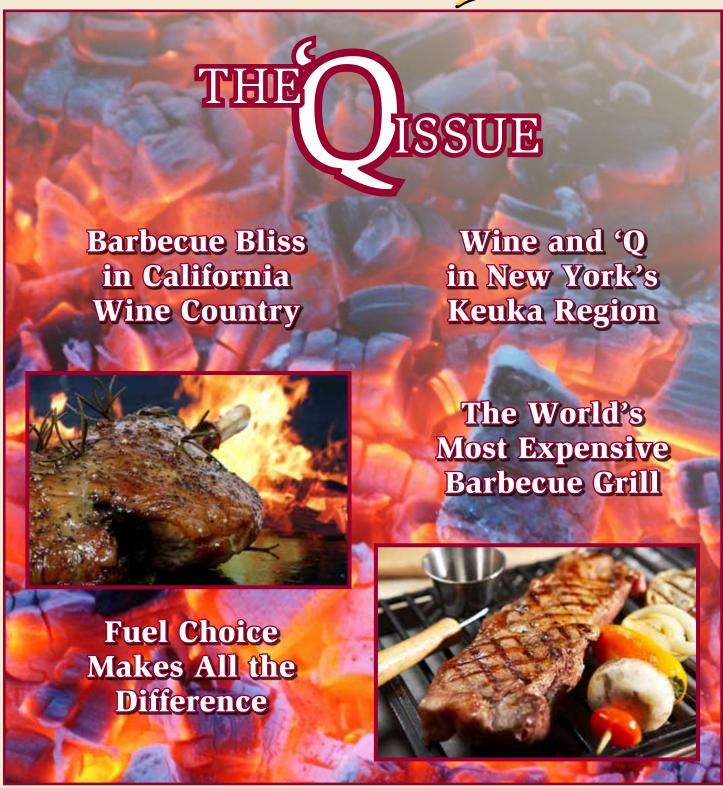
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Our Mission:

To uncover and bring you wine gems from around the world, which you're not likely to discover on your own, and which enhance your wine enjoyment.

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How About Some Tunes With Your Barbecue?

By Robert Johnson

Last summer, I saw an under-the-radar singer/ songwriter named Paul Thorn perform at a music venue called Rancho Nicasio, located in the southern sector of California's North Coast Wine Country.

The music was great — a mix of rock, folk, Cajun and blues that one could lump under the heading of "Americana" — but that was just part of the experience.

On selected weekends during the warm-weather months — including the weekend of my visit — Rancho Nicasio fires up the grill on its lawn and offers barbecue meals with tasty fixin's to enjoy along with the music.

The 2011 BBQ season will begin over the Memorial Day weekend (on May 29) when Tracy Nelson, Dorothy Morrison, Annie Sampson and Angela Strehli will team up as the Blues Broads. They'll be joined by the soulful Deanna Bogart for an afternoon of music that promises to turn up the heat (sorry; couldn't resist the barbecue analogy).

Also that weekend, on the 30th, Lisa Haley and the Zydekats will make their Rancho Nicasio debut. Louisiana Bayou music with barbecue? Perfect.

Others scheduled to perform grillside at Rancho Nicasio this summer include Riders in the Sky, Pablo Cruise and Asleep at the Wheel. And



then on Aug. 20-21, Paul Thorn will return.

You can get all the details about the venue, the music and the barbecue season at: www.ranchonicasio.com

So what's with all the barbecue talk? Well, for one thing, it's that time of the year — finally! And for another, we've decided to devote this entire issue of *The Grapevine* to the subject.

You'll read about the various styles of barbecue, wines that are particularly barbecue-friendly, great places to get your barbecue fix, the world's most expensive grill, special barbecue-and-wine weekends coming up in New York's Finger Lakes region and much, much more.

What's your BBQ I.Q.? You'll find out as you peruse this edition. Enjoy your newsletter, and enjoy your barbecue-and-wine experiences ahead.



