



Wild Mushroom and Bacon Ragù

Serve with Poplar Grove Pinot Noir or Omnia Chardonnay

Developed by **Executive Chef, Stacy Johnston**

The Restaurant at Poplar Grove Winery

We like to define our style of food as ‘thoughtful food.’ Our creative process begins primarily by looking at our farmers. Thinking about what is in season, what is at its peak and what will work harmoniously together on the plate. To complement our farmers, we like to add touches of what we can forage with our own hands. Our belief of ‘what grows together, goes together’ pushes us to work within the seasons of the Okanagan. Inspired by these ingredients we consider how best to prepare them to keep true to the flavor and place. Being respectful of the work that brought the ingredients to our kitchen, we strive to use every piece and look at our food holistically.

Who doesn't love pasta that's a little over the top? When the weather is cold and the ingredients are limited, I find myself making an indulgent pasta sauce and curling up on the couch. This ragù is cooked using different types of mushrooms, bacon, and onions, leaving you blissfully full at the end of your meal, until you add a glass of wine. The earthy mushrooms, salty bacon, and cream need a bit of tannin or acidity to cut the fat and make this dish a true gem. I highly recommend trying it with the Poplar Grove 2023 Pinot Noir, or even the Omnia Chardonnay, to see which pairing you like better.

Method

Serve with Poplar Grove Pinot Noir or Omnia Chardonnay

Serves 4

Wild Mushroom and Bacon Ragù

1 lb	Smoked bacon or pancetta, chopped thickly
1 cup	Dried Porcini mushrooms, or dried morels/chanterelles
1.5 cups	Hot water
2 tbsp	Unsalted butter
1 each	White onion, large, sliced thinly
1 lb	Mixed fresh mushrooms (look for cremini or oyster mushrooms), sliced
4 each	Garlic cloves, chopped
½ cup	White wine
2 cups	Heavy whipping cream
2 sprigs	Fresh thyme
1 tsp	Cracked black pepper
¼ tsp	Nutmeg, ground
1 cup	Parmigiano Reggiano (or Grana Padano)
1 tsp	Truffle oil (optional)
¼ cup	Fresh parsley, chopped
1 lb	Strozzapretti noodles

Procedure

In a 4-cup measuring cup, place the dried porcini mushrooms and add hot water to the 2-cup line. Cover with plastic wrap and let the mushrooms rehydrate for 15 minutes.

In a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan, add the bacon. Turn the stove to medium-low and let the bacon slowly render out its fat. This takes anywhere from 10–15 minutes. If the heat is too high, you'll sear the meat and the fat won't release, so take your time!

Once the bacon has released its fat, turn the heat up to medium and add the butter, stirring until melted.

Add the onions and cook slowly, stirring every few minutes, until they turn translucent. Continue cooking until they begin to caramelize.

Add the garlic and cook for about 2 minutes, until fragrant.

Turn the heat up to medium-high and add the fresh, chopped mushrooms. Cook them down in the bacon-butter fat until soft.

Strain the porcini mushrooms from their soaking liquid (be sure to reserve this porcini “stock”) and add them to the pan. Cook until completely soft. Depending on the mushrooms, you may need to add a few more knobs of butter so they cook evenly and don't burn.

Once everything is soft, add the wine. This will deglaze the pan, lifting up all those delicious caramelized onion and bacon bits from the bottom. When the wine has mostly absorbed, add 1 cup of the reserved porcini stock.

Add the heavy cream, thyme, black pepper, and nutmeg. Heat until the cream begins to simmer, then cook uncovered until the mixture has reduced to about half its original volume.

Add the Parmigiano and cook until the sauce is smooth and creamy. Season with salt to taste. It's best to salt after adding the cheese, as it already contributes saltiness.

Finish the sauce with the chopped parsley and truffle oil.

To serve: Add the freshly cooked strozzapretti noodles and stir to combine. **Tip:** If the sauce is a little too thick, add the pasta cooking water 1 tablespoon at a time until you reach your desired consistency.

Enjoy!