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The Grapevine

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR VINESSE WINE CLUB MEMBERS

TALKIN' TURKEY

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





Wine Steward:
Katie Montgomery

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EDITOR'S JOURNAL

The Time Has Come for a Turkey Makeover

By Robert Johnson

The turkey needs a makeover. Ol' Tom has been inaccurately portrayed for generations, and it's time someone set the record straight.

Let's begin with the myth about the first Thanksgiving dinner. A number of historians have made solid cases that the iconic multi-course meal involving the Pilgrims and Indians (not yet known as Native Americans) never happened.

According to author Andrew F. Smith, the story was concocted and included in history books to "create a sense of common heritage" for the children of immigrants who were surging into the country from all over the world. In other words, it was a "feel-good" story.

In 1777, when the Continental Congress declared victory at Saratoga, that "Thanksgiving" was celebrated not with turkey and all the trimmings, but rather with rice topped with a tablespoon of vinegar.

Long story short: The tradition of having turkey on the Thanksgiving table is much younger than we've been led to believe.

But there's no question that America raises a lot of turkeys, with most of the production centered in the South. Why there? It has to do with that region's tradition of tobacco farming.

It seems that the No. 1 enemy of the tobacco plant is the hornworm, and it turns out that turkeys love to munch of hornworms as much as we humans love to munch on Snickers bars.

Someone did the math, and we now know that 50 turkeys can protect 100,000 tobacco plants with their hornworm-eating habit.

Once his hornworm duties are completed, however, a turkey faces an unpleasant fate. Yes, we're talking about the roasting pan, in which Tom may spend anywhere from 165 to 360 minutes, depending on his size — the larger the bird, the longer the oven time. In the end, there is a price for gluttony, even among turkeys.

Speaking of gluttony, in the 34 years from 1970 to 2004, the average American's annual consumption of turkey jumped from 8.1 to 17.4 pounds.

Perhaps that eye-opening piece of information provides a catch phrase for turkey's much-needed makeover. May we suggest: "Turkey — it's not just for Thanksgiving anymore."





Winemaking: Hands-on or Hands-off?

The two basic “styles” of winemaking can be summed up thusly: hands-on versus hands-off.

The hands-on approach calls for the vintner to involve himself or herself in virtually every aspect of the process, from selecting the yeasts that spark fermentation to the speed of the fermentation to the specific types of vessels used for aging to the ultimate blending decisions.

The hands-off approach involves minimal intervention by the winemaker, with the goal being to make a wine that is an accurate portrayal of its fruit, its terroir and its vintage — in essence, a drinkable snapshot in time.

But when you think about it, even a minimalist approach involves important decision-making on the part of the vintner, and the expression of a preferred style.

The late Max Schubert, who oversaw the making of the legendary Penfolds Grange wine for many years, could never have been labeled a minimalist.

“It’s so essential that a winemaker give some of his



personality to his wine,” Schubert once said. “His personality is part and parcel of the wine itself. The greatest wines have implanted in them the ideas of the winemaker as to what they should be. His character is part

of the wine.”

It was Schubert’s belief that the wine world risked evolving into a bubble of boring sameness if all vintners followed the same “recipes” and procedures.

“We must not be afraid to put into effect the strength of our own convictions, and continue to use our imagination in winemaking,” Schubert added.



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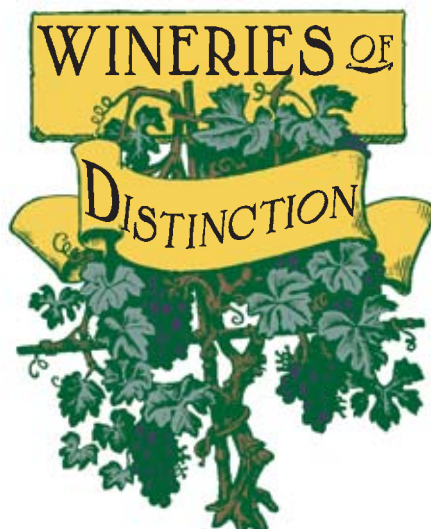
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Sir Peter Michael's Vision Stretches an Entire Century