6 Distinctive Styles of Barbecue

Comparing the various styles of barbecue is akin to comparing one's children. It's totally unfair because each — whether cooking style or human being

— is unique.

If you've ever had barbecue in Mexico or the Caribbean, you might not even have recognized it as such compared to the Kansas City style. Then there's the Southern style (particularly as expressed in South Carolina), which is an entirely different animal — figuratively and, in some cases, literally as well.

There are two different types of barbecue aficionados: those who embrace a singular style and decry all others, and those who enjoy discovering different preparations and flavors. Those who fall into the latter category are rewarded for their open-mindedness with a plethora of palate-pleasing experiences.

Here's a look at the six most famous and favored barbecue styles, just in case you have a trip coming up...

- Mexico/Caribbean The *barbacoa* (pit-smoked meat) and *carne asada* (barbecued beef) is seasoned with a dry rub consisting of salt, chile and allspice, then served with chile sauce on the side.
- Kansas City A sweet, peppery sauce is applied while the pork ribs, turkey or chicken is cooking. Barbecue gourmands ask for "burnt ends" of beef or pork.
- **South Carolina** While the meat (often pork shoulder and ribs, and sometimes a whole pig) is cooking, a unique sauce made out of vinegar, brown sugar and mustard is applied.
- Texas Beef brisket or German-style sausages are

cooked separately, with a tomato or chile sauce added afterward.

• Hawaii — The sauces used on beef brisket or pulled pork vary, from pineapple-based to teriyaki, and from tomato to chile. All sauces are applied after cooking.



• **California** — For an in-depth look at Santa Maria-style barbecue, see the "Wine Touring Tips" feature in this issue.

An important aspect of each regional style is the cooking method. In Mexico, oak or mesquite embers are used. In the Caribbean, pimiento wood is favored. In Texas and South Carolina, oak or pecan may be used, along with mesquite in Texas and hickory in South Carolina. In Hawaii, native tropical woods are employed, while in California, red oak is preferred.

Only in Kansas City is wood often eschewed in favor of a simple gas flame.



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Over two weekends in June, the eight wineries that comprise the Keuka Wine Trail in New York's Finger Lakes region become barbecue nirvana for wine lovers.

This year, the dates are June 11-12 and 25-26. Visitors can choose between full weekend or Sunday-only packages, and visit an array of wineries in order to experience a wide variety of both food and wine flavors.

Each winery will prepare its own unique barbecue dish, featuring a marinade, special sauce or rub made in New York state. They'll also pour their various wines, with a special emphasis on those that pair particularly well with the barbecue.

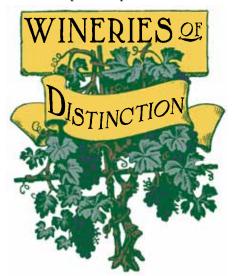
Many consider Keuka Lake to be the most picturesque of all the Finger Lakes, so there will be plenty of gorgeous scenery to soak in as well — whether from the comfort of your car, or while lounging on a winery porch.

The Keuka Lake region has an important place in American history as well. It's where the country's first bonded winery was established (that took place in 1860), and where vinifera vines were planted on U.S. soil for the first time.

Today, vinifera vines share vineyard space with hybrid and native varieties, but there's no doubt that the early vinifera plantings there ushered in a new era of winemaking that eventually spread west to California.

Here's what you can expect during a trek along the Keuka wine trail...

• **Keuka Spring Vineyards** — Owned by the Wiltberger family, this winery's tasting room sits on a hill overlooking the lake. A past recipient of the



Governor's Cup for "most outstanding wine," the winery features picnic grounds and has a gift shop stocked with regional items.

• Heron Hill Winery — There's always something good happening at this winery, from live music every Sunday in October to a selection of tasty deli items offered each May to October. A new "grand tasting hall" welcomes visitors.

