

The month of February, for all its brevity, has more than its share of holidays. Celebrations include the weather predictions of a famous woodchuck, a day dedicated to romance and a commemoration of the country's presidents.

The history of our chief executives has been studied extensively, but what about their wine preferences? I believe that February is the perfect month to consider our presidents and their wines.

Our first president, George Washington, was known to be a wine lover. His inventory contained the best that France had to offer, but his favorite was the dessert wine, Madeira. This fortified quaff originates from the Portuguese island off of the coast of Morocco, where the wine was carried to the New World in the hulls of sailing ships inside casks of 92 gallons known as "pipes." The wine became the darling of the upper classes in the fledgling country and import houses sprung up in all major ports. This was at a time when most people drank rum with the cultivation of sugar cane in the southern states and the Caribbean islands. Raising a glass of Madeira this month is a worthy tribute to the father of our country.

Our third president, Thomas Jefferson, could be considered the first "oenophile in chief." Not only did he enjoy the wines of France when he was ambassador to the court, but he took copious notes of soil types, grape varieties and vinification techniques. He traveled the major regions of Bordeaux,

Burgundy and the Rhone Valley, where he developed an appreciation for the greatest wines of the age. Jefferson ordered barrels of wine from the wineries he loved and had them shipped to Monticello, his estate in Virginia. Interestingly, he had his wine bottled and then shipped. An unusual practice at the time, this ensured that sailor crews would not be able to tap the wine casks and then top them off with water. Jefferson planted grapes extensively in the Charlottesville, Va., area to try and develop wine regions in this country that would rival those in Europe. Alas, the fragile vinifera could not survive in a climate where pests and diseases thrived. The next time you pull a cork from a bottle of wine, tip your hat to Thomas Jefferson.

Over the country's history, wine often has been a part of diplomacy. Richard Nixon, a Californian, was known to love Bordeaux, but, when he famously visited China in 1972, he took along Schramsberg blanc de blanc sparkling wine to be served at dinner with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. The details of that trip may have been forgotten but the wine never will. Other California sparklers served at the White House in recent years include bottles from Iron Horse, Chandon, Gloria Ferrer and Roederer Estate. I can't think of a better way to celebrate our presidents than by popping open a bottle of California bubbly. **B**

Keep sipping,  
Steve

## HAIL TO THE QUAFF

*This month, enjoy a wine fit for presidents.*

BY STEVE JULIANA

## FINE WINE & GOOD SPIRITS



*Broadbent Rainwater Madeira Non Vintage* \$15.99 | Code # 43750

Aged in oak casks for at least 3 years. Esteemed for its concentrated aroma and subtle flavor, it can be served as an apéritif or as an after dinner drink. Madeira, warm and luscious in both its dry and sweet variations, makes an excellent wine for winter. Clear dark reddish-copper in color, it breathes classic and very appealing Madeira scents of dried dates and figs and mixed nuts.

– Winemaker's notes



*Pezat Bordeaux Superieur 2016* \$12.99 | Code # 76974

Medium to deep garnet-purple colored, the 2016 Pezat displays lovely red cherries, mulberries and redcurrant jelly scents with touches of cinnamon stick and tilled soil. Medium-bodied, juicy-fruited and bursting with red berry preserves flavors, it has a soft texture and spicy finish.

– 89 points Wine Advocate



*Iron Horse Classic Vintage Brut Green Valley of Russian River Valley 2014* \$44.99 | Code # 81386

"Flavors of apple skin and lemon verbena accent this wine's tart, high-toned acidity and restrained richness. A winery flagship, it presents as dry and textured, with a tight structure of finesse. It finishes on a hazelnut tone."

– 89 Points Wine Enthusiast



# QUARANTUNE

*Nearly York turns lemons into longevity.*

BY DEBORAH LYNCH



**W**e all know those songs that just feel like summer. They're the ones we turn up on a windows-down drive or play on repeat at the barbeque. But bottle this summer up, and you'd think even the catchiest tune couldn't make the summer of COVID a jam.