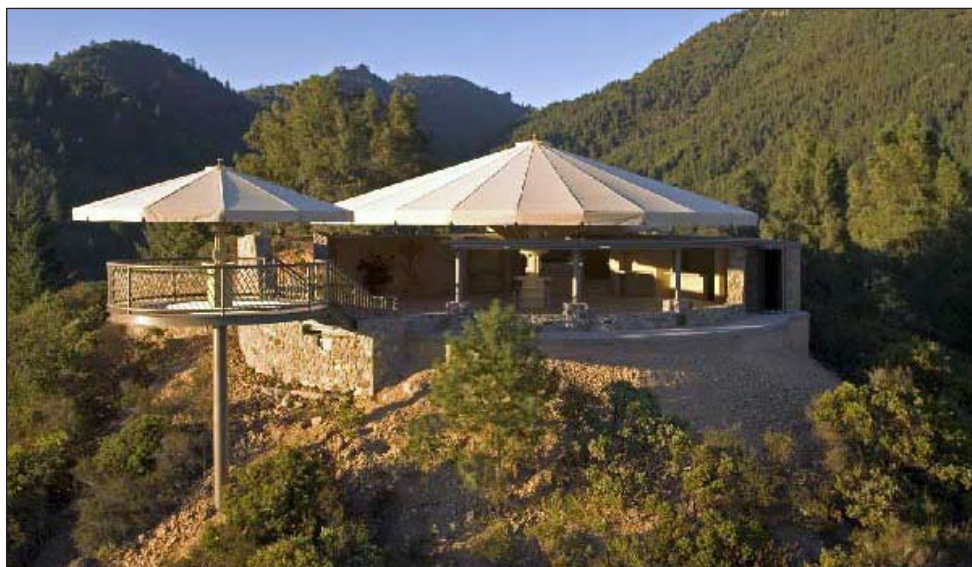
Will his winery in Sonoma County's Knights Valley remain in Sir Peter Michael's family for an entire century?

We likely won't be around to find out. But that certainly is the goal of Michael who, after an extensive, seven-year search for California property to serve as both family retreat and vineyard, purchased 630 acres of volcanic ridges on the western face of Mount St. Helena.

That was in 1982, and for the

entrepreneurial founder of Quantel and frequent visitor to Northern California, it was love at first sight.

A year later, Michael and his wife planted red Bordeaux varieties in the volcanic soils at the site. Four years after that, they hired Helen Turley to make their first wine, the 1987 Mon Plaisir Chardonnay, produced from fruit grown at the nearby Gauer Estate (now Alexander Mountain Estate) in the Alexander Valley. That wine was followed a year later by their first Cuvée Indigene Chardonnay, a barrel selection of wine fermented with indigenous yeast.



Over the years, the Michaels expanded their plantings of red Bordeaux varieties on the lower, warmer sites and Chardonnay on the higher, cooler portions of the estate.

To take full advantage of the unique conditions, each block was delineated and developed based upon the intricate puzzle of terroir. Soils, microclimates, topography and exposures were all considered in the selection of varieties, rootstocks, row orientation, vine spacing and drainage.

In addition to the vines, the family also ensured the long-term natural balance of the estate by restoring native habitats and extensively reforesting with native species trees — a nod to Sir Peter's "100 by 100 plan" — 100% family ownership for at least 100 years.

In 1998, the family purchased the 400-acre Seaview property, located on the Sonoma Coast. This amazing site possesses the best attributes of both coastal and mountain sites. While the climate is quite cool throughout the growing season, its location above the fog line provides enough sunlight to fully ripen the fruit.

Seaview was planted to Pinot Noir in 2006 and '07.

Last year, the winery purchased a 41-acre parcel on a raised plateau overlooking the east side of Napa's Oakville appellation, with 26 planted acres of red Bordeaux varieties.

Through the years, some of the most illustrious names in the industry have served as Peter Michael's winemaker, including Turley, Mark Aubert, Vanessa Wong, Luc Morlet and current winemaker Nicolas Morlet.

Wine has always been a way of life for Morlet, as it is for his brother and predecessor at Peter Michael, Luc. Both grew up working on the family domaine, Pierre Morlet & Fils, in Avenay-Val-d'Or, Champagne.

Born in Epernay to a fifth-generation winegrower family, Nick and his brothers grew up spending all their free time from school working on the family estate. At 40 acres, it was small enough to be managed by the family

alone most of the year, but large enough to require the efforts of all its members.

