milk and one cup of chopped hazelnuts also known as *nocciola*.

Principessa smiled. This did not seem hard at all! She read further. "Grease the bottom of a pan with the butter I have given you. Then sprinkle a bit of flour, but only enough to coat the bottom. Only after you have completed this, should you sift the one and three quarter cups of flour with baking powder and salt. Beat the butter until it is like cream in a large separate bowl. Gradually add sugar and do not stop until it is light and fluffy. Then will you blend in the egg using a medium amount of strength. At this point you must add sifted dry ingredients alternately with milk using a low amount of strength. Please be sure to begin and end with dry ingredients. Finally, add the *nocciola*, which should be finely crushed, and pour the mixture into the pan. Bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 45 to 55 minutes. Let it cool in the pan for 15 minutes, then turn it out of the pan and onto the table. Sprinkle it with confectioner's sugar if you have the means. I will return tomorrow."

"My goodness what a lot of instructions!" Principessa thought to herself. But, before she could ask any more questions the *nocciola* vendor had gone. And so Principessa was left with no choice but to create the perfect *nocciola* cake.

Once the witch had gone Principessa snuck down to the kitchen and began to create the recipe from the card. Soon the sweet smell of sugar and hazelnuts filled the air, and Principessa was reminded once again of her mother's kitchen and the happy life she once had. "I just have to make the perfect *nocciola* cake!" she thought aloud.

Yet when she took the cake out of the oven, it was nothing like the beautiful round cakes that her mother used to make. It was dark grey and tasted of burning embers. "How will I ever escape now?" she said, letting out a sob. Just then, Principessa heard the familiar song.

*"Nocciola! Dolce! Fresca!"*

"Oh no he's already here!" Principessa said before quickly running up to her room. "*Signore* I'm sorry!" Principessa yelled out of the tower. "I have no *nocciola* cake for you today! It's burned and inedible."

The man, seeing Principessa's sad face, looked up at her and smiled. "Have no fear, *bella*. I will return tomorrow." And with that he sent up another basket filled with the same ingredients as before.

For many days, the vendor would come to the tower, but to no avail. Principessa would reply "*Mi dispiace signore...mi dispiace!*" and he would send up another basket full of the ingredients necessary for the delicious cakes. Yet they never lost hope that one day the perfect cake would be created. Finally, Principessa cried out to the man "I'm sorry *signore*. But I fear that I will never be able to make the cakes as you say."

The man sat and thought. Perhaps he had written down the wrong instructions? No, he was sure that everything had been correct. "*Aha! Signorina sono pazzo!*" he cried out to her the next day. "I forgot the most important ingredient!" And with that, he sent up a basket with a strange vial in it.



Principessa stared at the vial. There was nothing in it! Was she going crazy? "*Signore*, I'm sorry, but I do not see anything in it!"

"Exactly!" the young man slyly replied. "What you need to make the perfect *nocciola* cake can not be purchased. You need a little magic of your own. You must believe."

Suddenly Principessa understood. It was not enough to add the ingredients together. She must let it become a part of herself.

The next day when the man returned, he was greeted by a waft of sweet fragrance. A steaming hot cake was sent down in the basket. Principessa smiled. "How is it, *signore*?" she asked, anxiously waiting for his response.

He took a bite of the steaming hot cake, letting the grain roll against his tongue. It was perfect. "*Perfetto signorina!*" he said before stuffing the whole cake into his mouth.

"Now listen very carefully," he said, "Tell the witch that you wish to cook her a *nocciola* cake exactly like this one. However, instead of filling it with your own magic and hope, mix in this. He sent up a bottle marked "*sogni*". "This will send her straight to sleep and I will come for you."

"Thank you, thank you!" Principessa yelled before scurrying away to make preparations.

That night, Principessa made the cake as instructed. Instead of letting her own hopes and dreams weave their way into the cake, she quickly poured in the potion. "What's this?" the witch cackled, sniffing the air suspiciously.

"I wish to make you a *nocciola* cake." Principessa whimpered, for the witch still scared her despite years of being locked in the tower.

The witch eyed her suspiciously. "I refuse. Far too suspicious." Yet the sweet cake, its golden and crisp coating sending shivers down her spine, entranced the witch. "On second thought, I suppose one bite would be all right."

