

FOR RICH, ELEGANT ZINFANDELS (CLARET-STYLE)  
**PASTA WITH ARTICHOKES, PANCETTA,  
MUSHROOMS, AND PEAS**

SERVES 4

- 1 lemon, halved**
- 4 large artichokes**
- 13 tablespoons olive oil**
- ½ cup water, or more as needed**
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms (any combination of button, cremini, chanterelles, or fresh porcini)**
- ⅔ pound pancetta sliced ¼ inch thick, unrolled and cut crosswise into ¼-inch strips**
- 2 cups sliced red onions**
- 1 tablespoon very finely minced garlic**
- 1 cup peas, blanched**
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme (optional)**
- 1 pound dried garganelli or fresh fettuccine**
- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley**

Fill a large bowl with cold water. Squeeze most of the juice from the lemon halves into the bowl, reserving a little juice for later. Remove the leaves of each artichoke until you reach the heart. (You can keep some of the tender green inside leaves if you like.) Pare away all of the dark green around the outside of the heart. Using a sharp spoon, remove the fuzzy choke. Cut the artichoke hearts into ¼-inch slices and drop them into the prepared acidulated water.

Heat 4 tablespoons of the olive oil in a sauté pan or skillet over medium heat. Drain the artichokes and add to the pan. Squeeze a little of the reserved lemon juice over the artichokes and drizzle them with ½ cup water. Cook, stirring occasionally and adding additional water as needed, until the artichokes are tender but not too soft, about 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. (Artichokes can be prepared up to 8 hours in advance. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.)

In a large, heavy sauté pan, heat 3 tablespoons oil over high heat. Add the mushrooms and sauté until just softened, about 3 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside.

Add 2 tablespoons olive oil to the sauté pan and warm over medium heat. Add the pancetta and cook, stirring often, until cooked through and just starting to brown, 5 to 8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the pancetta to the bowl with the mushrooms, leaving any fat in the pan.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil for the pasta.

Add 4 tablespoons olive oil to the pancetta drippings. Add the onions and cook over medium heat until tender, about 8 minutes. Add the artichokes, mushrooms, pancetta, garlic, peas, and thyme, if using. Cook until heated through. Season the vegetables to taste with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, cook the pasta in the boiling water until tender if using fresh pasta or al dente if using dried. Drain the pasta and add to the vegetable mixture in the sauté pan. Toss well over low heat for a minute or two. Transfer to a serving bowl or to individual bowls. Sprinkle with Parmesan and parsley. Serve hot.

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*I first ate this delicious pasta at a little Roman trattoria called Alfredo alla Chiesa Nuova. The restaurant faced the Chiesa Nuova and looked out onto a piazza with the most outrageous fountain, which resembled a giant soup tureen. When spring vegetables were just starting to come into season, they did a fabulous version of this classic pasta. Oh, those little sweet peas! If you can't wait for peas or can't find any really good ones, use asparagus. Or add both. Alas, a sad footnote: in the name of progress, this charming neighborhood restaurant has been demolished—for a bank. Fortunately, nothing can erase my memories or my passion for this recipe.*

*Garganelli are a quill-shaped dried egg pasta. They resemble penne rigate, but are more delicate in texture. —Joyce*

*Many wine drinkers are convinced that artichokes and wine never work. That's true if the artichoke is the focal point. Artichokes can distort white wines (making them taste sweet and flat) and red wines (twisting tannins and taking the middle palate out of the wine, making it taste thin). But when they are sautéed and treated as an added ingredient, they contribute nuttiness and complexity. This pasta recipe includes several Zin-friendly ingredients: mushrooms, noodles (which provide texture and match the wine weight), and pancetta. The combination is an appetizing tapestry of flavors that sets off the stylish, spicy interpretations of this varietal. —Evan*