



This month's theme is Antipasti which I have selfishly decided to use as an opportunity to reminisce about my time spent in Italy and Sicily. While working and traveling there I existed on a steady diet of seasonal ingredients, fresh from the market, prepared simply but incredibly deliciously. Antipasti, which means "before the meal" is traditionally served as the first course to an Italian meal. Bite sized morsels with such wonderful flavour that the starter becomes a feast in itself, challenging and delighting your taste buds with an exciting and layered entrée and then relaxing into a not too rich or complicated main course. On a hot Summer's day you can serve it as a meal on its own with beautiful cured Italian meats, olives and cheeses. Aside from that, Antipasti is also practical, usually quite quick to prepare, perfect for an impromptu cocktail party or even when the sudden urge for a yummy snack takes you!

Buon Appetito!

Tracy

eat. drink. live.

flavour files



capers & caper berries

A caper is the pickled or salted bud of the perennial caper shrub native to the Mediterranean region. Capers have been a part of Mediterranean cuisine for thousands of years. In fact, they were even used as informal currency among merchants travelling the ancient trade routes.

Processing capers can be a labour-intensive process, since harvesters must pick the immature blossoms at a specific point in their growth cycle. If the immature blossoms are not selected to become pickled capers, they can be left to flower and bear fruit, which can once again be harvested and pickled. The fruit is known as a caper berry. They resemble a small green olive and can be eaten as a snack or added to savoury salads or dressings.

Capers ready for the marketplace are usually packed into distinctive glass jars filled with coarse salt or vinegar brine. Capers are categorized and sold by their size, with the smallest sizes (less than 7mm) being the most desirable. Salted capers straight out of the jar should first be rinsed to remove excess salt. Capers are a distinctive ingredient in Sicilian and southern Italian cooking and are delicious in salads, sauces, fish dishes and pasta sauces such as Puttanesca. An old favourite is also smoked salmon with cream cheese and capers.

crumbed artichokes

- 2 cups quality marinated artichoke hearts
- 1 egg
- pinch **NoMU Just Salt**
- 1 cup dry breadcrumbs
- 1 tbsp **NoMU Italian Rub**
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- olive oil for frying

Drain the artichokes and dry them on kitchen towel. Lightly beat the egg in a bowl with a little salt. Season the breadcrumbs with NoMU just salt, NoMU just pepper and NoMU Italian rub and pour onto a tray. Dip the artichoke hearts in the egg and then into the breadcrumbs to coat. Heat the oil in a heavy-based pan.

Once heated, test the oil by dropping a cube of bread into the oil – if it bubbles and turns golden brown it is hot enough.

Fry the crumbed artichokes in batches for 2-3 minutes or until golden and crisp. Drain on kitchen towel. Serve warm with aioli (Recipe Mailer # 13).



stuffed zucchini flowers

- 18 medium zucchini flowers
- olive oil, for frying

Stuffing

- 180g ricotta, crumbled
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- zest of ½ lemon
- 50g pine nuts, lightly toasted
- 2 tbsp Italian parsley, finely chopped
- 80ml dried breadcrumbs
- 1 egg yolk
- 2.5ml NoMU One for All**

Batter

- 250g plain flour
- 1 tsp NoMU salt**
- ½ cup olive oil
- 1½ cups warm water
- 2 egg whites

To make the stuffing place all of the ingredients into a bowl and mix together well. Set aside. To make the batter, put the flour and salt into a bowl and make a well in the centre. Mix the olive oil with the warm water and pour into the well. Work the batter until smooth, then leave to rest for an hour.

Beat the egg whites to the soft peak stage and fold into the batter. Pour 3cm of olive oil into a deep saucepan and heat. To test the heat, drop a cube of bread into the oil: when it bubbles and turns golden brown, the oil is ready. Place a spoon of the stuffing into the flower and fold the petals closed. Dip the flower into the batter and then fry until golden.

Drain on paper towel and serve immediately sprinkled with sea salt.

