

AT THE TABLE

FAMILY AFFAIR

FILMING LIDIA'S SHOW AT HOME

HISTORY AND CULTURE

MEET LIDIA'S DAUGHTER

A DRY PASTA PRIMER

FROM COOKING TIPS TO SHAPES AND SAUCING

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ON THE STOVE

LIDIA SHARES HER FAVORITE RECIPES



LIDIA'S ITALY



2006 Tolaini VALDISANTI receives 92 points from *Robert Parker's Wine Advocate*

"These are the finest wines I have tasted from Tolaini... The estate's 2006 Valdisanti is 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Sangiovese and 5% Cabernet Franc. Here the fruit is marvelously rich and decadent, with layers of cherry preserves, roasted coffee beans, new leather and French oak all woven together in fabric of notable class. The sheer richness of the fruit should allow the Valdisanti to develop gracefully in bottle for a number of years. Dried flowers and mint linger on the long finish."

— *Robert Parker's Wine Advocate*, Issue 191, October 2010

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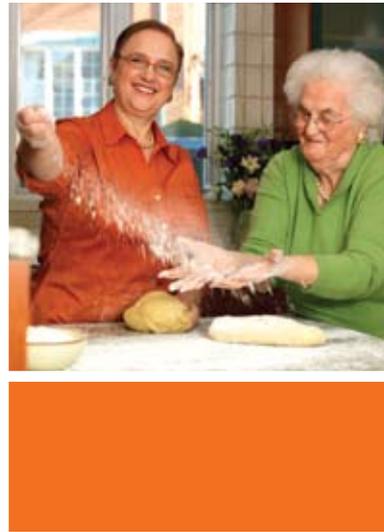
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TOLAINI

TUSCANY, ITALY



SHOWTIME: A FAMILY PRODUCTION

To watch an episode of *Lidia's Italy* is to be a part of Lidia Bastianich's family. Bastianich has been inviting guests into the kitchen of her very own home for more than a decade. She admits that it can be a little invasive—after all, some 30-plus crewmembers swarm her home each year for almost a month and whisk away her living-room furniture to make space for a makeshift control room, and she's literally in the kitchen from dawn to dusk.

However, the idea to film on-site was one of Lidia's first requests when she started doing the show. "I feel comfortable here," she explains. "I'm not an actress, although I might be considered a performer now, and I think people appreciate my sense of comfort here. That's why the show is still done in my home today." >

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With every show shot in Lidia's own kitchen at home—and the long hours of production—everyone involved in producing the show is part of one big extended family.

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10 INS AND OUTS OF PASTA

There's an overwhelming number of dry pasta cuts in Italy—literally hundreds of them. And sauces work best when paired with specific shapes.

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All in the Family

“Food is a great conduit for communication,” Lidia continues, “so to have food as a medium *and* to work with my family . . . well, let’s just say that I’m really blessed.”

Of course, the set has changed over the past ten years. Walls are painted, new drapes get hung. Most recently, Lidia Bastianich has been taking viewers outside of the kitchen as well, to the market or out in her garden, and with her to Italy.

“My house becomes a working place,” explains Lidia. “Cameras come in, lights turn on, but the crew hasn’t changed much over the years, so it’s almost like family by now. They know every inch of the house and are very respectful.”

Working days can be long, especially when you are filming up to three episodes in one day. Lidia is up at 6, in makeup by 7, and on set by 8, with breakfast “someplace in between.” And what does the show’s star eat to keep herself energized? “Protein and fruit for sustenance,” she says, and of course coffee. “I love my coffee. A nice cup of coffee, that’s number one.”

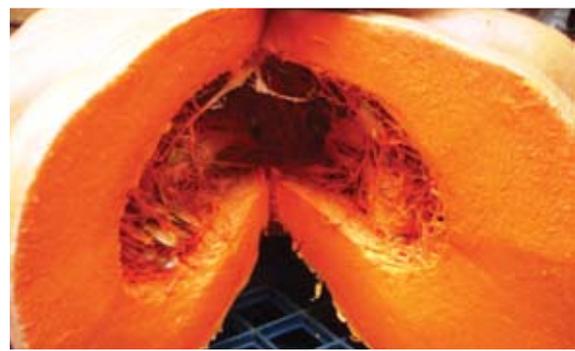
They’re already testing the lights on set and getting the food prepped, and the wafting smells of cooking fill the kitchen. Not Lidia’s kitchen though—not yet, at least. Lidia’s mother, known to everyone as Grandma, has her own apartment upstairs. As part of the family, she’s part of the show too. During the shoot, Grandma’s kitchen serves as the prep kitchen, whereas the show is filmed downstairs in Lidia’s. Everything is cooked in real time, so although the show lasts for 28 minutes on air, it can take up to four hours to film, which allows for elaborate recipes like ragus to cook for two to three hours and only get better with time.

During the course of a shoot, they aim to complete two or three recipes. While Lidia cooks, “guests” drop in and out of her kitchen, much like in real life. Her daughter, Tanya, with her own two kids; Lidia’s son, Joseph; and chefs from her restaurants all stop by to lend a hand and taste her latest dishes straight out of the oven.

Once they’ve wrapped the first show, it’s lunchtime, and everyone eats out in the courtyard, where the vibe is generally fun and familial. Unlike most other film and television sets, there’s no food service called in. “Nobody wants that!” says Lidia. “They want to eat what I actually cook.” The crew even takes food home for their families to try. And just like with real families, and in line with Lidia’s waste-not-want-not philosophy, what doesn’t get eaten at lunch is saved for the next day. “Unless no one can wait to taste it,” says Lidia, laughing. “In that case, everyone just sticks their forks in.”

