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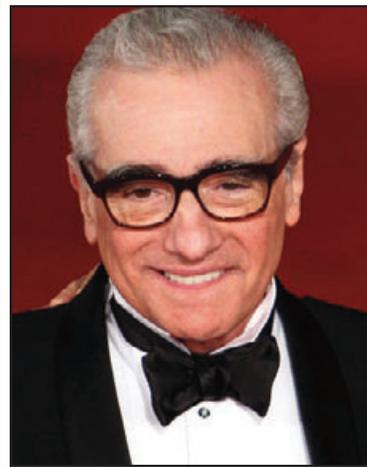
# FRANNOI®

DECEMBER 2010 • VOLUME 50 • ISSUE 12 • \$3.00



**Gifts galore!**

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**MAKE PASTA,  
NOT WAR**

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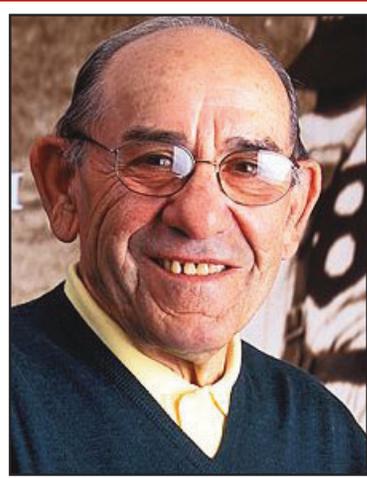


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# CHEF'S CHOICE

by Charles P. Pecoraro

## The Montillos share their recipe for Cheesecake Bars

There's an old proverb among pork producers that everything is used in a pig except the squeal. That same logic can be applied to the grape harvest, where everything is used except the wind whistling through the vineyard.

Wine is the principal product of grapes, of course, but nothing is wasted, including a juice byproduct called vino cotto that infuses recipes with a naturally sweet element without the fermented essence of wine.

Vino cotto (cooked wine) has a smooth, rich flavor similar to that of plums, figs or raisins. It contains no alcohol or vinegar, and isn't as thick as honey or maple syrup. Its versatility is evident with uses in meat, seafood, poultry, vegetables, desserts, sauces and salad dressings.

One of the more prominent makers and distributors of vino cotto is Montillo Italian Foods, founded by Greg and Deena Montillo and based in Framingham, Mass. The two-year-old venture actually is the U.S. extension of a company established by the Montillo family 100 years ago in Montepaone, Calabria.

The Montillos buy freshly pressed grape juice from a California source, cook it in a commercial kitchen, bottle and distribute it to retail and wholesale outlets plus direct via the internet. The shelf-stable product has earned U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval.

From a health perspective, vino cotto contains no salt, fat or cholesterol, no artificial flavoring or coloring, is low in calories and rich with antioxidants.

The business has become a family affair for the Montillos. Son Joseph designed [www.montilloitalianfoods.com](http://www.montilloitalianfoods.com), while daughter Christine helped design the packaging.

Here, in time for making holiday season desserts, is the Montillo family recipe for Vino Cotto Cheesecake Bars:

### Vino Cotto Cheesecake Bars

#### **Crust:**

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour  
1/4 cup almond flour  
3/4 cup pecans, finely chopped  
1 stick margarine, melted  
1/4 cup vino cotto  
1/4 cup sugar

#### **Filling:**

8 ounces cream cheese  
1 cup granulated sugar  
3 eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

**Crust:** Using fork, mix all dry ingredients into a bowl. Add margarine and vino cotto, thoroughly combine all ingredients. Hand press dough evenly into ungreased 13x9x2-inch pan. Bake for 20-30 minutes, until lightly brown and firm.

**Filling:** In separate bowl, add all filling ingredients and mix until batter is smooth. Pour filling over crust. Bake 20-30 minutes or until surface is golden brown and springy. To determine doneness, insert toothpick then remove immediately. Toothpick should emerge clean when cake is done. Allow to cool before cutting into squares. Yields 35 bars.

