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The Grapevine

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EDITOR'S JOURNAL

Wine & Cheese: Kissing Cousins

By Robert Johnson

Considering that my Dad was born in Wisconsin, it's amazing that I only recently discovered the wonders of cheese.

I've always known just enough about cheese to be dangerous, and have depended on others — true experts on the subject — when putting together cheese-focused features for *The Grapevine*. As I've learned more, I've been struck by the similarities between cheese and wine — particularly when it comes to serving these life-enhancing culinary treats, either together or separately.

For instance, when serving a flight of wines, we always start out with the milder ones, and progress to the stronger ones. As an example, we might start with a silky smooth Pinot Noir, move on to a mildly tannic Merlot, and then finish with a "big" Zinfandel.

In the world of cheese, a tasting flight should begin with a milder cheese, and gradually move toward stronger cheeses. Likewise, younger cheeses should be served before older ones, as a general rule.

When hosting a cheese party, experts suggest setting out the selections about a half-hour prior to serving so that they're at room temperature when the munching begins. Sound familiar? When a

white or rosé wine is chilled down too much, its aromas and flavors are masked. That's why we strive for room temperature when serving all wines, with the exception of Champagne.

And then there's the matter of the

serving size. When multiple wines are being served, we suggest pours of no more than an ounce to an ounce-and-a-half. Interestingly, the same holds true for cheese. When figuring out how much cheese to buy, experts suggest an ounce to an ounce-and-a-half of each type for



each person.

Even the accompaniments are similar. Whether serving wine or cheese — or both — it's good to offer a number of nibblers such as almonds, walnuts, cashews, apple slices, pear slices, olives, salami and prosciutto.

We could write a book... and others already have... on which cheeses are most simpatico with which wines. But if you're a cheddar cheese lover, you're in luck: In this issue's "Food & Wine Pairings" feature, we'll take a look at the various types of cheddar and their best wine partners.

Picking the Right Cheese and Wine for Your Next Pic-a-nic

At long last, it's Yogi Bear's favorite time of the year.

That's right, Mr. Ranger Sir, it's pic-a-nic basket time.

We may pack a basket to accompany a concert at a favorite outdoor venue, to enjoy under the trees at a county or state park, or to savor in the sunshine while lounging on a pristine beach.

There's just something about a picnic that helps us cool the cabin fever of winter and improve our outlook on life.

Whether planning a picnic just for yourself to get away from it all for a few hours... for you and your sweetie so you can spend some quality time together... or for a group of family members or friends... two essential ingredients are wine and cheese.

You certainly wouldn't get any argument to that assertion from the good people of Wisconsin, a.k.a. "America's Dairyland."

During the last Ice Age, glaciers cut through much of the state, leaving behind rolling hills and lush pastureland that early settlers found to be perfect for dairying.

Brick cheese is a Wisconsin original, created near the town of Theresa by a Swiss immigrant during the 1870s. About the same time, Colby cheese was created in the town of Colby. Wisconsin's first cheese factory was developed in 1876 near Sheboygan.

The Monroe area and surrounding Green County is home to the largest concentration of

cheesemakers and the most certified Master Cheesemakers in the nation. More than 350 varieties, types and styles of cheese are produced in Wisconsin today — far more than any other state.

But what kind of wine goes with what kind of cheese? Well, only your palate can answer that question with any degree of certainty. But here are a few of our favorite pairings...

- **Manchego** — A semi-firm to hard Spanish cheese with a rich, creamy color. Delicious when accompanied by olives, it can range from mild to sharp, depending on how long it has been aged. Wine match: (red) Zinfandel.

- **Brie** — A soft and creamy cheese from France, often thought of as the perfect picnic cheese. For a special treat, eat it with Granny Smith apples and a California-style, off-dry Riesling.

- **Gouda** — A yellow Dutch cheese with a mild, nut-like flavor and creamy texture. Try it with toasted almonds and Cabernet Sauvignon.

No matter what cheese and wine you select, here's one more piece of advice: Keep an eye out for that pic-a-nic basket-stealing bear.



