



THE *Pornanino* OLIVE OIL NEWSLETTER

No. 10, October 2008

Greetings to all of our olive-oil loving friends from busy Chianti! Remember what we said in the last issue? We are glad to report that Lady Summer has made up for her rather shaky (and very wet) start by lavishing upon us lots and lots of very welcome sunshine! Therefore we are confidently looking forward to an extremely good harvest this year, which should eventually translate into some truly outstanding oil! Of course our standard is always high, but when nature is as generous as she's been so far the result might be truly spectacular. Just make sure you don't miss it – **order now!** As you know **we always ship the new oil by the beginning of December, and since quantities are limited we might not be able to accommodate latecomers. Please do order early** and remember that our unique olive oil makes a wonderful Christmas present for your friends and family so be generous!

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Extra Virgin
Olive Oil

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here ...



Franco's olive grove diary



Let's keep our fingers crossed, and hope that weather conditions remain as ideally suited

to olive growing as they've been over the past couple of months. If they do, our 2008 harvest could well give us some of the best oil we've produced in years!

[Read more](#)

Ordering time!

Stock up now or risk having to wait until next year! Can you imagine doing without your favorite do-good indulgence for a whole twelve months? It doesn't bear thinking about. So don't risk it – order now! [Read more](#)

Smooth as oil

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body a treat: try our **unbelievably mild olive oil based soap!** Or use straight olive oil as the best all natural beauty treatment there is, as Mediterranean people have been doing for millennia.

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Looking ahead

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Grandma Lia's olive oil recipes



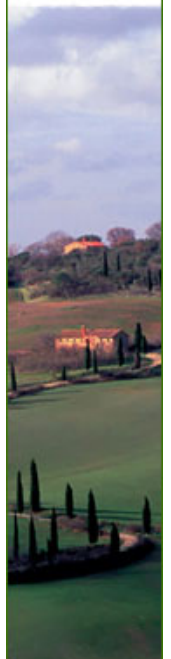
Prompted by our friend Gena's request, here are some yummy recipes that might come in

handy to celebrate in style. Not all that healthy, granted, but then when the holiday season strikes, indulgence is the name of the game! [Read more](#)

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We'd love to hear from you! Here's our email address oliveoil@chiantionline.com

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Franco's olive grove diary

Let's keep our fingers crossed, and hope that weather conditions remain as ideally suited to olive growing as they've been over the past couple of months. If they do, our 2008 harvest could well give us some of the best oil we've produced in years!

Of course we are always claiming that the next harvest will be the best ever; we lavish so much time, effort and passion into each crop that we feel like the proud parents of the brightest kid in playschool. We just know it's not going to disappoint us, no matter what. But this year is different.

Perhaps you remember Franco's golden rule – it takes perfect olives to make perfect oil. Substandard olives will reflect on the oil's quality, and no amount of cold pressing or fancy labelling can ever make up for that. It goes without saying that the reverse is also true; shoddy handling can ruin the most promising crop (NOT an issue on the PORNANINO estate).

Well, we are very glad to report that olives this year look pretty close to being perfect, thanks to all the rain we complained about at the start of summer, and the plentiful sun we had from July onwards. After a cranky start, which nonetheless served to replenish the underground aquifers, the rest of the season was just as sunny, hot and dry as any olive grove could wish for.

The trees got off to a good start with lots of moisture, and the subsequent heat meant they had a chance to grow plump, fleshy olives with a high oily content and lots of wonderful flavors. Too much rain would have made them bloated, and just as tasteless and prone to rotting as any other water-sodden fruit - all looks and no substance.

Let's just hope that nature keeps smiling upon our olive groves for the next month or so. Truth to be said, this year Franco is a little less worried than usual; considering how healthy and happy his

olive trees are, they should be able to withstand quite a lot without too much damage.

But disaster could still strike, as any farmer knows only too well. Nature can turn from benign goddess to merciless destroyer in two seconds flat, and that's probably why Franco and son-in-law Matteo don't like to stray too far away from the groves until harvest-time. Not that they could do much in case a freak hail storm hit, but you know how it is – can't leave the kids to brave the unknown alone ...

Luckily it looks like harvest-time could come a little earlier than usual, probably between the end of October and the beginning of November. It's actually been sliding up year after year of late, which rather goes to show that global warming is a hard fact. When Franco first started in the olive oil business, about fifteen years ago, olives were usually picked in early December – something his family remembers all too well. There's usually a long weekend around that time (combining Milan patron saint's day and the Immaculate Conception, falling on December 7 and 8 respectively and both holidays), so that friends and relatives were all co-opted to lend a hand.

