

FATGOLDZINE

FALL 2018 HARVEST / ISSUE 2

HOW TO TASTE OLIVE OIL

Grab a spoon or a tiny cup and pour out a little bit.

Smell it! Olive oil has tons of aroma.

Take a sip. Slurp in a bit of air at the same time.

Now: swallow it. There are three things you're looking for in an extra virgin olive oil, all in balance:

- **Fruitiness.** Think of words like this: grassy, tomato-y, herbaceous. You might taste green banana, artichoke, or something almost flowery.
- **Bitterness.** If you ever eat an olive straight off the tree, you will discover that they are very, very bitter. Some of that bitterness makes it way into the oil.
- **Pungency.** This is a fancy word for 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. If you've never experienced it in olive oil, it can be a bit alarming! What you're feeling is caused by the antioxidants that are abundant in fresh olive oil. (Some people even describe olive oil in terms of one, two, or three coughs.)

Along the way, you might experience an extra wave of "retronasal" flavor as aromas rise into your nose after you swallow and exhale.

Welcome to the second issue of Fat Gold's second year, made from frantoio olives harvested in November 2018!

THE BASICS

The plastic pouring spout pulls out from the tin. Don't be afraid to give it a good yank. (We've posted a video demonstration at fat.gold/open-sesame.)

Notice that the front label on the tin is a magnet, for you to keep and save if you wish. Every shipment's label/magnet is different, just like a magazine's cover. This magnet uses a fragment of the painting "Men and Mountains" by Maynard Dixon. He was born in 1875 in Fresno, which brings us to...

A NEW FRANTOIO

These olives are from a grove in Lemoore, California, just southwest of Fresno in the San Joaquin Valley, owned and tended by Kanwar Boparai, a veterinarian with a side hustle in olive oil. We first encountered Kanwar and his brand Boparai Farms on Instagram, and a friendly chat over direct messages led to assisting with his harvest and purchasing some of his fruit. Kanwar's small grove is a favorite of Robin's: wild, well-shaded, loud with bird-song, rough underfoot.

These are frantoio olives, a variety most commonly grown in Tuscany. We have frantoio in the Fat Gold grove in Sunol, and there, we harvest them early. But we harvested these olives from Lemoore later in the season, and the result is a sweeter, "softer" oil, with less bitterness and pungency. **Fat Gold advisory:** This also means the oil has a lower phenol count (see the February 2018 zine at fat.gold/super-secret/zine) which means it won't last as long on the shelf, which means you should *use it up!*

This oil's delicate nature makes it versatile in the kitchen; it won't overwhelm your food. In its aroma and flavor, you might detect almond, artichoke, or cinnamon.

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THE GLOBAL OLIVE

Our last shipment's hojiblanca olive is most commonly grown in Spain; this shipment's frantoio is associated with Tuscany; the next shipment will be another common Spanish cultivar. But *why* are these olives different?

Part of the story is environmental; for example, some places freeze, and only certain olive varieties can withstand that. But that's not the *whole* story. Were Tuscan or Spanish tastes also different? And, if so, did their tastes inform a cuisine that demanded a particular kind of olive oil... or did the olive oil come first—it's an ancient ingredient—and actually help form the cuisine?

It might seem strange, but it's difficult to find answers to these questions.

Tuscan olive oil is bitter; Spanish is fruity; and those traditions—those expectations—run *deep*. The exciting thing about New World olive oil is that there aren't any expectations, really; not yet. So we can pick and choose, sample and select. That's not to say we don't have a lot to learn from Spain and Tuscany, as well as Greece, Tunisia, Turkey—the list goes on. But, untethered from tradition, we also have unique opportunities to explore and inquire. Here at Fat Gold, we intend to take advantage of them.

HOW TO USE YOUR FAT GOLD

You try to escape it. You try to outsmart it. But in the end, nothing is ever as perfect an application of extra virgin olive oil as...

Pot o' Beans

Start with any kind of dried bean—cannellini or cranberry beans are easy to find; soak them or don't, your choice—and toss in a handful of whole, peeled garlic cloves. Cover them in water and simmer until the beans are soft. Then, dress them simply with salt and Fat Gold.

As always, if there are any problems whatsoever with your shipment, let us know. Just email robin@fat.gold and we'll get things sorted.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Fat Gold. Remember, good olive oil is not for hoarding. Use it up!

–Kathryn and Robin

“Men and Mountains,” Maynard Dixon

