



AN INSTANT POT BRAISE

The Beauty of the Tough Cut

Vermont Wagyu Osso Buco Meets Keenan 2022 Cabernet Franc

“Source the Best. Cook the Truth. Serve the Soul.”™

COOK WITH A PURPOSE.



“Respect the ingredients. Understand the science. Use the tools.”

PERFECT. I’LL TAKE THEM.

Some of the finest things in life come from parts that don’t get much respect. Beef shanks, for example. Tough, full of connective tissue, loaded with collagen, and hardly anyone’s first choice at the butcher counter.

Perfect. I’ll take them.

These beautiful shanks come from Dr. Sheila Patinkin’s Vermont Wagyu. While most associate Wagyu with luxurious, marbled steaks, I’m fascinated by what happens when lesser-celebrated cuts receive the attention they deserve.

Enter Osso Buco.

Traditionally a Milanese preparation featuring veal shanks, Osso Buco means “bone with a hole.” Inside? Marrow. Surrounding it? Connective tissue that transforms into silky gelatin under heat and moisture. Extraordinary richness follows.

Tradition might suggest a Northern Italian red. Barolo would be magnificent. But the mountains of Napa Valley have something to say about that.

Enter Michael Keenan’s 2022 Spring Mountain District Cabernet Franc.

Savory character, vibrant acidity, herbal complexity, and beautiful structure. Everything needed to complement deeply flavored Wagyu without overwhelming it. But it goes in the glass, not the pot. In the pot, I stayed true to Milan: a dry white wine joins the tomatoes, aromatics, stock, and thyme. Tradition in the pot. A challenge at the table. And here’s where tradition meets technology. **The Instant Pot.** Centuries of culinary wisdom, modern pressure cooking. What once required hours of gentle braising can now achieve remarkable tenderness in a fraction of the time.

Respect the ingredients. Understand the science. Use the tools.

Because great cooking isn’t about blindly following tradition. It’s about understanding why traditions work and knowing when to challenge them.

SERVES	PREP	DRY BRINE	COOK	WINE
2	20 min	4 hr min. · overnight ideal	~90 min (~25 hands-on)	Keenan 2022 Cab Franc





Why the Shank. Why This Wine.

THE CUT

The shank is the lower leg. It works hard every day, so it is packed with connective tissue made of **collagen**. Cook it fast and hot like a steak and it is tough and chewy. Cook it low, slow and wet, and that collagen gradually converts into **gelatin**: the meat falls apart and the sauce turns rich and silky. That is the whole magic trick of a braise.

Why the pressure cooker works. At normal pressure, water boils at 212°F. Under an Instant Pot's high pressure, it boils at approximately 240°F. Hotter liquid breaks collagen down faster, so under an hour of pressure cooking can do what typically takes 2½ to 3 hours on the stove. Thickness matters as much as weight.

Don't skip the marrow. The bone in the middle is the "hole" in *osso buco*. Scoop out the soft marrow and spread it on your fork or stir it into the sauce.



Two cross-cut Vermont Wagyu shanks, resting on a rack before cooking. Look at the marbling, the white seams of connective tissue, and the marrow bone.

THE WINE

2022 Cabernet Franc, Upper Bowl Vineyard

94

Vinous (Antonio Galloni), Dec. 2024 · 92 James Suckling, March 2025

Upper Bowl is Keenan's highest vineyard, at about 2,000 feet on the estate in the Spring Mountain District. Suckling finds black cherry, blackberry, mocha and licorice, with firm tannins and a slightly leafy, cedar finish. Galloni notes strong Cabernet Franc character and classic Spring Mountain grip.

Variety	100% Cabernet Franc
Vineyard	Upper Bowl, estate · ~2,000 ft
Harvest	Sept. 12 & Oct. 4, 2022
Oak	20 months, French & American
Alcohol	14%
Acidity	0.61 g/100 mL
pH	3.82
Bottled	July 2, 2024
Cases	553

WHY THIS PAIRING

Cabernet Franc has a savory, herbal side, and it meets the thyme, celery and tomato head-on. Tomato is tangy, so the wine needs enough freshness to keep up. This is a young wine with firm tannins; Suckling suggests drinking it from 2028. The rich, gelatin-laden braise is a beautiful counterpoint: protein and fat in the dish help soften young tannins. Decant it an hour ahead. The braise itself is made with dry white wine, the Milanese way, so the sauce stays bright and the Cabernet Franc brings the depth at the table.

"Great cooking isn't about blindly following tradition. It's about understanding why traditions work."