WINE TIP #1: Not everyone has a temperature controlled wine cellar so its best to avoid big temp. fluctuations, try to keep things moderate and constant. One must also avoid storing wines too long if the conditions are not ideal, don't be scared to contact the winery and ask advice regarding a particular wine.





stuffed sardines

- 12 filleted, butterflied fresh sardines
- 60ml olive oil
- 50g fresh breadcrumbs
- 100g sultanas
- 100g pine nuts, toasted
- 4 tbsp Italian parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp capers, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 2.5ml **NoMU Hooked**

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Flatten each sardine and place, skin side down on a chopping board. Heat half the oil in a frying pan and add the breadcrumbs, cooking until lightly golden. Drain on paper towel. Place the breadcrumbs into a bowl and add the sultanas, pine nuts, parsley and capers. Mix through thoroughly and season to taste.

Spoon two thirds of the bread mixture into the sardines and fold up to prevent the stuffing from spilling out. Place the prepared sardines side by side on a baking tray. Drizzle with the other half of the olive oil and bake for 15-20 minutes until cooked and golden brown. Place on a warmed platter, sprinkle with the remaining bread crumb mixture and serve with fresh lemons to squeeze as desired.

WINE PAIRING: Something green/fresh will match the richness of the sardines. I would recommend the Diemersdal 8 rows Sauvignon Blanc, a fantastic example of SA Sauvignon that shows a wonderful interplay between the tropical and green elements with fresh acidity and a dry finish.

marinated aubergines

2 slender aubergines

Dressing

NoMU Just Salt

- 60ml olive oil
- 1 tbsp white balsamic vinegar
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 anchovy fillet, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp Italian parsley, finely chopped
- juice and zest of ½ lemon
- 5ml **NoMU Italian Rub**
- 1 anchovy fillet finely chopped (optional)

Cut the aubergines into thick rounds. Place the slices in a colander and sprinkle with salt leave to stand in the sink for half an hour.

Rinse under cold water and pat dry with a dish towel or paper towel.

Grill the aubergine slices until charred on either side and then place in a hot oven for 10 minutes until soft. Mix all the dressing ingredients together in a bowl and set aside.

Place the hot aubergines into a sterilized jar and pour the dressing over.

Allow to marinate for 4 -6 hours or over night before serving.



bruschetta

- 1 baguette, cut into 1½cm slices
- 1 whole garlic clove, peeled
- 60ml prepared **NoMU Stir Tomato & Herb** or **Tomato & Chilli**
- 1 handful of basil leaves, torn
- 6 slices coppa, torn in half
- 4 slices mozzarella cheese, torn into 3 smaller pieces
- NoMU Just Salt**
- and **NoMU Just Pepper**

Bake the bruschetta on a baking tray for 2-3 minutes on one side until golden. While still hot, rub the un-toasted side of each piece with the garlic.

Spread half a teaspoon of the NoMU Stir onto each slice and place a piece of basil on top. Fold the torn coppa on top of the basil and top with the mozzarella.

Place under a hot grill for a few minutes until the cheese has melted. Finally add a sprinkling of salt and pepper and a drizzle of olive oil. Serve while warm.

WINE PAIRING: Definitely a bubbly. This is quite a light lunch dish. The biscuit in the bubbly would be lovely with the basil and mozzarella! I would recommend the Villiera Monro Brut 2001, I had it in a tasting the other night and it was fantastic, complex, clean and perfectly balanced.

chicken liver pâté

- 125g butter
- 450g chicken livers, trimmed
- 4 sage leaves, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 pinch **NoMU Poultry Rub** or a grinding of **NoMU Plucked**
- NoMU Just Salt**
- NoMU Just Pepper**
- ¼ cup dry sherry or brandy
- To seal**
- 60g butter
- 1 large or 8 small fresh bay leaves (optional)

Melt the butter in a large nonstick pan and sauté the onion and garlic, stirring, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the sage, NoMU seasoning, salt and pepper, followed by the livers. Fry gently until the livers are lightly browned on the outside but still pink when cut open, about 8 minutes.

Add the sherry or brandy and simmer for another minute. Remove from the heat and purée in a food processor until smooth. Pour into an attractive serving bowl or terrine or into individual ramekins and smooth the top.

If using a herb garnish, place on top of the pâté. Melt the remaining butter in a small saucepan over low heat, then remove pan from heat and let butter stand 3 minutes.

