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The Grapevine

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR VINESSE WINE CLUB MEMBERS

Plan a Wine Country Picnic... Before It's Too Late

**Getting to Know Southern
California's Appellations**

**Wine Pairing Possibilities
for Asian and Mexican Fare**

**Will a New Type of Barrel
Revolutionize Winemaking?**

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EDITOR'S JOURNAL

Mexican Food and Wine? Just Say, '¡Si!'

By Robert Johnson

I rarely drink beer. It's not that I don't like it; it's just that with so many different kinds of wine to discover and savor, I rarely find a good "excuse" to crack open a brewski.

Perhaps at a ballpark on a hot summer day... since it's not likely there's a decent wine to be found at the concession stands. Or maybe at a Japanese steak house... where bottles of Kirin or Sapporo seem to be on every table.



But even with spicy Mexican food, which seems to cry out for an ice-cold cerveza, I have come to prefer wine. Pairing isn't always easy, however, because there are regional cooking styles in Mexico (just as there are here in the States), and so many dishes are laced with chiles in varying degrees of heat.

Over the years, I've developed a "cheat sheet" that I take with me whenever I dine at a Mexican restaurant. I'm not shy about asking for descriptions of the dishes, and then I use those "clues" to select an appropriate wine. Not every Mexican restaurant has a great wine list, though, which means sometimes a cerveza has to suffice.

Preparing Mexican dishes at home simplifies the process greatly, because

there's almost always a bottle on my wine rack that will work — and on those rare occasions when there isn't, I can always adjust the recipe. But whether you're dining out or eating in, I hope my "cheat sheet" will come in handy...

■ **With enchiladas suizas** (corn tortillas rolled up with shredded chicken and two kinds of cheese, then served with a zesty salsa verde), opt for an "unoaked" Chardonnay. A number of Australian wineries make outstanding renditions, as do wineries in Oregon.

■ **With pork carnitas tacos** (served with cilantro, chopped onion and salsa), nothing beats a bubbly glass of Blanc de Noirs. The sweet fruit flavor of the wine nicely balances the pork flavor, while the mousse helps cleanse the palate between bites.

■ **With shrimp-stuffed poblanos** (among the milder peppers), a Brut Rosé would work well, or if you prefer a non-bubbly wine, chill a bottle of Sauvignon Blanc.



New Barrel Technology Is Unveiled

The balance between tradition and technology is always delicate in the world of wine, and so it is with the introduction of a new type of barrel that some are saying could revolutionize winemaking.

Late last spring, a company called Modern Cooperage unveiled its new barrel system at Dutcher Crossing Winery in Healdsburg, Calif. It's a stainless steel barrel with an oak-stave interior. The idea behind it is to enable the winemaker to have greater control over the aromas and flavors of his or her finished wines.

"Most types of fine wine made in California wineries spend more time in barrel than not," says Patrick Pickett, the winemaking consultant for Modern Cooperage. "Oak goes hand in hand in the production of the very best wines. Our barrel systems are designed to be part of a winemaker's barrel program, as another tool in their quest to make better wines. This tool provides them with a level of control and precision that has never existed before."

The interior stave rack systems are said to give the winemaker total control and repeatability over their "oak barrel stave recipes." The lees can be stirred in a circular motion in just seconds, and without moving the barrels. The winemaker has complete control over the level of oxidation they allow their wines to be exposed to while

in barrel. (Regular oak barrels have a uniform rate of oxidation that is unchangeable.)

Debra Mathy, the proprietor of Dutcher Crossing Winery, has embraced the concept.

"I think the technology has come a long way since the initial idea," she said, "and there is a significant place for it in the wine industry."



Modern Cooperage Barrel in filling and emptying position.