No sooner had the witch taken her first bite than she drifted off into a deep sleep. Suddenly, Principessa heard a soft tap at the back of the door. "Principessa! Principessa!" It was the *nocciola* vendor! "Principessa we must leave!" he said, before quickly guiding her out the door and onto his horse.

Once they were a safe distance away, Principessa let out a great sigh. "I'm free!" she said gleefully.

"Principessa...I must tell you something. I am not a lowly *nocciola* vendor. I am a prince. For days I heard rumors of a beautiful young girl who was kidnapped by a witch and taken away from her family. I was sent to rescue you. But now I find that I love you and wish to have you as my queen." At once, Principessa knew she felt the same. The two were wed and lived happily ever after, eating sweet *nocciola* cakes and dreaming happy dreams.



# Bittersweet

by Daniel Blair

After the destruction of the Cavallotto vineyard, San Domenico Church, and every clementine in the local fruit market, the city of Alba took legal action against Gelato Man and Captain Caffé. One three-year court dispute later, in which residents cited over 329 epic battles between the super-powered men, ranging from petty street brawls to giant mechanized robot clashes which leveled the Ferrero chocolate factory, the city successfully convicted the men of "unnecessary destruction" and "acting childish." At the suggestion of local fly fisherman, Thomas "Uncle Thomas" Thomason, Gelato Man and Captain Caffé were sentenced to resolving their differences with words until an agreement could be reached. Four months later "The Talks" (as the townspeople had come to call the duo's discussions) were still unresolved.



The daily venue for the debate was a table inside a local café. The staff, having dealt with the arguing pair for all this time, was fed up. The same thing happened every meeting: Gelato Man (Champion of Truth, Justice, and The Sweet Life) would praise all things sweet and tasty. Captain Caffé (Tyrant of Evil, Regret, and Bitterness) would glorify every bitter-tasting alternative. The two would take to shouting and eventually storm out of the café in separate directions. The events of each meeting became so regular that the staff ceased taking bets on the outcome. Still, every single day crowds of *Albese* (as the residents of Alba call themselves) pressed their faces against the café's windows, hoping to witness the long-hoped for resolution.

Today appeared no different from yesterday. Gelato Man, in his lime-green spandex jumpsuit and cone-shaped helmet, sat directly opposite of cloak-wearing, mustache twirling Captain Caffé. Each had his eyes locked on the other, glaring. A waitress asked for their order.

"Something sweet," said Gelato Man, his eyes unmoving.

"Something bitter," said Captain Caffé, his eyes the same.

The waitress rolled her own eyes and left the table with a sigh. Gelato Man and Captain Caffé remained locked in their gaze of fury for full minute after her departure.

"You have no taste," said Captain Caffé.

The *Albese* at the windows sighed. They knew what was coming next. A few mouthed along with the next part of the debate, having seen it many times.

"I have no taste?" said Gelato Man, "At least my order won't leave a bad feeling in my mouth for the rest of the day."

"While your order coats your entire mouth," said Captain Caffé.

Gelato Man smiled, "With sugary goodness."

Captain Caffé growled, "What's so great about sugar, anyway?"

"It tastes sweet! There is nothing that makes me happier than a nice *gelato*. It tastes so sweet without being too sweet. And the texture," here Gelato Man licked his lips, "it's so creamy and smooth. It's a nice food to eat and does not leave a bad taste in my mouth, unlike coffee."

"It's called *espresso*," said Captain Caffé, "and there is nothing wrong with it! It is much warmer than your precious, " here he suppressed a gag reflex, "*gelato*. And its taste is sophisticated. Each bitter gulp has a complexity of flavor you fail to appreciate. Within the bitterness are many flavors. Your sweets all taste the same: sugar."

"What is so wrong with that?" asked Gelato Man. "Sugar works well with many things, unlike truffles!"

Captain Caffé pouted, "What's wrong with truffles? They taste good on everything."

Gelato Man laughed, "No, they don't. A single flake is enough to cover an entire pasta dish with a disgusting fungus flavor. I don't understand the allure of digesting spores. I doubt that's healthy for anyone."

"Soda is even worse." said Captain Caffé. "All those bubbles mess with your bones and teeth. It's like drinking acid."

