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## Welcome to the Cluver Club

The Cluver Club's collaboration with leading South African chefs is setting a new benchmark in wine and food partnerships thanks to the excellent pairings with brilliant chefs to match great recipes with great wines.

This month we welcome Fortunato Mazzone and the lasagna he learnt at the knee of his aunts and his father.

The wine? Paul Cluver Cabernet Sauvignon which he calls 'the ideal partner'.



As a wine producer and partner in the award-winning range of Nick and Forti's wines and with a national diploma in wine from the Cape Wine Academy to his credit, our third master chef, Fortunato Mazzone, has a unique perspective on food and wine.

Fortunato co-owns Ristorante Ritrovo in Pretoria with his father, well-known chef and pioneer of Italian food in South Africa Giovanni Mazzone. Ritrovo has over the last 13 years amassed a large number of Food and Wine List awards and was the first restaurant to be awarded the South African Tourism Grading Boards Platinum Star Award. Forti (as he is known to his friends) is a member of the SA Chefs Association, Vice-Echanson of The Ordre Mondiale des Vins, and a Conseilleur Culinaire honoraire of the International Gastronomic Society of the Chaine des Rotisseurs.

Forti is well known for his appearances in food and wine shows on television and radio and was for the last two years a feature chef on the Sunday Times / BBC Food International Food Show with Reza Mohamed, Gino D'Acampo and Ainsley Harriott. He also contributes to several local publications.

His successful chain of upmarket kitchen stores iHigh-End Kitchens recently expanded to Stellenbosch with the opening of a flagship store at the 5 star Asara Hotel. Two years ago he opened the funky **BICCCS (Bread, Icecream, Cake, Croissant, Coffee, Sandwiches!!!)**, a prototype Italian Gelateria and coffee bar bakery concept in Pretoria with his father. Expect one in the Cape by next year!

He is also involved in the production of super premium organic extra virgin olive oil under the Ritrovo label, a result of his obsessive no-compromise produce-driven approach to cooking.

For his passion for that other Italian speciality, opera, Fortunato won a Business Arts South Africa (BASA) award for supporting the Black Tie Ensemble, a group of Opera singers mostly from previously disadvantaged communities and which is now the resident Opera Company of Pretoria's State Theatre.

What's coming up for this chef who believes that 'you can taste the happiness in my food'? More shops in the fair Cape and a cookbook with top SA food writer Gwynne Conlyn.



### **My Aunts' Neapolitan Lasagna** **Serves 8 generously**

Real Neapolitan Lasagna is not made with butter or cream or béchamel or any of the other weird ingredients that tend to bastardise it in South Africa. This is the best comfort food in the world and I learned it from my Aunts and my Dad. It is also not the boring 'easy' dish that people think it is. Good lasagna takes time, effort and care. It is truly Seeerriouus food!

Pre-boiled thin sheets of the freshest egg pasta you can find -(or make your own, using multiples of 4 whole eggs to 400g white flour, pinch of salt and two egg yolks for luck!)  
How much? Plenty. Enough to make many layers in your baking dish and remember you are not bulking this up with white sauce or cream etc.

8-10 hard boiled eggs, crumbled 20 thin slices of good Italian Imported salami, cut into quarters 6 x 350g balls of grated mozzarella 250g grated parmesan. (Have more at hand to add by feel) 80 goon-marble sized meatballs made with 1kg lean mince, seasoning, handful of breadcrumbs and 1 egg, fried in olive oil Lashings of Ragu sauce (see recipe below)

### **Ragu' napoletano (serves 6)**

Good virgin olive oil  
4 X 400g tins of Italian chopped and peeled tomatoes  
Two large tablespoons of tomato paste  
1 bottle Paul Cluver Cabernet Sauvignon  
1 large diced onion  
2 celery stalks diced  
1 large carrot diced  
2 cloves crushed garlic  
400-500 gr sirloin  
8 Italian salsicce or good coarse pork sausage  
1 small chicken on the bone cut into coarse chunks  
1 rack of lamb on the bone  
2 joints carefully trimmed rabbit, if available  
Handful fresh basil

### **Method**

In your largest pot, braise the diced carrots, onions, garlic and celery over a moderate heat until glossy. They must not burn. Add the sirloin, lamb, chicken and rabbit in large pieces with the sausage and cook slowly, turning until lightly browned. Dribble in the wine, stirring and reducing until the alcohol has evaporated and the sauce is reaching a nice thick consistency at the pot's base.

### Method

Layer the bottom of your large baking dish with a thin layer of ragu sauce and place the first of at least six layers of thin pasta sheets, depending on the dish. The smaller it is, the more the layers. Evenly spread more ragu sauce and stud this with meatballs, crumbled eggs and salami. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese and mozzarella, quite sparingly. Top this with another layer of pasta and start again. Don't overdo the cheese until you reach the top layer then sprinkle parmesan fairly generously and speck with little dollops of ragu sauce for an appealing look.

Bake at 200C for a nice crispy golden top and a piping hot centre for no more than 10 minutes. Cut into generous squares and scoop them out with an egg lifter to serve on a large warm white plate surrounded by ragu sauce.

The lasagna will look like a golden island in a sea of ragu!



Stir in tomato paste; cook a further 5 minutes stirring continuously to prevent burning. The emphasis is on gentle cooking with respect for your ingredients. Add the tomato and the basil and season to taste with sea salt and black pepper. Simmer slowly for three hours. The meat should now be dissolving into the sauce and the sauce should have thickened and browned.

The meat from the sauce can be enjoyed with a vinegary green salad as the main course after you have served the lasagna - two dishes in one!!!!

This sauce freezes fantastically so you can make it weeks before you need it – and use it any time for big flavour.