"Before you settle in an area, you must experience winemaking in many different places," Pierre Morlet had advised his sons. Nick pursued education and work that immersed him in the classic winemaking techniques of Champagne, Burgundy and Bordeaux. Following his degree in Viticulture, Enology and Wine Business at Lycée Viti-Vinicole de Beaune, Burgundy, he worked, as Luc had two years earlier, at Maison Chanson Père & Fils in producing Premiers and Grands Crus of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

Then, while working at Margaux's 2nd Grand Cru Classé Chateau Lascombes, Nick researched the advantages of macerating Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot in small oak barrels. His thesis on "vinification intégrale" won him honors when he received his Bachelor of Science in Enology from the prestigious University of Dijon in Burgundy (Jules Guyot Institute).

"I enjoyed school, being something of a science buff," says Nick. "But as I studied, I placed everything I learned against the background of all those seasons I spent in the vineyards and cellars. I truly believe in the constant observation of nature and the use of our senses to guide our (growing and winemaking) decisions."

And those decisions result in some amazing wines, vintage after vintage, for the Peter Michael Winery. We can only imagine what vintage No. 100 will be like.

Winery 4-1-1

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Exploring the Wine Islands of British Columbia



Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands (known as the Wine Islands) embody the fastest growing wine region in Canada, home to a quarter of British Columbia's wineries.

The region's crisp and fruit-filled wines, cider and mead are matched by an astounding variety of vegetables, fruit, seafood, meat, poultry and herbs. Wherever you choose to stop, you'll encounter friendliness, charm and artisanal production qualities, and you'll know that the owner(s) are somewhere nearby — perhaps even pouring your libation.

The Saanich Peninsula lies just a few minutes north of Victoria, yet truly feels like a world apart. Driving along country lanes lined with arbutus and wild roses, gazing at the gently rolling landscape, it's hard to believe that a major highway, ferry terminals and an international airport are nearby.

Sandwiched between a sun-warmed inlet and the island-dotted Strait of Georgia, the peninsula has a sheltered, mild and temperate nature.

This is reflected in the variety of fresh-from-the-field bounty — ranging from strawberries to sunflowers — sold at numerous roadside stands and markets.

Saanich also is Vancouver Island's newest viticultural hot spot, boasting the island's only certified-organic vineyard. Winemakers produce fruit-forward, floral whites such as Bacchus and Ortega, and light-to-medium-bodied reds such as Pinot Noir and Marechal Foch.

The southwest coast of Vancouver Island, known as Sooke, is edged with sparkling and protected bays, and traversed with walking trails through the Sooke Hills and beyond. The views are spectacular.

A breathtaking drive over the Malahat or a picturesque ferry ride brings you to the southern end of



TOURING TIPS

Cowichan Valley and the communities of Shawnigan Lake, Mill Bay and Cobble Hill. Sheltered by a ridge of high mountains to the west and warmed by the Strait of Georgia to the east, the valley boasts the highest average temperature in Canada, which creates ideal growing conditions for almost any crop.

Keep an eye out for vineyards and orchards with "Tasting Room Open" signs, where you can sample traditional cider, fruit wines made from local berries, and elegant,

aromatic wines that are nurtured by rich soil and the climatic combination of warmth and moisture. Local winemakers work with favorites such as Pinot Gris, Ortega and Pinot Noir, along with lesser-known varieties carefully matched to the maritime climate.

The “Warm Land” continues to Duncan, one of Vancouver Island’s best places to explore the art and culture of the region’s original inhabitants. The town itself is dotted with dozens of traditional totem carvings, and the Quw’utsun’ Cultural Centre showcases First Nations history.

You can stay for the unique experience of a traditional salmon feast, or seek out other fare in one of the city’s fine restaurants. Chances are your dinner will feature some of the local bounty, from herbs to organic vegetables to exotic game.

Houseboats bobbing gently on the water, kayaks gliding by, working fishing vessels — all of these provide real-life entertainment from the picturesque shoreline at Cowichan Bay. Wander the streets of this charming seaside village, stopping to browse in an eclectic boutique or watch an artist at work in the studio. Save time to sip wine and enjoy fresh-from-the-ocean seafood on a dockside restaurant, or sample handcrafted cheeses as you overlook the bay.

Salt Spring Island might just be the ultimate gastronomic getaway. More than 200 growers tend the meadows, fields and valleys of this largest of the Gulf Islands, cultivating everything from sheep to bamboo to grapevines.