"Better than the acid you drink," said Gelato Man.

"It's called wine," said Captain Caffé, "and it is much more cultured than a grape Nehi. For one thing, the scent of wine alone tells you which fruits were used. Each sip of wine carries the length of fermentation, the years necessary to break the sugar down into alcohol. You can even taste the type of wood used in the barrel that held it. I myself was drinking a *Barolo* the other day when—"

"It's just like you to enjoy things which turn sugar into a bitter poison!" shouted Gelato Man.

"How dare you!" roared Captain Caffé.

At this moment, seconds before the usual shouting match (followed by name-calling), something different happened. Two bowls were placed on their table with two resounding thuds. Their waitress had returned with "something sweet" and "something bitter."

Captain Caffé looked inside his bowl and found a light brown mass. Gelato Man looked inside his and found a white glob sitting in a pool of brown liquid.

"What is this?" asked Captain Caffé.

"Coffee-flavored *gelato*," their waitress said.

"And mine?" asked Gelato Man.

"*Fior di latte gelato* with coffee poured on top," she said.

Both men poked at their orders, lips pouted. The pair picked at their dishes, not wanting to try the new food. The waitress sighed and hit the back of their heads, first Captain Caffé then Gelato Man.



"*Stupidi!*" she shouted, "*Mangiate!*"

Idiots. Eat.

It was a command.

The two super-powered men, sulking in their seats, tasted their food.

Gelato Man felt the coffee flow over his tongue. It was disgusting, it was bitter, and it was hot. Then the gelato hit, cooling the coffee and his tongue. The gelato melted in the coffee and spread, mixing with the bitter beverage and sweetening each ounce of the liquid in his mouth. The bitterness wasn't completely gone. A hint of its unpleasantness lingered in Gelato Man's mouth, but the gelato was there, to comfort him, and seemed even sweeter because of it.

"Sweet," whispered Gelato Man.

Captain Caffé wanted to spit out the sugary glob in his mouth, but his head still stung from the waitress's hand. Instead he chewed on the creamy mass, hoping to break it down to swallowable masses quickly. His chewing slowed. With each bite, a taste of coffee flowed through his mouth. The bitter, complex flavor mingled with the sugars, pushing them away, but not completely. He could still feel the sugar coating his tongue, but the coffee flavor was a stronger presence.



"Bitter," whispered Captain Caffé.

"How is it?" their waitress asked.

Captain Caffé mumbled something.

"What?" she asked.

"S'okay," he said.

She whirled on Gelato Man, "And yours?"

Wide-eyed he nodding, "Good!"

"Did both of you ever consider something can be both sweet and bitter?" asked the waitress, "Did you ever consider food, like life, can blend well with opposing flavors?"

Gelato Man sulked, "No."

Captain Caffé pouted more, "No."

Their waitress continued her tirade, "Could it be possible that instead of excluding each other, sweet and bitter actually compliment each other?"

There was an unusually long silence for the short span of time that followed. The *Albese* at the windows watched with a united held breath, waiting for the response. Could this be it? Could "The Talks" finally

reach an agreement?

Gelato Man shifted in his seat. "I suppose it's—"

"—possible, yes," said Captain Caffé.

"Sure, why not?" said Gelato Man.

"Seems sensible—" said Captain Caffé.

"—to us." they said together.

An agreement!

Their eyes were trying to look everywhere, except at hers. After a few awkward seconds they tentatively gazed at the waitress's stern face.

She said one, gruff word, "*Bene*."

Gelato Man and Captain Caffé finished their treats. Captain Caffé (Tyrant of Evil, Regret, and Bitterness) paid the bill and Gelato Man (Champion of Truth, Justice, and The Sweet Life) held the door open for him as they left quietly. The pair walked down *Via Maestra*, side-by-side, stared at by the crowd of dumbfounded *Albese*. At an intersection the duo stopped and shook hands before going their separate ways. Seconds passed. A thunderous cheer rent the air as the onlookers rejoiced.

The waitress was given two commendations for her heroic efforts, one by the Mayor and the other by her boss. After a month of paid vacation time she returned to a more peaceful and prosperous Alba.