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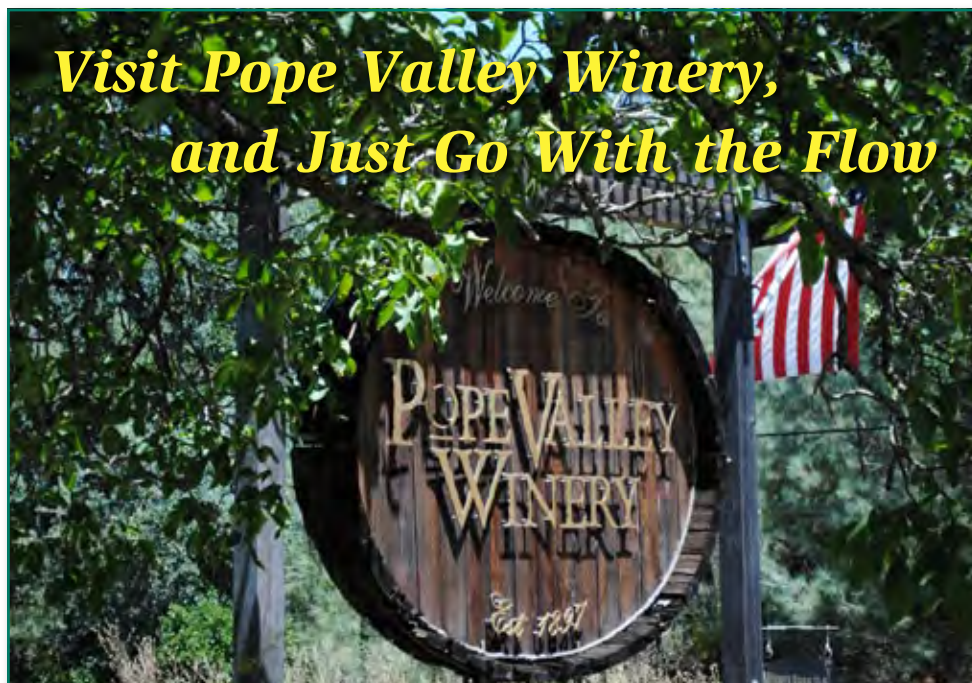
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“Gravity-flow” technology has been all the rage in late 20th century and early 21st century winery construction. Such a design eliminates the need for pumping newly fermented wine into barrels, a harsh process that most quality-focused vintners prefer to avoid if at all possible. Using a multi-tier system that moves the wine gently is preferred, and letting gravity do the work accommodates that preference.

Many decades before “gravity-flow” wineries became the norm, Ed Haus had embraced the concept at his winery in the Pope Valley area of the Napa Valley. Haus built the main building over the creek that meanders through the property, to conserve the available land, and utilized an adjacent hillside to make the structure three stories tall.

During harvest season, the just-picked grapes would be taken to the top level to be destemmed and crushed, then dropped to the second level for crushing, with the juice then flowing to the lower level where barrels awaited.

The year was 1897.

And Pope Valley Winery, as it is known today, is still going strong, annually producing around 5,000 cases of hand-crafted wines from estate vineyards that date back as far as 1940. Selections include an “Estate Reserve” Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot,

Zinfandel, Sangiovese, Chenin Blanc and Zinfandel Port.

How did the winery survive Prohibition, a time when so many estates were forced to close their doors and abandon their vineyards? Enough time has passed that the story can now be told.



Haus' son, Ed, was in the military, where he befriended a young man from Chicago. Like many Chicagoans of the time, the friend had connections. So, the Haus family would load wine onto a horse cart and deliver it to the town of Napa, where it was placed on a train bound for the Windy City.



It turned out that the wine was being purchased by a rather notorious Chicagoan named Al Capone, who used it to stock his speakeasies and brothels around the city.

Eventually, times became tough even for Capone, who owed a lot of people a lot of money. Rather than finding a way to pay off his debts, Capone began "offing" his creditors. When that news reached Pope Valley, Sam Haus decided it might be wise to stop selling wine to America's No. 1 wise guy.

The arrangement lasted long enough to keep the winery going, even though, to the outside world, it appeared that the winery was closed.

The estate remained in the Haus family until 1959, and later was purchased by the Devitt family. In the mid-1990s, long-time Pope Valley residents Rodney Young, Manny Gomes, Ralf Gerdes, and Jim, Sam and Henry Eakle pooled their resources to purchase the property. In 2012, Sam Eakle and his two children became the majority owners, and continued the process of pumping new life into the old estate — of course, without the use of pumps.

On the 40 acres, adjoining the still-standing three-story winery, are

six structures. Among them are a blacksmith shop, a wagon shed and the original farm house. Many of the original tools — dating back to the last years of the 19th century — remain, giving the property the feel of a working museum.

And the Eakle family loves showing it off, providing no-appointment-

necessary tours daily for groups of six or fewer. Tasting of the estate's "heritage wines" is complimentary; a reserve tasting costs \$15 per person.