Think again.

Nearly York, a Lancaster-based alt-pop band, released a new song, "These Nights," striking a chord with listeners who have felt a longing for carefree summer nights.

Although newly released, the song has been kicking around since 2014 or 2015. Originally called "New Year's Eve," the song seemed to fit the quarantine times, as well. When the band recorded in Nashville last fall, members played around with it, and the entire instrumentation, including a new beat, changed.

With that, "These Nights" was reborn. They shot the music video in drummer and percussionist Chris Mundy's garage and released it all on the same day in June.

"It was written about the idea of just having fun with your friends," Brad Hartman, guitarist and bassist, said. "COVID was an underlying thing we weren't really thinking about at the time."

The chorus from "These Nights" echoes these sentiments.

"These nights aren't complicated;

My friends, we keep things simple enough when we show up, oh yeah."

And show up they have.

Nearly York formed in 2018 when Hartman and lead vocalist and guitarist Lucas Gienow were music recording technology students at Lebanon Valley College. The two immediately connected over music. Mundy came along later when he found out through bartending with Gienow that he was making music.

"I started pestering my way in, and here we are," Mundy said.

Nearly York often plays in the Harrisburg area at events like Kipona, Fire and Ice Festival and the Millennium Music Conference. But, like many musicians, they've had to adapt this year, finding creative ways to get their music out.

## CHANGES

While COVID has been destructive, it has also been the catalyst for innovation. Businesses, schools and many other institutions changed their models to survive. Artists and musicians like Nearly York are no exception.

All three band members still have "day" jobs that sustain them. Gienow is a record producer/engineer and bartender, Hartman works audio for Clair Global in Lititz, and Mundy is a school counselor. But they have used the COVID "free time" to write new music and perform virtually.

Gienow livestreams performances through Facebook. He posts tip-jar links to his Paypal and Venmo accounts and finds that fans have been generous.

They are also working on videography to be better equipped to shoot their own music videos. Using Zoom and their own recording equipment, each member of the band records his part separately then sends it off to be mixed.

"The song you're hearing was recorded in my room, Brad's room and Chris's room," Gienow said.

When Nearly York officially started, the members formed an LLC. This has allowed them to act as the business that they are, writing off everything from gas on trips to instruments and equipment.

"All the money we made in the past few years would go into our business account," Hartman said. "So, we had saved up quite a bit of money. ... We're pretty lucky to be in the situation to be able to record at home."

The pandemic has forced techniques the band plans to continue using post-COVID, but members agree that forming the LLC was the smartest thing they did.

"I'm 30, playing in original bands since I was 16, and this is the only band I've been in that I haven't been losing money," Mundy said.

## SILVER LININGS

With a loss of touring income, Nearly York has focused more on its YouTube channel, Facebook page and Instagram account.

"Why not be creating content—short videos of us playing songs, acoustic versions, alternate versions," Gienow said.

Nearly York has produced some of its music at Studio 2300 in Nashville with the help of Dustin Richardson, a mixing engineer for Universal Music Group. Richardson, who has mixed for artists including Ariana Grande, Post Malone, The Killers and KISS, said most musicians and artists have had to turn to livestreaming and social media "not only for exposure, but to help make ends meet as well."

He said that, while most streaming is free, it has other benefits—bands are reaching more fans globally.

"A lot of the time, I work with bands who don't have a clear vision of what they want to sound like, but Lucas and Brad make it easy because they are both very hands-on and opinionated," Richardson said.

Locally, the band turns to Carl Bahner to mix and produce its songs. COVID benefited his work as a remote mix engineer since recording had to be done remotely. He said that his project load tripled after quarantine.

"There were some definite silver linings," he said.

One day, we all hope, COVID will be history, and music will return to live venues.

However, the band now worries about the paychecks they might be offered for reduced capacity audiences. If they have to accept less, what will that mean for the future, when things truly return to normal? Will musicians be able to command fees similar to what they used to draw?