# IN VINO VERITAS

## Making Christmas merrier

by Dick Rosano

*During holiday season, we should try hard to remember that we're supposed to be buying for our loved ones. But in moments of weakness, when the draw of a tempting wine is just too much, let the following selections be your guide. You can always hide the expenditure by wrapping it and writing your name in the "to" line and your significant other's name in the "from" line. S/He will forget the purchase, but be happy to take credit for it.*

#### **WHITE WINES**

Antica 2008 Chardonnay (Napa Valley, \$35) — Deep and luscious flavors, peach and pear, followed by accents of apricot, soft spicy notes, toast and slight oak accents. Wonderfully balanced. Score: 87

Ponzi 2008 Pinot Gris (Willamette Valley, \$17) — Vibrant fruit and acidity, flavors of stonefruit and ripe white peach with a slight hint of white grapefruit. Score: 87

Sbragia Family Vineyards 2008 Chardonnay Home Ranch (Dry Creek Valley, \$26) — Rich, ripe fruit aromas, sumptuous chardonnay flavors, cinnamon and a touch of tangerine on the palate. Score: 90

Simi 2006 Chardonnay (Russian River Valley, \$26) — Crisp, full, rich aromas of bright fruit and a hint of citrus, honey, melon, vanilla accents on broad Chardonnay palate impression. Score: 88

Terlan 2006 Nova Domus Riserva (Alto Adige, \$n/a) — Bright, brisk acidity and brilliant fruit, excellent for shellfish. Score: 87

Villa Russiz 2007 Grafin de la Tour (Collio, Italy, \$60) — Peach, pear, apricot aromas, soft pleasant and forward, succulent white peach and pear flavors. Score: 87

Villa Russiz 2007 Sauvignon de la Tour (Collio, Italy, \$62) — Pineapple and tropical fruit on nose, lime, pineapple, mango, apple on palate, fresh and brilliant. Score: 92

#### **RED WINES**

Antica 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley, \$55) — Seductively aromatic, emphasis on blackberry and cherry, hints of eucalyptus and herb, touch of cedar on mid palate, soft approach, full-bodied, rich and textured. Score: 93

(See In Vino Veritas on Page 108)



## HERBAL ADVENTURE

Dr. Gilbert Fornaciari & Ann Martin-Fornaciari



### Have a very herbal Christmas!

Throughout the holiday season, we all reminisce about the past and what we are looking forward to during this season. Today, we thank all of you who have been reading our articles each month throughout 2010. Not only are we pleased that our readers have enjoyed our articles, but we are hopeful that readers have learned from us and followed our advice regarding the wonderful world of herbs. We continually grow as we learn and experience our passion for herbs.

During the winter months, it is enjoyable to grow herbs indoors in a sunny location with at least five hours of direct sun. This is sometimes known as "windowsill" gardening. Water sparingly, as your plants don't require much watering indoors. This is a perfect time to use a water meter, which can be purchased when buying your herbs.

Herbs can be purchased from a local greenhouse or nursery. Plant each herb with potting soil in a container at least 6 inches deep with good drainage. You can either use small individual pots or a 4-inch-by-12-inch container for more than one plant. We have found that basil, varieties of parsley, chives, oregano, thyme, and mint do the best in these windowsill herb gardens. Once you can see that your

(See Herbs on Page 108)

## LEGENDS

*(Continued from Page 29)*

them that while he didn't look like a ball player, he could certainly play like one. In fact, many years later, Berra would tell the story to Dave Kaplan for the book "Ten Rings: My Championship Seasons" about how he was summoned into the Yankee offices in New York near the end of his Navy service. He had played against Mel Ott in one of the barnstorming teams and Ott was impressed. So impressed that he called up Larry MacPhail, the new chief of the Yankee ball club, and offered \$50,000 for Berra. As Yogi described it to Kaplan, "MacPhail never saw me but figured if the Giants were offering that kind of money, I must've been worth keeping. He figured he better meet me, so on a weekend liberty I went into the Yankee offices on Fifth Avenue in my Navy uniform. MacPhail kind of looked me over, and I think his heart sank. As he said later, 'Here was a funny-looking guy in a sailor suit. He had a homely face, no neck, and the build of a sawed-off weight lifter. My first thought was, 'Do I turn down \$50,000 for this? Never have I seen anyone who looked less like a ballplayer.'"

When he was finally discharged, Berra was sent to play with the Newark Bears. In 77 games with the Bears, Berra hit .314 and knocked out 15 home runs. Many of the coaches in the organization agreed that Berra had the raw talent. The question was whether he could refine it enough to play in the major leagues. The one man who believed that Berra had the makings of a big-league catcher was someone who knew a little about the subject — his predecessor and future Hall of Fame catcher, Bill Dickey. It would be Dickey who would ultimately be given credit for refining Berra's skills and turning him into a first-rate backstop.

