

FATGOLDZINE

FALL 2022 HARVEST / ISSUE 1

Welcome to the first issue of Fat Gold's sixth year, made from arbosana olives harvested in November 2022!

THE BASICS

Here's how to open your tin: pull the cap up by its "ears," extending the translucent pouring spout below. This can be puzzling, so we've posted a demonstration at [fatgold/open](https://fatgold.com/open)

The label is a magnet for you to keep and save, if you wish! This issue's magnet is based on a set of decorative screens painted in Japan in the early 1600s, titled Autumn Evening with Full Moon on Musashino Plain. You'll find a link to the originals at [fatgold/art](https://fatgold.com/art)

We chose this scene to represent the grassiness of this shipment's oil. It's also the first in a sequence of themed magnets we'll send with this year's shipments. Let's see if you can crack the code.

THE STUBBORN ONES

The oil in your tin is made from arbosana olives, a variety traditionally associated with Spain, now among the most plentiful in California, along with arbequina and koreneiki.

Arbosana is popular because it's compatible with super high-density planting. (You can learn more about different olive planting systems in our guide to extra virgin olive oil, available online at [fatgold/guide](https://fatgold.com/guide)) But, it can be difficult to get these olives harvested: they tend to grow in clusters that really stick to the trees. Arbosana olives also hold on to a lot of their water. All in all, they are a bit more challenging than other olive varieties, such as frantoio and arbequina.

These arbosana olives were grown by P-R Farms in the San Joaquin Valley and milled by Kathryn on the ENZO Olive Oil mill. Tasting this oil, she gets notes of grass, tomato leaf, and pine nuts!

(If you're new to tasting olive oil, flip this zine over and we'll tell you how Kathryn approaches it.)

Continued →

HOW TO TASTE EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

Here's how to taste your olive oil like a pro:

- Grab a spoon or a tiny cup and pour out a bit.
- First, smell it! Olive oil has tons of aroma.
- Take a sip. Slurp in a bit of air at the same time.

Finally, swallow. When you're tasting extra virgin olive oil, you want to find three characteristics, all in balance: **fruitiness**, **bitterness**, and **pungency**.

Fruitiness. Olives are a fruit, and you can smell the evidence in high-quality extra virgin olive oils. You might detect fresh-cut grass, or even tomato leaf!

Bitterness. Olives are very bitter, and some of that bitterness makes its way into the oil. Think: coffee, arugula, walnuts, hoppy beer.

Pungency. This is the spicy sensation that you might feel at the back of your throat. It's not spicy like a chile pepper; more like ginger or radish.

THE PIVOTAL MOMENT

The big news of the season is that OUR MILL HAS ARRIVED. It's a state-of-the-art machine manufactured in Italy; it can process a ton of olives in an hour. (For context, this batch of oil required about six tons of arbosana olives.) Next year will be our mill's big debut!

We thought we'd take this opportunity to talk about milling, which is the heart of olive oil production.

In the old days—the very old days—olives were crushed under a stone wheel, and the resulting paste pressed between woven mats; this is the etymology of the term “cold-pressed.”

Olive oil hasn't been produced in this way since the 1960s, when mechanical crushers and centrifuges took over. Although the image of a stone wheel is evocative, we don't think there's any reason to lament the passing of these tools: modern olive oil has better taste, healthier properties, and a longer shelf life than anything produced in centuries past.

Olives make three key stops in the mill.

First, they pour into **the crusher**, where, either by grinding or slicing, they are made into paste. When an olive's cells rupture, enzymes are activated that give rise to specific (pleasant) aromas and flavors.

At this point, the oil is distributed throughout the paste, uncountable microscopic droplets. So, the paste spends some time in a mixing tank called a **malaxer**, where we want those droplets to “find” each other, coalescing into larger droplets, pockets, and even pools.

Finally, the paste flows into a **decanter**, a fast-spinning centrifuge that separates it into layers of different density: solids, water, oil. The oil goes one way; the rest goes another.

Of course, there's a lot of work that happens to get those olives into the crusher in the first place, a whole universe of cultivation and transportation... but, for us, milling is the pivotal moment in olive oil's creation, and our nerdy interest in this mechanical process is something that sets Fat Gold apart.

Kathryn has learned a lot in ten years of olive milling; now, with our own mill to master, we are poised to learn a lot more.

HOW TO USE YOUR FAT GOLD

Sheet-Pan Potato Confit, with Variations

During the harvest, Robin cooked this several times, an adaptation of a New York Times recipe by Lidey Heuck.

First, slice small-ish potatoes into one-inch chunks, enough to almost cover a large sheet pan. Put them into a big mixing bowl with 3-4 shallots, peeled and sliced lengthwise, and 4-5 cloves of garlic, peeled. Add two heaping tablespoons of dijon mustard, salt and pepper, a quick pour of vinegar (any kind), and—it goes without saying—a heavy pour of Fat Gold. Stir it all around so the potatoes, shallots, and garlic are coated, then dump it onto that sheet pan.

Glug some more Fat Gold on top. A little more. Good.

Bake the pan in the oven at 425 degrees for 30-40 minutes. You almost can't overcook it—the potatoes will just get softer, the shallots more confit'd.

Variation 1: Add some protein to the sheet pan: Italian sausages, pork chops, or some chicken thighs. Let the potatoes, etc., all bake for 15 minutes before adding the meat to the pan. That way, it should all get done at about the same time.

Variation 2: Use apples, or a mix of apples and potatoes. Robin found some nice, small apples and cut each one into quarters, tossing the cores. Everything else in the recipe stayed exactly the same. In this pan, with the shallots, mustard, and olive oil, the apples come out totally savory.

The Fat Gold Martini

What's a better reward, after a long day—or a long year—than a cold martini? Take 2 oz dry gin, 1 oz dry vermouth, 1/2 tsp Fat Gold, and shake with ice. Garnish your drink with a twist of lemon peel, or... if you must... an olive.

That's it for this edition. If you encounter any problems with your shipment, don't hesitate to get in touch: robin@fat.gold

We hope you enjoy this issue of Fat Gold. Remember: use it up!

–Kathryn, Robin, and Bryan