Other, even more exclusive, tastings also are offered:

■ **Brunch and Bubbles**

— Includes fresh pastries, fruit, brie, crackers, a glass

of sparkling Blanc de Blancs, a custom wine flight and a tour of the winery and grounds. Cost: \$30 per person.

■ **Group Lunch and Reserve Tasting** — Includes a gourmet boxed lunch, a private reserve wine tasting and a tour. Requires a minimum of four people. Cost: \$50 per person.

■ **Private Lunch at the Winery** — A number of options are available, and this option requires a minimum of 10 people and a reservation at least two weeks in advance. Cost: \$75 per person.

No matter how you decide to experience Pope Valley Winery, you're in for a unique experience, and a rare glimpse of how the Napa Valley used to be. Our advice: Opt for one of the tour-and-tasting packages, and then just kick back and go with the flow.

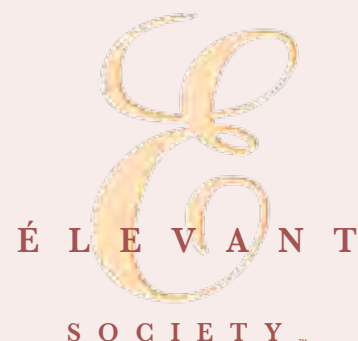
Winery 4-1-1

Pope Valley Winery

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Plan Your Sonoma Wine Country Picnic... While There's Still Time!



Viansa, Sonoma Valley

Summer is waning, but there's still time for one final picnic in Sonoma County wine country. Four of our favorite places to enjoy a leisurely lunch are Viansa Winery and Marketplace in Sonoma, Geyser Peak Winery in Geyserville, DeLoach Vineyards in Santa Rosa, and Dry Creek Vineyards in Healdsburg.

We checked the wineries' websites to get the latest information on their picnic facilities and offerings, and to help you plan one more wine country picnic — before it's too late for this year.

■ If you have a special love of all that is Italian, Viansa is for you. Situated at the gateway to Sonoma Valley, the winery is only 45 minutes from the Golden Gate Bridge.

Viansa sits majestically on a hilltop, providing breathtaking views of Sonoma Valley, nearby vineyards, olive groves and wetlands. And don't be surprised if you feel as if you're in Italy, as all of the estate's buildings and surroundings are Tuscan inspired.

Just like in Italy, Viansa is all about the synergy among great food, great wine and great people. It's an ideal spot to enjoy award-winning Sonoma wines, Italian delicacies and the warmth and joy of a friendly staff.

Guests can pick up fresh-made sandwiches, salads, antipasti, soups and fruit salads. And through October, wood-fired pizza and wine pairing is available on the patio. Then to work off a few calories, a game of bocce ball awaits.

In addition to great food and phenomenal views, visitors can catch glimpses of some of the more than 500 species of birds that have been sighted on Viansa's wetlands. It's a relaxing



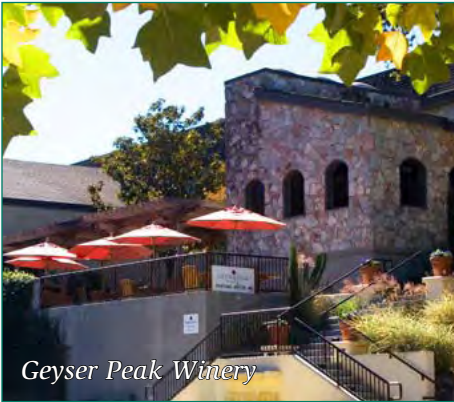
TOURING TIPS

way to wind down — which, after all, is the purpose of a picnic.

■ Expansive views also can be enjoyed at Geyser Peak Winery, where the Alexander Valley spreads out from perfectly sited picnic decks. A number of shaded tables are available for the convenience and comfort of guests.

Visitors may bring their own snacks, or purchase salami, cheese, crackers, olives, sweets and more from the winery's tasting room. Wines by the glass and bottle also are available, as are non-alcoholic beverages.

Geyser Peak also offers a "Picnic



Geysler Peak Winery

& Tasting Package” that includes a “Premier” tasting of four wines in the main tasting room, followed by a selection of charcuterie, cheese, nuts, crackers and chocolates — all served picnic-style along with two 5-oz. glasses of wine. A table on the picnic terrace — with tablecloth, napkins and stemware — may also be reserved, and a 24-hour advance reservation is required.