They film for the rest of the day and try to wrap by 6 p.m. But like any family gathering, things don’t always go according to schedule. “At the end of a long working day, sometimes I just want to be left alone,” explains Lidia. “It’s my house, and that’s a lot of people.” Other times, Lidia and the kids head out for sushi for a change of pace, or she gets dressed up and goes out to one of her restaurants to let other people do the cooking and see how business is.





Unlike most other film and television sets, there's no food service called in. "Nobody wants that!" says Lidia. "They want to eat what I actually cook." The crew even takes food home for their families to try.

Having Grandma involved with the show was a natural choice. "Ours is a family business, if you will," says Lidia, "and our family is always close."

"She was always there to support me, taking care of my children while I was working," she continues. "She is a part of our lives, she was there when we needed her, and she is here now. She is living history."

Everyone knows that mother figures are particularly emphasized within the Italian culture, and Lidia's

mother is no exception. "She embodies the sensibility of love, of giving, of warmth, of gathering around the table, of good food. She's just there when you need her with a big warm hug, a lecture, or a joke."

The family relationship offscreen is pretty much what you see on it. Lidia laughs at the thought of it being otherwise. "Yes, we are on our best behavior, but you know, we don't act. This is who we are."

Mixing in Culture and History

“Going and shooting in Italy changed the course of our production tremendously,” remarks Lidia. “Italy is not just about eating and drinking, it’s also about art and history. To capture all this, I coproduce and coauthor with my daughter, Tanya, an art historian.”



Lidia Bastianich explains how including her daughter, Tanya, in the action adds to the show. “When you’re visiting a region, you don’t want to just highlight the typical sights and scenes,” she says. “Tanya gives the viewer a deeper appreciation of the history of art by virtue of her extensive knowledge, while I do likewise with the food. It really is a wonderful symmetry.”

Lidia’s producer, Shelly, is also an art historian. She has worked with Lidia for many years and leads the production of the show. “It’s a great collaboration of passion—about things we love and how we capture them,” Lidia explains.

“This season, we visited Abruzzo, Umbria, Basilicata, and Sardegna, and showcased all these beautiful, though less known, settings, foods, and flavors,” she continues. “We went all the way down to Calabria, where the food is spicy with a lot of peperoncino, and all the way up to Alto Adige, the northern parts, where they’re almost Germanic and use lots of beer and apples in their cooking. Then we went to Val D’Aosta, which is near France, with their great, delicious, oozing cheeses like fontina.”

The on-site location of Lidia’s show means that her home is temporarily transformed into a set for weeks out of the year. So what is it like for her children when they drop by? After all, this is no ordinary day at Mom’s.

“It has its ups and downs,” says Tanya, Lidia’s daughter. She agrees with her mother that the crew isn’t such a distraction, since they have been around for so long they are almost like family. But super chef and supermom Lidia cooks dinner for her brood every Saturday and Sunday when she’s around—and that’s off the table, so to speak, when the kitchen is in studio mode. Tanya’s jokes, “It’s O.K., I guess I have to cook for myself and my kids . . .”

Tanya, who is also involved in the production of each show, is happy to have her workplace just around the corner. And her children love every minute of the tapings. “There’s the snack table and the food table, a chance to yell into the microphone and to watch the cameras.” In fact, they love to be on the set so much

that, Tanya adds, “there is a fine line to walk, so that they don’t get movie starstruck. They would be on the show every day if they weren’t in school. They love seeing themselves when the shows air!”

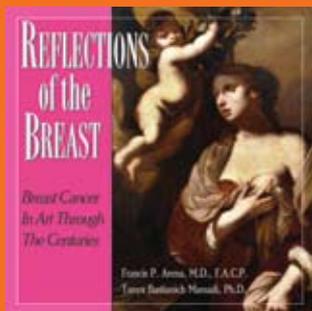
But Lidia’s family doesn’t drop in on the set just to sample the food and add family flavor to the show. As an art historian, Tanya is an integral part of the research and production that goes into each book and the television series.

Everything begins with the book, of which the shows are its offspring. Each book takes about two years to research and write, and Tanya is involved from the very start. The recipes are chosen and tested, and Tanya finds ways to weave in cultural elements of each region they visit. When the crew actually heads to Italy, she is then in charge of the footage.

Lidia takes each recipe and explains to the reader and viewer the ingredients and traditions that are particular to each region and what makes every dish so special. Tanya does the same with the art and culture of the area to include a richer understanding of the place. And she’s not talking about your everyday landmarks, either: “Even in passing conversation, I’m always quick to tell people to go get a really good guidebook to Florence, Venice, or Rome, because that’s not what I’m going to tell you about.”

What she will tell you about is a piazza in Bologna where all of the old men stand around and argue for hours: “It gives you a real sense of this passionately communist city.” Just this little glimpse of culture provides insight into Bologna’s long history, and Tanya is full of fascinating tidbits and nuances that accompany her mother’s culinary voyage up and down the Italian peninsula. “When traveling through Abruzzo, you have to go to Sulmona for the confetti shops,” she gushes. “The almond and colorful sugar candies are arranged like bouquets in a flower shop.”

Tanya’s cultural contribution adds dimension to the travel segment of the show. “Everyone knows the bright colors of Italy, like the Vatican and the Colosseum,” she explains. “I try to shade in the lines.”

