

TOP TOQUES

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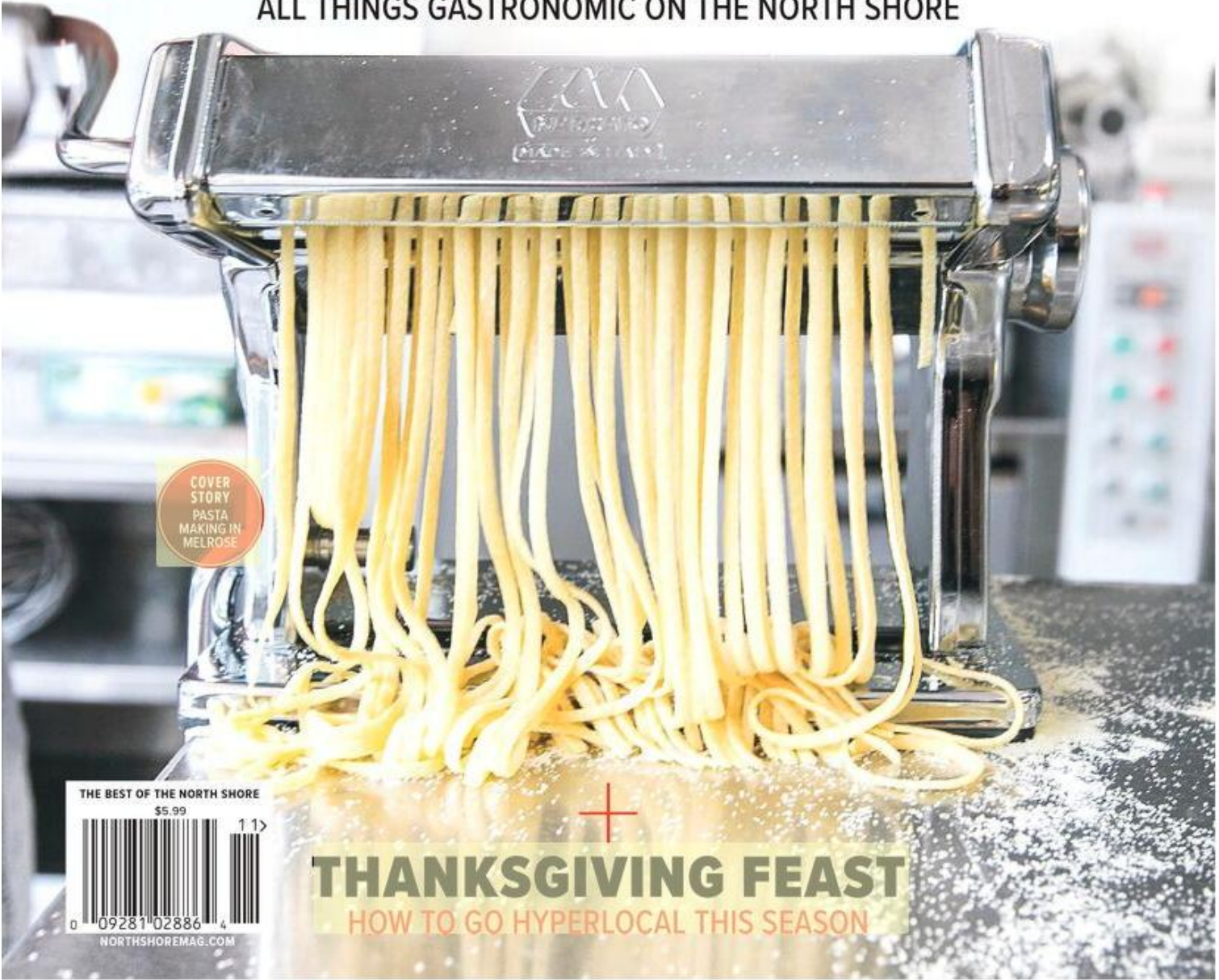
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NOVEMBER 2019

FOOD ISSUE

ALL THINGS GASTRONOMIC ON THE NORTH SHORE



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THANKSGIVING FEAST
HOW TO GO HYPERLOCAL THIS SEASON



Lucia wines include Frattaroli Pecorino, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, and San Marco.