Dotting the waters between mainland B.C. and Vancouver Island are hundreds of smaller islands, known as the Outer Islands, each with individual character that ranges from funky to sophisticated. Among the largest are Pender and Saturna,



where you can travel by ferry for a day trip or stay for a while in a full-service luxury spa hotel or family-friendly resort. With the development of wineries on both islands, you can enjoy some island wine as you settle into island time.

Each of the communities on the stretch of coastline known as Central Island sports its own charm and character. Bustling Ladysmith is a favorite with gourmands and antique-seekers. Nanaimo boasts a lively cultural scene, and a great selection of restaurants. A wide range of accommodations is available to suit every visitor, along with an equally compelling mix of boutique shops, restaurants and gourmet food producers.

From the sandy shores of the Pacific to Vancouver Island’s highest peak, the North Island has an incredible array of outdoor adventure opportunities. The Comox Valley is a dream destination for “foodies,” as inspired growers and farmers work with farmers markets, restaurants and specialty shops to create amazing culinary experiences. The theme here is quality food, with such delicacies as fresh wasabi, artisan cheese, organic pork and chicken, hand-made chocolates and fresh shellfish.

There’s more island-hopping to be had here, too. Just off the coast are two of the region’s best-kept secrets — the islands of Denman and Hornby. You must traverse one to reach the other, but it’s a worthwhile trip with plenty to savor on the way.

Stop in at a sun-kissed rose nursery or a sheltered organic farm, hunt for clams and shrimp on pebbled shores, or enjoy home-style pizza and Hornby Island wine or mead picnic-style while listening to local musicians.

To learn more about Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, visit: <http://www.wineislands.ca>

VINESSE

Hot LIST

1 Hot Wine Festival. As if we needed a reason to visit Barbados, along comes the inaugural Barbados Food and Wine & Rum Festival, scheduled for Nov. 19-22. Among the culinary stars expected to be on hand are Tom Colicchio, Marcus Samuelsson, Ming Tsai and Tim Love. In addition to a full slate of cooking demonstrations and tasting events, there also will be numerous wine seminars.

www.visitbarbados.org

2 Hot Holiday Album. For 20 years, Wine Country Music has been producing wonderful “soundtracks” for the Napa Valley and Sonoma County lifestyle. Now, the company has made a holiday CD, packed with stirring renditions of Christmas classics such as “Angels We Have Heard on High” and “Silent Night.” It’s the perfect accompaniment to a crackling fire, roasted chestnuts and a glass of wine.

www.winecountrymusic.com

3 Hot Chicago Steakhouse. David Burke’s Prime House has received a rare 3-star rating from *Chicago Sun-Times* critic Pat Bruno. The restaurant specializes in hand-selected meats that are dry-aged on the premises in a Himalayan salt-tiled aging room. But there is a price to be paid for the opportunity to eat a tender New York Sirloin that has been dry-aged for 21 days, and it’s reflected in the wine list. Of the 25 by-the-glass selections, only three cost less than \$10.

www.jameshotels.com



Vitis Vinifera. Name of the species of grapevine that is responsible for producing virtually all of the world's greatest wines.

Wente. One of California's most historic wineries, located in the Livermore Valley east of San Francisco. A maker of both still and sparkling wines.

Xarello. A winegrape grown in Catalonia, Spain, used primarily to make sparkling wines. Also known as Pansa Blanca.

Yeasts. Microscopic organisms that convert sugar to alcohol, a key aspect of transforming the juice of crushed grapes into wine.

ZD. One of the Napa Valley's highly acclaimed wine estates, and maker of exceptional Pinot Noir, among other varieties.

Aspect. The general topography of a vineyard, including the direction the vines face, and the angle and height of the slope.

VINESSE STYLE

STYLISH SEASONINGS

Want to add a stylish twist to a simple dish? It's easy — if you know which seasoning to select. Here are a few ideas, straight from the Vinesse test kitchen...

Grind peppercorns to bring almost any salad to life, or combine them with extra virgin olive oil and salt, and toss the mixture with pasta. They also add a tasty kick to balsamic vinegar.

Oregano can be added to meatballs, pasta salads and pizza sauces. It also can be sprinkled on grilled eggplant and zucchini, sautéed with mushrooms, or blended into tomato sauces. And it will make you think differently about chili.