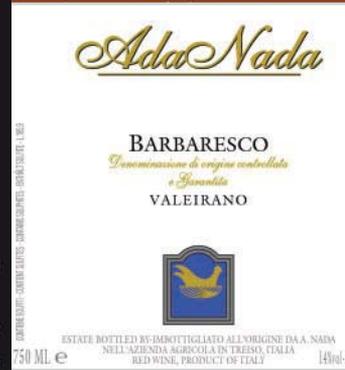
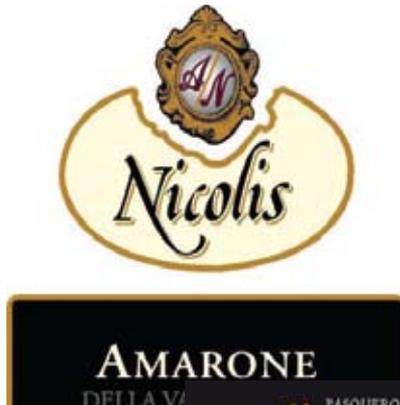
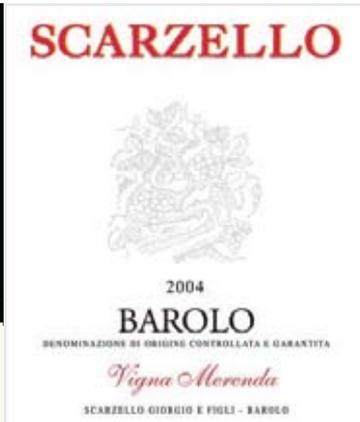


In addition to being Lidia’s daughter, Tanya Bastianich Manuali, Ph.D., is an art historian whose career has focused on the Italian Renaissance. Tanya and Dr. Francis Arena, a medical doctor with a specialty in breast cancer, have created a fascinating journey through the evolution of medicine and art in their inaugural work, *Reflections of the Breast: Breast Cancer in Art Through the Ages*. In this comprehensive study, these two esteemed professionals will take you on a pilgrimage through history in exploration of the evolution of women and breast cancer through the intersection of art and science.

Published by Brick Tower Books in October 2010.

VIGNAIOLI  SELECTION

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Ever-Enduring Dry Pasta

To this day, the romantic notion that Marco Polo brought pasta from China to Italy remains, despite considerable evidence that he did not. Even if pasta is not quite as old as Italians would like, it has been securely documented in Italy before 1295, when Marco Polo returned from China. In 1279, a basket of dried pasta was recorded in the estate inventory of a Genoese soldier, indicating its value. By 1400, it was being produced commercially, in shops that retained night watchmen to protect the goods. The *maccheroni*, as dried pasta was known, was kneaded by foot: men trod on dough to make it malleable enough to roll out, and then the dough was extruded through pierced dies under great pressure, a task accomplished by a large screw press powered by two men or one horse.

AL DENTE

Al dente literally means “to the tooth,” but it means much more than that in Italian. *Al dente* is a sensation of slight resistance, generated by the pressure of chewing, and it is a very important part of the overall enjoyment of eating dry pasta that has been properly cooked.

It's All in the Wheat

The flour used to make dry pasta—semolina—is granular, like sugar, and has a warm golden color. Semolina is milled from durum wheat (*durum* meaning “hard”), a much harder grain than the more common wheat used to make regular flour. Durum wheat is suited to the soil and weather of Sicily and Campania, especially the region around Naples, and so the pasta industry initially developed there. Naples had a perfect climate for drying pasta: the alternation of mild sea breezes and hot winds from Mount Vesuvius ensured that the pasta would not dry too slowly, and thus become moldy, or too fast, and thus crack or break. In 18th-century Naples, it was common to see pasta hung everywhere to dry—in the streets, on

balconies, on roofs. Neapolitan street vendors sold cooked spaghetti from stalls with charcoal-fired stoves, working with bowls of grated Romano cheese beside them. Customers would follow the example of the vendors, who lifted the long strands high and dropped them into their mouths. Indeed, pasta was originally street food, and there was no need for forks!

Today, dry pasta comes in many different shapes, colors, and even flavors. Versatile, delicious, nutritious, simple to make, and satisfying to eat, pasta has become a universally favorite food with infinite nuances and combinations.

LIDIA'S PASTA TIPS

From looking through the cellophane, you can't much tell how dried pasta will cook or taste. It should have an even buff color, and don't be alarmed if you see tiny black spots—semolina is milled much more coarsely than ordinary flour, and flecks of bran usually show. A finely pitted, dull surface is far preferable to a glossy one—it suggests that the pasta was made with a bronze die, and it will hold sauce better.

- Gauging portion sizes is always tricky. The standard portion in Italy, and the size usually recommended on packages, is two ounces.
- Cook pasta in abundantly salted water at a full rolling boil so that the pasta will keep moving as it cooks and not stick together.
- Add the pasta all at once. And don't add oil to the cooking water, as it reduces the starch on the pasta's surface. Only use oil when cooking long or large shapes, such as lasagna noodles, in order to keep them from sticking.
- Always combine pasta with the sauce, and let the two cook together for a minute or so before final seasoning and serving.
- A dish of dressed pasta should be flowing, not sticky or soupy. All the pieces should be separate and have a uniform texture.
- Add a last touch of extra-virgin olive oil, either drizzled into the pasta and sauce as they simmer together or drizzled over the pasta on the plate. It makes a plate of pasta “smile.”
- Stir in grated cheeses at the very end, after you remove the pasta and sauce from the heat and just before you plate it.
- Pasta should be served hot and as soon as it's ready. To serve, make a little pasta nest, or *nido*. The pasta will be more contained and will stay nice and hot.
- When cooked, dry pasta should have a clean, slightly nutty flavor and, above all, a texture that stays firm until you finish eating it.



SHAPING IT UP

There's an overwhelming number of dry pasta cuts in Italy, literally hundreds of them. Most are named for the shapes they resemble, some have significance only to the regions that name them, while a few were created for a specific type of sauce.

There are three main types of dry pasta: short, long, and various *pastine*, or little pastas. Short pasta has the widest range, with more than a hundred distinctive shapes. The main difference in long pastas is diameter, while the *pastine* are pastas used mainly in soups.

