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From Italy to America: Photographs of Anthony Riccio
February 1 – March 30, 2012

Fairfield University
THE BELLARMINE MUSEUM OF ART
Orecchiette Sant’Agatese
(“Little Ear Pasta Sant’Agatese Style”)

Serves 4 to 6
Preparation Time: 30 minutes

This dish is very well known around Sant’Agata, a town near where I grew up and one I still love. The recipe was used frequently during stagione dei zucchini, zucchini season, when my grandmother’s orto, her vegetable garden, was abundant with pomodorini, cherry tomatoes, and basil. My grandmother used to come out of the orto with her ‘o sinat, a white apron which she used like a big pouch to gather vegetables. She filled it with zucchini, basil, pomodorini, and green onions for that night’s cena. Instead of shopping at a store, she’d go right to the orto to pick whatever she needed fresh for that night and come into the house and put it all on the table.

1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
1/2 onion, finely chopped
4 slices prosciutto, 1/8-inch thick, cut into julienne strips
2 small zucchini (about 6 ounces each), trimmed and thinly sliced
1 pound ripe cherry tomatoes, halved and squeezed to expel the seeds
1 cup fresh basil leaves, torn
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 pound orecchiette, preferably imported from Italy

Heat salted water for pasta in a medium-sized pot. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add the onions and prosciutto and cook, stirring for approximately 5 minutes, or until the onions are translucent. Add the zucchini, tomatoes, half of the basil, and some salt and pepper. Cook for approximately 10 minutes more, or until the zucchini are tender and the tomatoes soft. Season with salt and pepper to your liking. Remove from the heat and set aside.

In the boiling water, cook the pasta, following the directions on the package for al dente. Drain, reserving some of the cooking water. Add the zucchini mixture to the pasta and stir. If it looks too dry, add some of the cooking water (it should be moist but not soupy). Ladle pasta into each bowl, garnish generously with the remaining basil, and serve hot.

Chef Silvio Suppa
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