

FATGOLDZINE

FALL 2020 HARVEST / ISSUE 2

HOW TO TASTE OLIVE OIL LIKE A PRO

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.** Olives are a fruit, and you can smell the evidence in a well-made extra virgin olive oil. Here are some aromas and flavors you might find: 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. It hits in the mouth, on the tongue. Think: coffee, arugula, walnuts, hoppy beer.
- **Pungency.** This is a fancy word for the spicy, tickling, or burning 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 phenols—antioxidant compounds—that are abundant in fresh, unrefined olive oil.

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 fourth year, made from frantoio olives harvested in November 2020!

THE BASICS

Here's how to open your tin: pull the cap up by its “ears”, extending the translucent pouring spout below. Don't be afraid to apply steady pressure until the spout pops out. This can be puzzling, so we've posted a demonstration at fat.gold/open-sesame

THE FRANTOIO PROCESSION

We talk a lot about our approach to small batch olive oil production; this shipment provides a perfect example. In November 2020, three mornings in a row, we loaded a truck with frantoio olives from Panacea Farms in Vernalis, California, and drove them to Jeff Martin's mill in San Martin, about an hour away.

Same olives; same mill; different days—and the oil is different!

First, we'll tell you about frantoio generally. It's the most ubiquitous variety in Tuscany; in fact, the word for “olive mill” in Italian is “frantoio”, which tells you everything you need to know. It is THE oil olive of central Italy.

Today, frantoio is popular to grow in California, too. Even compared to other oil olives, frantoio tends to have a high oil content. That oil, in turn, tends to be very balanced; though it's notoriously robust, it also has plenty of fruitiness, bitterness, and pungency. AND it's high in antioxidant phenols. Basically, frantoio is a winner!

The grove at Panacea Farms is well-established, and the trees are planted wide, the traditional spacing. A grove doesn't have to be beautiful to produce great olives and great oil, but, when you're rolling up in a truck every morning, it doesn't hurt.

In this shipment, you got one of those morning's batches. We'll tell you about them now.

Continued →

KATHRYN'S TASTING NOTES

On the third morning of this frantoio harvest, the fruit came from a different part of the grove, and it was notably greener. We've named these oils based on that color difference.

If you received *Frantoio Green*, it's elegant and smooth. The flavors are precise and clean: fresh green olive and green almond. You might even pick up a little cinnamon in the aroma.

If you received *Frantoio Purple*, it's robust and rustic. It's spicy and bitter, with more aggressive flavors—artichoke and arugula.

Generally, a miller assumes that greener fruit will yield a more robust oil, but that's not what happened in this case! Ah, the mysteries of the olive...

You're invited to join Kathryn for a live tasting and discussion of these oils on March 30 at 5 p.m. Pacific, 8 p.m. Eastern. You'll find a link to register at fat.gold/tv

HOW TO USE YOUR FAT GOLD

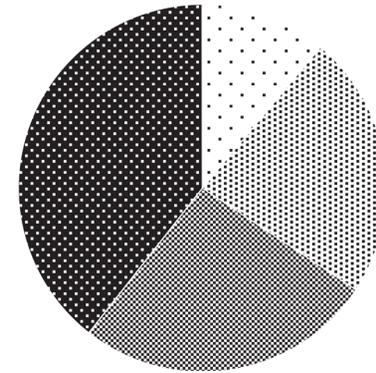
Here's a tip that seems simple—and it is—but too many people have never tried it: drizzle olive oil on your pizza. Homemade or takeout, fancy or basic, it doesn't matter; add the oil slice by slice, as you're eating. Not TOO much... but not too little, either. And if some oil pools on your plate, all the better, because you can swab it up with the last bite of crust. Then, on to the next slice.

Frantoio in particular is amazing this way; maybe that's no surprise, given its heritage. Robust Italian dishes demand robustness in return, and frantoio stands up to them with its structure, its balance of bitter and spicy. It's the ideal accompaniment for any kind of pizza or pasta. It's delicious with cooked tomato sauce—and a fine addition to the sauce itself, of course.

VALUE ADDED

These frantoio olives were hand-harvested by the crew at Panacea Farms. That's a mark of distinction, because all the other fruit we sourced this year was harvested by machine—either a small, clever repurposed pistachio harvester or a goliath over-the-row harvester engineered just for olive trees.

The fact that the olives were hand-harvested means these batches are among of the most expensive we produced this year. We thought it might be interesting to show you a cost breakdown for the oil in the tin you received:



As you can see, the most expensive ingredient in this tin of Fat Gold is the labor required to get the olives off the tree. Milling comes next, and *then* the fruit itself. The oil doesn't do us any good trapped in its cells, stuck on the tree; we need to get it off and out. That's the essence, and expense, of this substance.

SPRING

As always, the label is a magnet for you to keep and save, if you wish! Appropriate to the season and the shipment, this magnet uses the painting *Spring (The Procession—A Chromatic Sensation)* by Joseph Stella, a native of Italy. Two of his paintings were included in the landmark Armory Show, the first large exhibition of modern art in America.

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

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

—Kathryn and Robin

P.S. If you'll excuse an advertisement in your serene Fat Gold Zine, we should say that we have a small amount of both oils remaining, so, if the descriptions above make you want to try the frantoio you didn't receive, you have a chance to snag some! Just head over to fat.gold/shop on April 21 at 9 a.m. Pacific, 12 p.m. Eastern.