

Baked Penne with Dusted Valley 2014 Grenache Serves 8 with leftovers

When I make a dish with simple ingredients I like to use the best ingredients I can find. Such as San Marzano tomatoes, dried semolina pasta, Castelvetrano olives, freshly ground beef, an amazing ricotta from Bellwether Farms and wine from Dusted Valley. I've paired this dish with the 2014 Grenache...delicious.

2 pounds ground beef
3 teaspoons Savor
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried oregano
Pinch of red pepper flakes
1 Walla Walla onion, small dice
2 ribs of celery, small dice
2 large cloves of garlic, minced
1/2 cup Dusted Valley's 2014 Grenache
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1-28 ounce can crushed tomatoes

12 ounces of whole milk ricotta
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 cup parmesan cheese, divided
1 cup chopped Castelvetrano olives, or a ripe green olive
1/4 cup chopped basil
1 pound mozzarella cheese, grated.
1 pound Penne pasta



Preheat oven to 375 degrees

In a large skillet over medium high heat add the ground beef and Savor, cook, breaking the meat into small pieces (a spatula works great) for about 10 minutes.

Add the thyme, oregano, red pepper, onions, celery and garlic and cook for another 8 minutes, stirring occasionally until the vegetables begin to soften.

Pour in the wine and give the mixture a stir, then add the tomato paste and canned tomatoes and stir until thoroughly combined.

Bring the mixture to a boil and then reduce to a simmer and cook covered for 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

In a bowl large enough to hold the pasta and sauce, combine the ricotta, egg, 1/2 cup of the parmesan cheese, olives and basil. Stir to combine and set aside.

Cook the penne to al dente according to package directions, drain and set aside.

To assemble: Add 1/2 of the pasta sauce to the ricotta mixture and stir. Add the pasta and 1/2 of the mozzarella and stir to thoroughly incorporate all the ingredients.

Place the mixture into a 9x12 inch pan coated with cooking spray, then top with the remaining sauce, mozzarella and parmesan.

Bake, uncovered for about 30 minutes or until lightly brown on top and heated through.

Let rest for 10 minutes or so before digging in.