DeLoach Vineyards

■ DeLoach Vineyards offers picnics year-round, weather permitting, and with a day’s notice, guests will have a picnic basket waiting for them upon their arrival at the winery.

There’s a beautifully landscaped picnic area, and each basket includes

salami, cheese, crackers, olives, chocolates, dried fruit and nuts. A vegetarian option also is available. The winery will provide linens, stemware, a cutting board and a knife to make the picnic experience easy and complete.



Dry Creek Vineyards

■ A picnic at Dry Creek Vineyards comes with something most other wineries can’t provide: a taste of history. Founded in 1972 by David Stare, it was the first new winery built in Dry Creek Valley following Prohibition, and has a long track record of producing some of California’s finest Fumé Blanc and Zinfandel.

The estate’s picnic grounds provide a lovely setting for enjoying a snack, paired with Dry Creek wines purchased from the tasting room. And for those who absolutely must remain “connected,” even while on a picnic, free WiFi is available.

For Further Information

Viansa Winery & Marketplace

25200 Arnold Drive
Sonoma, CA 95476
707-935-4726

Geysler Peak Winery

22281 Chianti Road
Geyserville, CA 95441
707-857-2500

DeLoach Vineyards

1791 Olivet Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95401
707-526-9111

Dry Creek Vineyard

3770 Lambert Bridge Road
Healdsburg, CA 95448
800-864-9463

VINESSE

Hot LIST

1 Hot Brimming-With-Southern-Hospitality Resort. Blackberry Farm in Knoxville, Tenn., has been called “the ultimate in Southern comfort.” It’s a 4,200-acre property in the shadows of the Smoky Mountains, and each night in a magnificently restored barn, guests enjoy a modern take on Southern cooking. They also can choose a bottle of wine from a cellar that’s home to 160,000 bottles. What Blackberry Farm may lack in elegance, it more than makes up for in charm and comfort... and wine. www.blackberryfarm.com

2 Hot Pacific Coast Inn. There is no better place to soak in the magnificent beauty of the California coastline than at Big Sur’s Post Ranch Inn. Upon check-in, guests are treated to a bottle of wine from McIntyre Vineyards. Each morning, guests awake to a gourmet breakfast. And should you happen to take advantage of your in-room mini-bar, rest assured that those cheeses and chocolates will be restocked daily. www.postranchinn.com

3 Hot Cool Wine Cave Tour. Numerous wineries offer tours of their underground cellars, but none can top the tour at Jarvis, a Napa Valley winery that’s entirely underground. Tours of the 45,000-sq.-ft. cave are expensive — \$60 per person — but the experience (which includes wine tasting) is unlike any other in California wine country. www.jarviswines.com



Deep. Describes a wine that is mouth-filling, with plenty of extract; concentrated.

Earthy. Can be a positive or negative term for describing a wine, depending on how you feel about the aroma of soil. In general, a nice “accent,” as opposed to a dominant aroma.

Fortified. A wine that has had neutral spirits or brandy added to it, increasing its alcohol content.

Grafting. Process of uniting two grapevines — phylloxera-resistant rootstock with vitis vinifera buds, for example — so they grow as one. Much less costly than replanting.

Haut. French word meaning high; may refer to altitude or quality.

Inglennook. One of California’s historic wineries, founded in 1879 and now owned by Francis Ford Coppola.

VINESSE STYLE

GOURMET MUSTARD

The business is now known as the Napa Mustard Co., but its roots can be traced to California’s Mendocino Coast.

There, Lionel and Rose Jacobs operated the Noyo River Restaurant and Rendezvous, where regular customers came to love the salad dressings and gourmet mustards. Over time, the proprietors became convinced that there could be a market for those products outside the restaurant, and created the Noyo brand.

It proved to be a wise decision. Today, at Napa Mustard Co., the Jacobs’ daughter, Cindy, is carrying on the family business. And the company continues to produce mustards that are allergen free, fat free, trans fat free, gluten free and very low in carbs. Some even are sugar free and carb free.

Of course, it’s the wine-infused mustards that caught our eye, and current offerings include:

■ **Zinfandel Orange Mustard** — Zinfandel wine and orange flavor combine to create a mustard that will spark up any salad or dip. It’s also excellent on poultry or game meats.

■ **Zinfandel and Garlic Mustard** — The garlic provides most of the flavor in this mustard, and it complements both roast duck and prime rib.