Herbs de Provence — a mix of aromatic Mediterranean herbs such as fennel, rosemary, lavender, thyme and savory — can be crumbled onto a tomato and mozzarella pizza, or added to grilled zucchini and peppers. If you



like olives, add a dusting of herbs de Provence and then warm them in olive oil. For a special treat, add the herbs to roast chicken or grilled swordfish.

If you're a fan of twice-baked potatoes, add a sprinkle of sweet paprika for a new (and wonderful) culinary experience.

Sweet paprika also should be part of any spice rub for barbecued pork ribs.

Rosemary is an aromatic, flavorful complement to a leg of lamb. You can also pair it with garlic in marinades for pork, or sprinkle it with crumbled feta over focaccia. And if you want to add a different twist to your holiday turkey, rub rosemary directly on the bird prior to cooking. Your nose will thank you.



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APPELLATION SHOWCASE



South of Boston

In Massachusetts, the largest of the wine regions is known as “South of Boston.” Since Plymouth is part of that area, and since Plymouth is widely believed to have hosted one of the first Thanksgiving feasts, we thought it appropriate this month to provide an overview of that town’s three wineries.

Plymouth Bay Winery overlooks Plymouth Bay, in the heart of the waterfront district — very close to the Mayflower and Plymouth Rock. The wines are produced on-site with age-old methods and utilizing only the choicest fruit from growers who exhibit a commitment to high quality.

The winery’s blends are a reflection of the owners’ desire to produce the most interesting wines in the area. Toward that end, Plymouth Bay crafts both traditional grape wines as well as wines made from other fruit.

Plymouth Colony Winery is housed in a renovated screening house, circa 1890, that’s surrounded by nine acres of picturesque cranberry bogs.

And the Plymouth Winery specializes in intensely-flavored fruit and grape wines, ranging from apple and cranberry to Syrah and raspberry.

The grape wines are traditionally crafted using wild yeasts, a method

that minimizes the types and amounts of additives (sulfites) typically utilized to control the fermentation process and stabilize wine. They’re cold-stabilized during the New England winter. Locally grown cranberries are used to make the winery’s signature Cranberry wine and Cranberry Blush, while the grape wines are made with Massachusetts-, New York- and California-grown varietals.

The style of Plymouth Winery’s offerings ranges from dry and off-dry to sweet, and many of the berry wines can stand alone as dessert, similar to a Port. The bottlings dubbed Pilgrim’s White, Bug Light Red, Bogart’s Blend and Mayflower Red are aged in new American oak, helping create a fruit-forward style.

Plymouth Winery is located in the Village Landing along the waterfront, and produces about 8,000 gallons annually.

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“The best use of bad wine is to drive away poor relations.”

— French proverb, and sage advice at Thanksgiving time

Q Is it true that turkey was used to make the first frozen TV dinner?



A Yes, and no doubt because Carl Swanson was a turkey processor by profession, and shipped his turkeys in refrigerated railroad cars. The first Swanson frozen dinner included roast turkey, giblet gravy, stuffing, sweet potatoes and green peas. What — no apple crisp!?

3-3.5

Number of hours it typically takes to cook an 8- to 12-lb. turkey so that a breast attains an internal temperature of 170 degrees, a thigh reaches 180 degrees and the stuffing reaches 165 degrees.

The next time you pour yourself a glass of wine, don't forget to sniff. Many wine drinkers know that smelling wine is the first step in enjoying it. But too many stick their nose in the glass and inhale deeply. While this method will give you an overall impression of the aroma — and, by extension, the wine's basic flavor — it's not very effective for detecting nuances. A better method is to take several small sniffs. Do this with a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon, as an example, and instead of smelling “black fruits,” you're more likely to experience the aroma of “blackberries and black cherries.” The more precisely you can identify aromas and flavors, the easier it becomes to know what types of wine you really like.



The annual Thanksgiving feast can generate a great deal of waste, and not just in terms of the amount of food prepared. Here are four ways to plan a more “green” Thanksgiving:

1. Car pool. Ask one guest to be a designated driver, and ask him or her to pick up other people who live within a reasonable distance. It's better to have just one car on the road than two or three; every little bit helps.

2. Serve water from the faucet. Even if it means breaking down and buying a filter. We could devote an entire issue to how much waste is produced by plastic water bottles.

3. Take a homegrown approach to decorating. Pick flowers from your garden to make arrangements, or decorate with a pumpkin and turn the “inside” into a pie. Either approach beats buying hot-house flowers.

