

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



December 2019 – Magnificent Madeira

December is a celebratory month full of parties, family traditions, and celebrations. It's the perfect time to open a special bottle of wine like Madeira, which is often overlooked but worth seeking out. It is one of the great wines of Portugal, made on a small, eponymous island south of Lisbon. The wines are fortified with brandy before fermentation is complete, allowing them to range from slightly sweet to very sweet. After fermentation is stopped, the wines are heated for three months to 20 years. The best wines continue to age in barrels an additional three to 20 years more! As you can imagine, such a lengthy process results in an incredibly complex wine.

There are four styles of Madeira. Sercial and Verdelho, the two lighter styles, are less sweet and often served cool. Start your Madeira experience with a Verdelho Madeira paired with your favorite pâté. Verdelho Madeira is a light amber color, has bright citrus fruit and spice aromatics, and has a classic nuttiness found in almost all Madeiras. It takes its name from the white Verdelho grape and is slightly fuller in body than the Sercial (which also takes its name from its own white grape). The weight of Verdelho is just right to complement the silky texture of the pâté, yet the acidity is there to handle the fat and even the acidic little cornichons pickles that are often served alongside.

For the main course, take it up a notch with a room temperature Bual Madeira paired with the following rich recipe of Roast Duck with Sweet Balsamic Glaze. Bual Madeiras also are made from white grapes with the same name, have fruit aromas like red apple, and bitter notes of coffee and brazil nuts. Bual is sweeter and has an even fuller body than Verdelho,

perfect for the sweet crispy skin and fatty meat. Finish off your plate with duck fat roasted potatoes and root vegetables.

End your meal with a room temperature Malmsey Madeira, which is luscious, sweet, and a dessert all by itself. It is made from the Malvasia white grape and has dried fig and floral notes along with the expected bitter notes of black tea, soy, and molasses. The sweet nuttiness of the wine works with chocolate or nut desserts. Alternatively, accentuate the sweetness of the wine by pairing it with a savory cheese such as Gorgonzola Dolce spread on Trader Joe's Raisin Rosemary Crackers.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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

Roast Duck with Sweet Balsamic Glaze

INGREDIENTS

One 6-pound whole Pekin duck (the most popular commercial duck breed in America)

Salt

5 garlic cloves chopped

1 lemon, small or medium, chopped

Glaze

½ cup balsamic vinegar

1 lemon, freshly squeezed juice

¼ cup honey

DIRECTIONS

If you purchase a frozen duck, defrost it in the refrigerator for a couple of days. Once defrosted, take the duck out of the refrigerator 30 minutes prior to cooking to

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bring it more or less to room temperature. Preheat oven to 350°F.

Prepare the duck: Remove giblets from inside the duck. Rinse inside and outside of duck with cold water. Pat dry with paper towels.

Set duck on working surface. Score duck's skin on the breast in a diamond pattern, making sure you only cut the skin without reaching the meat. Poke the other fatty parts of the duck with the tip of the knife all over to ensure fat release, especially in very fatty parts. You don't need to poke the duck legs (where the skin is pretty thin) except for where the duck legs connect to the duck body. Season the duck very generously all over with salt (include inside cavity of the duck, outside skin, and legs). Place the duck breast side up.

Put 5 chopped garlic cloves and lemon slices inside the duck cavity. Fold the two flaps of skin inwards to hold the garlic and lemon inside. Tie up the duck legs with butcher's twine.

Roasting (3 hours in 4 steps):

Place the bird breast side up on a large roasting pan with a rack. (Roasting pan should have a roasting rack to lift the duck from the bottom of the pan and allow the fat to drip below the duck). Roast the duck, breast side up, for 1 hour at 350°F.

Flip the duck on its breast and roast it breast side down (roast the other side) for 40 minutes, at 350°F.

Remove the roasting pan with the duck from the oven. Carefully remove the duck to a

platter (making sure the lemons and garlic from the cavity do not fall out; keep the skin on both ends of the duck folded), and carefully pour off all the duck fat and juices from the roasting pan into a large, heatproof bowl or container. You can use this fat to roast some potatoes and other root vegetables.

Flip the duck breast side up again on a rack in the roasting pan (the pan is now emptied of fatty juice). In a small bowl, combine ½ cup of balsamic vinegar with the freshly squeezed juice of 1 lemon. Brush all of the duck with the balsamic mixture (especially the scored duck breast) and cook the duck breast side up for another 40 minutes at 350°F, brushing every 10 minutes with the mixture.

Now, in a separate small bowl, combine ¼ cup honey and 3 tablespoons of balsamic vinegar lemon mixture leftover from the previous step. Brush the breast side of the duck with this honey-balsamic mixture and roast for another 40 minutes, brushing the duck breast side every 10 minutes with honey-balsamic mixture.

After the duck is cooked, remove it from the oven. Let duck stand for 15 minutes. Carefully remove and discard lemon from the cavity. Cut into four quarters and serve!

OVERVIEW: Roast for a total of 3 hours at 350 F: 1 hour breast side up + 40 minutes breast side down + 40 minutes breast side up brushed with balsamic-lemon mixture + 40 minutes breast side up brushed with the honey-balsamic mixture.

Yield: 4 servings