The End

#### Recipe for "Epic Coffee-Flavored Ice Cream"

*Whether you are a diabolical mastermind bent on world conquest, a heroic person in spandex, or an average citizen, this recipe is for you.*

3 Egg Yolks

50 mL (or 1 ½ fluid ounces) Coffee or Espresso (Cooled)

45 mL (or 3 Tablespoons) Sugar

200 mL (or 1 Cup) Heavy Cream

Heroically beat the egg yolks, sugar, and coffee together. Then cook the mixture in a double boiler for twenty minutes, majestically stirring with a wooden spoon the entire time. While the mixture cools, maliciously whip the cream. Combine the whipped cream and coffee mixture in a bowl and imprison the bowl in the freezer. Eat when it is sufficiently frozen and enjoy. Serves three to five people, depending on who is willing to share.

# The Spoon in the Stew

by Chris Panzarella

A long, long time ago, there was a kingdom called Alba, and this kingdom had a king. His name was King Ferro, and he was very old. He wanted to stop being the King of Alba. However, he did not have any children, so he needed someone to take his place. One day the king made an announcement. King Ferro told the people of Alba that there would be a contest to see who would be the next king! He said that the contest would be, in fact, a food contest. The person who created a meal so good that one bite made the king cry tears of joy would be proclaimed the new King of Alba.

In case you were wondering, King Ferro made the contest a food contest for one simple reason: the kingdom of Alba was a kingdom of food! Everyone loved to eat! There was a restaurant on every street and a café on every corner, and all of the children of Alba wanted to be cooks when they grew up!

News of King Ferro's contest spread far and wide. People came from all over to create the perfect meal for King Ferro and the people of Alba! Alas, not one was able to make a dish good enough for the King to cry tears of joy. Because of this, the people of Alba were very sad! They were afraid that no one would make that perfect dish, and they would not have a new king!

While King Ferro tasted dishes, there was a boy named Pip who worked in a small restaurant in Alba. He noticed that when people from abroad came to cook for the king, none of them used any ingredients from Alba! So, he decided to make a dish using only local ingredients, to show King Ferro how good the food of Alba could be! Pip told his master, Benito the cook, what he intended to do. Benito laughed heartily and clapped him on the back. "That is a fine idea, my apprentice," he said, "you will learn much if you go to the village of Olio e Cipolle north of here, I have a friend named Massimo who cooks there, he shall help you!" Not wasting any time, Pip grabbed his burlap sack for carrying food and set out on his adventure!

After a few hours, Pip came to the village of Olio e Cipolle. He found Massimo the cook working in his kitchen, making a fine meal out of onions and olive oil for the Mayor and his family. Suddenly, some of the food burst into flame! Thinking quickly, Pip took some of the water he had brought with him and threw it on the flames, putting them out! Massimo sighed in relief. "Thank the onions that you had some water, otherwise the Mayor's lunch would be ruined! Let me help you in return! Is there anything I can do for you?"

Pip smiled and said, "You have the finest onions and olive oil I have ever seen! I am trying to make the perfect meal; may I take some of each with me?"

Massimo laughed heartily, just like Benito. "You have a fine zest for life, my boy! I think that you will make a great cook one day! Here, take six of my onions and a small bottle of my olive oil, use them well! Now, go to Sedano e Aglio, the next town over, to the east! There you will find a friend of mine, his name is Angelo, and he is a

cook. He shall help you!" Pip put the onions and olive oil in his burlap sack and set out for the next town!

After a few more hours of walking, Pip came to the town of Sedano e Aglio. He found Angelo working at a cook fire in the town square, feeding vegetables and meat into a big pot and stirring occasionally. Suddenly a stray dog grabbed a couple of the vegetables and ran off! Angelo shouted after the dog, and then began to cry. "Oh no, now how will I cook dinner for my family?" he exclaimed. Pip walked up to Angelo and gave him three of the onions in his sack. "Here," he said, "Massimo gave me too many onions for the dish I am trying to make, use these for your dinner." Angelo laughed and gave Pip a bear hug. "Thank you my friend, let me repay your kindness! Here, take some garlic and celery, ours is the best in Italy! Now, go to the next town, there you shall find my friend Paolino, he shall help you," he exclaimed! Pip took the garlic and

celery and set out for the next town, Carote e Zucchini!

