

# PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



## May 2012 – Festival Foods

Festivals are a great way to celebrate the best our country has to offer whether it is produce, seafood or just old-fashioned caramel popcorn.

The California Strawberry Festival is held each year in Oxnard, California on the third weekend in May. Strawberries add a great burst of acid and beautiful color to a salad. Paired with brie cheese and fresh pears, then topped with tangy sour cream dressing, this salad needs a wine with bubbles to cut through the creamy dressing and a bit of sugar to balance the sweetness of the berries. Prosecco or an Asti Spumanti from Italy are both great options.

Closer to the San Francisco Bay Area, the Asparagus Festival takes place in Stockton, California. This year it was held the last weekend in April. As a second course, try Asparagus Ceviche. It is a substantial salad that blends cooked shrimp and crab with raw asparagus. In most ceviche, the citrus juices cook the fish; in this case, the juices cook the asparagus! Asparagus has a tendency to make wines taste vegetal and calls for a wine with intense fruit flavor like Riesling. Furthermore, the salad has jalapeño, garlic and onion, so the spicier you like it, the more sugar your wine needs to balance the heat. German Rieslings offer both dry and off-dry wines with excellent acid to stand up to the citrus juices. If you prefer American wines, look for Riesling from Mendocino County or Washington State. These regions are cooler, from a higher latitude and, therefore, usually produce wines with higher levels of acidity.

Vidalia Onion BBQ'd Ham utilizes the super sweet onions from the state of Georgia's Vidalia Onion Festival. Simply sauté the onions with garlic and add them to

your favorite vinegar-based, store-bought sauce. Gewürztraminer wine has a sweet spiciness that will work well with the ham and Caramel Corn Sweet Potatoes on the side. You can't go to a festival without finding caramel popcorn, and you won't even miss dessert if you finish your evening with these two recipes. You can find them both on my website, [www.LaSommeliere.com](http://www.LaSommeliere.com).

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## **Brie and Pear Salad with Creamy Strawberry Dressing**

### **INGREDIENTS**

#### Salad

- 1 small round of brie cheese
- 4 pears
- Romaine lettuce or your favorite salad greens
- 1 basket fresh, ripe California strawberries

#### Dressing

- 1/4 cup raspberry vinegar
- 3/4 cup non-fat sour cream
- 1 cup fresh, ripe California strawberries
- 1 tbsp. high-quality strawberry preserves

### **DIRECTIONS**

Slice brie cheese into bite-sized pieces. Slice pears vertically. Place greens on four plates. Place pears and cheese atop greens. Put strawberry slices around salad and atop greens. Put dressing ingredients in a blender or food processor and whisk for one minute. Drizzle over salad.

Yield: 8 servings

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## Asparagus Ceviche

### INGREDIENTS

1 pound asparagus spears, chopped  
1 pound shrimp, cooked and chopped  
1 cup crabmeat, shredded  
1 bunch green onions, chopped  
1/2 cup chopped red onions  
1 1/2 cucumbers, peeled and chopped  
1/2 cup cilantro leaves, chopped  
1 cup chopped tomato  
2 cups shredded cabbage  
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped  
2 lemons, juiced  
3 limes, juiced  
1-4 cloves of garlic, to taste  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1-2 large avocados, chopped

### DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, toss all ingredients (except avocado) gently until well mixed. Cover and chill for 30 to 45 minutes to allow flavors to blend. Add avocado just before serving.

Yield: 4-6 servings

## Vidalia Onion BBQ'd Ham

### INGREDIENTS

2 large Vidalia onions, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 large (1/2 gallon or more) bottle vinegar based barbeque sauce  
13 pound pork ham

### DIRECTIONS

Sauté the onion and garlic in olive oil until onions are tender. Add onions to barbeque sauce and stir well.

Place uncooked ham in a baking bag. Pour about 1/2 gallon of barbeque sauce mixture into the bag. Seal the bag and marinate in the refrigerator overnight - about 8 to 12 hours. Remove the ham from the baking bag and place it on the grill. Cook ham until the meat is tender, basting often with barbeque mixture.

Yield: 12 servings

## Caramel Popcorn Crusted Sweet Potatoes

### INGREDIENTS

2 (40-ounce) can yams, drained  
2 (20-ounce) can crushed pineapple, drained  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
4 cups caramel popcorn, coarsely ground and kernels discarded  
8 tablespoons margarine, melted  
2 tablespoon all-purpose flour  
2 tablespoon brown sugar  
3 cups miniature marshmallows

### DIRECTIONS

With an electric mixer, beat yams, pineapple, and cinnamon until smooth. Pour into a greased casserole pan.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Combine the remaining ingredients and sprinkle on top. Bake 20 minutes or until marshmallows are golden brown. Serve warm.

Yield: 8 servings