Skim the froth from the top of the butter, then avoiding the milky solids in bottom of pan, spoon enough clarified butter over the pâté to cover its surface. Chill the pâté until the butter is firm, about 30 minutes, then cover with plastic wrap and chill for another hour or 2 before serving.

WINE TIP #2: I'm a big fan of the Spigelau range of wine glasses, expensive but well worth it! The old fashioned balloon glass will not do justice to your carefully stored prized wines.





suppli

3 tbsp butter
 1 small onion, finely chopped
 1.5 litres chicken stock
 440g Arborio rice
 75g parmesan cheese, finely grated
 1 egg, beaten
NoMU Just Salt
NoMU Just Pepper
 a handful of basil leaves, torn in half
 150g mozzarella cheese,
 cut into 1cm blocks
 150g dried breadcrumbs
 seasoned with **NoMU One for All**
 oil for deep-frying
 serve with **NoMU Stir Tomato & Herb**
 Makes 24-30

Melt the butter in a saucepan and add onion. Sauté until onion is soft. Add the rice and stir to coat thoroughly. Heat the stock and add to the rice, one ladle at a time, allowing the liquid to be absorbed each time before adding more. Stir continuously while doing so. Do this until the rice is creamy, but still al dente.

This should take about 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the eggs and parmesan and stir through. Season with NoMU Just Salt and NoMU Just Pepper. Set the rice aside to cool completely. Once cooled, divide the rice into 24 portions. To make the croquettes take a portion into your hand and push a cube of mozzarella and a piece of basil into its centre. Fold the rice around the filling carefully and using your fingers, mould it into a neat ball shape. Once done, roll the croquettes into the seasoned breadcrumbs and place on a tray.

Heat the oil in a deep pan or pot until a piece of bread turns brown within 15 seconds when dropped into the pot. Once hot enough drop the suppli into the oil (the croquettes must be covered by the oil) in batches to prevent over-crowding. Fry them for about 4 minutes, until they turn golden brown. Drain on paper towel and serve hot with a prepared NoMU Stir.

semi-dried tomatoes

16 large roma tomatoes
NoMU Just Salt
NoMU Just Pepper
 3 tbsp chopped thyme
 2 tsp **NoMU One for all Grinder**
 olive oil for preserving

Preheat the oven to 140°C.
 Quarter the tomatoes lengthways and lay skin side down on a baking tray. Sprinkle each tomato individually with the salt, pepper, thyme and NoMU One for All and then place in the oven and roast for 3 - 3½ hours, checking occasionally that the tomatoes are not burning around the edges.

Remove the tomatoes from the oven, place onto a cooling rack and allow to cool completely. Place them in an airtight sterilized glass jar covered with olive oil. Allow to marinate for 24 hours before you use them.



carpaccio

400g beef fillet
 ¼ cup **NoMU Beef Rub**
 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 Rocket leaves, to serve
 100g parmesan cheese,
 shaved, to serve
 caper berries, to serve
 olive oil for drizzling
NoMU Salt
and Pepper, to season

Remove any visible sinew or fat from the fillet and rub generously with NoMU Beef Rub. Heat the olive oil in a pan until hot and sear the fillet on the outside to seal.

Cool the fillet and wrap tightly in plastic wrap so the fillet keeps its shape. Place the fillet in the freezer for 1-2 hours, this makes the meat more firm and easier to slice.

Using a sharp knife cut paper-thin slices of fillet and arrange immediately on a serving plate in a circular pattern. Garnish with rocket, parmesan, caper berries and a generous drizzle of olive oil. Season with NoMU salt and pepper and serve with crusty bread.

WINE PAIRING: When serving a red wine with Carpaccio it is best to find one that will compliment and not overpower. My choice would be the Oak Valley Pinot Noir served at 16 to 18 degrees Celsius. The wine shows soft red fruit, well judged oak and good freshness.

grissini sticks

olive oil
NoMU Italian Rub, for sprinkling
NoMU Just Salt, for seasoning
Dough
 250g flour
 1 tsp salt
 2 tsp instant dried yeast
 1 tsp honey
 1 tbsp olive oil
 ½ cup water

Preheat the oven to 180°C.
 Combine all of the dough ingredients and knead well. Put the dough into a lightly greased bowl, cover with a damp tea towel and allow the dough to prove until it has doubled in size, which will take about an hour.

