

For the Love of Olive Oil

By Sophie Jasinski

My mother and father warned me that love comes when you least expect. I didn't expect to fall in love the day I visited Planeta Winery. But I walked in, sat down, and it was right in front of me.

It wasn't love at first sight, though. At first I was distracted by a gorgeous glass of white wine named *Secreta* ("secret" in Italian). Before coming to the winery, we learned the steps to a perfect tasting: swirl, sniff, sip, and spit or swallow. I swirled my glass looking at the color and thickness of the wine. I sniffed it; it had a nice scent. I sipped it and found it had a fruity taste. Then, out of courtesy to others around me I decided to swallow. I have to admit I was quite intrigued by the wine, or so I thought.

Bowls of bread were put on the table. Before coming to Italy, I never ate bread, probably because of the many calories packed into a single piece. Since I was on vacation, I decided I was going to try something new. I slowly took a bite of bread and olive oil. My mouth dropped. Unlike heavy olive oil found in America, Planeta's was light and bursting with many delicious flavors. I had to sit in silence for a moment to comprehend what I had just experienced. Like love, it slapped me in the face. I thought I was going to take that bottle and drink a big gulp of it. I would go so far to say that I would probably have proposed to it, that is, if I could.

I couldn't stop with the bread and olive oil. I found myself ignoring conversation and stuffing my face with more and more pieces of bread. It didn't cross my mind that there might actually be a first course. The waiter came out carrying a bowl of pasta with pesto and fennel. I took a bite. *Al dente*, my favorite. Could I have seconds please? Yes. I didn't even have to ask for thirds, it just kept coming.

Somehow, I had enough room for more olive oil and bread. Then the salad came out packed with fresh fruit. It was a light finish, so I figured why not have another piece of bread and some olive oil? I dove right in, like usual. I stopped only to watch a plate of *biscotti* covered in almonds and honey being put on the table. So salad wasn't the last course?

I couldn't say no to dessert. If I had only one cookie, I could still fit in another piece of bread drenched in olive oil.

After this experience I wanted everything with olive oil. I was so crazy in love. Just like any American girl would, I took him home with me; well, make that the Planeta sampler pack.