- Dr. Konstantin Frank's Vinifera Wine Cellars Founded in 1962 by its namesake, this is where quality winemaking had its genesis in the Finger Lakes region. Its bottlings of Riesling, in particular, are legendary. Today, Dr. Frank's grandson, Fred, carries on the family tradition.
- Stever Hill Vineyards The tasting room is located in a restored barn originally built during the mid-1800s.
- Hunt Country Vineyards Picnic under a grape arbor or on the winery's covered porch, and sample a selection of wines that have garnered 30 gold medals in just the past three years. The farm has been in the same family for six generations, and the family has been making wine for more than 25 years.
- Barrington Cellars & Buzzard Crest Vineyards Ken and Eileen Farnan own this small family winery that offers a spectacular view of Keuka Lake.

- Ravines Wine Cellars Morten Hallgren graduated from a premier winemaking school in Europe, and he and wife Lisa have created a charming tasting room offering specialty foods, artisanal cheeses, handmade chocolates and, of course, wonderful wines.
- McGregor Vineyard Winery For 30 years, the McGregor family has made wines that "reflect the voice of the grapes," and it has been a winning formula. You can sample wines with names both familiar (Pinot Noir, Merlot, Riesling) and not so familiar (Saperavi, Sereksiya Charni, Rkatsitel).

All of the wineries will be open long hours during the "Barbecue at the Wineries" weekends in June and throughout the summer months. In the "off-season," some implement more limited hours, so it's a good idea to call ahead before planning a trip. But no matter when you go, be prepared to experience new wine varieties, new aromas and new flavors.

Winery 4-1-1

Keuka Spring Vineyards

243 State Route 54 (East Lake Road) Penn Yann, N.Y. 315-536-3147 www.KeukaSpringWinery.com

Heron Hill Winery

9301 County Road 76 Hammondsport, N.Y. 800-441-4241 www.heronhill.com

Dr. Konstantin Frank's Vinifera Cellars

9749 Middle Road Hammondsport, N.Y. 800-320-0735 www.drfrankwines.com

Stever Hill Vineyards

3962 Stever Hill Road Branchport, N.Y. 315-595-2230 www.steverhillvineyard.com

Hunt Country Vineyards

4021 Italy Hill Road Branchport, N.Y. 315-595-2812 www.HuntWines.com

Barrington Cellars & Buzzard Crest Vineyards

2794 Gray Road Penn Yan, N.Y. 315-531-8923 www.barringtoncellars.com

Ravines Wine Cellars

14630 State Route 54 Keuka Village, N.Y. 607-292-7007 www.RavinesWineCellars.com

McGregor Vineyard Winery

5503 Dutch St. Dundee, N.Y. 607-292-3999 www.mcgregorwinery.com



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In an age of culinary fads and next-big-thing mentality, Santa Maria-style barbecue deliciously demonstrates that good taste never goes out of style.

The roots of the Santa Maria barbecue date back to the mid-1800s, when large ranches occupied the hills of California's Santa Maria Valley, north of today's upscale oceanside community of Santa Barbara.

Local ranchers would host Spanish-style feasts each spring for their *vaqueros*, or cowboys, as well as family and friends — barbecuing meat over earthen pits filled with hot coals of native red oak. The meal would be served with a generous helping of *pinquitos*, small pink beans that are thought to be indigenous to the Santa Maria Valley.

"The Santa Maria barbecue grew out of this tradition and achieved its 'style' when local residents began to string cuts of beef on skewers or rods and cook the meat over the hot coals of a red oak fire," say local barbecue historian R.H. Tesene.

In 1931, the Santa Maria Club instituted a "Stag Barbecue," which was held on the second Wednesday of each month. As many as 700 people

would turn out for the feasts.

In those early days, the favored cut was top-block sirloin. Then, as today, the meat was rolled in a mixture of salt, pepper and garlic salt before being barbecued over the red oak coals, which contribute a smoky, hearty flavor.

In the 1950s, a local butcher named Bob Schutz perfected the tri-tip, a triangular bottom sirloin cut that



TOURING TIPS

quickly joined top-block sirloin as a staple of Santa Maria-style barbecue.