Knock the dough back and then allow to double in size again. Break off small, walnut-sized pieces of dough and roll them into thin sausages, roughly 25cm long.

Brush with the olive oil, sprinkle generously with NoMU Italian rub and season with NoMU Salt and place on a floured baking tray allowing enough space for the grissini to spread. Bake immediately for 15 minutes until golden brown. Cool on a rack before serving.

WINE TIP #3: A Riesling, Chenin or Semillon goes well with spicy food. People are often unsure of Semillon but don't be scared to try it with spicy food, with a bit of bottle age it can be fantastic!



rosemary and lemon potato wedges

12 large waxy organic potatoes, quartered lengthways
2 heads of garlic, sliced in half horizontally
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
juice of 1 lemon
1 tbsp **NoMU Lamb Rub**
1 tsp **NoMU Just salt**
½ tsp **NoMU Just pepper**

Preheat oven to 200°C, ideally on the thermo fan setting. Place potatoes and garlic onto a baking tray, potatoes skin-side down and drizzle with the olive oil.

Sprinkle and rub generously with NoMU Lamb Rub, salt & pepper. Squeeze over the lemon juice and toss well. Place into the oven and bake for ± 1 hour until golden and crispy. Remove and place on a warmed platter. Serve with NoMU Tomato & Chilli Stir.



figs in parma ham

4 figs, quartered
16 sage leaves
8 slices of Parma ham, cut in half

Pre-heat the oven to 220°C.
Place a sage leaf onto each fig quarter and wrap with a slice of Parma ham.
Bake for 10 – 12 minutes or until the figs have softened and the parma ham has crisped. Remove from the oven and serve immediately.

NOTE: These can also be served uncooked.

gnocchi with burnt sage butter

1 kg waxy potatoes
2 egg yolks
1½ cups flour
2 tbsp parmesan cheese, finely grated

Boil the potatoes until soft. Peel and pass through a potato ricer into a bowl. Add the parmesan and egg yolks and mix through. Add the flour slowly, using your hands to form a dough with the mixture. Transfer to a floured surface and knead gently. Divide dough into 6 portions.

Working with one portion at a time, roll out onto a floured surface to make a rope about 1.5cm thick. Then cut into 1.5cm pieces. To form the gnocchi, press down gently with your thumb to form a hollow in the middle. Then roll the outside surface of the piece along the tines of a fork. Fold the two sides together to form a hollow in the middle. Continue until all the dough is finished. Alternatively simply use a fork to lightly press the tines into each piece of dough.

Bring a large pot of water to the boil. Cook the gnocchi in batches, about 20 pieces at a time. Cook for 1-2 minutes after they have risen to the surface. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain.



WINE PAIRING: : I think an un-oaked or lightly oaked Chenin would probably be best. Gnocchi with burnt sage butter is such a classic dish with such simple flavours you don't want to overpower it. I would recommend the Raats Original Chenin, a clean fresh style from a top producer.



burnt sage butter

125g butter
50ml olive oil
handful of sage leaves
NoMU Salt and Pepper
Parmesan shavings, to garnish

Heat the butter and oil over a moderate heat until the butter has melted.
Add the sage leaves and continue to heat until the butter has changed to a lovely golden nut-brown colour and the sage leaves are crispy and fragrant.
Season with NoMU Salt and Pepper and immediately pour over the gnocchi.
Serve with shavings of parmesan.



CONTRIBUTOR OF THE MONTH

Although Duncan Savage is also just an incredibly nice and obliging sort of guy, we noted (with appropriate horror) that in his contributions for this month's wine pairing, he has also very modestly chosen not to include Cape Point Vineyard's Sauvignon Blanc. This wine is widely considered one of South Africa's best and has only one real drawback in that it is not always easily available – it's become so popular, it sells out too quickly! Duncan's wines have won multiple awards both locally and internationally and more can be read about this on our website. Although we can't fault his generous selection and pairing suggestions (as they are wonderful), we would encourage any fan of white wine to absolutely make a must of trying the Sauvignon if you ever have the opportunity. Contact details for the vineyard are also available on

www.nomu.co.za