 # 125: Meaty Mains

Ragu

Rebecca Wilcomb, Gianna

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 pound guanciale (Italian cured meat), diced (pancetta can be substituted)
5 pounds beef chuck, cut into 1-inch chunks
2 tablespoons salt
1 tablespoon black pepper
4 cups diced yellow onion
2 cups diced carrot
2 cups diced celery
1/2 cup tomato paste
6 ounces chicken livers, chopped
1/2 bottle good dry white wine
10 bay leaves
1/2 tablespoon red pepper flakes (or more to taste)
4 cups chicken stock
Pappardelle, tagliatelle or rigatoni pasta
Parmigiano Reggiano for serving

Heat the olive oil in a large Dutch oven until almost smoking, then add the guanciale. Cook until golden brown, stirring frequently. Remove the guanciale from the pot using a slotted spoon and set aside.

Season the beef with the salt and pepper and add to pan with the guanciale fat and olive oil. Cook until light golden brown, then add the vegetables. Cook for about 3 minutes, then add the tomato paste and stir well. Cook for another 2 minutes, then add the chicken livers, wine, bay leaves and red pepper flakes.

Once the wine is cooked until almost dry, return the guanciale to the pan with the beef. Add the stock and cook over low heat, covered,

stirring frequently until the beef is tender and delicious. Add more stock if needed, taking care not to add too much. The ragu should be wet enough to cook together like a thick gravy and not stick to the pot. Taste and add more seasoning if necessary. Serve with your favorite pasta and a sprinkle of Parmigiano Reggiano. It's great with pappardelle, tagliatelle, or rigatoni.
Serves 10 to 12.