Just like his pal Garagiola, Yogi didn't have to wait long to get into a World Series. In his first full season as a Yankee, 1947, Yogi and company faced the cross town Brooklyn Dodgers in the fall classic. It was a ritual that would be performed repeatedly over the next two decades. Although he'd ultimately end up being remembered as one of the greatest postseason players in the history of the sport, his first World Series was less than auspicious. He batted only .158 despite hitting his first World Series home run. Nevertheless, the Yankees would prevail over the Dodgers and Berra enjoyed the first championship celebration of what would be many more to come. From 1947 until 1963, Berra would participate in 14 World Series with the Yankees and take home 10 World Series Championship rings.

Berra's teammate and close friend Phil Rizzuto co-wrote a book with Tom Horton called "The October Twelve." The title refers to the 12 players that formed the core of the history-making New York Yankee team that from 1949 through 1953 won five World Series in a row — a feat never accomplished before nor equaled since. The "October Twelve," as Rizzuto dubbed them, were Charley Silvera, Bobby Brown, Jerry Coleman, Johnny Mize, Joe Collins, Vic Raschi, Allie Reynolds, Eddie Lopat, Gene Woodling, Hank Bauer, Yogi Berra and Phil Rizzuto.

Rizzuto, who had played three seasons with the Yanks before Berra came on board full-time in 1947, became one of Berra's closest friends on the team. In fact, the two of them eventually went into business together as owners of a bowling alley in New Jersey. In his book, Rizzuto describes Berra as one of the most secure men he ever knew. "Yogi could be in a room with you for an hour and feel no need to say anything," said Rizzuto. "He is happy with himself. He is sure you are happy with him, and if you are not, it is your problem."

The one place where Berra did a lot of talking was behind the plate. "As our catcher," said Rizzuto, "he was great at talking. I somehow think he thought it was part of his job, like putting on the shin guards. [Ted] Williams hated a blabbermouth catcher,

which Yogi was, but he could not hate Yogi. 'Have a good dinner last night?' Yogi would ask. 'The food is all bad here in New York' [Williams responded]. 'If you leave a tip, the food gets better,' Yogi would say and even [Allie] Reynolds might wish the two guys at home plate would shut up and the little one would give him the sign."

While everyone likes to make jokes about Berra, everyone agrees that Berra was no joke between the foul lines. Not only was Berra an integral part of the great Yankee dynasty of the 1940s and 1950s but he was one of the greatest all-around players of his era. When he retired as a player after the 1963 season, Berra finished with 358 home runs, the most by a catcher in the history of the game up to that time. (Mike Piazza now holds the record with 427.) He also won three MVP awards — in 1951, 1954 and 1955. He still holds, or is tied, for at least a half-dozen different World Series records, including those for at bats and hits. He was elected to Baseball's Hall of Fame in 1972.

He is remembered as both a fierce competitor and someone who had a great time playing the game. His baseball acumen was so well developed that Casey Stengel, Yankee manager from 1949 through 1960, used to identify him as "Mr. Berra, my assistant manager." Following his playing career, he did become a manager and led the Yankees to the World Series in his first year at the helm, 1964. Berra would become one of only three managers in baseball history to lead teams from both leagues to a pennant when he managed the Mets to the World Series in 1973.

Volumes could be written about Lawrence Peter "Yogi" Berra. In fact, volumes HAVE been written about this colorful baseball legend. Ironically, as great a baseball player that Yogi Berra was, he's become most famous for his verbal malapropisms over the last 60-plus years. He's been called the most quoted man in sports history. While Yogi himself will tell you that "he didn't say everything he said" there are pearls of wisdom that even he won't deny. For example, he once said, "Nobody goes there any more, it's too crowded." In his 1998 book, "I Didn't Really Say Everything I Said," Yogi explained, "I was talking to Stan Musial and Joe Garagiola in 1959 about Ruggeri's Restaurant in my old neighborhood in St. Louis. It was true!"

Most famous is his oft-quoted philosophical insight first uttered by Yogi during the 1973 pennant race when it seemed the Mets were all but out of the race. Yogi just smiled and told reporters, "It ain't over 'til it's over." It may seem funny or silly but in the unpredictable world of sports, no truer words have ever been spoken.

The name "Yogi" was apparently given to him by an old friend from the neighborhood who said that when Berra sat with his legs crossed he reminded him of a yogi from India that he'd seen in a motion picture. Whatever the origins, it's become the most famous nickname in all of sports for one of the most beloved figures in the history of any game.

At 85, Yogi Berra is still active and still in love with the game of baseball. He now has a museum of his own called the Yogi Berra Museum and Learning Center on the campus of Montclair University in Little Falls, N.J. Not too bad for a guy who never finished high school.

