



**My goodness, look at the calendar!**  
 Can it be Autumn again? It must be, musn't it. Times are uncertain all over but besides, this is the time we have been working towards all year long – it will soon be time to reap the rewards for all the loving care we lavished on our olive groves. And hopefully this year we will have the joy of presenting you with an olive oil that's even better than its usual outstanding standard. We are always pushing the limits of perfection because you deserve the best. And we want to make sure you get it! So get ready to taste a really remarkable new oil this year. Just remember:

**you have to order it now if you want to receive it in time for Christmas.** And since our production is tiny, if you don't order now you risk having to wait until the next harvest!



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**Want to watch our olives grow? Look us up on Google Earth!**  
 Search "Pornanino" or put our Coordinates: N 43° 27.226', E 11° 20.658'

**We'd love to hear from you!** Here's our email address [oliveoil@chiantionline.com](mailto:oliveoil@chiantionline.com)

If you want to unsubscribe please click [here](#)

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## Pornanino's olive grove diary

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Dear oil-loving friends,

This last year has been a tumultuous roller coaster accompanied by uncertainty and changes that have profoundly affected our lives all around the world.

Here at Pornanino we have missed visitors at the mill, guests in our cottages, and the lovely feeling of sharing and connecting that we experience every year.

Isolated from the rest of the world, we have kept our usual working rhythm with the land and the trees requiring their usual care and attention. The result has been rewarding though: the garden was richer, the vegetables grown from seeds were on our table every day and our beloved olive trees have had a fantastic blooming season and are now bearing the fruits that we will harvest soon.



Many of you have cooked more than in the past, and our Pornanino Extra Virgin Olive Oil has kept travelling around the world to reach distant destinations and add flavour to your dishes.

We have kept a positive outlook throughout these unprecedented times and have worked very hard to reach our annual goal and produce our green gold!

The trees are now loaded with beautiful plump olives, which will be ripe and ready to be harvested in the next few weeks. The mill has been tested to fully operate as soon as the harvest begins, we have replenished our supplies of bottles, caps and labels, and have already alerted the shipping companies that by the end of November we will be ready to ship our Extra Virgin Olive Oil worldwide.

Thank you to the many who have already placed their order and to those who will place it soon, you have been our greatest supporters and have given us the strength to look at the future with plenty of positivity.



We cannot wait to have our Pornanino Extra Virgin Olive Oil back on your tables and to bring you a little slice of our haven!

Affectionately yours,

(a little bit younger...) Matteo and Francesca ♦

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## Olive oil making in three easy steps

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We all share a healthy love for olive oil, but have we ever spared a thought for the innocent fruit that gets squeezed to a pulp in the process? Here's to little olive, with many thanks for the wonderful bruschettas (and Martinis) it's selflessly given us.



Olive oil making is pretty straightforward. It really doesn't take much more than poor, stony soil and the right climate - plus loads of patience and hard work of the back-breaking kind. It's tough, for sure, but at the end of the day it's a price we are happy, and rather proud, to pay.

All you have to do to get olive oil is press the olives. Period. It's as easy as that, in theory at least. Needless to say, over here in the material world it gets a bit more complicated. Once upon a time, actually until not so long ago, peasants used to wait until the olives dropped to the ground of their own accord, raked them in, pressed them and stored the resulting oil in large earthenware jars. They never doubted for a minute that the time-honoured practice that had been

passed on from father to son for countless generations could be wrong. But it was.

To be precise, the old method allows for maximum yield with the least possible effort, which made perfect sense when people couldn't afford to waste time and labor on niceties. It was not terribly important whether the oil they made tasted good or not – and more often than not it didn't. Living as we do in much more affluent times, we can afford to be discriminating. And we do care about the quality of the food we eat.

Olives are of paramount importance and today we know they should not be allowed to ripen completely, because by the time they get plump and soft the oxidation process leading to decay is already underway, and the resulting oil will deteriorate quickly. Picking slightly under-ripe olives requires more of an effort, since they tend to hold on tight to the tree, and the oil content is lower, but that's the price you have to pay for quality. There's no other way.

And we know that the olives should never be allowed to touch the ground, particularly if it's muddy, they should be handled with care so as not to bruise them, and stored for as short a time as possible in well aired, thin layers to prevent any moulds, fungi and parasites from attacking them. This is extremely important to keep oxidation (i.e. rotting) at bay, and prevent any nasty musty flavors from sneaking into the oil.

It probably escaped our forebears that stage two is just as important, as the olives should be pressed very quickly in a controlled and perfectly clean environment, once again to prevent nasty flavors from contaminating the oil. Oils pick up smells and flavors very easily, so this is not to be underestimated. Also, any oily deposits exposed to the air will turn rancid in a few hours, which makes it imperative that all machines and implements be used round the clock, or thoroughly washed with soda if left idle overnight. Operating the frantoio, the oil mill, is heavy work. At the height of the oil making season, our own on the Pornanino estate runs nonstop from 8 AM to 8 PM, and the nightly clean up takes about two hours. It's no sinecure, for sure!

Although relatively easy compared to the others, the third step is fundamental. Once pressed, the new oil goes straight into air-tight stainless-steel containers where it remains until the time comes to bottle it. Much of the health-promoting value of olive oil comes from very fragile chemical compounds that are damaged by light, heat and oxygen, therefore sloppy storage could ruin a potentially excellent olive oil.

