

Pasta Il Gigolo

By Robert Morse, Morse Wines / Il Gioiello Winery



We made a lot of this for our Behind the Cellar Door event in March 2012, so this is adjusted to approximately a 4 serving size

There are 4 components: pasta, sausage, mushrooms and the sauce. The four components are simple and should be made independently and combined in the sauté pan when you are ready to assemble and serve. The pasta, sausage and mushrooms can all be variables determined by what you have available, but I'll tell you what we used. In our case, of both the sausage and pasta makers, I cannot say enough about the quality of their product and service.

Pasta: We used a very thick pasta, about 2 inches long that can hold onto the sauce. We bought fresh pasta from "The Pasta Shop" in Oakland. The pasta was called Casaleche. A nice Fusilli might do well. Do not overcook, as you will be heating it again in the sauté pan and don't want mush. Use ~ 10 ozs of dry or 1lb fresh pasta for 4 servings.

Sausage: 1lb sweet Italian bulk sausage with fennel seed works perfectly. If you don't like fennel, use sweet Italian sausage. Sauté until past pink, but don't overcook, as again you will be finishing the process with all the components. We used fresh-made sausage from Taylor's Sausage in Oakland.

Mushrooms: Everybody has their favorites and some are very expensive. We used shitake and crimini mushrooms. Slice mushrooms ~1/8 thick and no more than 1-2 inches long if you use shitake. You need the following items:

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp butter
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 lb. mushrooms
- 1 tsp oregano, fresh or dried
- 1 tsp parsley
- ¼ tsp angostura bitters

Sauté the mushrooms:

- Heat olive oil & butter in a large flat bottomed fry or sauté pan
- Sauté the diced shallots until soft and translucent. You may need to add a couple ounces of white wine to add liquid. This will depend on the type of mushrooms you use and the amount of liquid they create

- Add mushrooms and sauté until soft, adding oregano, parsley and bitters once the mushrooms have begun to sweat out liquid
- Once soft, remove the mushrooms and shallots to a bowl, retaining the liquids in the fry pan

The Sauce: You will need:

- 1.5 Tbsp dried mushroom powder – see below
- 2 oz. blue cheese or gorgonzola
- 1 oz. grated parmesan
- 16 oz. heavy cream - we used manufacturing cream, easily found at “Smart and Final”, but a heavy whipping cream can be used

Making dried mushroom powder: Use any dried mushrooms. We used dried Shitake. Put the dried mushrooms in a coffee or spice grinder, and grind to an ultra fine powder.

Making the sauce:

- Reduce the retained juice from the sautéed mushrooms to a couple of Tbsp
- Heat the retained mushroom liquid to boiling
- Add the heavy cream and whisk constantly until a soft boil
- Vigorously whisk in mushroom powder until it has rehydrated into the sauce. This may take a couple of minutes.
- Stir in blue cheese and parmesan until melted into blend. Taste as you add to adjust to your taste.

Finishing the dish: If serving immediately, add back pasta, sausage and mushrooms to the sauce until you get the concentration and density you desire from the flavors. Add ground pepper to taste.

You can make the components ahead of time and assemble this dish in a couple of minutes. Start by heating up the sausage and mushrooms in a little bit of olive oil, then add the sauce until it starts to simmer, and then add pasta.



Serve with a thick slice of bread to wipe up the sauce.

Serve with Il Gioiello Barbera or Montepulciano.

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