NATE'S PICK · BARBERA

BARBERA-BRAISED RED CABBAGE WITH APPLES

A nod to his German roots, Nate's braised cabbage is the side that cuts through everything else on the plate. Barbera has plenty of acid and little tannin, so the cabbage braises sweet-tart and deep purple without turning bitter. It's better the next day, which makes it the easiest dish here.

SERVES 8

INGREDIENTS

- 4 oz thick-cut bacon, cut into ½-inch pieces (or 3 Tbsp duck fat)
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 medium red cabbage (about 2½ lb), cored and thinly sliced
- 2 tart apples, such as Granny Smith or Pink Lady, peeled and grated
- 1 cup Barbera
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar, plus more to finish
- 3 Tbsp dark brown sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 4 whole cloves
- 6 juniper berries, lightly crushed (optional)
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

1. **Render the bacon.** Cook in a large Dutch oven over medium heat until the fat renders and the bacon is crisp, 6–8 minutes. Move to a plate with a slotted spoon.
2. **Soften the onion.** Add the onion to the fat and cook until soft, about 5 minutes.
3. **Braise.** Add the cabbage, apples, Barbera, vinegar, brown sugar, spices, bay leaves and 1½ tsp salt. Toss to coat. It will look like too much cabbage, but it cooks down by half. Bring to a simmer, cover and lower the heat. Cook, stirring every 15 minutes, until very tender, 1 to 1¼ hours.
4. **Finish.** Uncover, raise the heat and cook until the liquid reduces to a glossy glaze, 5–8 minutes. Remove the cinnamon, cloves, juniper and bay. Stir in the butter and the bacon. Season with salt, pepper and a splash more vinegar.

MAKE AHEAD

Up to 3 days, chilled. Reheat gently with a splash of water.