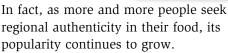
By the late 1950s, three local restaurants — the Far Western Tavern, the Hitching Post and Jocko's — were on their way to becoming landmarks of this culinary treat. All three thrive to this day, and have been joined by Shaw's Steakhouse, Historic Santa Maria Inn, F. McLintocks, A.J. Spurs and others.

President Ronald Reagan was an avid fan of Santa Maria-style barbecue. Local chef Bob Herdman and his "Los Compadres Barbecue Crew" staged several barbecues for President Reagan, including five feasts on the South Lawn of the White House.

Today, the classic barbecue menu in Santa Maria, which was copyrighted by the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce in 1978, includes fresh salsa, grilled French bread dipped in sweet melted butter, tossed green salad and those slow-cooked *pinquito* beans.

The relatively recent emergence of the Santa Maria Valley wine country, jump-started by the locally-filmed movie "Sideways," has further shined the spotlight on Santa Maria's culinary scene.

In the words of the book *Renewing America's Food Traditions*, published in 2008, Santa Maria-style barbecue is nothing less than "a mainstay of California's culinary heritage."



One way to find a Santa Maria-style barbecue is to pull off Highway 101 in Santa Maria, turn onto Broadway Street, and follow your nose. Several local service groups set up their grills in parking lots on weekends, selling lunches to raise funds for their charitable activities.

But if you'd prefer to sit at a table and select your meal from a menu, we'd suggest heading to one of the barbecue institutions...

• The Far Western Tavern — The restaurant, housed in a century-old building, was founded in 1958, and today the Minetti family brings two generations and five decades

For Further Information

The Far Western Tavern

899 Guadalupe Street Guadalupe, Calif. www.FarWesternTavern.com

The Hitching Post Original Location:

3325 Point Sal Road Casmalia, Calif.

Second Location:

406 East Highway 246 Buellton, Calif. www.HitchingPost1.com

Jocko's Steak House

125 N. Thompson Avenue Nipomo, Calif. 805-929-3565



of ownership to the table, serving legendary cuisine that is rooted in local tradition yet suited for contemporary tastes. Example: the Pinot filet, which is served over grilled polenta.

It's a great place for people-

watching, too, as the clientele is a mix of foodies from the "big city" and local cowboys (complete with cowboy boots).

• The Hitching Post — If you saw "Sideways," you saw The Hitching Post. The restaurant was established in 1944 in the town of Casmalia, and has been owned by the Ostini family since 1952. The Ostinis opened their second Hitching Post in Buellton in 1986.

An indoor barbecue pit filled with red oak is the secret to the restaurant's signature dining experience.

• Jocko's Steak House — The *Gayot Restaurant Guide* calls Jocko's "a raucous, high-energy haven for lovers of good steak, especially those cooked Santa Maria-style over a roaring, fragrant oak fire."

Established in 1956, Jocko's is a true American roadhouse specializing in steak, ribs and oak pit pork chops, as well as traditional salsa and *pinquito* beans. It also serves the most flavorful plate of hamburger meat you've *ever* had. Ever. No ambience; just great food.

For the most authentic Santa Mariastyle barbecue experience, enjoy your meal with a glass of Pinot Noir or Syrah (preferably from the Santa Maria Valley), then finish it off with strawberry shortcake, made from fresh, locally grown berries.

Not all of the barbecue restaurants have great wine lists or strawberry shortcake, so you may need to make a second stop after dinner. But, hey, you're on vacation, right?

VINESSE



LIST

1 No. 1. If you still need convincing that barbecue and wine can be simpatico, consider this: One of the best places to chow down on a Memphis-style pulled pork sandwich (other than in Memphis) is Napa. Yes, that Napa. BarBersQ restaurant may look like a trendy wine country restaurant, but this is a place where "low and slow" cooking produces flavor-packed baby back ribs that seemingly can't wait to bid adieu to the bone.