SOURCING & VARIATION NOTES

No Instant Pot? The old-fashioned way works. Same steps in a Dutch oven, then cover and braise in a 325°F oven or at a bare simmer on the stove for about 2½–3 hours, until fork-tender. It costs time and attention. The Instant Pot uses physics and chemistry to save the one commodity we can never get back: time.

Other cuts. Short ribs would be amazing. Regular beef shank works too, and the classic Milanese version uses veal shank. **Stock:** I used Kitchen Basics; homemade is even better.

Where to buy. Dial up Vermont Wagyu and see if they have more! Have a farm nearby? Stop in and ask. Regular beef shank is often in the supermarket meat case (sometimes sold as "soup bones"), and international markets are a good bet. Wagyu shank, you'll need to order.

Wine. I used white, the traditional Milanese choice. Red works too (the Cab Franc would be lovely in the pot), even pink. Just make sure it's a dry wine you would happily drink. Use good wine!

Why the microplane? Grating garlic breaks open more of its cells. That lets an enzyme (alliinase) turn a compound called alliin into allicin, the source of garlic's sharp, punchy flavor.

Go classic: gremolata. Milan's traditional topping (see Step 12) cuts through all that richness with fresh lemon and raw garlic, for almost no carbs.



Sear, Deglaze, Pressure, Finish

INGREDIENTS · SERVES 2

Vermont Wagyu beef shanks

2 cross-cut pieces, about 1.5 lb total (mine were 1.69 lb)

Kosher salt

A scant 1 tsp for the dry brine (I used Aldi's), plus a pinch in the braise. Brands differ: that's about ¾ tsp Morton or 1¼ tsp Diamond Crystal.

Beef tallow

1–2 tsp, for the sear. Olive or avocado oil also work.

Dry white wine

1 cup, one you'd happily drink. The Keenan Cab Franc is for the glass.

Yellow onion

1 medium, minced

Carrots

2 medium, chopped

Celery

2–3 stalks, chopped (I used 3; my wife voted for 2)

Garlic

4–5 cloves, minced or grated on a microplane

Fresh thyme

5–6 sprigs (or about 1 tsp dried)

Diced tomatoes

1 can (14.5 oz)

Beef stock

1 cup, high quality

Black pepper

To taste

Cornstarch or tapioca starch

1 tbsp, optional, to thicken

Fresh parsley

Chopped, for garnish

Gremolata (optional)

1 lemon, zested · 2 tbsp parsley, finely chopped · 1 small garlic clove, microplaned

KEY EQUIPMENT

6-quart Instant Pot

Tested in a 6-qt. Or a Dutch oven for the stovetop/oven method

Wire rack + plate or sheet pan

For tempering and resting the seared shanks

Microplane · tongs · wooden spoon · wide spatula



Packed Sept. 10, 2026, in Springfield, Vermont, and carrying the Authentic Wagyu seal.

THE METHOD

1. Dry Brine

Salt the shanks on all sides with kosher salt. Leave them uncovered in the fridge for at least 4 hours. Overnight is even better.

2. Temper & Prep

30–60 minutes before cooking, take the shanks out of the fridge to take the chill off. Meanwhile, prep every ingredient and set it all out, organized and ready to go.

3. Sear

Set the Instant Pot to “Sauté” on high and melt the tallow. Brown the shanks on both flat sides (about 3 minutes each), then stand them up and brown the edges (3–4 minutes). Total: 8–10 minutes. You want a deep golden-brown color. The goal is browning, not cooking the meat through. The pressure cooker does that.

4. Rest

Move the seared shanks to a rack set over a plate or sheet pan.

5. Deglaze

Pour in the wine and scrape up the browned bits (the *fond*) from the bottom of the pot. Simmer until it has reduced by about half. Much of the alcohol cooks off; some always stays.

6. Vegetables

Add the onion, carrot, celery and garlic. Stir and cook for 90–120 seconds. You shouldn't need more fat, but if another teaspoon helps, add it.

7. Build the Braise

Add the thyme, stock and a little salt and pepper. Stir, and scrape the bottom clean. Return the shanks and any juices to the pot. Spoon the tomatoes over the top and **don't stir again**. Thick tomato sitting on the bottom is a common cause of the Instant Pot “Burn” warning.

8. Pressure Cook

Lock the lid, seal the valve, and set High Pressure for 40 minutes for about 1.5 lb of shank. Larger shanks (about 2 lb)? Add 5–7 minutes. The pot needs 10–15 minutes to come up to pressure before the timer starts.

9. Natural Release, Then Vent

Let the pressure come down on its own for 10 minutes, then turn the valve to “Venting” to release the rest. Keep your hands and face away from the vent. My test cook: I quick-released right at 40 minutes. The shanks were tender, but my wife said they could use about 5 more minutes. The 10-minute natural release gives them that gentle extra time, and it keeps hot liquid from spitting out of the vent. Check with a fork: the meat should pull apart easily. Still tough? Seal it and cook 5–10 more minutes on High. Cook until fork-tender, but no longer.

