

where

MAGAZINE

FLOUR + EGGS + LOVE

Two ingredients, give or take. Some mix flour with water, others prefer flour with egg. But everyone's end goal is the magic that is fresh pasta.

By MINERVA THAI



Tagliatelle al pomodoro at Old Vine Café. Opposite: Making ravioli at Il Garage, top, and gnocchi at Antonello.

Old Vine Café owner/chef Mark McDonald, who studied and trained in Italy, has been making fresh pasta daily since the restaurant opened, far preferring the sleek texture of fresh pasta to the al dente consistency of dried pasta. Classics such as pappardelle, tagliatelle, gnocchi, orecchiette and cavatelli offer a range of shapes and surfaces that affect his choice of sauce and ingredients.

Old Vine Café makes its pasta with egg yolks rather than with water, producing richer and heftier pasta, which he then complements with regional ingredients. If a dish derives from southern Italy, for instance, McDonald adds only cheeses and produce native to the region.

The beef tenderloin Stroganoff is not a traditional Italian dish but can be considered northern Italian, as beef is raised in the north. Served over housemade tagliatelle and drizzled with a creamed demi glace, the entrée is both hearty and tender and, above all, comforting. Copious amounts of fresh shiitake mushrooms contribute an umami component that also primes the palate for the restaurant's distinctive wines.

The lighter tagliatelle al pomodoro is tossed in a tangy, sweet pomodoro sauce and heavily snowed with aged pecorino Romano. The texture of each gently springy tagliatelle noodle shows why many seek out fresh pasta.

Another staple appeals to fans of more rustic pasta dishes: handmade pappardelle resting in a pork sausage pomodoro ragu and topped with fresh English peas and Parmigiano-Reggiano. Thick, wide noodles of pappardelle stand up to the weight of the ragu and the savory sausage; the peas lend a welcome pop and textural variance.

Every beautiful pasta deserves a beautiful wine; every staff member at Old Vine is well-versed in pairing.