707-224-6600

2 Hot Barbecue Destination
No. 2. There are several
places to go for Santa Maria-style
barbecue along California's Central
Coast, but for Western ambience,
nothing beats the Far Western
Tavern in Guadalupe, Calif. See the
accompanying "Wine Touring Tips"
feature for more on this barbecue
joint that's a cut above.
805-343-2211

Hot Barbecue Destination
No. 3. Julie Reinhardt believes that great barbecue should not be the exclusive domain of men. She believes it so much, in fact, that she wrote a book about it: *She-Smoke*. But Julie does allow husband Eric in the kitchen at their Smokin' Pete's BBQ in Ballard, Wash., just outside Seattle. If you go, go hungry, because the Reinhardts' platters of dry-rubbed and cherry- and hickory-smoked meat are generous... not to mention addictive.

206-783-0454



Zinfandel. Perhaps the quintessential wine variety to accompany barbecued meats, since it pairs so well with so many different styles of 'Q.

Arthur Bryant's. One of the famed barbecue joints in Kansas City.

Blues Broads. Group that will kick off the barbecue/concert season at Rancho Nicasio in Sonoma County. See "Editor's Journal" on page 2 for details.

Chianti Classico. A wine from Italy that often possesses a gamy spiciness that is an ideal foil for grilled meats. Made from Sangiovese grapes.

Dry Rosé. Another barbecuefriendly type of wine, as its bright acidity holds up nicely next to the tang of the sauce.

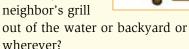
Embers. Burning pieces of (in this case) oak or mesquite wood, essential for Mexican-style barbecue.

VINESSE STYLE

THE ULTIMATE GRILL

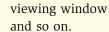
Women may be responsible for a majority of wine purchases in America, but when it comes to buying a grill, well, that's a man's job. Now that we have insulted a number of publics and at least one gender, let's get on with the sales pitch. By the time we're done, you're going to think you're at a car dealership (oops — just offended another group!).

You say you want nothing but the best? You say money is no object? Most importantly, you say you want to blow your neighbor's grill



Well, sir, step right over here. You've got to see this beauty. When I say "BeefEater," you probably think of gin. But this BeefEater is a company in Australia that makes barbecue grills. And take a look at this one — it's the Signature Series 6-Burner SL4000.

It comes with the usual quartzstart ignition technology system, Vaporiser grid, roasting hood with



But this isn't just *any* Signature Series 6-Burner SL4000. No, sir. This is a *gold-plated* Signature

Series 6-Burner SL4000. Look at it. All parts of the grill — except for the cooking surfaces, of course — have been individually plated in 24-carat gold. Let's see your neighbor top *that!*

What's that? How much? Well, sir, if you have to ask, you probably can't afford it...

Okay, okay... if you must know. For you, sir — but only if you buy today — you can take this baby home for just \$164,000.



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APPELLATION SHOWCASE



C infandel offers immediate hedonistic access that almost anyone can enjoy."

That's a quote that the growers of Zinfandel grapes in Sonoma County's Dry Creek Valley use to promote the variety that pays their mortgages and tractor bills. And even though it comes from someone who writes for the *New York Law Journal* — sort of like a movie being recommended by the "film critic" for the *Greater Podunk Express and Shopper* — no truer words ever were written.

Zinfandel may be the most barbecue-friendly of all wine varieties (see the "Food and Wine Pairings" feature in this issue), and a solid argument could be made that the Dry Creek Valley is Zinfandel's hedonistic headquarters.

First planted in Dry Creek around 1870, most of Northern California's Zinfandel vineyards were destroyed by phylloxera in the late 1880s. Some century-old Zinfandel vines survived either because they were planted on resistant rootstock or were isolated from the disease. Zinfandel remained popular among home winemakers during Prohibition.

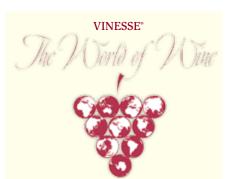
In 1973, White Zinfandel was

created, and it has been seen as both a savior and a curse for the future of Zinfandel — a savior because it called attention to the variety, which was being passed over by Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, and a curse because much of the supply of Zin grapes was being used for the "white" version.