Going back to Franco's golden rule, with near-perfect olives this year we can indeed look forward to producing some truly outstanding oil. The nail-biting countdown has started. Look, would you be so kind as to keep your fingers crossed for us? You know the stakes are high: we all want the best PORNANINO Extra Virgin Olive Oil we've ever had! And that should really be quite something ...

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Stock up now or risk having to wait until next year! Can you imagine doing without your favorite do-good indulgence for a whole twelve months? It doesn't bear thinking about. So don't risk it – order now!



Indeed time flies, doesn't it. It's that time of the year again. You know – time to have a look in the larder to check how many bottles of Pornanino Olive Oil you have left. What, NONE! Heavens, you'll have to order a bit more this time, just to be on the safe side. And what if you still have

plenty? Shame on you. Either you couldn't bear to part from them and kept those you'd bought for presents, or you haven't been eating right. Ideally by this time you should have just about one bottle left, enough to tide you over till December.

Since it's that time of the year again, we hope you'll forgive us for recapping the reasons why you should seriously consider ordering a fresh supply of our Pornanino First Cold Pressed Extra Virgin Olive Oil - let's give it its full name just this once, although by now you should know better than being impressed by it; it's the quality that matters, rather than the high-sounding title on the label.

1. And the number 1 reason is exactly that – quality. You've tried it. You know we make it ourselves, using the olives we grow, harvest and press on our own Chianti estate. You know we are sticklers for quality, because oil-making to us is much more of a pleasure than business. Actually a sound businessman would probably be dismayed by the way we run things – we cut no corners, and make no compromise where quality is concerned. And we are quite happy in the knowledge that we don't risk ever becoming olive oil tycoons!

2. Quality means getting a 100% natural product, like fresh olive juice with all of its flavor, nutrients and invaluable vitamins untouched and unblemished by industrial processing and chemical tampering.

3. Genuine olive oil is incredibly good for our health. Scientists maintain that it's one reason why Mediterranean people live longer and healthier lives. Tradition says you should have a

spoonful of it first thing in the morning every day, and present-day physicians rather agree ... It's recognized the world-over as heart-friendly, among the many other things, and might even ward off cancer.

4. It tastes wonderful, which makes it just about the only thing that's good for both your body and your taste buds! Since it's so flavorsome, a little bit will go much farther than seed oil, which means you can use less and should actually prefer it if you are on a diet.

5. As a 100% natural product, Pornanino olive oil matures in time. The peppery, green tang of the new oil should be enjoyed within days of pressing. In the course of a few weeks it will give way to subtler, mellow hues that will keep subtly shifting as time goes by. This is one reason for ordering now, to experience the whole gamut of flavours as they develop and change.

6. Another reason to order now is that our production is tiny and most of it gets snatched up by December, which is when we ship the new oil. If you delay your order, we might not be able to accommodate you.

7. Our Pornanino olive oil makes a perfect gift. It can only be ordered through our website, and therefore is accessible only to a selected elite of gourmet friends – people who appreciate the finer things in life, just like you. It's a unique product you won't find in any shop, either in Italy or abroad. It's guaranteed to score you a hit with your nearest and dearest, and as we ship by the beginning of December you're sure to get it in time for Christmas.

So you see, you really should consider stocking up on your favorite olive oil right now. And one more reason why is that we make it for you, for all those who compliment us and keep ordering and come to visit us in Tuscany and make us feel like what we are doing is worthwhile. Is there anything more gratifying than making people happy? Not really, so trust us: you'll get some seriously good olive oil this year. We want to make you happy.

[Please order now!](#)

Smooth as oil

As an old hand who understood the importance of looking the part, Queen Cleopatra was a great believer in the virtues of olive oil. Take her advice and give your body a treat: try our unbelievably mild olive oil based soap! Or use straight olive oil as the best all natural beauty treatment there is, as Mediterranean women have been doing for millennia.

We are always harping on about how good olive oil is for our health, and of course it's true. Mediterranean peoples knew long before science came to explain the whys and wherefores, but since they didn't have a clue regarding the inner workings of the body they probably regarded it as something that's good for you in a vague and general way.

Where they could actually measure its benefits was on the outside, where the manifold virtues of olive oil could be seen and touched just by applying it to the skin and hair.

Of course it does make sense. Olive oil is much more than a well-balanced combination of fatty acids; it is also rich in antioxidant compounds that promote cellular regeneration and combat free radicals, plus a host of other goodies that have been keeping researchers busy for decades. It stands to reason that it would work both inside and out.