He started off as a joke to many but ended up with the last laugh on all those who doubted him. "Yogi" Berra's life is a testament to the fact that "it ain't over 'til it's over."

## IN VINO VERITAS

*(Continued from Page 33)*

Badia a Coltibuono 2007 Chianti Classico (Tuscany, \$20) — Aromas of cherries, raspberries, with a sweet oak accent on nose, red fruit with soft tannins, nice bracing acidity for balance. Score: 87

Badia a Coltibuono 2006 Chianti Classico Riserva (Tuscany, \$35) — Soft plush red fruit aromas, soft textures, plums, cherries, soft

tannins, nicely layered, elegant. Score: 90

Barboursville Vineyards 2007 Barbera Riserva (Virginia, \$23) — Black cherry and plum flavors, clove accents, hint of chocolate on finish. Score: 87

Bianchi 2007 Quattro (Paso Robles, \$32) — Forward aromas of earth, plums, and roasted coffee, soft textures, medium body, long velvety finish. Score: 88

Bianchi 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Paso Robles, \$19) — Deep sensuous aromas of earth, toast, and black fruit; soft textures, black cherry, plum, and raspberry, touch of cassis on finish. Score: 91

Bianchi 2006 Barbera (Paso Robles, \$22) — Notes of cherry pie and cinnamon on nose, soft oak and brown spice accents, cherry, raspberry. Score: 87

Bianchi 2007 Zinfandel Zen Ranch Heritage Selection (Paso Robles, \$22) — Rich, dark fruit and earth nose, dark fruit flavors, subtle yet evident acidity, soft tannins. Score: 88

Bisceglia 2006 Guadarraga Aglianico del Vulture (Basilicata, \$25) — Scents of coffee, leather, and toast; black cherry and plums on palate, with coffee and leather accents. Score: 89

Castalvento 2005 Chianti Classico Riserva (Tuscany, \$35) — Tangy and rich, black cherry and raspberry flavors, rugged and earthy, chocolate accent on finish. Score: 87

Ferrari-Carano 2006 Prevail West Face (Alexander Valley, \$55) — Sumptuous and smooth, full bodied, jammy with black cherry and blackberry highlights, textured and layered. Score: 91

Ferrari-Carano 2006 Tresor (Sonoma County, \$58) — Rich aromas with light smoke on black fruit, black fruit flavors, earth, mushrooms. Score: 91

Feudi di San Gregorio 2007 Rubrato Aglianico (Campania, \$16) — Coffee, toast, tobacco smoke, earthy accents almost overwhelm the red fruit. Score: 89

Feudi di San Gregorio 2004 Taurasi (Campania, \$45) — Aromas of raisins and blackberries; soft and gently displayed, superb balance, plums, black cherry. Score: 90

Figli d'Italia 2006 Vino Nobile di Montepulciano (Tuscany, \$20) — Smoke and toast up front, light red fruit aromas, soft approach, Bing cherry and black cherry flavors, kiss of oak, soft tannins. Score: 88

Frei Brothers 2007 Merlot Reserve (Dry Creek Valley, \$20) — Scent and flavors of cherries and plums, medium body. Score: 87

Louis M. Martini 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon (Sonoma County, \$17) — Deep scents of dark fruit earth and oak, coffee, cocoa, and black cherries on palate, soft tannins, medium length. Score: 87

Mastroberardino 2007 Aglianico (Campania, \$22) — Coffee, tea, leather, and chocolate on nose, black cherry, plums, mixed with earth, coffee, and soft tannin. Score: 90

Mastroberardino 2005 Radici Taurasi (Campania, \$55) — Rich and aromatic, soft scents of earth, black fruit, and truffles; soft palate sensation, plum flavors, well integrated tannins for a velvety smooth finish. Score: 92

Rocca 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (Napa Valley, \$75) — Light aromas and texture, soft approach, cherry, blackberries, soft tannins, medium finish. Score: 90

Rocca 2006 Merlot (Napa Valley, \$45) — Rich and nicely textured for a Merlot, cherries and cloves on palate, soft accent of sweet tobacco. Score: 89

Rocca 2006 Syrah (Napa Valley, \$45) — Deep concentrated black fruit flavors, plums, black cherries, soft pepper accents, lush textures and long finish. Score: 91

Parducci 2006 Coro Mendocino (Mendocino County, \$n/a) — Deep rich and sensuous aromas, flavors of black cherry with spicy notes, soft tannins. Score: 88

