MARTONE STREET

BY SCOTT CONANT

PASTA ALLA NORMA

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

1 large eggplant (about 16 ounces)

Kosher salt

Vegetable oil, for frying

24 ounces Martone Street Mediterranean Style Marinara Sauce

1 pound Rigatoni pasta

12 basil leaves, torn

1/3 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

1 8-ounce block of Ricotta Salata cheese (see note)

INSTRUCTIONS

Bring a large stockpot of water to boil and salt it generously (it should taste like broth).

Peel the eggplant lengthwise in alternating strips, leaving some of the skin intact, so it has a striped appearance. Cut the eggplant into 1-inch cubes and place into a colander.

Sprinkle the eggplant lightly with kosher salt and let sit for about 30 minutes to release excess moisture and any bitterness. After 30 minutes, discard the liquid and thoroughly pat the eggplant dry with paper towels.

Heat about 5 inches of vegetable oil in a Dutch oven over medium, to about 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a sheet pan with paper towels and set aside.

Working in batches, fry the eggplant for about 7-8 minutes, or until tender and deeply golden. Drain the eggplant on the paper towels and set aside.

In a large sauté pan, simmer the sauce over low heat for about 10 minutes.

Once the water comes to a boil, cook the pasta about 80 percent of the way through, just shy of al dente. Reserve about ½ cup of the pasta water before draining the pasta. Transfer the Rigatoni

directly into the reduced sauce. Add a few tablespoons of the pasta water to the sauté pan and toss to coat, adding more pasta water, if necessary, to thin the sauce.

Continue cooking until the pasta is al dente. Add the eggplant and toss gently to combine.
Turn off the heat and add the basil and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese. Toss to completely coat the pasta, emulsifying the cheese with the sauce.

Serve and grate the Ricotta Salata cheese, using a box grater, over each bowl.

NOTE:

To enhance the flavor of the Ricotta Salata, bake it on a parchment-lined sheet tray at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for about 10-12 minutes, then cool before grating.