SHORT PASTAS—TUBULAR

RIGATONI: large, ridged, and sometimes slightly curved tubes with square-cut ends (unlike diagonally cut penne)

ZITI (like a hose): medium-size, thin tubes, sometimes featuring ridges

PENNE (quills): straight tubes cut diagonally at the ends to resemble the end of a quill, like a quill pen

LUMACHE (snails): variably sized pasta shaped like a snail's shell

PACCHERI: an oversized version of tubular-shaped rigatoni, only without ridges

SHORT PASTAS—TUBULAR, WITH A TWIST

RADIATORE (radiators): small squares with ridges that "radiate" outward

ROTINI: twisted pasta—like fusilli, only shorter

SHORT PASTAS—DISTINCTIVE SHAPES

RUOTE: small wagon wheels

FARFALLE (butterfly): small rectangles that have been pinched together in the middle; also known as bowtie pasta

FUSILLI (little spindles): corkscrew twists

TOFE (like a shell): medium-size seashells

ORECCHIETTE (little ears): a unique pasta shape originating from Puglia

CONCHIGLIE (conch shells): a popular shell-shaped small pasta

LONG PASTAS

SPAGHETTI (a length of cord): long, thin, round strands of pasta

VERMICELLI (little worms): round strands that are thinner than spaghetti yet thicker than superfine angel hair

CAPELLINI (fine hairs): thin, long strands of round pasta—like angel hair, only slightly thicker

LINGUINE (little tongues): from Liguria, long flat strips that are thinner than fettuccine

BUCATINI: from *buco*, Italian for "hole"—a hollow version of spaghetti, like a thin drinking straw

PERCIATELLI: large hollow strands—a close, wider cousin of bucatini

FETTUCCINE (string): flat sheets cut into ribbon strands

CANDELE (candle): long hollow tubes, designed to be the same length—unsurprisingly—as your average candle!

CANNELLONI (large reeds): rectangle shapes of flat pasta dough that are filled and then rolled into large tube shapes

PASTINE

ANELLINI (small rings): tiny o-shaped rings used in soups

ORZO (grains): looks like barley and often used as an alternative to rice

DITALI (fingers): *ditali* are things that can fit around a finger. Pasta-wise, this makes for small, ring-like tubes

SEME DI MELONE (seeds of melon): a small seed-shaped pasta used primarily in soups

SAUCING PASTA

Different sauces work best when paired with specific shapes of pasta. Whatever the sauce, the pasta should be coated but not suffocated by it.



Lidia's sauces available at www.lidiasitaly.com

VEGETABLE SAUCES

For a chunky vegetable sauce, choose pasta cuts with lots of nooks and crannies or deep crevices to catch and hold the vegetables.

Pasta suggestions: fusilli, orecchiette, conchiglie

CHEESE SAUCES

Cheese sauces adhere best to small pasta cuts with lots of surface area.

Pasta suggestions: fusilli, farfalle, maccheroni, penne, shells

BUTTER SAUCES

Long pastas are best with butter. A little bit of sauce goes a long way to coat them evenly.

Suggestions: linguine, fettuccine

OIL-BASED SAUCES

Pesto and other oil-based sauces are excellent for keeping long, thin cuts from clumping together. They also coat noodles more evenly than they would smaller pasta or pasta with lots of crevices.

Suggestions: bucatini, spaghetti, trenette

MEAT SAUCES

Two completely different pasta cuts are commonly used with meat ragu. In northern Italy, wide, fresh egg noodles are traditionally paired with meat sauce, while in southern Italy small cuts of dried pasta are used.

Suggestions: maccheroni, fusilli, pappardelle, tagliatelle

SOUPS

Nearly any small cut is the right pasta for soup. The size you choose all depends on how many pieces of pasta you prefer in each spoonful.

Suggestions: tubetti, maccheroncini



LINGUINI WITH BACON AND ONIONS

LINGUINE ALLA CARBONARA

Yield: 6 servings

I use slab bacon here because I like large pieces that are brown on the outside, but still moist in the center. If you cannot find slab bacon, use the thickest sliced supermarket bacon you can find. Just be sure not to overcook it. If you prefer, you can pour off all the bacon fat after browning the bacon and replace it with an equal amount of olive oil, but remember, the bacon fat has a much more pronounced flavor. If you don't have the stock called for in the recipe, just use water from the pasta pot.

Often you will see this dish prepared with cream. It's not the traditional style, but that's not to say it doesn't taste good. But I prefer my carbonara made this way, the sauce thickened lightly with egg yolk. The heat of the pasta is enough to cook the egg yolks, but if you like, you may bring a small saucepan of boiling water to a simmer and, about a minute before draining the pasta, slip the yolks into a small sieve placed into the simmering water to coddle them for a minute. Carefully lift the sieve from the water and add the coddled yolks to the pasta as described above.

Salt

6 ounces slab bacon,
in one piece

2 tablespoons extra-virgin
olive oil

2 large yellow onions,
sliced 1/2 inch (about 3
cups)

1 1/2 cups hot chicken
stock or canned reduced-
sodium chicken broth, or
as needed

1 pound linguine

3 egg yolks

1 cup freshly grated
Grana Padano or
Parmigiano-Reggiano
cheese

freshly ground
black pepper

Bring 6 quarts of salted water to boil in an 8-quart pot over high heat.

Remove the rind, if necessary, from the bacon. Cut the bacon into 1/4-inch slices, then cut the slices crosswise into 1/4-inch strips. Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy skillet over medium heat. Add the bacon and cook, stirring, until the bacon is lightly browned, but still soft in the center, about 6 minutes.

The amount of fat in the skillet will vary depending on the bacon. If there is more than 3 to 4 tablespoons of fat in the pan, pour off the excess. If there is less than 3 to 4 tablespoons, add enough olive oil to measure that amount. Add the onions and cook until wilted, but still crunchy, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add the stock, bring to a boil, and adjust the heat to a lively simmer. Cook until the liquid is reduced by about half.