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At Saxon Brown, Wine Is Made from the Ground Up

Jeff Gaffner, the owner of and winemaker for Saxon Brown Wines, once observed, “Winemaking must consume you, or your wines may not be worth consuming.”

That’s the approach he has taken with each wine he has crafted at Saxon Brown, from Semillon to Syrah, from Chardonnay to Zinfandel, and from Pinot Noir to Cabernet Sauvignon.

Gaffner is a 25-year veteran of the wine industry. His career as a winemaker was launched in 1981 at Chateau St. Jean under the tutelage of renowned vintner Richard Arrowood. Most notably, Gaffner was part of the winemaking team responsible for Chateau St. Jean’s 1996 Cinq Cepages, which was named the 1999 Wine of the Year by *Wine Spectator* magazine.

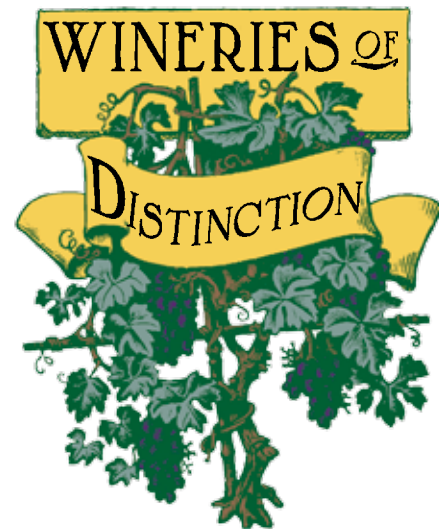
In 1997, Gaffner launched Saxon Brown, named for the willful heroine in Jack London’s *Valley of the Moon*. The winery gained instant recognition for its flagship “old vine” Zinfandel from the family’s Casa Santinamaria Vineyard — one of only a few remaining classic, Italian-style, field-blended vineyards.

The winery also produces an “old vine” Semillon from the same vineyard,

as well as Pinot Noir from the famed Durell Vineyard (Sonoma County); Pinot Noir, Syrah and Zinfandel from Parmellee Hill Vineyard (Sonoma Valley); Syrah and Syrah Rosé from Flora Ranch (Chalk Hill), and Semillon from Cricket Creek Vineyard (Alexander Valley).

In addition to his Saxon Brown wines, Gaffner has won critical acclaim as the consulting winemaker for several high-end boutique labels, including Xtant (Napa Valley), Stephanie (Napa Valley), Black Kite Cellars (Anderson Valley) and Ram’s Gate (Sonoma Valley).

But most of the time, he is focused



Pictured left to right are Winemaker Jeff Gaffner of Saxon Brown, Winemakers Don Van Staaveren, James Hall, Tor Kenward, Jason Kesner, Steve Tylicki, Brian Loring and Bill Price. (Photo credit: Michael Wright Studio)

on the wines of Saxon Brown, which he describes as being made from the ground up.

“We spend at least as much time in the vineyard as the cellar,” Gaffner explains. “Our flagship Zinfandel and Semillon are from our family’s 19th century Casa Santinamaria Vineyard. Saxon Brown is one of only a handful of wineries making classic ‘field blended’ wines. This commitment to tradition is a grounding principle of the Saxon Brown wines.”

Gaffner’s affinity for the land is in his blood.

“As a third-generation Sonoma farmer, I have spent my career as both a grower and winemaker,” he says. “As such, I believe that truly great wine is made in the vineyard. In addition to the Semillon and Zinfandel from Casa Santinamaria Vineyard, we make a Syrah from Parmelee-Hill Vineyard, and Napa Valley Syrah that is a blend of two vineyards in southern Napa Valley.”

Field blending is the practice of blending the grape varieties in the vineyard instead of the winery. The practice is still very common in Europe, especially Italy. In the late 1800s, many Italian immigrants settled in Northern California, bringing with them a vast knowledge of grape growing and winemaking. They planted vineyards in Sonoma and Napa Valley using their Old World “field blend” model for both red and white wines.