Pip slept in a ditch at the side of the road and found Carote e Zucchini early the next morning. Walking into the town, he found Paolino kneading some dough in his bakery. When Pip walked in, Paolino said, "Ah, you have the look of adventure about you, young one! By any chance, would you have some garlic? I ran out of seasoning last night and now I can't make my famous garlic bread!"

Pip smiled and gave Paolino some of the garlic from his sack. "Wonderful! Here, take some zucchini and carrots as a token of my thanks!", exclaimed Paolino, handing Pip six carrots and six zucchini. "Now, go to the next town, south of here, called Oregano e Pepe, my friend Rosario works there, he shall help you!", said Paolino. Pip thanked Paolino, placed the vegetables in his sack and hurried on to the next town!

Pip made good time and arrived at Oregano e Pepe after only two hours! Looking around, he found Rosario working in his spice shop, grinding herbs with his mortar and pestle. Rosario greeted Pip and declared, "Working in my shop all day makes me hungry, can you spare any food my little friend?"

Pip replied, "of course, have some of your good friend Paolino's carrots and zucchini!"



"Thank you, thank you! Here, take some black pepper and oregano for yourself and cook a fine meal! Now, go west to the town of Pomodori, you will find my friend Carlo, he shall help you!"

Taking the jars of spice and placing them in his burlap sack, Pip headed for the next town, anxious to cook!

Soon Pip came upon the town of Pomodori! What a sight to see it was! Every house was painted bright red! After searching for a few minutes, Pip found Carlo working at his blacksmith forge, pounding iron! Fortunately it was lunchtime, so when Carlo stopped working and fixed himself a bowl of soup from his house next door, Pip walked up to him. "Ah, hello my young friend! Passing through Pomodori in search of adventure eh? Listen, by any chance could you spare anything to spice up this bland soup of mine?"

Pip remarked, "I have just the thing! Here, try some of your good friend Rosario's pepper and oregano!"

With that, he sprinkled a pinch of each into the bowl. Carlo tasted the soup at laughed, it was so good! Taking Pip by the arm, Carlo showed him the garden in his backyard. With his deft blacksmith's hands, Carlo picked some fresh tomatoes, chickpeas, and basil and gave them to Pip. "Here, take some of these fresh greens, my young friend! Enjoy them! Make a great meal worthy of Alba! Now, go north to the town of Orzo e Vino, you will find my friend Fabio there, he shall help you!"



Pip was so close now! He almost ran to Orzo e Vino. When he entered the last town, he saw a large vineyard on the hills below the town. Walking among the green vines, he found Fabio, hard at work. "Good evening, my weary friend", called Fabio. "Please, come eat dinner with my family!"

In response, Pip handed Fabio a tomato, some of the chickpeas, and a few basil leaves. "Will these help with your dinner, good sir?"

"Ah! How did you know that my wife was unable to find any tomatoes at market today, young one?"

Pip just smiled in response and noted, "Your friend Carlo sends his love and regards!"

Dinner was delicious! Fabio introduced Pip to his wife and children, and they all traded stories for hours on end! By the time the table was cleared night had fallen, so Fabio insisted that Pip stay the night. Early the next morning Pip and Fabio went down to Fabio's wine cellar. Fabio gave Pip a bottle of fresh red wine that was perfect for cooking! Then, he gave Pip two handfuls of dried orzo pasta from the barrel in his



kitchen, saying, "Here, make good use of these! May you make a meal so good that King Ferro weeps for a week!"

Pip thanked Fabio greatly and set off for his home, the city of Alba! When he entered the city gates, Pip went straight to Benito's restaurant. When his master saw the burlap sack bulging with all of the food his apprentice had brought back, Benito laughed with gusto! He said, "I knew you would find all the food you needed on your travels! Now, use that stove there and start cooking!"

Pip did not need to be told twice, he was so eager to start! He sautéed the onions first, then added the garlic and sautéed them in the olive oil on low heat until the onions were soft and translucent. He then added the celery, carrot, pepper, oregano, and basil. He sautéed all of that for another five to ten minutes, then added the tomatoes, chickpeas, some water from Benito's faucet, and some of the red wine! He then simmered that delicious, thick soup on a low heat for one to two hours, until the carrots, celery and zucchini were soft. He cooked the orzo pasta separately, then added that to the soup last along with a pinch of salt.