Meanwhile, stir the linguine into the boiling salted water. Return to a boil, stirring frequently. Cook the pasta, semi-covered, stirring occasionally, until done, about 8 minutes.

Ladle off about a cup of the pasta cooking water. If the skillet is large enough to accommodate the sauce and pasta, fish the pasta out of the boiling water with a large wire skimmer and drop it directly into sauce in the skillet. If not, drain the pasta, return it to the pot, and pour in the sauce. Bring the sauce and pasta to a boil, stirring to coat the pasta with sauce. Check the seasoning, adding salt if necessary. If necessary, add as much chicken stock or pasta cooking water as needed to make enough sauce to generously coat the pasta. Remove the pan from the heat and add the egg yolks one at a time, tossing well after each. (A salad fork and spoon work well for this.) Add the grated cheese, then the black pepper, tossing well, and serve immediately in warmed bowls.

CANNOLI NAPOLEON

CANNOLO A STRATI

Yield: 6 to 8 cannoli Napoleons

Pasticcerie, or pastry shops, also called *catlisch* (a name inherited from the Swiss), are a grand tradition in Palermo. The city was greatly influenced by the French and Swiss in their pastry making. When I am in Sicily, cannoli and desserts made with citrus are my favorites. In Palermo, I always enjoy desserts and a great cup of espresso at my dear friend's pastry place, Pepino Stancanpiana's *Catlisch*.

My Sicilian chef at Felidia, Fortunato Nicotra, makes an elegant version of this favorite Sicilian dolce with deep-fried disks of cannoli pastry stacked high with layers of ricotta cream in between. I like to fry squares of pastry in a skillet—no deep fryer needed—and build a crispy, creamy cannoli Napoleon.

In Sicily, cannoli filling is made with sheep's-milk ricotta, which has a distinctive flavor that can't be matched by ordinary processed ricotta. Fresh cow's-milk ricotta, which is widely available now, is what I use. Be sure to drain it well, sweeten lightly, mix with chopped bitter chocolate, candied orange, and toasted almonds—and add a touch of Grand Marnier for a real Sicilian cannoli.

FOR THE PASTRY DOUGH

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
(plus more for rolling)

2 tablespoons sugar

1/4 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon white vinegar

1/2 cup dry red wine, or as
needed

FOR THE CANNOLI CREAM

1 pound (2 cups) fresh ricotta

2/3 cup confectioners' sugar,
plus more for decoration

1 tablespoon Grand Marnier
(optional, but very good!)

1 ounce unsweetened
chocolate (or 3 tablespoons
bittersweet chips)

2 tablespoons candied
orange rind

2 tablespoons toasted
almonds

1 cup vegetable oil,
or as needed

Make the pastry dough in the food processor a day or two in advance—or at least 4 hours—for the best texture. Put the flour, sugar, and salt in the bowl and process just to mix. Mix the olive oil, vinegar, and the wine together and, with the machine running, pour all but 1 tablespoon in and process for 20 seconds or so until a dough gathers on the blade. If it feels hard and dry, sprinkle in the remaining liquid and process briefly. It should be moist and malleable—incorporate more wine if needed. Turn the dough out of the bowl, scraping any bits from the sides and blade, and knead by hand into a soft, smooth ball. Flatten to a disk, wrap very tightly in plastic, and refrigerate for up to 2 days.

Put the fresh ricotta in a fine-meshed sieve and set inside a bowl to drain for at least 12 hours or a whole day in advance. Cover the ricotta with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

To make the cannoli cream, whip the ricotta with the whisk attachment of an electric mixer until smooth. Whip in the confectioners' sugar and the Grand Marnier. Chop the chocolate (or chips) into coarse bits—big enough to bite into and be visible. Coarsely chop the candied peel and almonds to the same size. Fold the chopped pieces into the cream and refrigerate until you assemble the cannoli.

Cut the pastry dough in half. On a lightly floured surface, roll out one piece of dough to a 14 x 11-inch rectangle (or as close as possible). With a sharp knife and ruler, trim the edges and divide the rectangle into a dozen squares, about 3 1/2 inches on a side. (If you can get only 9 squares of that size or slightly larger, that's fine!) Set the squares aside on a lightly floured tray to rest for 15 minutes before frying. Meanwhile, roll out and divide the remaining half of dough the same way.



To fry the pastry, pour oil into the skillet to a depth of 1/4 inch and set over medium heat. With the point of a small sharp knife, pierce each pastry square about 10 times all over its surface, as though you were making pin pricks through the dough. (These tiny holes will prevent the pastry from ballooning when fried.)

Heat the oil until the edge of a square sizzles gently when dipped into it, then lay in as many squares as you can, 2 inches apart. Raise the heat to keep the oil temperature up (but lower it as soon as the sizzling gets too fast). Fry the squares for about 3 minutes on the first side, pushing them under the oil occasionally to heat the top surface. As the tops begin to bubble, press with tongs to prevent big bubbles from ballooning—small bubbles are O.K. When the bottom is golden brown, flip the squares over and fry until evenly colored and crisp on both sides, about 2 minutes.

As soon as they're done, lift the squares with tongs, let excess oil drip off, and lay them to drain on folded paper towels; flip them over to blot the oil from both sides. Fry all the squares this way, adding oil as needed and heating it between batches.

Assemble your cannoli Napoleons shortly before serving, with 3 nice squares for each. Set one square on the plate, drop about 1 1/2 tablespoons of cannoli cream in the center, lay another square on top—sides aligned—and press gently to spread the cream. Drop on another layer of cream, cover with the third square, and press. Finally, shower the top of each Napoleon with powdered sugar (and embellish with drizzles of honey or a sprinkle of finely grated chocolate) and serve.