According to an ancient Egyptian medical text dating back 3,500 years, you can make the ultimate anti-wrinkle cream by pounding and mixing olive oil, milk, wax, incense and a few cypress berries (apply for 6 consecutive days). The Greek athletes always massaged their tired and aching muscles with warm olive oil, and the Romans rubbed it on after each session at the baths to keep their skin supple.

The reasons why olive oil is so skin friendly are several. Basically olive oil has the very same acidity as the acid mantle that protects our skin, which means that it actually can restore what is taken away through washing, exposure and pollutants. Its composition is so similar to the natural lipids of the skin that it is easily and fully assimilated, which means that it nourishes. Since water is naturally stored in the lipids, and that's what makes our skin firm and elastic, olive oil also acts as a moisturizer. But that's not all. In addition to nourishing, moisturizing and rebuilding the acid

mantle, it also contains soothing elements that ease irritations. And last but definitely not least, it is particularly rich in vitamins and other compounds that counteract oxidation, a natural process in which free radicals are released that may lead to premature aging. That's quite a lot, you will agree!

The same of course goes for the hair, which share many characteristics of the skin.

Since the inherent qualities of olive oil are well known since antiquity, you'll find many beauty products on the market that include it in their ingredients list. One word of caution, though: many of the precious vitamins and compounds it contains are destroyed by heat and industrial processing, and it's most unlikely that commercial brand names would use first-cold pressed extra virgin olive oil!

You had much better do as the ancients did, and rub some of our PORNANINO olive oil all over your body – it really works. And to give a new lease on life to tired hair mix some olive oil with one egg yolk and the juice of half a lemon, let stand for half an hour and rinse with a mild shampoo. Olive oil and lemon juice, warmed up, will cure brittle nails (for more beauty tips refer to our Newsletter no. 3; access the archives from our website).

Since Christmas is approaching why don't you give yourself a present your body will love? Get yourself a good supply of **our extra mild olive oil based soap**. It's made by hand the traditional way, with no heat involved and the very same cold pressed extra virgin olive oil we bottle for food consumption. It's truly great.

Oh, and don't forget to order some for cranky Aunt Kate. It's guaranteed to soften the toughest old hide!

[Order our extra mild olive oil soap here](#)



Looking ahead

Reaching issue number 10 feels a bit like coming of age. Gosh, we've gone a long way over the past two years! So thank you for bearing with us all along, and rest assured that we won't be resting on our laurels. Want to know what we're cooking up for 2009?

When you're dealing with tradition, as we do, looking ahead shouldn't really be an issue. Our friends and customers would probably prefer us to look behind, and keep sticking with the age-old customs and time-honored practices of olive oil making. Surely there should be no room to innovate.

We wholeheartedly agree with that. And therefore Franco's number one priority is to prepare the next generation, so that his passion can be passed on and kept alive for our olive oil loving friends' children and grandchildren and those that will come. This is the Italian spirit – family and tradition go hand in hand over here!

Franco's son-in-law Matteo has been working full-time on the estate for a few years now, having left an IT job in Milan for the pleasures of country living. And he seems to be doing fine, although working along with Franco can feel like army-training from time to time! Franco makes no compromises, not even for family members.

The love for olive oil is percolating even further down the line, to Franco's delight, and it seems to have caught granddaughter Beatrice as well. Although just 12, she is already practicing her English with the foreign visitors who come to the Pornanino estate from all over the world to listen to Franco and Matteo talking about olive oil. She has been playing assistant to both her grandfather and father all summer long, and meanwhile picking up information and olive oil lore.

This is why we can confidently look ahead to the future, and even think of building up a little from the sturdy foundations of Franco's enthusiasm, knowledge and dedication; because you need to keep moving on, even if you're dealing with tradition. So on we go! And since there's not

much room left to improve on quality (Franco has been spending the past dozen years working on that), we're going in for creativity.

The novelty for 2009 is that we will be focusing on cooking!

It's your interest that pointed us in that direction, and the appreciation many of you have shown in Grandma Lia's recipes which are a regular (and quite popular) column of our Newsletter.

So along with the regular olive oil seminars we take on tour in the US to talk about our favorite subject, from 2009 on **we will be offering mini cooking classes** centred on olive oil as a fun and pleasurable way to get to know olive oil in practice, as well as in theory. If you think your community center, club, school or other association would enjoy to hear plenty of interesting, thought-provoking information about olive oil PLUS a few quick and easy recipes for some seriously tasty and healthy olive oil based Italian food (hands on if at all possible), do let us know! We'd love to share what we know and love with your friends and community.