Placing a lid on his soup, Pip carried it up the street to the main square, where only a few people were still in line to give old King Ferro new dishes to taste. Pip waited patiently; when it was his turn, he stepped up to the table that had been set up. He was about to unveil his creation with a flourish when a sob echoed through the square. Pip turned and saw that a homeless woman was trying to keep her two small children quiet as they walked through the square, but the smaller of the two was bawling. It was clear that all three of them were very, very hungry. Pip's heart almost split in two; he bowed to King Ferro, then took his soup off the table, walked over to the mother and the two little ones, and offered them the pot of soup. "Oh thank you, thank you kind sir!", the mother exclaimed as she began to feed the soup to her sons. "Now we won't go hungry today!"

Pip nodded. "I am glad that I could help you and your children, ma'am." He turned back to King Ferro, intending to apologize for giving away the soup, but was greeted with an astounding sight! The king was crying tears of joy! King Ferro wiped his eyes and stood up.

"Behold! This young man understands one of the greatest truths about food! Sometimes, the most satisfying meal is one given to another!"

With that King Ferro strode over to Pip, placed his crown on Pip's head, and bowed to him! Someone in the crowd called out, "what is your name?"

Pip addressed the crowd, "My name is Pepercino, and if it pleases you, I shall be your king!"

"ALL HAIL KING PEPERCINO!" bellowed the crowd. And just like that, Alba had a new king.

The End

# Gelato D'Orsi

by Chris Lewis

Bolric hopped down from his saddle. The crunching of snow under his fur-lined boots broke the silence, accompanied only by the harmony of his breathing with the heavy draws of his mount. The crisp mountain air filled his lungs as he overlooked the nearby villages. From his vantage, he could see the rolling foothills covered in vineyards and olive trees. The Alps had been one of the last potential refuges for his people. Unfortunately the climate here wasn't cold enough; it seems his search must continue, he would have to lead his people to another mountain range. Hopefully the Himalayas could provide the cold climate they needed, but even his homeland had been drastically affected. Such thoughts tugged at his heart; his homeland seemed lost - it had changed so drastically. He must save his people; he refused to let them down. Bolric swung his leg over Dalibor, his mount; he let out a grunt as it took his weight. Nudging Dal with his knees, he signaled that they were heading back to camp. Suddenly, a shrill scream shattered the silence.



"Guarda! Un orso!" a little girl screamed. Bolric watched as she and her brother scrambled down the path. He had no interest in them. Dal loped over to where they were, his muzzle nudging something on the ground. Bolric leaned over and picked up some of the sticky substance they had dropped. It was cold. He brought his fingers to his mouth and tasted. His eyebrows raised, and he looked at the ground in disbelief. This was it; this substance could save his people. He could bring this back. It would be his.

Sofia pulled at her brother Sandro's arm. She had only ever heard of bears in the books her mother read them before bed, but she knew that they were not meant for riding and that anyone who did was probably meaner than the bear itself. Her mother had told her not to leave the town, but she had wanted to show Sandro the snow and thought it would be all right if they were only gone for a brief while. It hadn't snowed in Alba yet and Sandro was getting impatient, so against her mother's words she had taken the long hike, stopping for a gelato on the way; she had anticipated a nice day. She now found herself hurdling down the hillside back to her town. Warning the others became her priority, but she wasn't exactly sure what she was going to warn them about, however she knew the man on the bear was something people should know about.

Sofia's lungs burned as she slammed the door behind her. She breathed in to scream for her mother, but a reply came before she let out a sound.

"Where have you been!" her mother said sternly as she walked out of the kitchen. Her hands were floury from preparing that afternoon's meal and were rested firmly on her hips. She gave Sofia a look that made the little girl choose her next words very carefully.

"Nowhere. Me and Sandro just went out for some gelato." she said quietly as she looked at the floor. She glanced up to see her mother squinting at her.

"Go wash up and you can help me finish up dinner, hopefully you haven't spoiled it by filling up on sweets." Her mother said with the slight tone that she knew Sofia wasn't telling the truth but at the moment there were other things that needed to be tended to. Sofia tried not to lie to her mother, but currently she was more afraid of that look than any strange man on a bear. For now she would keep quiet, hopefully he would just go away.