The traditional field blend was not limited to grapes. Often, the vines would be interplanted with olives, cherries, walnuts, prunes, pears, plums, apples and tomatoes. The field blend would vary from grower to grower and site to site, depending on the stylistic preferences of the grower and the varietal suitability of the site.

By the late 1960s and early ’70s, however, the practice had fallen out of favor as the wine industry moved to single-variety and single-rootstock plantings.

Planted before the turn of the previous century on one of the most

magnificent sites in all of Sonoma Valley, Casa Santinamaria is one of only a few “field blended” vineyards remaining in California. Due to the age of the vines and the fact that they are dry-farmed and head-pruned, the yields are low, the clusters are very small and the fruit is very concentrated.

“Typically, we harvest between one-half ton and one ton per acre,” Gaffner says, “The vineyard is planted to a classic field blend of Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Carignane, Alicante Bouschet and Mataro (which comprise our Zinfandel), and Semillon, Muscadelle du Bordelaise and Sauvignon Blanc (the blend for our Semillon).”

Saxon Brown wines are made with great reverence for tradition. The grapes are nurtured in the vineyard throughout the year. Harvest is based upon touch, smell, taste and appearance, not lab reports. Gentle handling is emphasized, along with slow fermentations and (except in the case of the Semillon) lengthy aging to promote wines of elegance and longevity.

Timing of Saxon Brown wine releases often is out of sync with other wineries, which demonstrates a strict adherence to stylistic ideals.

“I love making wine,” Gaffner says. “I love the art of it, the science of it and, most of all, the tradition of it. I continue to be fascinated by wine’s capacity for reflecting the subtlest of influences from the vineyard environment to the winemaker’s touch.

“And my goal is always to produce a wine that is true to the varietal and growing site.”

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The Wine Trails of Ohio

Little-Known Wineries Provide Memorable Experiences for Vino Tourists



There's always something to do at the wineries of Ohio, particularly during the summer months. What's that? You say you didn't know there was much of a wine culture in Ohio? Read on...

The history of winemaking in Ohio can be traced back to the early 1800s when Nicholas Longworth, a lawyer from the Cincinnati area, saw the potential of the Ohio River Valley to become a major producer of wine.

In 1820, Longworth planted the first Catawba grapes in the state. This domestic variety was hearty enough to withstand Ohio winters, and the wine produced from it won quick consumer acceptance. The light, semi-sweet wine was different from the other strong American wines of the day.

Soon, there were many acres of vines growing in the greater Cincinnati area. By 1845, the annual production was more than 300,000 gallons. And by 1860, Ohio led the nation in the production of wine.

As crop diseases such as black rot and mildew began to plague the grapes, the Civil War left the grape growers with little manpower, leading to the demise of winemaking in

southern Ohio.

While the southern vineyards wilted, a new Ohio growing area emerged in the Lake Erie Islands. The islands had a unique climate; the waters surrounding them provided a long growing season and insulated the vines from spreading disease.

German immigrants who brought the traditions of winemaking with them settled the islands. By the turn of the century, thousands of gallons of wine were being produced by dozens of wineries on and near the islands. Vineyards were soon planted along the entire southern shore of Lake Erie. This narrow strip of shoreline was nicknamed the "Lake Erie Grape Belt."

Then Prohibition struck the United States and brought disaster to the Ohio winemaking traditions. Some family businesses turned to making wine for sacramental purposes, others produced juice, but the majority of

land was turned into industrial land and housing developments. The grape-oriented economy of the area collapsed.

When Prohibition was repealed in 1933, a few wineries reemerged, but they had a lot going against them: The majority of vineyards were in a state of disrepair, government restrictions hindered their winemaking traditions, and the few lasting vines had been converted to produce juice grapes.

Ohio's one-time status as the nation's top wine producer was



TOURING TIPS

gone, and with it came a long road to recovery.

The turning point for the Ohio wine industry came in the early 1960s with the planting of French-American varieties in southern Ohio, encouraged largely by The Ohio State University's Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center in Wooster.