ROAST PORK SHOULDER WITH ROAST VEGETABLE SAUCE

Yield: 6 servings or more

Pork shoulders (also called butts or Boston butts) are terrific roasts, in my opinion—more delicious than pork loin and definitely less expensive. With a nice layer of fat on top, a good proportion of fat through the muscle, and lots of connective tissue, the roasted meat has wonderful flavor and a soft, moist texture. It's easy to roast—you don't need to erect a foil tent for it—and the shoulder blade bone, which adds flavor and speeds roasting, is simple to remove when you're serving the meat.

Shoulder roasts range from 4 to 8 pounds, bone-in, or larger. This procedure will work for any size roast, though the vegetable and seasoning amounts are for a 5- to 7-pound shoulder, the size you'll usually find in the butcher's case. To feed a big crowd, ask the butcher to cut a larger shoulder for you, or cook 2 smaller roasts in one very big roasting pan. Be sure to increase the vegetables, seasonings, and cooking liquids proportionally with your meat.

5- to 7-pound pork shoulder (butt) roast, bone-in

1 1/2 teaspoons coarse sea salt or crystal kosher salt

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

FOR THE PAN AND SAUCE—VEGETABLES, SEASONINGS, AND BROTH

4 medium onions, peeled and chopped into 1/2-inch pieces

2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch chunks

2 medium leeks (including green trimmings), rinsed, split, and chopped into 1/2-inch pieces

3 celery stalks and leaves, rinsed and cut into 1/2-inch pieces

1/4 cup dried porcini slices, crumbled or chopped into small bits (about 1/2 ounce)

1 teaspoon whole black peppercorns

6 whole cloves

1 tablespoon fresh rosemary sprigs, stripped from the branch, packed to measure

2 large bay leaves

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 teaspoon kosher salt or less

1 1/2 cups dry white wine

3 cups or more turkey broth, simple vegetable broth, or water

PREPPING THE ROAST AND VEGETABLES

Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 400°F.

Rinse and dry the roast; leave the entire layer of fat on the top. Place it in the roasting pan and sprinkle salt on all sides, patting the crystals so they stick to the meat and are evenly distributed. Pour on the olive oil and rub it all over the roast. Set the roast fat side up in the center of the pan.

Scatter all the chopped vegetables and seasonings—except the remaining salt—around and toss everything together with the 3 tablespoons of olive oil. If you are using water as cooking liquid, toss 1 teaspoon salt with the vegetables; if using broth, less or no salt is needed, depending on the saltiness of the broth (taste to determine). Pour the white wine and 2 cups or more broth (or water) into the side of the pan so the cooking liquid is 1-inch deep, coming well up around all the vegetables.

SLOW ROASTING THE PORK AND VEGETABLES

Set the pan into the oven and roast for an hour, then set the pan into the oven and roast for 1 hour, then open the oven and bring the roasting pan up front, turn the vegetables over, and rotate the pan back to front, for even cooking.

Roast for another hour or hour and a quarter (depending on the size of the roast); the internal temperature of the meat should be 170°F or a little higher. The meat should be browned all over with dark edges; the top (especially the fat) should be crisp and caramelized. There will still be a considerable amount of juice in the pan, and the vegetables should be cooked through and lightly browned. It is ready to serve now unless you want to glaze the roast or get it darker and crispier, in which case raise the oven temperature to 425°F and proceed as directed later.

MAKING THE SAUCE AND FINISHING THE ROAST

Lift the pork out of the roasting pan with a large spatula, or by holding it with towels, and rest it on a platter while you start the sauce. If it's not going back in the oven, set the roast on a warm corner of the stove covered loosely with foil.

With a potato masher, crush the cooked vegetables in the juices, breaking them up into little bits. Set the sieve in the saucepan and pour everything from the pan into the sieve, including any flavorful caramelized bits that can be scraped up. Press the vegetables and other solids against the sieve with a big spoon to release their liquid, and then discard them. Let the liquid settle and when the fat rises, skim it off. Set the saucepan over high heat, bring the juices (you should have 3 to 4 cups) to a boil, and let them reduce uncovered.

For further browning, return the roast to the roasting pan, including its juices. When the oven is at 425°, set the pan on a higher rack and roast until browned and crusty. This could take just a few minutes or 15 or more; check the meat frequently and turn pan if browning unevenly.

When the roast is out of the oven, let it sit for 10 minutes or so before serving. I like to remove the blade bone, which is visible on the side of the roast. Insert a long knife blade into the meat so it rests on the flat bone; draw the blade along the bone, following its contours, and the meat will lift off. Arrange the boneless pork on a warm serving platter.

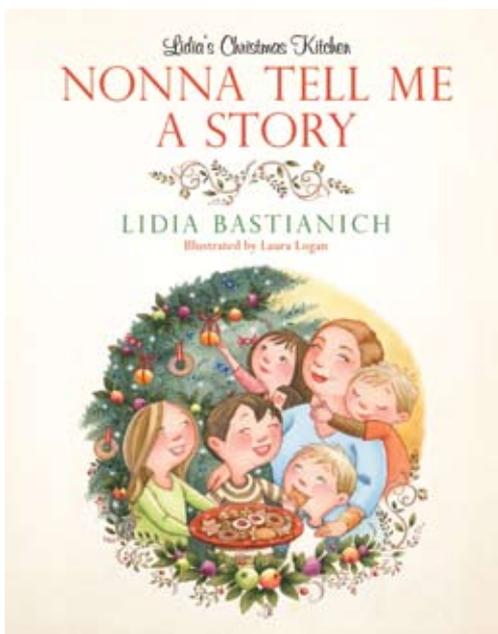
To finish the sauce, cook until the strained roasting juices have reduced by half, or to a consistency you like. Thicken it, if you wish, with bread crumbs. Moisten the roast with some of the sauce and pass the rest.

THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN CHEF AND DINER
BEGINS WITH WHAT'S ON THE PLATE



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LESSONS FROM NONNA

When Lidia was a child, she spent Christmas with her grandparents, where she learned to cook with her Nonna Rosa by preparing food in their smokehouse and kitchen. Lidia and her brother would find a big, beautiful juniper bush to cut down for their holiday tree. And they made their own holiday decorations with nuts, berries, and herbs they collected for their meals. Lidia talks more about her Nonna in a new book published by Running Press.

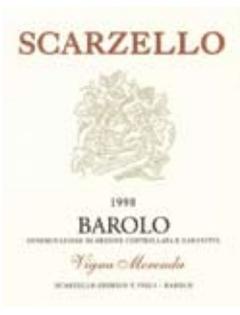
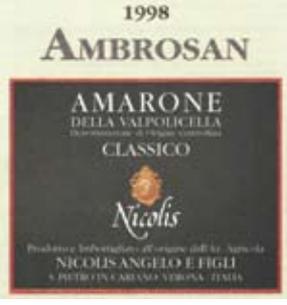
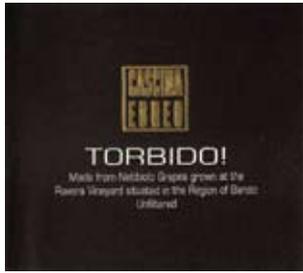


I just started traveling to various bookstores to sign copies of my very first children's book, *Nonna Tell Me A Story: Lidia's Christmas Kitchen*. It's been such a delight sharing this book with parents and grandparents, and watching the kids' reactions as I meet with them. It's always been a rewarding experience to share recipes and traditions through my cookbooks, but this project has an added bonus: I'm touching today's youth, and hopefully helping to make a difference in their lives and in how they respect the food that goes onto their tables.

Telling my grandchildren stories of my growing up is some of our favorite times spent together. They want to know what it was like, and what I did as a child. They seem to be especially interested in the organic and simplistic setting I grew up in. I lived close to my grandmother, who grew and raised just about everything we ate—from the wheat to make flour and then bread and pasta, to the olives we made into olive oil, to the grapes that were harvested and fermented into wine, to potatoes, beans, and tomatoes. Then we had all the courtyard animals: chickens and geese, ducks, rabbits, pigs, goats, donkeys, and more. It is this life—how I played, what we ate, and how communal family life played out—that interests my grandchildren, and so I decided to share the stories and my family with other children.

WINES TO WATCH

Sommelier Marica Viczian and executive chef Fortunato Nicotra are always in synch when it comes to pairing wines with the ever-changing menu at Felidia.

WINE	TASTING NOTES	VINEYARD
	<p>Scarzello Barolo Vigna Merenda</p> <p>Garnet color, with soft orange highlights. Full, lingering aromas on the nose, and dry and warm on the palate with delicate, concise sensations.</p> <p>Food Pairing: Roast meats, seasoned cheeses, and game.</p>	<p>The winery is small, its tiny 12.5-acre estate located in the heart of Barolo, Italy. Family operated for three generations, the current winemaker and enologist is Federico Scarzello. Using mostly traditional cultivation and winemaking techniques, with a few modern exceptions, Federico continues to improve the quality of the wines and the visibility of the estate. His 1999 Barolo "Vigna Merenda" brought the family its first Gambero Rosso Tre Bicchieri award.</p>
	<p>Nicolis Amarone "Ambrosan" 2003</p> <p>The gold standard for wine production at Nicolis, it is a princely wine—full-bodied, elegant, and robust—and has an intense red pomegranate color. It is dry and generous in the mouth, but with delicate accents of vanilla. It has a complex perfume with odors of flowers and wood, of brushwood and leather.</p> <p>Food Pairing: Roast game, roasted meats, and hearty, flavorful cheeses.</p>	<p>The Azienda Agricola Nicolis Angelo e Figli is located in San Pietro in Cariano, in the Valpolicella, the heart of the "classic" zone. The art of viticulture is a richness that the Nicolis family has passed on for generations with the cultivation of the 87-acre family-owned property. The current winery produces high-quality wines, due to the enterprising strength and intuition of Angelo Nicolis and his wife, Natalia, along with their sons, Giancarlo, Giuseppe, and Massimo, who personally conduct most of the activities of the winery.</p>
	<p>Cascina Ebreo Torbido 2001</p> <p>Bouquet of ripe fruit that turns toward cinnamon and licorice. Complex and powerful.</p> <p>Food Pairing: Suckling pig, game, and fowl.</p>	<p>This tiny estate began when two Swiss wine lovers followed their hearts to Italy. Romy Gigax and Peter Weimer had already envisioned their grand Barolo, their exemplary Barbera, and their experiments with powerful white wines before buying the Cascina Ebreo in 1991. Seated in the Ravera zone near the village of Barolo, the estate and its more than five acres of vineyards were in complete disrepair when Romy and Peter arrived and plunged themselves into their new undertaking. Though still a well-kept secret for a lucky few, Cascina Ebreo has presented the world with some splendid wines that can compete with the best of their neighbors.</p>
	<p>La Fornace Brunello Riserva</p> <p>The color is deep red, clear, and brilliant. The fragrance is intense and persistent, with fruit aromas like berry, plum, cherry, and aromatic wood. The flavor is dry, warm, slightly tannic, strong, harmonious, and persistent.</p> <p>Food Pairing: Steak, pheasant, and wild boar.</p>	<p>La Fornace is a small winery owned by the Giannotti family. The cellars are on a single level, and they use an air-conditioning system to control the temperature in the different vinification phases.</p>

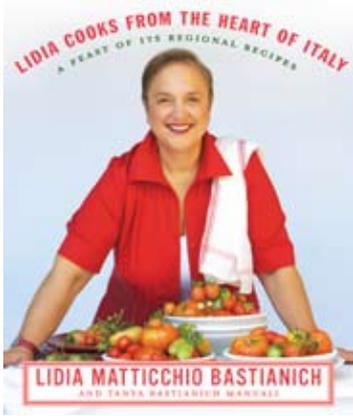
EXPERT SELECTIONS

Since 1999, Dino Tantawi of Vignaioli Selection has scoured Italy to bring his best wine finds to the American consumer. Tantawi's approach to selecting wines is reflected by his own wine attitude, philosophy, and experience, and he feels the history and background of vineyards and winemakers are essential to the character and regional depth of their wines. Found in each of Vignaioli's wine selections is an interpretation of terroir, varying microclimates, and winemaker philosophies.

