

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



January 2017 – Winter Down Under

After a long, cold holiday season of heavy foods and red wines, I crave a light, refreshing meal with crisp, white wine. The wines that immediately come to my mind are the great white wines from down under. Australia and New Zealand make some of the best wines in the world. The fact that these countries are on the other side of the world, basking in the warmth of summer, makes these wines seem even more appealing.

Start your meal off with a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc paired with this Avocado Grapefruit Salad. NZ Sauvignon Blancs are some of the most fragrant and flavorful in the world. The zesty vinaigrette, silky avocado, and slightly bitter grapefruit each complements the wine in its own way. The grapefruit echoes the citrus flavors in the wine. The shallot and mint are bold flavors that won't be overrun by the intensity of its flavor. And, finally, the tart vinegars stand up to the substantial acidity while the avocado provides a little fat to balance.

New Zealand is known for its Sauvignon Blanc (no comma) as Australia is known for its Chardonnay. The Aussies often let their Chards go “naked” by limiting wood contact and preventing the softening effect of malolactic fermentation. Of course, it is still the Chardonnay grape (no comma) that is generally softer than Sauvignon Blanc. It has a little extra body that is perfect with Skinny Shrimp Scampi. This scampi recipe has less butter than the classic, but it is just as flavorful. Plan to serve this with white rice and steamed asparagus, simple yet delicious with the savory sauce.

A sweet ending to this meal is a “sticky” wine paired with Kaffir Lime Custard. The folks in Australia refer to their white dessert wines as “stickies.” These late harvest, or

botrytis-affected, wines have a honeyed texture that inspired this nickname. In Australia, the premier region for sweet winemaking is the Riverina. Its climate is ideal for growing botrytis-affected grapes (humid weather, immediately followed by a dry spell). Most dessert wines have aromas and flavors reminiscent of tropical, citrus, or stone fruits. They pair nicely with desserts featuring these same fruits. Kaffir lime leaves offer a unique combination of lemon, lime, and mandarin orange aromas that subtly flavor the luscious cream.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Avocado Grapefruit Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 1 head butter lettuce
- 1 small bunch young spinach leaves
- 2 ruby grapefruit, sectioned
- 2 avocado, diced

Dressing:

- 4 tsp. sherry vinegar
- 2 tsp. raspberry vinegar
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 6 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. mint, finely chopped
- 2 tsp. chives, finely sliced
- Fresh ground pepper

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DIRECTIONS

Whisk together the dressing. Toss the dressing with the greens, and then gently place the grapefruit and avocado on top. Sprinkle with pepper.

Yield: 4-6 servings

Skinny Shrimp Scampi

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp. butter
2 tbsp. olive oil
1 shallot, peeled and thinly sliced
8 cloves garlic, minced
2 pounds raw shrimp (21-25 size), peeled and cleaned, with tails removed and patted dry
1 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. black pepper
½ cup chicken stock
1/3 cup white wine
¼ cup fresh lemon juice
1 tbsp. lemon zest
Chopped fresh parsley (garnish)

DIRECTIONS

Heat butter and oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add shallot and garlic and sauté for 2 minutes, or until fragrant, stirring occasionally. Add shrimp and immediately season (sprinkle) with crushed red pepper flakes, salt and pepper. Continue sautéing the shrimp with the garlic for about 3-4 minutes, or until pink on both sides and no longer opaque. Remove from pan and cover with foil to keep warm.

Add in the chicken stock, wine, lemon juice and lemon zest, and stir to combine. Let the

mixture continue cooking for an additional minute to boil down, then pour over shrimp. Garnish with fresh parsley.

Yield: 4 servings

Kaffir Lime Custards

INGREDIENTS

3½ cups heavy cream
1 cup sugar
2 kaffir lime leaves (available at specialty food stores or online)
½ cup plus 2 tbsp. fresh lime juice
2 teaspoons finely grated lime zest
¼ teaspoon salt
Sweetened whipped cream, chopped mint and sea salt, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

In a medium saucepan, combine the cream with the sugar and kaffir lime leaves and bring to a simmer. Cook over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until the cream is slightly reduced, about 15 minutes.

Whisk the lime juice into the hot cream. Strain the cream through a fine sieve set over a measuring cup. Stir in the lime zest and salt. Pour the cream into eight 6-ounce glasses and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, until chilled and set.

Yield: 8 servings