

SPRING GREENS WITH **FEAST**

STUFFED MANICOTTI WITH COPPA AND RUSTIC PESTO

BY CATHERINE NEVILLE



Yield: **6 to 8** servings

- 1 cup loosely packed **basil leaves**
- ½ cup loosely packed **arugula**
- 3 cloves **garlic**, peeled
- **salt** and **pepper**, to taste
- ¾ to 1 cup **pine nuts**
- 1 cup freshly grated **Parmigiano-Reggiano**
- 3 to 4 Tbsp extra virgin **olive oil**
- 1 16-oz box **manicotti**
- 1 lbs whole milk **ricotta**, at room temperature
- 1 **egg**, beaten
- ¼ cup **cream**
- 4 oz **Volpi Coppa**, finely chopped
- 2 to 3 cups **marinara sauce**, either jarred or homemade
- ½ lb fresh **mozzarella**

| Preparation | Preheat oven to 375°F.

Using a very sharp knife, begin making the pesto by chopping ¼ of the basil and arugula together until rough cut. Add a garlic clove, a bit of salt and more of the basil and pesto, continuing to chop, adding a bit of the pine nuts, another garlic clove, some of the cheese, a bit more of the basil and arugula and then the third garlic clove, rest of the pine nuts, more of the cheese and remaining basil and arugula. The paste that forms will create a pesto that is much more interesting than just whirring everything together in a blender. Form the paste into a cake and put in a small bowl. Pour 3 tablespoons olive oil over and stir. Taste and adjust seasoning, adding salt if necessary. Set aside.

Cook manicotti in well-salted water until barely al dente. Drain thoroughly and set aside on a baking sheet or another flat surface.

Make the filling by combining the ricotta, beaten egg, Volpi Coppa and ½ cup of the pesto, stirring to combine. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add cream only if the filling is too stiff and adjust seasonings to taste.

Add about 2 cups of marinara to the bottom of a 9-by-13-inch baking dish – enough to cover the bottom of the dish to about ½-inch. Using a pastry bag, fill manicotti and place in the dish so they are nestled together. Tear the mozzarella into pieces and scatter over top, then drizzle with more pesto. Cover with tin foil and bake for about 15 to 20 minutes and then uncover and bake for another 10 minutes or so, until bubbly and cooked through.