Vignaiolo (vee-n'yah-EE'OH-loh): Italian for "vine-dresser," someone who tends to the vines (pl. vignaioli)



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LIDIA ON LOCATION IN *THE HEART OF ITALY*

My latest book is ultimately about being at the table, because the table is so important in Italian culture—it's where everything happens. The table should be important in the American culture as well. Time spent around the table is essential for maintaining relationships with others as well as for cultivating a relationship with the world around us.



"How can you talk about Italy and not show Italy?" asks Lidia, and rightly so. But she always longed to show *her* Italy. "It's the Italy that I enjoy and know, made up of all those wonderful food artisans and winemakers that I have befriended over the years. In a sense, they have made me who I am. They shared their passion with me and, in turn, I share it in my restaurants, on TV, and in books."

Excerpt from
Lidia Cooks From the Heart of Italy

Food is a way of connecting with the people who surround us. Through food we communicate love, compassion, and understanding. The sharing of dishes together at the table opens doors for us to penetrate the thoughts of those around us. There is no better opportunity to communicate with our children than at the table, to discuss values of life that are important to us as individuals, as a family, and as a part of the world we live in.

A WASTE-NOT-WANT-NOT APPROACH TO LIFE

"I grew up within those parameters. My grandmother and my grandfather ate everything they grew, cured, and dried, like peas and beans. When you have to get up at 5 a.m. to harvest potatoes, you're not going to waste anything. I grew up with that—to respect every last crumb. In fact, my grandmother would gather up the crumbs after we ate and feed them to the chickens.

That is the way we still should live. I think there is an overabundance of everything today. If you don't have a real connection to what it takes to grow an apple or a tomato, it's that much easier to discard it—after all, you can always buy another one, until perhaps one day there are no more apples. So let's each work on saving a crumb. Do you know how many more people could be fed? "

Excerpt from
Lidia Cooks From the Heart of Italy

It is now a time for reflection, for looking back at the generations before us to understand their approach to the table. In my research into the 12 regions of Italy that I explore here, some answers came to light. The recipes I share with you reflect a respect for food—growing it, shepherding the animals, foraging for the gifts of nature in the wild, and hunting respectfully to put nourishing meat on the table, not just for sport.

Nothing is wasted.

LIDIA'S MESSAGE IN THE CONTEXT OF ITALY

"We visited different regions and show their traditions. In most of the recipes in this book, it is evident that the original dish is rooted in the reality of those times, when frugality went along with hard work, and home cooks made do with what was on hand."

Excerpt from
Lidia Cooks From the Heart of Italy

Our approach to food, our respect for and understanding of the ingredients we work with, will dictate our future survival. Will there be enough available for the generations to come? Will the world survive?

Waste not, want not—and make it delicious.

HAUTEVINTNER



COOPERATIVE EXCELLENCE

Located in Alto Adige's Dolomite mountains, at the foothills of the Alps, Terlano's distinctive terroir is the key to the development of their exceptional wines. Situated on an extinct volcano, Terlano benefits from an ideal south-facing exposure. The vineyards, ranging from 820 to 3,000 feet above sea level, are composed of red porphyric rock that is naturally high in silicates, which lend a minerality to the wines that is both unique and enticing. It's no wonder the reserve wines from Terlano can age for 50 years. They have every vintage in their library of wines, dating back to 1955. The proof is in the bottle. Terlano is renowned for the longevity and quality of their wines.



"To say that an Italian cooperative winery (cantina sociale) produces some of the best white wines in its region, if not the whole of the country, may raise an eyebrow or two. But having recently blind-tasted the white wines of Cantina Terlano, from the Alto Adige region in Italy's northeast, I have no doubt that this is the case." — James Suckling, *Wine Spectator*

HAUTECOCTAIL



THE CAIPIRINHA

2 oz Leblon Cachaça
1/2 lime
2 tsp superfine sugar

Cut the lime into four wedges. Muddle the lime and sugar in a shaker. Fill the shaker with ice and add Leblon Cachaça. Shake vigorously. Serve in a rocks glass. Garnish with a slice of lime.

LEBLON

Cachaça is unique to Brazil, as it can only be made there. Like France's Cognac or Champagne and Mexico's tequila, cachaça has qualities that separate it from any other spirit. Cachaça is made from fresh-pressed sugarcane juice, which is then fermented and distilled. Distillation can be accomplished using two accepted methods: industrial column stills or artisanal alembique copper pot stills. The latter method represents the minority of the yearly production, but it can result in complex, interesting, and wonderful spirits.

Leblon, an artisanal cachaça, is made at Maison Leblon in Brazil's state of Minas Gerais. The distillery's mission is to show the world that cachaça can be a noble spirit. The result is a lively pure nose and a full-bodied liquor that exhibits a floral bouquet with light herbal and grassy notes and tastes of sweet sugarcane, crème brûlée, spicy vanilla, and white pepper. The spirit warms in the mouth and leaves a gentle sweetness in the middle of the tongue that flowers as it lasts, much like a refined tequila.

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- Joseph Henriot, 6th Generation Champenois