



CACIO E PEPE

Wine Pairing: Damiano Ciolli "Silene" Cesanese Superiore Olevano Romano DOC

If you love to see delighted diners at your table then this is a dish you need to have in your repertoire. Cacio e Pepe may for some evoke the American classic macaroni and cheese but it is only to show it as a weak imitation of this deeply flavorful and satisfying dish. The key here is making sure you have all your equipment and ingredients prepared in advance so that you can act in the moment and deliver steaming hot bowls of pasta to the table. At the table the Damiano Ciolli "Silene" Cesanese Superiore Olevano Romano DOC offers dark berry flavors to balance the dish's richness and aromas of herb and spice to round out the bold pepper character of the sauce.

1 pound fresh spaghetti
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons freshly cracked black pepper, plus more to taste
2 cups finely grated Pecorino Romano
Four fresh eggs
Kosher salt, to taste

IN ADVANCE: Separate the eggs, discarding the whites, and keep each intact egg yolk in its own bowl. Add just enough olive oil to lightly coat the yolk. Set up a 6-quart pot for the pasta water with a removable pasta basket. Have a large metal mixing bowl that will sit over the pasta pot without pushing the water out at the ready.

FOR THE PASTA: In the 6-quart pot with pasta basket, bring 4 quarts of water to a boil and salt generously. Add the pasta and cook until al dente, about 2-3 minutes. Using the basket insert, remove the pasta from the water and transfer to the metal bowl. Add the olive oil and black pepper.

Ladle $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the pasta water into the bowl with the pasta. Place the bowl over the boiling water and sprinkle in $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of the Pecorino while stirring vigorously with tongs, taking care not to spill the boiling water below. Stir until a creamy sauce forms and clings to the pasta without clumping, about 2 minutes. If the sauce seems too thick gradually add small amounts of water from the pot below to thin.

TO FINISH: Using tongs, pile the hot pasta into four shallow bowls, making a nest with a depression in the center. Carefully place an egg yolk into the center of the pasta and garnish with the remaining Pecorino and pepper. Serve immediately.