■ **Merlot ’n Chocolate Mustard** — Frankly, we had our doubts about this combination of flavors... until we tasted it. Try using it as a dip for pretzels, or add a few spoonfuls to your favorite brownie mix to make those tasty squares moister and “fudgier.”

To learn more about Napa Mustard Co. and its many gourmet products, visit www.napamustard.gourmetfoodmall.com.



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APPELLATION SHOWCASE

Southern California



The Golden State's "wine history" actually began in Southern California, but over the years it migrated northward as more and more people flowed into the Southland, creating today's sprawl of housing tracts and strip malls. But winemaking there has not disappeared.

The Southern California region extends from Malibu (north of the city of Los Angeles) to the southern border of California (below the city of San Diego).

Among the seven AVAs in the region, the South Coast is the largest with an area totaling 115,200 acres. Cucamonga Valley contains 109,400 acres of land, Ramona Valley has 89,000 acres, Temecula 33,000, San Pasqual Valley 9,000, Saddle Rock-Malibu 2,100 and Malibu-Newton Canyon 850. The region has close to four dozen wineries.

Even though Cucamonga is the second-largest AVA, it's probably the most threatened by the Southland's never-ending urban sprawl.

Cucamonga is located in San Bernardino County, about 45 miles east of Los Angeles. Originally known as the Cucamonga-Guasti Wine District, where vineyard planting began in 1838, it has lost most of its winegrape acreage in recent years.

During Prohibition, vineyard acreage in Cucamonga was double

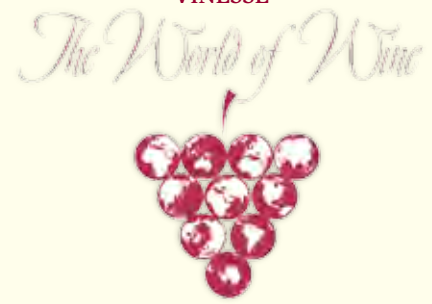
that of Napa and Sonoma counties combined. In the 1940s, this east/west-oriented valley region was home to 60 wineries and more than 35,000 acres of vines, as its thick-skinned grapes could survive the long trip east where home winemakers awaited their delivery.

Today, only three of the original family wineries and fewer than 1,000 vineyard acres remain in Cucamonga. The loss of vineyard land continues, and some of the nation's oldest vines could disappear.

Since the region became an official American Viticultural Area in 1995, the two major wineries, Galleano and Joseph Filippi, have refocused on producing premium wines. Top varieties include Alicante Bouschet, Carignane, Cinsault, Grenache, Mission, Mourvedre and Zinfandel.

In addition to table wines, the region is known for unique fortified wines, including a highly regarded Triple Cream Sherry made by Rancho de Philo.

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Q I'm seeing more and more bottles that are sealed with screwcaps instead of corks. Why is this?

A Technology has advanced to the point that screwcaps provide a bottle seal that's even more dependable than traditional corks, which can become brittle and leak, thus impacting the quality of the wine. Many people prefer the tradition and the "pop" sound associated with corks, but industry insiders tell us to expect still more wines sealed with screwcaps in the future.



In Portland, locals and visiting foodies head for one of the most happening streets in all of Oregon: Southeast Division. There, in addition to the original Stumptown coffee house and Lauretta Jean's pie shop, one can find the Southeast Wine Collective. Four wineries make their bottlings on the premises, and a tasting room in the front of the building offers cheese, charcuterie and, of course, wine. For hours, menus and a calendar of specials events, visit: <http://sewinecollective.com/>

“As I ate the oysters with their strong taste of the sea and their faint metallic taste that the cold white wine washed away, leaving only the sea taste and the succulent texture, and as I drank their cold liquid from each shell and washed it down with the crisp taste of the wine, I lost the empty feeling and began to be happy and to make plans.”



— *From A Moveable Feast, by Ernest Hemingway*

2.4

Pounds of winegrapes required to make one bottle of wine.