Be that as it may, the new attention paved the way for vintners to begin taking a fine-wine approach to Zinfandel winemaking, and by 1985, "real Zin" (as some called the traditional red version) had ascended to high on the wine coolness scale.

The terroir in Dry Creek Valley plays a major role in Zinfandel's development. The well-drained soils and fog patterns from the Pacific Ocean create perfect growing conditions for the variety. Zinfandel likes to grow on well-drained, low fertility sites that are warm enough to fully ripen the grapes — and that's a perfect description of Dry Creek's geology.

In the case of Zinfandel, hedonism, it would seem, begins with Dry Creek Valley soil.



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We just moved to Phoenix and are looking for a good barbecue restaurant. Do you have any suggestions for us?



It's not a barbecue joint, per se, but America's Taco Shop serves up a mighty fine *carne asada* — skirt steak that's marinated and grilled. America's Taco Shop offers this garlic and orange juice-infused treat in tacos, tortas, quesadillas and burritos. Our favorite: in a burrito with *pico de gallo* and guacamole. The restaurant is located at 2041 N. Seventh Street. Call 602-682-5627 for hours.

As any experienced griller or Tim Allen would tell you, the key to successful grilling is having



good grilling tools with which to work. Your tool checklist should include highquality tongs, a spatula, a basting brush

and an instant-read thermometer. And don't forget a wire brush for cleaning the grill.



Beer is cold like white wine.

And beer is sweet like white wine.

So the pairing of white wine with barbecue is a natural.

— Winemaker Paul Bonarrigo, quoted in USA Today.

You can't have barbecue without some tasty side dishes. Well, you could, but why would you consider such deprivation? We asked some of America's top barbecue chefs what they recommend with their grilled specialties, and their suggestions make for an eclectic list: coleslaw, pinto beans, corn-on-the-cob, macaroni salad, poi, kimchi, rice, stewed red beans, flour tortillas, potato salad, cornbread, baked beans, French fries and hush puppies.

If you'd like to take a more environmentally-friendly approach to grilling this year, be aware that although charcoal and briquettes are the least-expensive fuel options, they're also the dirtiest. Charcoal sends soot and carbon monoxide into the air, lump charcoal contributes to both deforestation and greenhouse gas, and briquettes can contain various carcinogenic chemicals from the wood's previous life. Options? Coconut



shell charcoal burns without smoke, odor or harmful emissions. Look for charcoal, made from leftover furniture, that is free of additives, coal, chemicals and fillers. Propane and natural gas are the most environmentally-friendly liquid options, and solar-powered barbecues (like the one shown here) are now starting to hit the market.

135

Degrees Fahrenheit that a tri-tip steak should reach for medium-rare doneness, typically achieved after about 20 minutes of grilling on each side.



The type of fuel that you use to "power" your grill can have no influence or a big influence on the flavor of the meat. In Kansas City, some barbecue restaurants opt for gas grilling because of its neutral nature when it comes to flavor. Using charcoal will add some smoky flavor, but for even more smokiness, grill-masters opt for mesquite or various types of hardwood. The options are numerous, so the best way to find your preferred fuel for specific types of meat is to experiment.

FOOD & WINE PAIRINGS

Barbecue-Friendly Wines

We recently came across a guide offering wine suggestions for summertime grilling, and one of the recommendations was Merlot.

We love Merlot. We drink a lot of Merlot. It's wonderful with so many dishes. But we do not drink Merlot with barbecue. Why? Because there are so many other types of wine that are better matches. When considering which gift of the grape to uncork with your next outdoor cooking adventure, please

remember this poem:

Barbecue with Merlot?

Just say no!

Instead, say yes to...

