

MUSHROOMS

Fun Guy

French-based woodland mushroom company Borde was founded in 1920 – Alain Bordes, who represents the third generation of the family-run concern, shares his vast knowledge of fungi *by Pierre Godeau*



until late autumn. In China, summer is porcini season, whereas in the Balkans you get them in late spring.

Where do they grow best?

You can never be sure. For mushrooms to grow, you need a humid climate with some temperature variation, you need woodlands or prairies, and you need elevation. In the woodlands, there have to be particular species of trees. Some require deciduous trees like oak, ash and hazel to develop, while others prefer resinous species such as pine and spruce. Porcinis grow in most regions of France, in the Balkans, in Yunnan and in Mongolia. You get lots of morels in India, Pakistan, China and Turkey, and large quantities of chanterelles in the Balkans. Everywhere, growth increases when the phase of the moon changes.

How are wild mushrooms different from cultivated ones?

The former grow naturally in forests, without any human intervention, and are gathered by hand. Quantities vary greatly from one season to the next – and from one location to the next. It's impossible to predict what the harvest will be.

While there's no difference between a wild mushroom and one cultivated from the same mycelium, most wild mushrooms such as porcini, chanterelles and black trumpets remain impossible to cultivate. The Chinese cultivate certain types, such as morels, and experiments are being done in France. However, there are so many factors that need to be controlled – temperature, moisture, proper mycelium development – that growing them is still a very uncertain

and not necessarily economically worthwhile venture.

What's the best way to preserve a mushroom after picking it?

The best “technology” to use depends on the type. Morels are best dried, chanterelles should be preserved in glass jars and freezing is best for porcini.

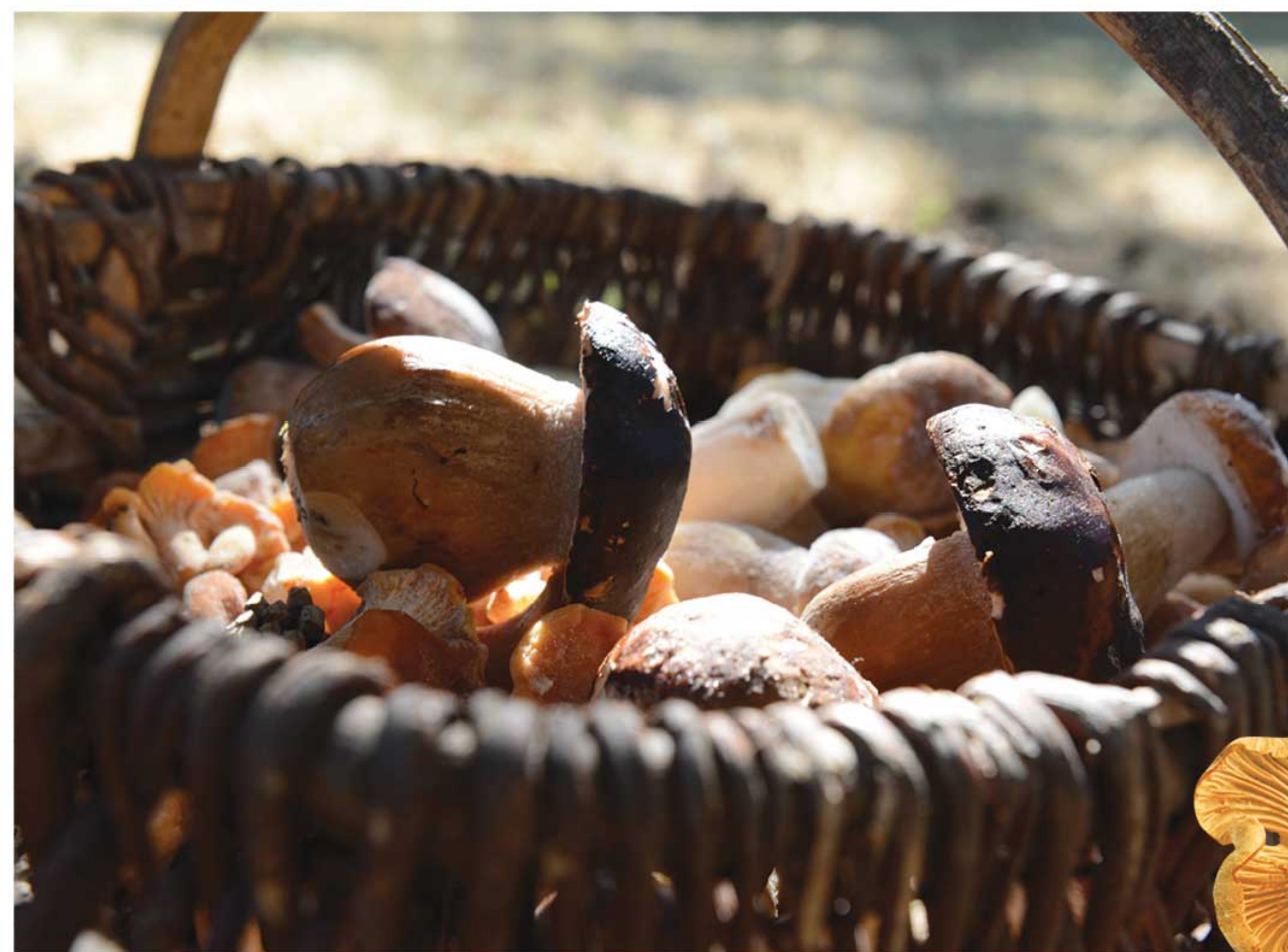
What's the best way to cook them and what are some ideal wine pairings?

Mushrooms can be cooked very simply by pan-frying them with garlic and parsley, or can be prepared in more sophisticated

ways. Although recipes reflect a country's gastronomic traditions and culture, some are very similar from one to another.

For example, in Yunnan, mushrooms are cooked with herbs and the recipes are very similar to French ones.

As for pairings, a chicken cooked in cream with morels is delicious when served with a Jura yellow wine. And you can't go wrong with a Bordeaux, especially the Pomerols, with their woodsy notes recalling the scent of mushrooms. A white Burgundy like chardonnay or a young Rhône such as a Condrieu goes marvelously well with sautéed chanterelles.



What are the most popular types of mushrooms and what's the best season to gather them?

The most emblematic are porcini, chanterelle and morel. In France, morels start to grow in the spring, chanterelles from mid-June and porcini in the autumn. Depending on the country, the mushroom season ranges from spring