10. Lift Out the Shanks

Use a wide spatula or slotted spoon to move the shanks and bones to a plate. They should be very tender and may fall apart. That's a good thing. Fish out the thyme stems.

11. Finish the Sauce

Two options. Set the pot to “Sauté” and simmer the liquid down to concentrate the flavor. Or, if you're hungry: stir 1 tbsp cornstarch or tapioca starch into a few tablespoons of cold water. When the sauce is bubbling, swirl the mixture in a little at a time until it is as thick as you like.

12. Serve

Spoon the sauce and vegetables into wide bowls, add the shanks, and top with chopped parsley. **Optional, and worth it:** mix the gremolata (lemon zest, parsley, garlic) and sprinkle it on top for a bright, fresh finish. Pour the Cabernet Franc.

The whole lesson: about 25 minutes of hands-on work. The pressure cooker does the rest. Respect the ingredients. Understand the science. Use the tools.



The Numbers. The Farm. The Vineyard.

THE FARM

Vermont Wagyu at Spring-Rock Farm

Dr. Sheila Patinkin, a retired pediatrician, raises Fullblood Wagyu at Spring-Rock Farm in Springfield, Vermont. In September 2025, Vermont Wagyu became the first U.S. farm to ship Certified Authentic Wagyu beef, a USDA-certified program of the American Wagyu Association. You can see the seal on the package. Steaks get the headlines, but the whole animal deserves respect. Ask about shanks.

To order: vermontwagyu.com · (802) 885-7812 · Springfield, VT 05156

THE WINERY

Keenan Winery, Spring Mountain District

Robert Keenan founded the winery in 1974 on Spring Mountain, high above St. Helena. Today Michael Keenan and his son Reilly farm the estate vineyards. The Upper Bowl block is their highest, at about 2,000 feet. Only 553 cases of the 2022 Cabernet Franc were made, aged 20 months in French and American oak.

keenanwinery.com · (707) 963-9177 · St. Helena, CA



The "bone with a hole." Marrow in the center, collagen all around it.

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NUTRITION

Per serving (½ the recipe). Estimates — see notes.

MACRONUTRIENTS

	AS WRITTEN	WITH 1 TBSP STARCH
Calories	~600 kcal	~615 kcal
Protein	52g · 35%	52g · 34%
Total Fat	30g · 45%	30g · 44%
Carbohydrates	24g · 16%	28g · 18%
Alcohol (est.)	~4%	~4%

How we got here: ~30% of the 1.69 lb package is bone, leaving ~1.2 lb raw meat, or about 6 oz cooked per serving. Total carbs, not net; most come from the carrots, onion and tomatoes (~5g fiber). Alcohol: the USDA estimates ~25–35% survives a braise of this length; we used 30%, about 25 kcal per serving. Marrow is not included: about 1 tbsp (15g) per serving adds roughly 110 kcal, almost all fat.

KEY MICRONUTRIENTS

NUTRIENT	AMOUNT	% DV
Zinc	~11mg	100%
B12	~4mcg	167%
Selenium	~40mcg	73%
B3 (Niacin)	~8mg	50%
Iron (total)	~4.5mg	25%
Vitamin A (carrots)	~500mcg	56%

Based on about 6 oz cooked beef per serving. Wagyu varies in fat; all values are estimates.

SODIUM

Roughly 1,400–1,500 mg per serving as written (an estimate; salt brands vary a lot). About half comes from the brining salt. The rest comes from the stock, the canned tomatoes, the pinch of salt in Step 7, and the beef and vegetables themselves. To trim to roughly 1,000–1,100 mg: use no-salt-added tomatoes and unsalted stock, and skip the pinch in Step 7. Taste at the end instead.

A NOTE ON THE PLATE

Want a carb on the side? Northern Italians would reach for risotto (saffron risotto is the classic Milanese partner) or creamy polenta. Roasted potatoes or a crusty Italian bread for sopping up the sauce work too. None of these are in the numbers above, and they add meaningful carbs. Lower-carb: mashed cauliflower or sautéed greens.

LOWER-CARB OPTION

Skip the starchy side, bread and thickener to cut the carbs and the potential blood-sugar bump. The braise alone is about 24g carbs per serving; to go lower, halve the carrots and onion.

LEFTOVERS

Even better the next day. Refrigerate within 2 hours in shallow containers; eat within 3–4 days. Chilled, the sauce sets like jelly. That's the gelatin from all that collagen. Rewarm gently, covered, until steaming hot.