- Riesling. Yes, a white wine with meat. In this case, the meat is pork in the form of brats, grilled and accented with various hot and sweet toppings such as onions and mustard. Opt for a Riesling that is completely dry in order to achieve the perfect pairing.
- **Semillon.** Another white wine, and one that matches beautifully with grilled shrimp. (Sauvignon Blanc also works quite nicely.)
- **Syrah.** Renditions from the Rhone, in particular, have a smoky characteristic that melds seamlessly with the smoke from the grill. Syrah plus smoked brisket yields big smiles.
- Cabernet Sauvignon. We almost included this variety in our "just say



no to Merlot" rant, but as long as you grill a steak using a gas flame (i.e., one that imparts no flavor to the meat), Cabernet makes a great pairing partner. A big Cab with a big hunk of beef? Yeah, we can make do with that.

• Pinot Noir.
As much at home with grilled salmon as it is

with a grilled burger. Its silky texture is easy to love.

- **Dry Rosé.** Almost regardless of the grape, a rosé-style wine, well chilled, holds up nicely next to most types of grilled meat.
- **Gewurztraminer.** Another white wine, and one to consider when eating grilled Cajun-style chicken or almost any type of blackened fish.
- Zinfandel. We have saved the best for last. And what makes Zin the go-to variety for grilled food? First, it pairs nicely with almost any kind of meat. And second, it possesses a peppery/spicy quality that complements any type of grilling fuel (from charcoal to oak chips) and all but the very hottest of barbecue sauces. Here's another poem for you to remember:

Want to win? Go with Zin!



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SALSA STEAK

Talk about flavor! This dish is brimming with it. For help with selecting a complementary wine, see this issue's "Food & Wine Pairings" department. This recipe yields 4 servings.

Ingredients

- Canola oil
- 1 small cucumber, chopped
- 1 large tomato, peeled and diced
- 1 small red salad onion, diced
- ½ yellow capsicum, diced
- 4 tablespoons chopped coriander
- 1 teaspoon seeded mustard
- 4 serving portions of rib eye steak

Preparation

- 1. Prepare salsa by combining ingredients.
- 2. Brush steak with just enough oil to stop surface from drying out and sticking to plate.
- 3. Cook on a hot barbecue plate (griddle), or grill until well sealed (about 2-3 minutes per side for boneless cuts and 3-4 minutes per side for bone-in cuts) before turning. Tip: Use the juices that appear on the uncooked side as an indication of when the steak is ready to turn.
- 4. For rare steak, remove immediately after sealing. For medium or well-done, move steak to cooler part of barbecue, or reduce heat to medium-low, and continue cooking 2-3 minutes per side for medium, or 4-5 minutes per side for well-done.
- 5. Rather than cutting, test that steak is cooked to your liking by pressing with tongs. Cover and rest for about 2 minutes to retain juiciness.
- 6. Top with salsa and serve.

LEMON BARBECUED CHICKEN

Semillon, Chardonnay and Pinot Gris/Pinot Grigio make ideal companions for this dish. This recipe yields 4 servings.

Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken (appx. 3.5-lbs.)
- 2 lemons
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- Salt and pepper
- 2 teaspoons fresh oregano, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 medium-sized brown potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 1-lb. pumpkin, cut into portions with skin on

Preparation

- 1. Wash chicken inside and out, drain, and pat dry with paper towels. Wash lemons, then peel off zest with a potato peeler. Dice zest finely. Juice the lemons. Mix together half the lemon zest, lemon juice, garlic, salt, pepper, oregano and oil.
- 2. Spoon half the lemon mixture over the chicken and in the cavity. Place remaining zest in the cavity.
- 3. Preheat barbecue with roasting hood down. Place chicken on roasting rack in a baking tray. Place potatoes and pumpkin around chicken, and sprinkle with remaining lemon mixture, being sure to coat all pieces. Place pan over indirect heat and close roasting hood.
- 4. Cook for 60-90 minutes, brushing chicken with lemon and herb mixture every 20 minutes. Turn vegetables. Check chicken for doneness using a meat thermometer.
- 5. Remove vegetables when cooked, and cover to keep hot. Rest chicken for 5 minutes before carving and serving.

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