

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



March 2017 – Sparkling Brunch

Sparkling wine does not get enough credit for what it delivers. First, it is versatile because it goes with almost every type of food. Second, there are many well-priced and delicious sparkling wines that are easy to find. Finally, sparkling wine can turn the most ordinary of occasions into a celebration. Here is a menu that will allow you to try three different styles of sparkling wine, and make your next Sunday special.

In Italy, you can find sparkling wines that are spumante (fully sparkling) and frizzante (semi-sparkling). Prosecco, from northern Italy, is made in both styles. Prior to 2009, I could always remember the grape from which Prosecco was made because it had the same name as the wine. Since then, the Italians have returned to using the grape's original name, Glera, to protect the name of their DOC. Prosecco is delicate and has aromas of yellow apple, pear, and white peach. It also has a light palate due to its comparatively low alcohol content (about 11-12%). Be sure to check the label carefully for sweetness designations. Proseccos range from Brut (low sugar) to Dry (higher sugar). Whichever you choose, Prosecco will be perfect for Tomato-Curry Deviled Eggs. The bubbles will cleanse the palate of the rich yolk filling, and the fruit will balance the spice from the curry powder. Less expensive Proseccos have the standard DOC designation, or you can look for Prosecco Conegliano Valdobbiadene Superiore DOCG on the label if you want to splurge.

Next, Crab Salad with Blood Orange will be terrific with just about any sparkling wine. I like the idea of Brut Champagne with its tart citrus or stone fruit flavors and background of toasted brioche. The bright

acidity in the wine will counter the richness of the crab and avocado. The blood orange and ruby red grapefruit both have sweet undertones and mild acidity that will echo, not overpower, the wine's acidity.

Moscato d'Asti is another one of Italy's fantastic sparkling wines. It is even lower in alcohol (closer to 5-6%), and is made from the Muscat Blanc grape in a sweet, frizzante style. It has lovely peach, orange blossom and nectarine aromas that come from a compound called linalool. Moscato's fine balance of sugar and acid will match the sweet-tart flavor profile of Low Fat Lemon Muffins. These muffins are so flavorful, you won't miss any of the fat. The challenge will be not eating up the entire batch.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Tomato-Curry Deviled Eggs

INGREDIENTS

6 eggs
2 tbsp. mayonnaise
1 small, Campari tomato, peeled, seeded and chopped
1 tsp. tomato paste
¼ tsp. curry powder (or to taste)
Salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS

Place eggs in cold water, bring to boil. Cover pot and remove from heat. Let stand 15 minutes, drain, refill with cold water.

Peel and slice eggs in half. Remove yolks and combine with remaining ingredients to a

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smooth paste. Season to taste with salt and pepper and fill egg-white halves with

Yield: 12 halves

Crab, Avocado & Blood Orange Salad

INGREDIENTS

Vinaigrette

1/4 cup blood orange juice (about 1 orange)
1/2 teaspoon minced shallot
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and pepper to taste
Rice vinegar as needed

Salad

2 large cooked crabs (about 2 pounds each),
or 1 1/4 pound crabmeat, picked clean
6 blood oranges, segmented
2 ruby red grapefruit, segmented
1 to 2 large heads butter lettuce (16-20
leaves), torn
2 large firm-ripe avocados
(optional garnish)

DIRECTIONS

For the vinaigrette: Mix together the blood orange juice and shallots in a bowl. Slowly drizzle in the oils while vigorously whisking to form an emulsion. Season to taste with salt, pepper and some vinegar if needed.

Cut the avocados in half, cut into small dice and sprinkle with grapefruit juice to avoid darkening. Season to taste with salt.

Dress the lettuce with vinaigrette and arrange remaining ingredients on top. Serve

with a crisp crostini or some good crackers on the side for textural contrast.

Yield: 4 servings

(on website)

Low Fat Lemon Muffins

INGREDIENTS

3 tbsp. butter
1/3 cup fat free cream cheese
1 cup sugar
1 egg
1/4 cup fat-free egg substitute
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1 1/2 cups flour
1/2 cup 1% milk
Juice and zest of one lemon

Syrup

Juice and zest of two lemons and 1/3 cup sugar, blended together until sugar melts

DIRECTIONS

Cream butter and cream cheese. Add sugar, egg, egg substitute, juice and zest. Mix well.

While beating slowly, add baking soda and salt. Then add one half of flour, and one half of milk. Beat after each addition. Add remaining flour and milk alternating.

Spray muffin pan with non-stick cooking spray and fill to 3/4 full. Bake at 350° for 12 minutes or until center springs back when pressed with finger. Muffins will be light in color.

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Immediately after removing from oven,
poke center of each muffin with fork.
Spoon ½ tsp. of syrup on each muffin.

Yield: 24 mini-muffins