

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



August 2017 – Summer Dining

Welcome to *Pair Up*. Each month I will bring to you a full evening of fantastic menu selections with suggestions on the best beverages to complement the food's flavors. My goal is to create pairings of food and beverage to heights neither would see alone. I want to empower you to make your own selections that provide you with the style and flavor profile of the wine while leaving the selection of producer and price up to you and your trusted retailer.

This month I have created a menu that pairs up the lighter foods of summer with refreshing wines. Sauvignon Blanc immediately comes to mind. It is the quintessential summer wine: light, crisp and refreshing. Its citrusy, herbal flavors go perfectly with almost any summertime food. Anything you squirt a bit of lemon on or sprinkle with fresh herbs will harmonize beautifully with the flavors found in a bottle of Sauvignon Blanc. My absolute favorite food pairing with Sauvignon Blanc is tangy, fresh goat cheese. Goat Cheese Crostini with Roasted Beets transforms the cheese into a creamy spread. The wine's light body matches the delicacy of the cheese, the herbal character echoes the fresh herbs in the spread, and the crisp acidity stands up to the bite the cheese offers.

Salmon Topped with Seared Baby Tomatoes in Lemon Brown Butter is a delicious main course. A little fresh thyme, salt and pepper are all that is needed for the fish because the seared tomatoes bring an explosion of lemony goodness. The Sauvignon Blanc you opened earlier can continue right on into dinner, or if it is gone, you can open a delicate Pinot Noir. Pinot Noir is fantastic with grilled salmon because it is lower in tannin and won't stomp all over the tender fish. And salmon has plenty

of its own oil and fat, so when it takes on a little smoke from the grill, it will make a lightly oaked red sing. Serve with crusty bread and a mixed green salad dressed with lemon vinaigrette.

If you still have room for dessert, Luscious Lemon Bars paired with Italy's sweet sparkler Moscato d'Asti. The sweet/sour combination of the lemon bar is balanced by the slight residual sugar in the wine while the bubbles clear your palate for the next bite. Always remember that the wine should be sweeter than the dessert. If the wine isn't sweet enough, it will taste sour; it is better to serve a bitter counterpoint to the sweet dessert such as French Roast coffee.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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

GOAT CHEESE CROSTINI WITH ROASTED BEETS

INGREDIENTS

Beets:

¾ pound beets (about 2 medium)
1 cup water
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
Salt & pepper to taste

Cheese Spread:

1 (5-ounce) package goat cheese
1 tablespoon light mayonnaise
2 teaspoons minced fresh tarragon
Freshly ground black pepper

Crostini:

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24 (1/2" thick) slices diagonally cut French bread baguette, drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with salt, baked at 275° for 15 minutes or until crunchy

DIRECTIONS

Prepare the components of this recipe ahead and assemble at the last minute.

Preheat oven to 375°. For beets: leave root and 1" of stem on beets, scrub with a brush. Place beets in an 11" x 7" baking dish, and add 1 cup water to dish. Cover and bake at 375° for 45 minutes or until tender. Drain and cool. Using gloves, unless you want pink hands, trim off beet roots, and then rub off skins. Cut beets lengthwise into quarters, and cut each quarter crosswise into 9 (1/8") slices.

Combine vinegar, rind, juice, salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper in a medium bowl. Add beets, toss gently to coat.

To prepare cheese spread, combine goat cheese, mayonnaise, tarragon, garlic and pepper to taste in a small bowl. Spread each baguette slice with 1 teaspoon cheese mixture, top with 3 slightly overlapping slices of beet.

Yield: 12 servings (serving size: 2 crostini)

SALMON TOPPED WITH SEARED BABY TOMATOES IN LEMON BROWN BUTTER

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs. salmon filet
Fresh thyme
Salt and pepper

2 tbsp. olive oil
1 pint grape tomatoes
1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped
4 tbsp. butter
Juice of 1 lemon
Salt and Pepper

DIRECTIONS

Season fish with salt, pepper and fresh thyme. Grill or sear over high heat until just cooked through.

In a large skillet, heat oil to smoke point. Add the tomatoes and let them sear on one side for about 3 minutes. Add half the parsley and season with salt and pepper. Shake pan and cook for about 2 more minutes (the tomatoes will start to burst). Remove from pan. Cover with foil to keep warm.

Add the butter to the hot pan. Once the butter begins to brown around the edges, add the lemon juice and remaining parsley. Pour the hot lemon butter over the tomatoes.

Yield: 4 servings

LUSCIOUS LEMON BARS

INGREDIENTS

2 sticks (8 ounces) butter
2 cups flour
1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
4 beaten eggs
2 cups sugar
4 tablespoons flour
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 tablespoon finely grated lemon peel
Sifted confectioners' sugar

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DIRECTIONS

Heat oven to 325°.

Blend butter, 2 cups flour and 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar. Pat into ungreased 13x9x2-inch pan. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes.

For filling, blend together eggs, sugar, 4 tablespoons flour, lemon juice, and lemon peel.

Pour over first layer. Return to oven and bake at 325° for 20 minutes.

Loosen around edges, cut into bars and sift confectioners' sugar over the top while warm.

Yield: 24 bars