The hardy, disease-resistant grapes produced wines similar to the older European vinifera varieties. Their success in the south encouraged plantings in the Lake Erie Grape Belt. Since 1965, more than 40 new wineries have been established across the state, and each spring, growers continue to plant French-American hybrids and vinifera varieties.

In 1975, a group of innovative winemakers formed the Ohio Wine Producers Association. Their purpose was and still is to bring together the grape growers and the winemakers. The Ohio General Assembly and Governors James Rhodes and Richard Celeste established another vital program in 1981. In cooperation with winemakers and grape growers, the Ohio Grape Industries Program was created and charged with the development of marketing and research programs to encourage the continuing revitalization of the fresh grape and winegrape industries.

In the decade of the 1990s, one of the significant threats facing the industry was a lack of quality Ohio-grown grapes. A major effort to increase acreage was initiated under the leadership of Governor George Voinovich. Tax credits, vineyard planting grants, and the hiring of a state extension viticulturist are having a positive impact on the total number of winegrape acres being planted.

The results can be seen through the continued success of Ohio wines in national competitions. In the early 1990s, an Ohio Riesling won Best of Show at the prestigious San Francisco Fair Wine Competition. That award provided a tremendous boost for the Ohio wine industry, and a new era of respect emerged. Other gold medals

in Atlanta, Dallas, Los Angeles and across the nation have reinforced Ohio's position as one of the major wine regions of the world.

In Ohio, there are five recognized viticultural appellations. The Lake Erie appellation includes grapes grown near the shores of Lake Erie in Ohio, New York and Pennsylvania. Two appellations within the Lake Erie appellation include Isle St. George and Grand River Valley.

The Ohio River Valley appellation borders the Ohio River from Wheeling, W.V., to Cincinnati, and continues on to Evansville, Ind. The Loramie Creek appellation is in Shelby County, bordered by Loramie and Tuttle Creeks and State Route 47. Unfortunately, the Loramie Creek appellation currently has no operating winery in its jurisdiction.

Many of the state's wineries host special events throughout the year, but the summer calendar is particularly abundant. Here are just a few of the events coming up in July...

- **July 9** — Musical entertainment by Reb Robinson at Breitenbach Wine Cellars in Dover. Info: www.breitenbachwine.com

- **July 16** — Steak fry at Buccia Vineyards in Conneaut. Info: www.bucciavineyard.com

- **July 16** — Steak or chicken fry at Biscotti Family Winery in Conneaut. Info: www.biscottiwinery.com

- **July 23** — Natural Areas Wine Tours. This date features St. Joseph Vineyard in Madison. Includes a naturalist-led hike, followed by wine tasting and lunch. Info: www.cmnh.org

- **July 29** — Winey-Margarita Party. An evening of "wine margaritas" and Latin jazz music at Grand River Cellars & Restaurant in Madison. Info: www.grandrivercellars.com

For additional information on Ohio wine touring, including maps and suggested itineraries, visit: www.ohiowines.org

VINESSE

Hot LIST

1 Hot Wine Bar. One could hang out at La Cave Wine & Food Hideaway at Wynn Las Vegas for a long time. And that's the point. The wine-focused space is actually three distinct spaces, including an intimate wine cellar environment. Guests select from a menu of small plates — flatbread, grilled fare, cheeses, seafood, artisan salami, etc. — and a wine list that includes about 30 wines by the glass (available in 2-, 4- and 6-oz. pours). Mixing and matching is all part of the experience. 702-770-7375

2 Hot Book for Foodies. *How Italian Food Conquered the World*, written by John F. Mariani, is so delightful it will make you hungry. *Palgrave Macmillan*; \$25

3 Hot Airport Trend. One doesn't normally think of an airport as a place to enjoy fine wine. But as airport operators work to make the flying experience more palatable in these high-security times, more vinous opportunities are popping up. Not surprisingly, California's San Jose Airport — not far from a number of wine appellations — offers one of the best at its Santa Cruz Wine Bar in Terminal B, where bottlings from the Santa Cruz Mountains are featured. A good glass of wine can make a long delay a little bit easier to swallow. 408-294-5108



Kabinett. A term once used to describe a “reserve” level wine in Germany. Today, it refers to a lighter, lower-alcohol style. Austria wineries also use the designation.