PRIVATE LABEL

North Shore restaurants offer signature wines.

BY VICTORIA ABBOTT RICCARDI

➤ **A restaurant's livelihood depends upon** attracting diners night after night, year after year. Thus, many have created clever enticements beyond welcoming settings, superb food, and standout service. For example, several North Shore eateries have developed private wine labels. Working with domestic or international wineries, they're offering something their competition can't—specially crafted wines only available on their premises.

"It's like hiding Easter eggs of our family and culture on the wine list," says Philip Frattaroli, managing partner at Filmark Hospitality Group, which oversees his family's five restaurants, including Ristorante Lucia in the North End and Winchester. "We were probably one of the first in Boston to do a private wine label, because when my father, who came from Abruzzo, founded Ristorante Lucia in 1977 in the North End, he couldn't

find the region's typical wine, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo. So, he found a local vineyard near his hometown that was growing grapes on land his family formerly owned and got them to make Frattaroli Montepulciano d'Abruzzo to pair with the Abruzzo cuisine."

Made from the Montepulciano grape, the rustic red sports the family's crest on its label, and with its signature oregano, pepper, sour cherry, and tobacco notes pairs beautifully, says Frattaroli, with the restaurant's guitar string-shaped pasta with sausage and truffle cream. The family also makes a fish-friendly white, Frattaroli Pecorino, since Abruzzo not only hugs the lush Apennine Mountains but also runs along the Adriatic coast. And it makes Collevento San Marco Prosecco and a dry rosé called Collevento Azalea, thanks to a small producer in Friuli. The family's fifth label, Trambusti Chianti Classico DOGG, is a rich, Sangiovese-based red with an image of Ristorante Lucia in the North End on the label and was developed in conjunction with

IN-DEPTH



Tuscan Kitchen's Toscana Private Reserve Cellars: Toscana Rosso Toscanoso and Toscana Bianco.

a small Tuscan producer to celebrate the restaurant's 40th anniversary back in 2017.

What's nice about these wines, says Frattaroli, "is that they help us create bonds with the restaurant and Italy, while supporting these small wineries. People try to Google our wines and can't find them online, which gives us a nice exclusivity," he adds.

Tuscan Kitchen, with locations in Burlington, Boston's Seaport, and New Hampshire (Portsmouth and Salem), also has its own wine label. "Castello di Querceto in Chianti created the wines for Tuscan Kitchen to complement our authentic regional Italian cuisine," says Tuscan Brands beverage director Joe Comforti. "Our team, in cooperation with the winery, tasted over fifty blends to create our first Tuscan Kitchen Private Reserve Cellars, Toscana Rosso. We're now pouring the 2015 vintage, which is filled with beautiful flavors of black cherry, spice, and earth and goes well with roasted red meats, aged cheeses, osso buco, and eggplant and chicken Parmesan."

For lighter meats and seafood dishes, the team worked with the winery to create Tuscan Kitchen Private Reserve



The Bancroft's private label is called Patriarch.

Cellars Toscana Bianco in 2017, "a nice white that is ready to drink, and the acidity won't kill you," says Comforti, who recommends it with tuna, pork, veal, and scampi. Both wines wear a gold label with a Tuscan sun and are available at all Tuscan Kitchens and two New Hampshire Tuscan Market shops. In the works is a rosé and prosecco that Comforti hopes to start offering in early 2020.

Kate Webber, wine director for Webber Restaurant Group, helped develop a velvety, rich red for the family's restaurants, which include The Bancroft in Burlington and Bancroft & Co. in Peabody. "In 2015, when the first restaurant had been open for more than 10 years, we thought, 'We know what our guests like to drink, so it's time to create wine for them,'" says Webber, a Certified Sommelier through the Court of Master Sommeliers and International Sommelier Guild. "I had Banshee Wines on the list and appreciated the way they operated, so I went to the winery [in Healdsburg, California] and tasted a bunch of blended wines." Webber ultimately chose a Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Syrah blend for the first vintage, which she named Patriarch in honor of her father. In 2018



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