"We put years of work and effort into creating entertainment value," Gienow said. "That has a price we feel it is worth. So, we have to make sure that doesn't get undercut."

*For more information about Nearly York, visit [www.nearlyyork.com](http://www.nearlyyork.com). Watch the music video for "These Nights" on their YouTube channel. Photos by Jeff Pittenger.*



# SQUIDDING AROUND

*Rosemary puts  
pot to ink.*

BY ROSEMARY  
RUGGIERI BAER

For a long time, I have wanted to try squid ink pasta. My husband and I often visit the little Italian restaurant, Pastorante, in Midtown Harrisburg. They serve a beautiful dish of black squid ink pasta bathed in a rich cream sauce and topped with shrimp. I have come so close to ordering it only to default to my usual spaghetti with meatballs. I do like seafood very much, including calamari, but I don't like "fishy fish." And, since it's made from the black ink extracted from ocean squid, calamari or cuttlefish, I was certain squid ink pasta must be fishy.

But after talking to several people who have eaten this unusual black pasta, I decided this

Italian cook had to give it a try. So first, I had to find some. I found one bag at my favorite place at the West Shore Farmers Market, Peggy's Silver Spoon. This was dried pasta, although I would have preferred a fresh version, which Pastorante uses.

Trying to re-create a dish I had only viewed from afar was a challenge. I knew that a cream sauce would be best for the dark pasta and, although I thought briefly about crab, I settled on shrimp. But I struggled with the mechanics of the dish.

- Should I make a traditional béchamel? This is a blend of butter, flour and milk, and I wasn't sure a flour-based sauce was what I wanted.

- Should I use cream and could I cook it long enough that it would thicken? Or maybe half and half to cut the richness?
- What about other seasonings? Would chopped garlic or hot pepper add just the right touch?
- Should I cook the shrimp separately from the cream sauce?
- How much butter would be just enough or would olive oil be better?

I normally follow recipes rather than create them. But spoiler alert: This turned out very well. Here are the ingredients I used, and this is what I did.



## *Squid Ink Pasta and Shrimp*

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 1 pound uncooked, cleaned and de-veined raw shrimp
- A tablespoon of Calabrian chili paste or a teaspoon of red chili flakes (I used the chili paste)
- 3 or 4 cloves fresh garlic, finely chopped
- 2 cups fresh heavy cream
- 10 to 12 ounces squid ink pasta
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt to taste
- Chopped parsley (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

- Melt 1 tablespoon of butter in a non-stick skillet. Sauté the shrimp over medium low heat for about 2 minutes. Add 1 or 2 teaspoons of Calabrian chili paste or ½ to 1 teaspoon of red pepper flakes if you prefer a little kick to your dish. Keep the shrimp warm until the sauce and pasta are finished.
- Cook the squid ink pasta according to package directions.
- In a large sauté pan or saucepan, melt the second tablespoon of butter over medium low heat and briefly cook the minced garlic.
- Add the 2 cups of heavy cream and simmer it gently for about 15 minutes. (I kept stirring it and watching it carefully until it became moderately thick.)
- When the cream has thickened, add the grated Parmesan and whisk it until very smooth.
- Before draining the pasta, scoop out about a cup of pasta water to thin the sauce if needed.
- Place the drained pasta into the pot with sauce and gently toss together. Add the sautéed shrimp and toss again. Thin with a little pasta water if needed.
- Place the finished pasta in a large, warmed serving dish. Sprinkle with a little chopped parsley for a little color, if you want.
- Ready to serve!

So, I took my first bite. It was delicious! The sauce was just the right consistency. The garlic and chili gave just the right kick to the bland cream. The two tablespoons of butter were just enough. The cheese was a nice complement to the shrimp, although they are often not used together. And the pasta was not at all fishy.

I am embarrassed to say, that for a very brief moment, I looked around for the TV cameras. It was fun. I am ready to make the dish with scallops or crab. Maybe lobster? What about lightly sautéed calamari for a perfect match?

Give this a try. I think you will like it, too. **E**