Of course olive oil seminars and olive oil cooking classes can be arranged over here on the Pornanino estate as well, should you happen to visit our part of the world! Just send us a mail and we'll be glad to work it out for you.

Another pet project we'd really love to launch next year is our very own olive oil recipe book, provided we figure out a way of overcoming a series of practical problems (not the least of which a very tight budget). We'll keep working on it and keep you posted – should any of you out there have a bright idea would you PLEASE share it with us? Thank you very much.

Grandma Lia's olive oil recipes

Prompted by our friend Gena's request, here are some yummy recipes that might come in handy to celebrate in style. Not all that healthy, granted, but then when the holiday season strikes, indulgence is the name of the game! And what could be better than outsized ravioli for that?



Making fresh pasta (serves 4)

1 ½ cups all purpose flour
2 eggs
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
salt

Combine the flour, eggs, tablespoon of olive oil and a pinch of salt in the mixer and work for a few minutes, or until the dough turns shiny and silky-soft to the touch. If it's too dry add a little cold water, but mind it shouldn't be sticky – in case add a little flour. Let rest for half an hour, covered. Roll out very thin on a floured surface just before using.

Ravioloni in brodo (serves 4)

14 oz meat (chicken and beef)
carrot, celery, onion, bay leaf and juniper berries
for the stock
3 slices white bread, soaked in water

grated Parmesan cheese
nutmeg
salt and freshly ground pepper

Cover the meat with cold water and put to the boil, together with a bit each of carrot, celery and onion, coarsely diced. Add one bay leaf, a few juniper berries, a couple of peppercorns and a little salt and simmer with a lid on until the meat is cooked through. Strain and reserve the stock. Process the meat together with the bread slices, squeezed of excess liquid, the Parmesan cheese, some grated nutmeg and freshly ground pepper. Taste and add salt if necessary. Cut out 8 large squares from your pasta dough sheet. Arrange a generous spoonful of the meat filling in the centre of 4 squares, wet the edges with a little water and cover with the remaining 4 squares, pressing firmly to seal. Cook the ravioloni in the boiling stock for about 5 minutes (cooking time will vary depending on pasta thickness). Arrange the ravioloni in individual soup dishes, with a little of the stock and a dusting of grated Parmesan cheese.

Ravioloni alla robiola (serves 4)

6 oz Robiola cheese (or cottage and cream cheese)
1 egg yolk
grated Parmesan cheese
2 artichokes
12 asparagus

1 shallot
dry white wine
¼ stock cube
extra virgin olive oil
salt and freshly ground pepper

Thinly slice the shallot, asparagus and artichokes and sauté in two tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil. Add a little dry white wine, let evaporate and poach with a little stock for about 15 minutes. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper. Cut out 8 large squares from your pasta dough sheet. Work together the Robiola (or half cottage cheese and half cream cheese) with one egg yolk, one tablespoon of grated Parmesan cheese, a little grated nutmeg, salt and pepper. Arrange a generous spoonful of the cheese filling in the center of 4 squares, wet the edges with a little water and cover with the remaining 4 squares, pressing firmly to seal. Cook the ravioloni in plenty of boiling, salted water for about 5 minutes (cooking time will vary depending on pasta thickness). Arrange the ravioloni in individual soup dishes, covering with the asparagus and artichoke sauce.

Ravioloni al tartufo (serves 4)

6 oz Robiola cheese (or cottage and cream cheese)
4 small egg yolks
extra virgin olive oil

grated Parmesan cheese
truffle-flavored butter
salt and freshly ground pepper

Cut out 8 large squares from your pasta dough sheet. Work together the Robiola (or half cottage cheese and half cream cheese) with one tablespoon of grated Parmesan cheese, a little grated nutmeg, salt and pepper. Arrange a generous spoonful of Robiola filling in the center of 4 squares, forming a hollow in the cheese where you'll drop one egg yolk each; season with a pinch of salt. Wet the edges of the pasta with a little water and cover with the remaining 4 squares, pressing firmly to seal. Cook the ravioloni in plenty of boiling, salted water for about 3 minutes (the yolks inside should remain runny). Drain the ravioloni carefully, arrange in individual dishes and season with melted truffle-flavored butter and a dusting of grated Parmesan cheese. Should you have it, finish off with paper-thin slivers of truffle.

Tell us if you like our recipes! Is there a recipe you'd like Grandma Lia to work out for you? [Let us know](#)