Ergo, making olive oil is a deceptively simple yet delicate kind of magic. Man made, but magic nonetheless. ♦

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## Top 10 reasons why we love Pornanino olive oil

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Dear Santa, as Christmas is approaching and I have been a good boy/girl, may I please have lots of Pornanino Extra Virgin Olive Oil? I love it and here are the top 10 reasons why. Thank you Santa. Please keep some for yourself and your reindeer – I'd say you all deserve it!



Reason no. 1 is it's so wonderfully delicious I could eat it all day long, drizzled on freshly toasted, crusty bread. It would be a little fattening, admittedly, but if you added a bike or a gym subscription it would be no big deal, in the end. Actually a very good incentive to exercise more, which is just as good for you as olive oil.

Reason no. 2 is that it's good for you. Can you believe it, it must be just about the only instance on earth of something that's good for you and *not at all* unpleasant!

Reason no. 3 is that it is 100% natural – or so it should be, if you want it to work all its wonders.

Reason no. 4 is I know the guys who make it and can guarantee that they do make it by hand, step by step, the traditional way. They grow the olives in Tuscany, they crush them in their own mill on the estate and bottle the oil themselves. There's no room for scams there, which rather sets them apart in a business that is sadly rife with fraud.

Reason no. 5 is I can use less of it. Since it's so wonderfully flavorsome a little goes a long way. Both my waistline and my wallet will thank me for that. And that goes double for the Truffle and Hot Chili Pepper flavored ones!

Reason no. 6 is that it will keep all its magical properties longer (up to 2 years) because it's made with slightly under-ripe olives. The yield is lower, which is why most producers use riper olives, but the oxidation process will be slower.

Reason no. 7 is that it works wonders for the body both inside and outside. It's heart and bowel friendly, lowers the risk of certain cancers, helps live longer and healthier lives, might contribute in staving off dementia and a host of other nice things science keeps discovering. In addition to that, thanks to vitamin E and other antioxidant compounds it counters the effects of aging on the skin. And all it takes is eating lots of bruschetta? Count me in!

Reason no. 8 is that my hair get soft and shiny (and not at all oily) when I use it as a conditioner. And mixed with table salt, say 1 tablespoon of oil to 3 of salt, it makes a great body scrub. My skin just loves olive oil, because it's highly compatible by composition - olive oil has the very same acidity as the acid mantle that protects the skin. And it contains lots of goodies that nourish, moisturize, protect, soothe and leave my skin healthy and looking younger.

Reason no. 9 is that Pornanino Extra Virgin Olive Oil makes the perfect present for friends and family. It's always welcome, which doesn't surprise me in the slightest. And let's count the Balsamic in as well!

Reason no. 10 is that it makes the most wonderful face soap I ever had the pleasure of using. It leaves the skin incredibly soft and is so mild it can be used for babies and little kids. Even cranky Aunt Kate looks forward to getting it as a Christmas present and will actually SMILE, which is something indeed! ♦

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## Grandma Lia's olive oil recipes

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We've chosen two very different dishes this time: one's a wholesome, warming chicken casserole and the other is pure indulgence. Traditionally only made from All Saints Day to Easter, farinata is a humble homage to winter (and a great appetizer).

### Pollo in potacchio (serves 4)

- ✓ 1 chicken (about 1 ¾ lb)
- ✓ 2 onions, medium sized (about ½ lb)
- ✓ 2 large sprigs of rosemary
- ✓ ½ cup dry white wine
- ✓ 4 tomatoes, medium sized (about 2 lb)
- ✓ 4 tablespoons Pornanino Extra Virgin Olive Oil



Cut the chicken into even-sized chunks – you should get 8 to 10 in all. Remove the skin if you want a leaner dish, otherwise leave it.

Chop the onions and rosemary and cook with the extra virgin olive oil in a heavy pan or casserole until the onion is tender and golden. Remove the onion, put in the chicken, and brown it thoroughly all over. Wash the tomatoes, peel, deseed and chop roughly.

When the chicken is well browned, put the onion back into the pan, season with salt and freshly ground pepper and douse with the white wine. Let evaporate over a high heat, then turn it down and add the tomatoes. Cook over a low heat with a lid on for about 45 minutes, or until the meat is cooked through.

If the sauce looks too thin reduce it by boiling fast.

### Farinata (makes a 10x15 in tin)

- ✓ 7 oz chickpea flour (or try besan flour in Asian shops)
- ✓ 1 ½ cup water
- ✓ ¼ cup Pornanino Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- ✓ 3 tablespoons flat-leaf parsley
- ✓ 1 teaspoon salt
- ✓ freshly ground pepper



Sift the chickpea flour in a bowl. Mix in the chopped parsley, salt, extra virgin olive oil and the water, a little at a time, beating with a wooden spoon to obtain a smooth, rather thin batter. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper and let stand for 30 minutes.

Set the oven to fairly hot, around 400°F. When the oven temperature is right, thoroughly grease a baking tin with plenty of extra virgin olive oil, pour the farinata mix into it (note it should be no more than a quarter of an inch thick) and bake for about 25 minutes or until it's golden on top and the edges look crispy.

Cut into squares and serve immediately as an appetizer, with a glass of wine.

Don't risk running out of your secret ingredient, Pornanino Extra Virgin Olive Oil: [Click to order](#) ►►

Tell us if you like our recipes! Is there a recipe you'd like Grandma Lia to work out for you? [Let us know](#)