

# PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



## May 2014 – Sweet Mama!

My mom is the sweetest lady in the world and she loves sweet wine. In fact, most of the country prefers wines that have a little residual sugar. And why shouldn't we like sweet wine? Sugar softens the perception of acidity, tames the spice in food and just plain tastes good. In wine, the opposite of sweet is dry. This makes sense when you think of sugar as fuel for fermentation. When all the sugar is converted into alcohol, the fuel is gone and fermentation stops. It is like a gas tank in a car; when it is dry, the engine stops. If the winemaker chooses to stop the fermentation early, the residual sugar left will determine the sweetness of the wine. It can range from slightly sweet (off-dry) to very sweet. Generally, I like to serve off-dry wines at the start of a meal and save super sweet wines for after.

Muscat de Beaumes de Venise is a medium sweet, white wine from the South of France. Try it with Spicy Crab Stuffed Mushrooms. The sugar in the wine will offset the heat of the pickled jalapeños and hot sauce. Additionally, the fresh citrus flavors of the wine will be an excellent match with the crab. If you can't find a Muscat de Beaumes de Venise, look for an off-dry Sauvignon Blanc or Riesling.

Sweet wines come in three colors: pink, white and red. Both Lodi and Livermore Valley produce wonderful red Zinfandel, and some producers leave just a touch of residual sugar to enhance the fruit flavor. It is the perfect wine for smoky, slightly sweet, BBQ'd pork. I like shredded BBQ pork in a soft roll, piled up with my favorite coleslaw. BBQ'd pork can take days to make, so in the interest of time, consider picking some up from a local BBQ joint or Costco. Coleslaw, on the other hand, is easy. Here is a

delicious coleslaw recipe that has lime juice and cilantro. You can make it with broccoli slaw or regular cabbage, whichever you prefer.

The king of sweet wines is Port. Traditionally, it is made from a blend of red Portuguese grapes, but it can be made from any grape. In California, winemakers create terrific Port from Zinfandel grapes. Port is one of the only wines I ever suggest with chocolate, and Blackberry Truffles will echo the primary berry flavor found in Zinfandel grapes. The combination of chocolate truffles and port wine will sing (and so will you after a few glasses).

So, go on. Pair Up!

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

## **Spicy Crab Stuffed Mushrooms**

### **INGREDIENTS**

12 ounces white mushrooms, cleaned and stems removed  
1 pound lump crabmeat, picked over for shells and cartilage  
1 teaspoon chopped garlic  
1/2 cup chopped pickled jalapeños  
1/4 pound pepper Jack cheese, grated  
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
1 teaspoon hot sauce  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 cup mayonnaise  
2 ounces Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated

### **DIRECTIONS**

Preheat the oven to 350°. Place mushroom caps on a baking sheet lined with parchment

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paper. In a large bowl, mix together crabmeat, garlic, jalapenos, pepper jack, Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce, salt, mayonnaise and Parmigiano-Reggiano. Place a heaping tablespoon of the crab mixture into the cap of each mushroom. Bake the mushroom caps for 30 minutes.

Yield: 8 servings

## Cilantro Broccoli Slaw

### INGREDIENTS

1 (12 oz.) package broccoli slaw  
¼ cup diced cilantro  
¼ cup diced green onion

### Dressing:

½ cup oil  
1/3 cup lime juice  
1 tbsp. vinegar  
1 tbsp. sugar  
2 cloves garlic, crushed  
1 tsp. salt and lemon pepper  
½ tsp. crushed red pepper

### DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, mix slaw package, cilantro and onion. Mix dressing ingredients. Toss well.

Yield: about 6 cups

*(on website)*

## Chocolate-Blackberry Truffles

### INGREDIENTS

2 lbs. bittersweet chocolate  
1 cup heavy cream  
1 pint fresh blackberries, crushed  
¼ cup Mountain Blackberry Syrup

(<http://natureshollow.com/ecommerce/product/10/Mountain-Blackberry-Syrup>)

¼ cup Cabernet Sauvignon  
¼ cup cocoa powder

### DIRECTIONS

In a saucepan, reduce berries, syrup and wine by one half. Let cool and then blend and strain. Set aside.

In another saucepan, scald cream. Remove from heat and add chocolate. When chocolate/cream mixture is smooth, fold in berry/wine mixture. Pour into a shallow pan and refrigerate until set.

Roll desired size truffles and then roll again in cocoa.