San Patrignano 2004 Avi (Emilia-Romagna, \$58) — Amazing depth and richness of texture, black cherry flavors accented with a hint of herb, soft tannins and long finish. Score: 92

San Patrignano 2006 Noi (Emilia-Romagna, \$33) — Bright and fragrant, yet with subtle notes of spice and oak, cherry, blackberry and plums, evident tannins though not aggressive. Score: 90

San Patrignano 2004 Montepirolino (Emilia-Romagna, \$58) — Hint of licorice and cigar smoke on nose, licorice, black cherry, smoke, focused black fruit flavors. Score: 92

Sbragia Family Vineyards 2007 Merlot

Home Ranch (Dry Creek Valley, \$25) — Black fruit nose, touch of cassis on palate, plums, black cherry, soft tannins, hint of roasted coffee on back palate. Score: 90

Sbragia Family Vineyards 2007 Zinfandel Gino's Vineyard (Dry Creek Valley, \$28) — Ripe red fruit aromas and flavors, forward and impulsive, raspberry, black cherries, hint of cassis in mid-palate. Score: 89

Simi 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon, \$60) — Aromas of cassis and black cherry, full flavors, accent of sweet tobacco. Score: 89

Terra dei Re 2005 Divinus Aglianico del Vulture (Basilicata, \$37) — Coffee, black cherry, raspberry on nose, black coffee with dark fruit flavors, soft tannins, and rich textures. Score: 89

Terra dei Re 2005 Nocte Aglianico del Vulture (Basilicata, \$49) — Coffee, licorice, tar, and dark oak on nose, coffee, black cherry, raspberry, licorice. Score: 90

Terredora di Paolo 2007 Lacryma Christi Rosso (Vesuviana, \$24) — Earthy and lightly scented on nose, dry, earth tones on dark fruit, slight hint of eucalyptus. Score: 87

Terredora 2008 Greco di Tufo (Italy, \$26) — Apples and ginger on nose and palate, bright fresh fruit, terrific with pasta and cream sauce. Score: 87

Villa Matilde 2005 Falerno di Massico (Campania, \$27) — Smoke, toast, and black cherry aromas, soft tannins, black cherry, raspberry, long supple finish. Score: 89

Vinosia 2006 Marziacanal (Lugosano, Italy, \$45) — Deep, rich, and powerfully aromatic, black cherry and blackberry on nose and palate, big robust, soft textures but mountains of flavor, soft finish. Score: 90

Vitalonga 2005 Terra di Confine (Umbria, \$26) — Rich in fragrance and texture, dark red fruit, blackberry and raspberry highlights, soft gentle tannins, a full-bodied nicely balanced wine. Score: 90

## SPARKLING WINES

Bisòl (non-vintage) Prosecco di Valdobbiadene Crede Brut (Valdobbiadene, \$21) — Brilliant bead, fresh fruit but dry flavors, soft and gentle, mix of citrus and tropical on palate. Score: 89

Ca'Montini (non-vintage) Prosecco Royal Cuvee (Trentino, \$19) — Aromatic, with soft fruit and high acidity, rich textures, vivacious acidity, lemon, pink grapefruit. Score: 90

Le Colture (non-vintage) Fagher Prosecco Brut Spumante (Valdobbiadene, \$18) — Peach, pear, hint of jasmine on the nose, soft delivery, smoothly effervescent, delicious with steamed shellfish. Score: 88

Le Colture (non-vintage) Carlizze (Valdobbiadene, \$30) — Lemon and citrus up front, coupled with hint of orange peel. On the palate, soft effervescence, citrusy, and long. Score: 88

## OTHER

Badia a Coltibuono (non-vintage) Grappa di Sangiovese (\$n/a) — Aromatic, floral, essential scent of sangiovese, huge expression, grapes and floral notes mingled, terrific balance and delivery.

*Editor's Note: Dick Rosano's wine rating system is based on quality and price and breaks down as follows: 96-100 (excellent, worth any price), 91-95 (very high quality, worth a high price if you can afford it), 86-90 (high quality, worth the price if you like that type of wine), 81-85 (moderately good, should shop around for best price), 76-80 (some defects but generally acceptable), 70-75 (of doubtful value), below 70 (not worth drinking).*

## HERBS

*(Continued from Page 33)*

herbs are growing, use the herbs as needed for your favorite recipes or as a garnish, and your plants will prosper and be healthier. We have basil and parsley growing indoors presently and have enjoyed these fresh herbs as we plant other vari-

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