

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



October 2020 – Pasta Party

Pasta is great comfort food, and since it can often be served warm or at room-temperature, it makes a good “party” food. These two pasta recipes are perfect for a Halloween party. Serve them with a basket of bread and your guests can help themselves all night long.

With lots of flavorful arugula, this first pasta dish can be considered a salad. This is one of those recipes where you just toss everything together; it is quite simple to make. And while most salads do not play nicely with red wines, the cheese, nuts, and balsamic vinegar are all components that complement red fruit flavors and soften the tannic qualities of red wines. A Hermitage wine from France’s Northern Rhone wine region is a wine worth splurging on for this dish. The unique tobacco notes bring out the earthy qualities of the Gorgonzola cheese, toasted walnuts, and arugula. If you can’t find a Hermitage Syrah, a Syrah from just about anywhere else will do.

Pappardelle with Pancetta and Wild Mushrooms is also robust and can be served at room temperature. Pair it with a Salice Salentino from southern Apulia. It’s made from Negroamaro and Malvasia Nera grape varieties; Negroamaro has a rich bitterness similar to dark chocolate, while Malvasia Nera softens the blend. It is excellent with salty pancetta and buttery sautéed mushrooms. Remember to go easy on the chili flakes, or you may unbalance the wine by increasing the perception of the tannins. If want your pasta to be spicier, try a less tannic Pinot Noir. Pinot is always welcome to a party that includes mushrooms.

When the kids come home with their bags of goodies, see if you can fish out a Tootsie Roll or two. The hint of orange adds just a bit of sophistication to the chocolate

flavor and goes nicely with a sweet wine made from the Muscat grape. Muscat’s mandarin orange, mango, and honeysuckle aromas bring out those citrus notes, and its sugar level will hold up to the sweet candy.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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

Pasta Salad with Gorgonzola and Walnuts

INGREDIENTS

1 pound farfalle, cooked al dente
8 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil (plus extra for drizzling)
2 cups Gorgonzola cheese (cut into 1 cm cubes cold)
1 cup walnut halves
10 cups arugula (aka rocket)
2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar
Salt & pepper

DIRECTIONS

Place the Gorgonzola, walnuts, and rocket in a large bowl. Pour 8 tablespoons of the extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar over it and season with salt and pepper; mix thoroughly. Add the pasta to the bowl and gently toss everything together to allow the flavors to combine. Serve immediately or keep in a sealed container in the fridge for the following day. Do not keep longer than 48 hours and eat it at room temperature.

Yield: 4 servings

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Pappardelle with Pancetta and Wild Mushrooms

with fresh pepper and remaining Parmesan shavings.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 servings

1 pound pappardelle pasta (fresh or dried)
4 ounces thinly sliced pancetta, cut into strips
3 Tablespoons unsalted butter
1½ Tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1¼ pounds mixed mushrooms (chanterelles, bluefoot, oyster, etc.), brushed clean, trimmed, and halved or chopped if large
5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
2 Tablespoons chopped fresh thyme leaves
Pinch of crushed red chili flakes, or to taste
1/3 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese shavings, divided
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook pasta according to package directions. Drain, reserving ¼ cup cooking liquid.

Meanwhile, put pancetta in large, deep skillet and place over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until pancetta is browned and crispy, about 5 minutes. Remove pancetta with a slotted spoon, leaving drippings in pan; set pancetta aside.

Add butter and olive oil to skillet and cook over medium heat until butter melts. Add mushrooms, garlic, and salt; raise heat to medium-high and cook, stirring frequently, until mushrooms release their juices and brown, about 10 minutes. Add pasta, pancetta, thyme, chili flakes, ¼ cup pasta cooking liquid, and half the Parmesan and stir until noodles are coated. Serve topped