

# PALMINA



## Polenta Pastacciata paired with Barbera, Santa Barbara County 2006

A layered baked dish, like lasagna but made with soft polenta instead, with a slow-cooked sauce and cheeses.

10 cups of cooked polenta - see below

5 cups of ragu sauce - see below

2 tablespoons butter

2 cups Muenster cheese, shredded

1 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano, grated

serves 8 people

1. Butter a 12" cast-iron skillet (or a 3 quart baking dish).
2. Spread half of the polenta across the bottom.
3. Sprinkle one-third of both cheeses on top.
4. Ladle 2 cups of the sauce on top.
5. Spread half of the remaining polenta on top.
6. Sprinkle the second third of the cheeses on top.
7. Ladle another 2 cups of the sauce on top - reserve the remaining cup, keeping it warm.
8. Spread the remaining polenta and sprinkle with the remaining cheeses.
9. Put the skillet on to a baking tray, and then bake at 400 degrees for 45 minutes.
10. Remove from the oven and let cool for ten minutes. Run a knife around the sides to loosen the pastacciata. Invert on to a wooden cutting board and tap the bottom of the skillet until it drops out. Pour the remaining sauce on top and serve in wedges.



### *Polenta*

10 cups water  
1/4 cup olive oil  
1 tablespoon salt  
4 bay leaves  
2 cups cornmeal

1. Put everything except the cornmeal into a pot. Whisking vigorously, pour the cornmeal in a thin, steady stream. Keep whisking until the mixture is smooth.
2. Put on medium heat and slowly bring to a boil, stirring continuously. As the polenta thickens, switch to a wooden spatula.
3. When the mixture is boiling, turn the heat down so that it is just boiling, and cook for a further 25 minutes, stirring frequently. When the polenta turns glossy and starts to pull away from the sides of the pot, it's ready, although you can cook it further for more flavor and digestibility.

### *Ragu Sauce*

1/4 cup olive oil  
4 tablespoons butter  
1 cup chopped shallots  
1 cup chopped white onion  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 oz dried porcini, soaked in 1 1/2 cups warm water, then drained, but keep the mushroom water warm  
2 pounds mushrooms, sliced thinly  
1/3 cup tomato paste  
1 cup Palmina Barbera  
4 cups vegetable stock  
freshly ground black pepper

1. Put the oil and butter in a large skillet and heat over medium heat until the butter melts. Add the shallots and onions and cook until they're soft.
2. Add the mushrooms and salt and toss. Cover the pan and cook for 3 minutes to sweat the mushrooms, shaking occasionally.
3. Uncover and turn up the heat, and allow the liquid to evaporate.
4. Just when the mushrooms start to stick, clear a spot and add the tomato paste and toast it, then stir it into the mushrooms.
5. Add the wine and stir as the wine thickens and evaporates.
6. As the mixture starts to stick again, add the mushroom water and 2 cups of stock and stir to incorporate any caramelized bits.
7. Bring to a boil, then cover and turn down the heat to a simmer. Cook for 20 minutes, adding 1/2 cup of stock at a time to keep the mushrooms just covered.
8. Uncover and continue to simmer, adding stock as necessary, for another 20 minutes. Taste and adjust salt and pepper.