



# Mangia! Bere! Wines to Pair with Nonna’s Lasagna

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Sep 7, 2016 Cindy Rynning 1 Comment

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I grew up eating lasagna. No, I'm not Italian, nor is anyone in my family. My Southern mother found a basic, five ingredient recipe, aptly named "Lazy Day Lasagna", that everyone loved. Who cared if she used cottage cheese instead of ricotta? A jar of Ragu instead of homemade gravy? Store bought instead of made-from-scratch noodles? Fuhgettaboutit. None of us knew the difference because it was delicious.

Years later, I accepted a job in Chicago. At the time, my wine acumen was just as limited as my knowledge about authentic Italian cuisine. I moved to the Windy City from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where I had honed my skills in drinking scotch and water, Pearl Light, an occasional Leinenkugel (thanks to my Wisconsin boyfriend, now husband), and jug "Chablis".

What did I discover in the authentic Italian restaurants in Chicago? Honest to goodness wine lists, with a plethora of undecipherable choices... I poured, I sipped, I learned, and I fell madly in love with the many variations of beautiful, Italian wine (and savory lasagna, of course). My palate was transformed.



So here I am, having tasted hundreds of wines from around the globe and plenty of versions of **lasagna**. I've found my favorites (not all are from Italy!) that I'm happy to share with you, because if you're still reading this, you love a good

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bottle of wine with your lasagna, too!

All of the delectable, mouthwatering selections below were sent as *samples*. If you're unable to find one of these choices in your local wine shop, ask for the same variety in a similar price range.

**Sterling Cabernet Sauvignon 2013** (*sample*) – Uncorked about thirty minutes before pouring, aromas of Bing cherries, plums, purple flowers, and spice were rich and broad upon my first whiff of this luscious Cabernet. Smooth tannins and bright acidity were nicely balanced with blackberries, more cherries, pepper, cocoa, and a touch of oak. The lively finish was long and juicy – a delightful complement to any lasagna laden with sausage in a rich, tomato based sauce. Cost is \$20.



**Avignonesi Rosso di Montepulciano 2014** (*sample*) – You'll think of southern Tuscany when you open this lovely bottle. From mostly Sangiovese grapes, I found distinct aromas of raspberries, pomegranate, violets, and vanilla. The palate boasted more juicy cherries, white pepper, soft, velvety tannins and food friendly acidity; the lingering finish was delightful with its herbal notes and spice. Pair this Tuscan beauty with a lasagna layered with plenty of vegetables, ricotta, pecorino, and red sauce. Cost is \$19.





**Tabarrini Montefalco Rosso Boccatone 2013** (*sample*) – Structured and broad, I appreciated every sip of the Tabarrini Montefalco Rosso. Predominantly Sangiovese, strawberries, cherries, violets, and plenty of vanilla spice wafted from the glass after a few swirls. Notable was its complexity – satin like tannins and lively acidity were braided with flavors of cherries, juicy red fruits, and a hint of thyme. The lingering finish was absolutely luscious. Open the bottle, pour yourself a glass, and pair with any of Nonna's endless varieties of lasagna. Cost is \$20.



**Donnafugata Sherazade Nero d'Avola Sicilia DOC 2015** (*sample*)– If you've never tasted a wine of Nero d'Avola, this charmer from Donnafugata, one of my favorite wineries in Sicily, is the one to try. Aromas of black currant, sweet vanilla, red flowers, and the slightest hint of black pepper were enticing. My palate was equally enchanted with flavors of raspberries and strawberries laced with mouthwatering acidity, smooth as silk tannins, and a lingering, seductive finish. Open a bottle (or two) and savor each sip with cheesy lasagna featuring chicken with an alfredo sauce or one that boasts a meat sauce replete with oregano, thyme, and basil. Cost is \$23.