Lake County. Winegrowing region of California that surrounds Clear Lake, the largest natural lake in the state.

Montepulciano. An Italian grape, most often associated with the Abruzzo region, that makes a richly-hued, medium-bodied wine with accessible tannins (i.e., no long-term aging needed).

New World. Refers to wines made primarily outside of Europe. The New World “style” is considered more fruit-focused and less terroir-driven.

Old World. Refers to wines made in the traditional European winemaking countries, including France, Italy and Germany.

VINESSE STYLE

THE DREAM KITCHEN

If you love to cook, you’ve probably daydreamed a time or two about the “perfect kitchen.”

The kitchens seen on TV cooking shows and in architecture journals may be pretty, but are they functional? Do they accomplish the goal of providing an ideal setting for cooking and displaying food, or are they just pleasing to the eye?

With more and more people eschewing pricey restaurants for homemade gourmet experiences, the time seemed right to develop a checklist for designing a “dream kitchen.” Of course, space is always an issue, but smart use of space can help make room for more gadgets.

Here’s what design experts suggest should (or could) be a part of your kitchen makeover (in addition to the requisite Subzero refrigerator and two ovens, natch)...

- **Plenty of counter space.** A cook needs room to work, and while various decorations and cooking-focused souvenirs may look nice, they take up valuable real estate. Clear them off and make room for the food prep.

- **Well-organized cabinets.** One should be able to locate and pull out the right utensil or dish or pot without having to rearrange the cupboard.

- **Warming drawers.** A must for anyone who plans to serve multi-course or multi-item meals. It’s impossible to have everything reach perfect doneness at precisely the same moment, but warming drawers can make it seem as though you pulled off this neat trick.

- **Built-in steamer and wok stations.** These accommodate a wide range of ethnic cuisine, and the wok can be easily switched out for a pasta pot.

- **An industrial-style faucet.** One trend noted by designers is the installation of sinks and faucets once found only in restaurants. Having the right tools available can make the clean-up process much more palatable.

Long story short: You need to make your kitchen your own. After all, in most homes, it’s where the family hangs out.

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APPELLATION SHOWCASE



Mount Veeder

Mount Veeder was named for the German Presbyterian pastor, Peter Veeder, who lived in Napa during the Civil War era and enjoyed hiking on the mountain, where the Douglas Firs and Bristlecone Pines reminded him of the forests of home.

It was during those Wild West days that winemaking on Mount Veeder was first recorded. In 1864, Captain Stelham Wing presented the first Mount Veeder bottling in the Napa County Fair, a wine hailing from today's Wing Canyon Vineyard.

The Germanic thread continued with the founding in the 1880s of the Streich Winery (today's Yates Family Vineyard) by Ernest Streich, and the Fisher Winery (today's Mayacamas Vineyards) by John Henry Fisher of Stuttgart.

Commercial-scale production arrived on Mount Veeder in 1900 when Theodore Geir, a colorful and flamboyant German-born Oakland liquor dealer, bought the property that would later become the Christian Brothers' Mont La Salle Winery (today's Hess Collection Winery).

By the late 1890s, there were some 20 vineyards and six wineries on the slopes of Mount Veeder. Prohibition diminished the vineyards, which revitalized beginning with Mayacamas Vineyards in 1951 and Bernstein Vineyards in 1964.

The wines from Mount Veeder — the mountain by the bay —

reflect the independent spirit of its mountain growers and vintners, borne of rugged conditions that demand handcraftsmanship at the highest level.

