



Delightful Food Ideas

The Cheese Impresario Presents Asiago

(NAPSA)—The next time you say “cheese,” consider saying “Asiago” (ah-zee-AH-goh). This is a cow’s-milk cheese first made in the northern Veneto region of Italy. It’s crafted in two flavor and texture profiles: Pressato, the fresh Asiago, and the big-flavored, aged Asiago, Asiago d’Allevo. The fresher version is a light straw color, with a semisoft texture that has a mild and slightly sweet taste. As this cheese ages, it becomes a darker color and delivers a sharper and nuttier sensation. The texture also becomes harder, so you can grate it on or in your favorite dish. Asiago can be a pleasing substitute for Parmesan at any meal.

Although it enhances a variety of Italian dishes, such as pasta, hearty bean soups or panini sandwiches, Asiago is also great to serve on its own as part of a cheese plate. Another simple and delicious method of serving Asiago is to split a California dried Calimyrna (golden) or Mission (black) fig in half and place a slice of Asiago on top for an easy appetizer.

This classic Italian cheese pairs beautifully with a classic Italian red wine such as Chianti. A good example is the Marchesi de’ Frescobaldi Nipozzano Riserva Chianti Rufina. This ruby-red wine has plum and black currant flavors, with a hint of cinnamon and spice, which enhances the rich flavor of Asiago.

Additional cheese and wine pairing suggestions, as well as authentic Tuscan recipes, can be found at www.TuscanyTonight.com.

Asiago-Topped Grilled Portobello Mushrooms

Serves 4

- 4 large portobello mushrooms**
- 1 cup of grated Asiago**
divided into four portions



The Cheese Impresario advocates Asiago cheese in a variety of Italian dishes.

- 4 tablespoons of Chianti**
- Extra virgin olive oil**
- Salt & pepper**
- Italian chopped parsley**

Light up your grill. Chop parsley finely. Clean mushrooms and brush both sides with olive oil. Place mushrooms on aluminum foil grill side up and not directly over coals or heat source. Add a tablespoon of Chianti into each mushroom. Cook mushrooms until just tender. Add the salt & pepper. Liberally fill each mushroom with a portion of the grated Asiago cheese. Cover with aluminum foil until the cheese melts, about 10 minutes depending on how hot your grill is. Sprinkle parsley on top and serve.

• *The Cheese Impresario, Barrie Lynn, is an artisanal cheese expert based in Los Angeles.*