4. Cook less. We've yet to see a Thanksgiving meal that gets eaten in its entirety. Truth be told, a lot of those leftovers go to waste, too. So, this year, don't overdo it, and help your guests avoid diet disasters.



Every piece of meat and every type of spice rub is different, but as a general rule, you should apply about one teaspoon of spice rub for each pound of meat. For more on cooking spices, see the “Vinesse Style” feature in this issue.

FOOD & WINE PAIRINGS

HOLIDAY MAIN COURSES

We know how challenging it can be to find the “perfect” wine for the Thanksgiving feast. With so many eclectic flavors on the table, it can be like trying to select just one wine to accompany a meal at a smorgasbord.

There are numerous worthy strategies, ranging from simply pouring your favorite wine (regardless of color or sweetness level) to opening up a number of different bottles and letting the diners figure it out for themselves.

If you're leaning toward the latter approach, try to make sure that one of the wines pairs well with whatever you've selected as the main course — be it turkey, ham, roast beef or a pork crown roast.

Turkey is the most “wine-friendly” of those options, as it pairs nicely with either white or red Burgundy — i.e., Chardonnay or Pinot Noir. Another solid white choice would be an off-dry Riesling, while another red option would be a fruit-forward Zinfandel.

Ham is more challenging, and not solely because it's quite salty; at holiday time, it may also come with a honey glaze. Whether just salty or salty *and* sweet, a glass of Beaujolais — including the Nouveau version that becomes available just before Thanksgiving — works well. Another option is Viognier, which typically provides a nice

counterpoint to the smokiness of the ham.

If you're slicing roast beef for guests, Cabernet Sauvignon would be an obvious choice, but you may want to opt for Merlot since it would pair better with a wider array of side dishes. Pinot Noir also is a tasty option.

A pork crown roast adds a “wow” factor to the table, and also demands a little more attention when selecting a wine partner. As with turkey, white and red options are available — Gewurztraminer, and either varietal bottlings or almost any blend of Grenache, Syrah and Mourvedre.



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TURKEY SOUP

Other than sandwiches, what can you do with some of that leftover turkey, post-Thanksgiving? Well, now that there's a briskness in the air, why not make soup? This recipe yields about 6 servings, and pairs nicely with Syrah/Shiraz, or a well-chilled Chardonnay.

Ingredients

- Leftover turkey, cut into small pieces
- 12 cups cold water
- 3 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 1 Spanish onion, chopped
- 1/4 bunch Italian parsley
- 2 bay leaves
- 12 whole black peppercorns
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 1 large parsnip, peeled and diced
- 1/2-lb. rutabaga, peeled and diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons minced Italian parsley
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 cup uncooked orzo pasta

Preparation

1. Bring the turkey pieces and water to a boil in a large pot over high heat.
2. Add the chopped celery, chopped carrots, chopped Spanish onion, 1/4 bunch parsley, bay leaves and peppercorns, and return to a simmer.
3. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer uncovered for 3 hours. Strain the turkey broth and skim any fat that floats to the surface.
4. Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat.

5. Stir in the red onion, and cook until the onion has softened and turned translucent (about 5 minutes).
6. Add the diced celery, diced carrots, parsnip and rutabaga, and cook 5 minutes more.
7. Stir in the garlic and chopped parsley, and cook for 1 minute more.
8. Pour in the turkey broth, season to taste with salt and pepper, and bring to a simmer over high heat.
9. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until the vegetables are nearly tender (15 to 20 minutes).
10. Stir in the pasta and cook until just tender (about 7 minutes).
11. Cover and remove the pot from the heat. Let stand until the pasta is tender (about 5 minutes), and then serve.

HAM-MACARONI BAKE

If you're having ham for the holiday, don't let those leftover chunks go to waste. Use them in this tasty dish, which pairs nicely with Gewurztraminer, Riesling, or fruit-forward red wines.

Ingredients

- 8-oz. pkg. elbow macaroni
- 1 can cream of celery soup
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 small onion, minced
- 1 cup diced cooked ham
- 1 cup (1/4-lb.) sharp Cheddar cheese, grated

Preparation

1. Stir macaroni into boiling salted water and cook per package directions. Drain well and rinse in cold water.
2. Stir in soup, milk, onion, ham and half the cheese.
3. Pour into buttered 6-cup baking dish. Top with remaining cheese and more ham, if desired.
4. Bake in oven at 375 degrees for 30 minutes.

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