

PENNE A LA VECCHIA BETTOLA

(adapted from Joseph Realmuto)

1/4 cup olive oil
1/2 yellow onion, diced
1 clove garlic, diced
1/2 T dried red pepper flakes
1 T dried oregano
1/2 cup vodka
1 can best quality whole tomatoes (28 ounces)
salt and black pepper to taste
1/4 cup heavy cream
fresh herbs of your choice (oregano, basil)
parmigiano reggiano cheese, grated

Heat the oven to 375 F.

Heat the olive oil in a skillet, add the onions, cook for about 8 minutes over medium heat, add the garlic, red pepper flakes, and dried oregano, and saute for a couple of minutes, mixing constantly. Add the vodka and simmer until the mixture is slightly reduced. Drain the tomatoes and add them to the skillet, crushing them slightly with your hands or a large wooden spoon (careful, they will splatter!). Season lightly with salt. Cover the skillet and place in the oven for one and a half hours. Remove the skillet from the oven, let it cool for 15 minutes, then place the contents in a blender. Puree until smooth.

While you cook the pasta in plenty of salted boiling water, finish the sauce back in the skillet, setting over medium heat, and adding heavy cream. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Simmer for about 5 minutes, add the cooked pasta, and allow them to gently simmer for a few more minutes. Add fresh herbs and parmigiano cheese right before serving.

