

# PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



## September 2018 – Here's to the Moms

Ah... September in Northern California. Outside it still feels like summer, but the kids are back in school and moms everywhere are breathing a sigh of relief. I have created this menu in honor of moms who may finally find a moment to enjoy an afternoon meal with friends, even if it means that you dine while brainstorming for the upcoming school fundraiser.

Chardonnay is a complex white wine that is fuller in body than lighter white wines like Pinot Grigio and Chenin Blanc. Its ripening ability results in higher alcohol levels, and when it goes through malolactic fermentation, the resulting wine is smoother and takes on flavors like popcorn butter and crème brûlée. Additionally, while most whites are aged in stainless steel tanks, Chardonnays are often aged in oak barrels. The barrel adds wonderful smoky and spicy flavors and also extends the bottle life of the wine. Blanc de Blancs is a sparkling wine or champagne made from 100% Chardonnay grapes. Compared to a Brut wine, it is a little rounder and often has toasty flavor. This Pear-Celery Salad will echo the pear flavor found in the Chardonnay grape, and the high acid levels of a sparkling wine counterbalances the vinegar in the dressing.

A still Chardonnay is an excellent partner to a Mushroom-Corn Quiche. I love this recipe because it utilizes simple pantry ingredients. As mentioned above, many Chardonnays undergo malolactic fermentation to convert tart malic acid into buttery lactic acid. This conversion gives the wine a rich butteriness that is perfect for a quiche.

Chardonnay Port is a dessert wine that, when done well, is truly delicious. It is both sweet and crisp, with flavors of tangerine, peach, vanilla, and honey. It is a delightful

complement to lighter desserts like Apricot Coconut Meringue Bars. Northern California locals can find Chardonnay Port at a few wineries in our own Livermore Valley. However, if you are having trouble securing one, a Sauternes from France is a good substitute and can be found at most grocery and wine stores.

So, go on. Pair Up!

*Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in the San Francisco Bay Area. [www.LaSommeliere.com](http://www.LaSommeliere.com)*

## Pear-Celery Salad

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 stalks celery, trimmed and cut in half crosswise
- 2 tablespoons cider, pear, raspberry, or other fruit vinegar
- 2 tablespoons honey
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 ripe pears, preferably red Bartlett or Anjou, diced
- 1 cup finely diced white Cheddar cheese
- ½ cup chopped pecans, toasted
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 6 large leaves butterhead or other lettuce

### DIRECTIONS

Soak celery in a bowl of ice water for 15 minutes. Drain and pat dry. Cut into ½-inch pieces.

Whisk vinegar, honey, and salt in a large bowl until blended. Add pears; gently stir to coat. Add the celery, cheese, and pecans; stir to combine. Season with pepper.

## **PAIR UP**

*with Maria Terry*

Divide the lettuce leaves among six plates and top with a portion of salad. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

Make ahead tip: Prepare salad without pecans up to two hours ahead. Stir in pecans just before serving.

Yield: 4-6 servings

### **Mushroom-Corn Quiche**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

1 tablespoon butter  
1 onion chopped  
1½ cup mushrooms sliced  
4 eggs  
1 can (14 oz.) cream style corn  
½ cup milk  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
¼ teaspoon dried thyme leaves  
1 cup Monterey Jack or Fontina cheese, grated  
9" pastry shell, unbaked

#### **DIRECTIONS**

Heat oven to 400°F.

In a skillet, melt butter over medium-high heat. Sauté onions and mushrooms for three minutes. Remove from heat.

Whisk egg slightly. Stir in corn, milk, flour, and thyme, mixing well. Add sautéed vegetables and ½ cup cheese.

Pour into pie crust. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes or until set and golden brown.

Yield: 4-6 servings

### **Apricot Coconut Meringue Bars**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

##### **FOR THE BASE**

½ cup butter  
1 cup brown sugar  
2 egg yolks (reserve whites for the meringue top)  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 ½ cups flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
2 cups homemade or good quality apricot jam

##### **FOR THE TOP LAYER**

2 egg whites  
1 cup brown sugar  
1 cup fine unsweetened dried desiccated coconut

##### **TO MAKE APRICOT JAM**

2 cups chopped dried apricots  
1 ½ cups boiling water  
⅔ cup sugar  
2 tablespoons lemon juice

#### **DIRECTIONS**

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9×9" square baking pan and line with parchment paper.

##### **THE COOKIE**

Cream together the brown sugar and butter until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg yolks and vanilla extract. Sift together the flour and baking powder. Fold into the creamed mixture.

Spread evenly into the bottom of the prepared pan and bake for 25 -30 minutes. Remove from oven and cool for 10 minutes. Spread the jam over the surface of the base.

# **PAIR UP**

*with Maria Terry*

Whip the egg whites to soft peaks.  
Gradually beat in the brown sugar. Fold in the dried coconut. Spread carefully over the surface of the jam layer. Return to the oven for about 20-25 minutes.

Cool completely in the pan before cutting into squares or bars. Store in airtight containers. Freezes well.

## **APRICOT JAM**

You can use a good quality jarred jam, but if you want to make your own, cover the chopped apricots with the boiling water and add the sugar and lemon juice. Bring to a slow simmer for about 15-20 minutes.

Using a potato masher, mash the apricots and continue to simmer into a jam consistency until the jam is quite thick and all the visible liquid has boiled off. Cool to at least warm before using in the cookie square recipe.

Yield: 24 bars