

Recipe of the Month

A Sicilian Secondi By Brian Cohen



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Mention “Italian food,” and chances are your immediate company will conjure images of pasta, tomatoes, garlic, bread, and—bless their hearts—Olive Garden. Perhaps some of the more worldly will think of Tuscany, Rome or Venice. Maybe Sicily.

As with most Mediterranean cuisines, Sicily’s is the result of fusion. The Greeks introduced olives, grapes, figs, walnuts, hazelnuts, wheat and pomegranates. Later, the Romans introduced hard durum wheat, leading to superior pastas. They imported cherries, plums and citrons and eventually, the Arabs brought lemons, bitter orange, bananas, date palms, pistachios, mulberries, watermelon, apricots and tangerines.

From trade with Asia, came the exotic spices. The Spanish came with tomatoes and chocolate. The English Normans merged their predominately beef diet with all the preceding influences.

We can tie all this tasty history together in one simple dish, Costolette di Maiale all’Arancia (Pork Chops with Orange). The pork is fried in olive oil and simmered briefly in a reduced sauce of orange juice, orange zest and dry Marsala and served with a garnish of orange zest strips.

Such a fruitful *secondi* deserves an equally fruit-filled wine built with a medium body to suit the pork and the slight viscosity of the sauce which is just a tad off-dry, so a sweet vino would be overkill. I turned to one of my favorites, a Veritas Viognier 2013. The nose and palate are twins, boasting a garden of peaches and apricots with honey and flowers just along the border, due to winemaker Emily Hodson’s obsession to keep everything bright and crisp with high acidity. The medium body and finish perfectly complement the feel of the dish and the duration of the flavors.

So don’t delay. Cook, serve and *mangiare* (eat)!

*Brian Cohen publishes a wine and food pairing blog at CrozetVirginia.com.
He caters on occasion and pours and tours at Veritas Vineyard and Winery in Afton.*