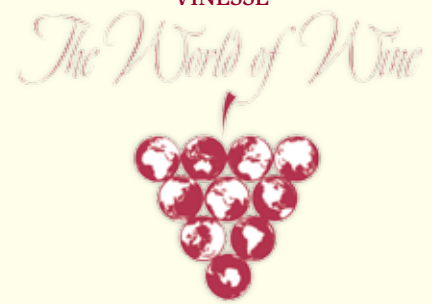
The appellation has the longest growing season and the lowest yields in Napa Valley, and virtually all vineyard work is done by hand due to the rugged conditions and steep slopes. Those slopes, above the fog, render shallow topsoil and minimal water retention, resulting in tiny berries with intense flavor concentration and amazingly soft tannins.

Mount Veeder is the only hillside appellation in Napa Valley that adjoins the cool, bayside Carneros, benefiting from the cooling influence of San Pablo Bay.

Geologists think of it as an island of ancient seabed pushed up into a mountain, surrounded by volcanic soils that typify the rest of the Napa Valley.

Based on Mount Veeder's incomparable mix of steep slopes, predominance of seabed soil and proximity to San Pablo Bay, official American Viticultural Area status was granted in 1993.

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Q Why are some wines sweeter than others? Aren't they all made from grapes?

A Not all wine is made from grapes — basically, anything that can be fermented can be made into wine — but the vast majority is. The ultimate sweetness of a given wine is dependent upon two primary factors: the sweetness level of the grapes when harvested, and when fermentation of the crushed grapes is halted by the winemaker. A vintner may choose to stop the fermentation process before the wine attains full dryness. The earlier fermentation is stopped, the higher the wine's residual sugar level will be... and the sweeter it will be.

On the 35th anniversary of the 1976 Paris Tasting, Stag's Leap Wine Cellars has announced the creation of a unique "Judgment of Paris Seal" for its iconic Cabernet Sauvignons. The Stag's Leap Wine Cellars 1973 S.L.V. Cabernet Sauvignon took top honors among the red wines at the historic Judgment of Paris tasting that took place on May 24, 1976. The Judgment of Paris Seal is a circular emblem with the words "Estate Winner Paris Tasting 1976" surrounded by an olive branch wreath, which in Ancient Greece symbolized victory. The commemorative design will debut on the 2009 vintage of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars FAY, S.L.V., Cask 23 and Artemis Cabernet Sauvignon. "Anniversaries are fitting times to reflect and to look forward," said Ted Baseler, President and CEO of Ste. Michelle Wine Estates. "The Paris Tasting was a defining milestone for Stag's Leap Wine Cellars and the entire California wine industry, and this iconic emblem pays homage to this rich history."



In the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, where Architecture fans flock to see numerous structures designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, there is a purveyor of cheese (and wine) that does everything possible to "be green." The Marion Street Cheese Market recently attained a three-star rating and green certification from the Green Restaurant Association, a national non-profit organization. In addition to embracing locally grown and produced products, the market features bar counters that were made from reclaimed glass, and bar seats made from reworked and woven car seatbelts. Green chemicals are used for cleaning, the restrooms feature timed lights and water-flow moderators, and the kitchen uses energy-efficient appliances. It's a place one can go and enjoy wine-and-cheese flights without even an ounce of guilt.



Wine labels can be informative, but they also can be misleading. Wineries are in the business of selling wine, and the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau is tasked with, among other things, making sure that the labels on wine bottles are truthful. In a famous court case several years ago, the Napa Ridge name was "retired" because little (if any) of the wine inside its bottles came from Napa. Now, regulators are examining such terms as "Old Vine," "Barrel Fermented" and "Reserve" to determine whether they are in need of strict definitions. As one might expect, wineries are opposed to the added scrutiny. Some employ people who do nothing but make sure that labels are in compliance, and approved in a timely manner. Another layer of "oversight" is seen by the wine industry as "overkill." For the time being, the ATTTB is seeking comments from the industry and the wine-buying public.

329.7

The number, in millions, of 9-liter wine cases purchased by Americans in 2010 — up from 313.8 million in 2007.

During that same time period, wine consumption in France dropped from 357.4 million to 320.6 million cases.