As he entered his camp, the bear-king looked around at the riders who had accompanied him to this region. It was easier for his people to travel in smaller groups; allowing for more possible homes to be searched. He sent word for his personal guards to meet at his tent, and called for his fastest rider. He told him to travel to the other groups and give word that they were to stop the search and head to the mountains near their current position. The messenger was soon on his way and Bolric went into his tent, a council of war was about to begin.

Bolric knew his people, he knew they would follow their king without question, but he wanted to assure them that he had found their salvation. Since he was unaware what sort of defenses this town had he decided to form a raiding party, composed solely of himself and three of his best warriors. They would ride into town and retrieve enough of the substance to rally his people behind him to go on a full out assault.

Sofia and her family were on their way to dinner. Casually strolling down Via Maestra they passed a well known gelateria on the town's main street, Sacchero. As they walked by there was a sudden screech from the narrow intersection at the corner. A car slammed on its brakes as four men on top of bears charged out of the alley. One bear ran in front of the car, and another whose path intersected with the car reared up on its hind legs and began to push the top it's frame. The small European car was easily toppled with the bear's strength. The bear then climbed over the felled car and all four of the riders continued to lope down Main Street, right in Sofia's direction. Screams and the treads of panic-stricken fleeing filled the air. Sofia's father threw her over his shoulder and began to run; holding her mother's hand while she held Sandro in the other. They sprinted down the street. Looking back, Sofia saw one of the men point at the Gelateria. Much to her confusion, the three other riders burst into the shop and grabbed three tubs of gelato. With a loud whistle, they rode off down the street in the direction of where she had first encountered the strange man that morning.

Bolric was satisfied with the results of the raid. The three tubs would be enough to inspire the same hope in his people he had felt when he first tasted the substance. When the party arrived at camp, he ordered that everyone taste the substance. He witnessed mixed reactions among his group. A few looked disappointed, how was this supposed to help? A few looked questioning, how would they be able to take enough of this home without it melting? Most were gleeful, with this supplementing the cold they had adapted to then they wouldn't need to leave their home. With this they wouldn't have to leave, to start anew, they could stay in the land they loved so much.

The next stage of Bolric's plan started to take affect. They would ransack the town, taking whatever of the substance they found. The town hadn't put up much of an affront to the raid so they prepared for little resistance. He knew that plundering all they could was merely a temporary solution, but if they took enough back then they could periodically raid the area and return home. Though the shadow of the future loomed in his mind, the temporary solution would keep his people happy, and that is all he really wanted.

Sandro wept in his mother's arms as Sofia's father gave a statement to the Carabinieri, they were all in front of the gelateria where the chaos from the day's events was dying down. The police force was late to arrive; initial calls of bear-mounted individuals causing trouble were met with skepticism. However, when numerous complaints were filed they finally arrived on the scene, but the troop of riders had already fled. Most of the people of Alba were confused, why would anyone assault a town for mere gelato?

The bears were growing restless; all the mounts had been prepared for the large sweep of the entire town's gelato supply. The tubs of gelato were strewn about the camp, completely empty. Bolric stared at the tub between his hands.

"Ge-la-to." His tongue struggled slightly with the foreign word. His lips curved into a small smile. Setting down the tub, he walked over to Dal and got into his saddle. The rest of his camp looked to their leader and followed suit. The entire camp began to move out.

Sofia and her brother once again desired some gelato. The earlier events at Sacchero made them hesitant of returning there, so they headed to one of the many other gelaterias throughout the city.

The bear soldiers looked over the town of Alba from one of the hills outside the city. Peering over the quiet town none spoke. They had their objective. With a lurch from the front, they all began to trot down the hill. They picked up speed as they met the narrow roads of the town. The townspeople became aware of their rampage very quickly. As the soldiers reached the first gelateria, the screech of the Carabinieri's tires surrounded them.

Sofia couldn't believe her eyes. A stampede of men riding bears charged towards the gelateria they had chosen. Through the window she saw the bears come to a stop outside of the building. She also saw the Carabinieri pull up behind them. They got out of their cars and drew their weapons, slowly moving towards the bear soldiers, who had moved into a circle formation and were edging towards the gelato.

