

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



January 2020 – Warm Winter

When I created this menu, the idea was to come up with a winter meal that was warming but not standard comfort food. In the end, I realized that this meal could be enjoyed in either hemisphere and just about any climate. The starter salad is warm, but the wine is refreshing. The pork roast main course would be appealing on the slopes or at a luau. And, a dessert wine with cheese is pretty appealing anytime or anywhere.

Because New Zealand is in the southern hemisphere, December is summertime. This makes their grape growing season the exact opposite of California's. However, it has a cool maritime climate similar to our coastal growing regions. The resulting wines are intensely flavored and highly acidic.

Acclaimed for their Sauvignon Blanc, they also make great Pinot Noir and other white wines. Just about any of the no-oak whites will go with a Warm Balsamic, Kale, and Delicata Squash Salad. I like the idea of choosing a Gewürztraminer. The floral notes of a Gewürtz contrast the earthy flavors of the onion, garlic, and cheese while coaxing out the spicy notes in the squash and red pepper. Additionally, the wonderful acidity stands up to the vinegar and acts as a refreshing palate cleanser.

Choose a New Zealand Pinot Noir to pair with the Roast Pork and Chestnut Puree for the main course. The earthy pinot perfectly complements the savory pork, and the silky texture of the puree mimics the texture of the wine. Add color to the plate with a seasonal green vegetable. Consider Brussel sprouts in a colder climate or, in a warmer area, some verdant green beans with a squeeze of lemon to brighten the dish.

One of the most versatile, simple, and welcoming desserts is wine and cheese. Go all out with a French Sauternes, a

combination of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon. Its honeyed, stone fruit sweetness is to-die-for with a Cambozola cheese. Cambozola is a brie cheese that has been inoculated with a blue mold. It is super creamy with just a hint of blue pungency. Serve it with thin slices of French baguette and make it even more dessert-like with a drizzle of honey over the top.

So, go on. Pair Up!

Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in the San Francisco Bay Area. www.LaSommeliere.com

Warm Balsamic, Kale, and Delicata Squash Salad

INGREDIENTS

2 Tablespoons butter
¼ cup diced onion
1 red pepper, diced
½ delicata squash, peeled, seeded and diced
8 oz. baby Portobello mushrooms, sliced
4 cups kale
1 teaspoon garlic, minced
1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar
¼ cup Asiago cheese
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

In a large skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Add the squash, onions, and peppers and sauté for several minutes until softened. Add the kale, garlic, and balsamic vinegar. Sauté until the kale is deep green but not fully wilted. Remove from heat and serve topped with Asiago or Parmesan cheese. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Yield: 2 entrée or 4 side servings

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



Pork Loin Roast

INGREDIENTS

One (2-pound) boneless pork loin roast with a generously thick layer of fat and, if possible, preferably with the skin still attached and definitely with a thick layer of fat on the top side
1 to 2 teaspoons olive oil
Coarse sea or kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 475°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet or shallow roasting pan with foil.

Pat the pork skin with paper towels until it is completely dry. Using a sharp knife, score the skin by making deep, long, parallel cuts in the fat, 1/8 to 1/4 inch apart, being careful not to cut through to the underlying pork. Rub the skin with the oil and sprinkle with a generous amount of salt and pepper.

Place the pork on a wire rack, skin or fat side up, and place the rack and pork on the baking sheet or in the roasting pan. Roast for 25 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F and roast until cooked through, 40 to 45 minutes longer, rotating the pan once halfway through to ensure even cooking. The meat should be slightly pink in the middle, although the juices flowing from the pork should not be bloody. If you have a meat thermometer, it should read 145°F. You may need to adjust the cooking time, depending on the weight of the pork roast. The pork will continue to cook even after it's removed from the oven.

Transfer the pork roast to a warm platter and let it rest in a warm place for 10 to 20 minutes before carving. Don't cover the roast, as any steam coming from the resting pork will soften the skin or cracklings.

To carve the pork roast, remove the cracklings, and cut the crisp pork skin into strips. Carve the pork roast across the grain.

Yield: 4 servings

Savory Chestnut Puree

INGREDIENTS

1 14.8 ounce jar roasted chestnuts
1 bay leaf
1 medium onion, chopped coarsely
1 cup chicken broth
¾ cup milk, warmed
3 Tablespoons butter, softened
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Pour broth into a large saucepan with the bay leaf and add the onions. Bring to a boil and simmer 3-4 minutes. Add the chestnuts to the pan. Bring back to a boil and simmer 15 minutes. Most of the liquid will be absorbed by the chestnuts. Strain out the excess broth. Remove the bay leaf, discard.

Place the chestnuts and onions in the bowl of a food processor while still warm. Give the mixture 3-4 turns in the processor. Add the warm milk and process again until smooth. Add the softened butter and process again until smooth and incorporated. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve warm.

Yield: 6-8 servings