“ There are two reasons for drinking. One is when you are thirsty, to cure it. The other, when you are not thirsty, to prevent it. Prevention is better than cure. Wine is the elixir of life.”

— Thomas Love Peacock,
a 19th century English satirist and author.

FOOD & WINE PAIRINGS

Cheddar Cheese

You're on a road trip. You're getting hungry, so you start checking the billboards and other roadside signs for dining ideas.

Rather than another meal at another chain restaurant, you're hoping to find something different. Perhaps a ma-and-pa tavern where you can sit down and enjoy a homemade burger with a slice of melting cheddar cheese.

Restaurant critics probably wouldn't consider that a gourmet experience. But be honest: Does anything taste better than a just-off-the-grill cheddar burger? Add a glass of wine, and life truly is good.

But as we know, few things in life are simple. In this case, pairing the cheddar burger with the right wine — if the tavern even offers wine — can be challenging. So, to simplify this pairing conundrum, let's take the burger out of the equation and focus solely on the cheese.

There are several different styles of cheddar, ranging from quite mild to very sharp. And each style calls for a different type of wine.

If mild cheddar is your preference, seek out a bottle of rich, creamy Chardonnay. Normally, these big, oaky renditions of Chardonnay are best enjoyed sans food, but mild cheddar cheese is a tasty exception to the rule. Because the cheese is so mellow, it doesn't compete with the wine's oakiness. In fact, the two characteristics actually complement one another.



A medium cheddar cheese calls for a red wine — specifically, Pinot Noir. Pinot typically has a mild earthy quality that complements the cheese without overwhelming it.

But if you believe that mild and medium cheddar cheeses are for wimps, and that only sharp cheddar is “real” cheddar, you're in luck because the wine options are more numerous.

Sharp cheddar calls for a noticeably earthy style of wine, so seek bottlings such as Chateauneuf-du-Pape from Southern France, similar Grenache-Syrah-Mourvedre blends from Australia or California, or bold Spanish reds.

Add a slice of sharp cheddar to a burger, and you can add Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon to the wine pairing possibilities.

So the next time you chow down on cheddar, don't forget the corkscrew.

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CHICKEN CASSEROLE WITH HERBS

Try this dish with Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc or Sauvignon Blanc. This recipe makes 6 servings.

Ingredients

- 6 boneless chicken breast halves
- Salt
- Pepper
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 can (10.5-oz.) condensed cream of chicken soup
- 6 to 8-oz. mushrooms, sliced
- 3/4 cup dry white wine
- 2 tablespoons chopped green bell pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon leaf thyme, crushed
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes
- 1/4 teaspoon tarragon, crumbled
- 1/4 teaspoon dried minced chives (or 1 scant teaspoon fresh)

Preparation

1. Lightly season chicken with salt and pepper.
2. Brown chicken slowly in butter in a large skillet.
3. Arrange browned chicken in a baking dish. To drippings in skillet add soup and stir to blend.
4. Slowly add dry white wine, stirring until smooth.
5. Add remaining ingredients and heat to boiling.
6. Pour sauce over the chicken and cover dish with foil. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes.
7. Remove foil and continue baking for 35 minutes, or until tender.
8. Serve with rice or noodles.

PEAR-CHEDDAR PIE

Cheese for dessert? It has been a European tradition for decades. Here's a dish that combines Old World tradition with the New World's daily pursuit of sweetness. This recipe yields one sinfully delicious pie that can be enjoyed with Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Muscat Canelli or "unoaked" Chardonnay.

Ingredients

For the Crumble:

- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup butter

For the Pie:

- 6 cups peeled and sliced pears
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Unbaked pie crust

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Combine the flour, 1/2 cup brown sugar and cheddar cheese. Cut in the butter until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
3. Toss the sliced pears with the lemon juice. In a separate bowl, combine the remaining brown sugar, cornstarch and cinnamon. Add the sugar mixture to the pears and toss to coat.
4. Transfer the pears to the pie crust, and top with the crumble mixture. Bake in the preheated oven until the top is golden brown (about 45 minutes).

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