"Fermatevi!" they yelled at Bolric and his men to stop themselves, but their alien words fell of deaf ears. Bolric moved into the gelateria and his men moved in a semicircle around the entrance to guard his back. The Carabinieri moved closer and the soldiers began to notice them. Their home land didn't really have a need for guns so they didn't readily recognize what the officers were holding. One of Bolric's personal guards withdrew his sling, placing one of the smooth rocks into its pouch. He readied his heels into his mounts side and with a twirl of his wrist the rock was loosed at one of the Carabinieri's heads. It struck and as the man's limp body fell to the ground, the assailant charged towards the others, his mount letting out a roar. They yelled for him to stop again, but he just drew his blade as his bear was preparing to lunge. As the bear began to leap, a shot ripped through the air and the bear slid forward on its side. Its rider gazed down, gaping at his motionless compatriot. He vaulted off his mount and fell by its side. Blood began to pool under its body as he held its head in his hands. Bolric was back outside from the gelateria, the rest of his guard began to take up their own arms in horror of how easily their comrade was felled. They stopped their movement when Bolric let out his own cry. Waving for the others to stop he ran to his guard and his fallen mount. He began to weep with the man; his people were very close to their mounts. They had grown up with them and created a close bond after many years of traveling together, to lose one was to lose a member of your family. Tears streaming down his face, Bolric looked to the men surrounding them.

"Gelato." He whispered as he fell to his knees, then again slightly louder, but his voice still wavered with his sorrow, "Gelato."

Sofia had snuck outside with Sandro in tow, once Bolric had exited the gelateria. She saw him weeping and heard his odd plea. The officer hit by the rock had regained consciousness, so he hadn't really hurt anyone and she understood his desire for the delicious treat. She wasn't sure what she was doing but she walked over to the scary large man and took his hand. He looked up at her, squinting through teary eyes. He tugged at his arm, as she would with Sandro, and in his stupor, he followed her. She led him back to her family's kitchen. Sofia knew that he wanted the gelato, she decided she would show him how to make his own, and he and his scary friends could go away and leave their quiet town alone. Luckily her mother wasn't in the kitchen. She didn't know what sort of objections she would raise towards the fur-clad bearded man but she knew he certainly wouldn't have been allowed anywhere near her kitchen. As quickly as she could, she tried to show him how to make gelato. The language

barrier causing slight delays, her process of cooking became very deliberate and she made sure to point out all the qualities one looked for in the process of making gelato.

### **Ingredients**

·2 cups milk    ·1 cup heavy cream    ·4 egg yolks    ·1/2 cup sugar

### **Directions**

1. In a medium saucepan, mix milk and cream. Warm until foam forms around the edges. Remove from heat.
2. In a large bowl, beat the egg yolks and sugar until frothy. Gradually pour the warm milk into the egg yolks, whisking constantly. Return mixture to saucepan; cook over medium heat, stirring with a wooden spoon until the mixture gels slightly and coats the back of the spoon. If small egg lumps begin to show, remove from heat immediately.
3. Pour the mixture through a sieve or fine strainer into a bowl. Cover, and chill for several hours or overnight.

Pour the mixture into an ice cream maker, and freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions. Transfer to a sealed container, and freeze until firm. If the gelato is too firm, place it in the refrigerator until it reaches the desired consistency.

Bringing out all the ingredients showing how much of each he would need. The man nodded after the process was complete. Bolric touched his hand to his heart and then extended his palm out towards the girl, thanking her and signifying that he wanted to go. Sofia led him back to the gelateria and his people. The Carabenieri, still wary of the men, were keeping a watch over them. When Sofia returned she asked that they not arrest the men, that they were going to leave and that they didn't need to come back. Bolric reached out to the guard who had lost his mount and pulled him up onto Dal. He looked to the rest of his people, he said that they no longer needed to be here, that they could go home and enjoy this gelato. The band of riders began to saunter towards the mountains, happy to be out of the situation, but still shaken by the loss of a mount. Bolric turned back to look at the little girl and tears filled his eyes again. This time they were of happiness, though it came at a cost he now knew how to make gelato. He could easily get those ingredients at home. And so Bolric and his people rode their bears off into the sunset, towards their home and a gelato-filled future.





Eat, Laugh, and Enjoy the Earth,  
and feed your Love for all its Worth

-Anonymous