At Gundlach Bundschu in Sonoma, Calif., sustainability is defined broadly. The winery seeks not only to be a responsible steward of the land, but also to preserve the land for future generations of its family. There is nothing static about this view of sustainability; it requires innovation and action. The family believes that preserving the unique ecosystem of Rhinefarm is essential to wine quality, as well as to the health of the family and business. The introduction of beneficial predators — from owls and bluebirds to beetles and mites — and intensive pest monitoring allows GB to minimize the use of pesticides and herbicides. Cover crops contribute vital diversity and nutrition to the soils, and registered organic compounds and practices are used whenever possible. Vigilant management of the acute deficit irrigation program and water reclamation ponds promotes conservation, recycling 70% of winery water. In November 2008, two new solar arrays were installed on the property. The first, a 1.3-acre 80kw system, now provides 60% of the winery's power. The second, a "floatovoltaic" system, is the first of its kind in Sonoma County. The panels float on the estate's ponds, and provide 100% of the power to the water reclamation system. In June 2009, Gundlach Bundschu received certification as a Bay Area Green Business from Sonoma County. In 2012, it received its Fish Friendly Farming certification.



FOOD & WINE PAIRINGS

A Different Approach to Asian Fare



We know that pairing wine with food is a highly subjective endeavor, simply because no two human noses or palates are exactly the same.

In a single glass of wine, one person may perceive a cherry-like aroma, while another might identify the same scent as more like that of a blackberry. Once the wine is in the mouth, the perception of the flavors could remain consistent with the aromatic perception, or they could flip-flop. That's just how it is with wine, noses and palates.

With that in mind, we would like to make what might be considered a revolutionary suggestion: The next time you dine on Asian fare, have a glass of red wine with it.

You won't find very many books, pundits or bloggers who would float that idea. When offering a wine-pairing suggestion for Asian food, it's much safer to stick with the traditional advice: white wine, perhaps with a touch of sweetness, well chilled.

Safe? Yes. An off-dry (i.e., slightly sweet) Riesling or Gewurztraminer works very well with the flavors we typically associate with Asian cuisine — vegetables, black pepper, soy sauces and semi-hot spices. One

of the great Thai restaurants in the United States — Lotus of Siam in Las Vegas — has a cellar stocked with an amazing array of Riesling bottlings.

But its extensive wine list also has page after page of red wine selections — in particular, numerous bottlings from Burgundy.

The red wine of Burgundy is Pinot Noir, and the reason it works well with Thai food... and other spicy Asian fare... is that its tannin structure is modest. Whereas the strong tannin in a variety such as Cabernet Sauvignon clashes with the delicate texture of the food, the modest tannin in Pinot Noir allows the fruit flavor of the wine to shine, complementing the food's texture and flavors. French Beaujolais offers similar pairing bliss.

Another red wine to try is a fruit-forward Shiraz from Australia, or a peppery Syrah (same variety, different name) from France's Rhone Valley. Even though such wines can be somewhat high in tannin, their complementary flavors can make the food pairing work.

Light & Sweet

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PANANG NEUA

Yes, it is possible to pair wine with spicy dishes — just not overly spicy ones. Depending on your personal preference, this dish matches nicely with Gewurztraminer or Riesling... and if you drink red wine only, opt for a fruit-forward, Australian-style Shiraz (a.k.a. Syrah). This recipe yields 4 servings.

Ingredients

- 3/4 lb. beef, thinly sliced
- 3 tbsp. Panang curry paste
- 2 cups coconut milk
- 6 Kaffir lime leaves, thinly sliced
- 3 tbsp. palm sugar
- 2 1/2 tbsp. fish sauce
- 4 slices fresh red chili
- 2 tbsp. peanut butter
- 2 parsley leaves, stems removed

Preparation

1. Wash beef, then cut into about 1 inch thick strips.
2. Heat 1 cup of coconut milk over medium heat for 5-6 minutes.
3. Add curry paste and stir constantly for 2 minutes.
4. Add beef, and cook for another 5 minutes, or until done.
5. Reduce heat to medium-low, and add remaining coconut milk. Heat for about 10 minutes.
6. Season to taste with fish sauce and sugar, stirring well.
7. Add Kaffir lime leaves and red chili pepper for more spice (if desired). Reduce heat and simmer for another 15 minutes, or until the beef is tender. Stir well to combine.
8. Transfer to a serving dish, and garnish with red chilies, Kaffir lime leaves and parsley leaves.
9. Serve hot over Jasmine rice.

SALMON WITH PESTO

Many fish dishes call for a light, refreshing wine, such as Sauvignon Blanc. But this one has texture and a flavor spectrum that calls for a more full-bodied wine, such as Chardonnay. If you prefer red wine, Pinot Noir would be the ideal choice. This recipe yields 2 servings.

Ingredients

- 1 slice white bread
- 1/4 cup lightly packed fresh basil
- 2 tablespoons packed fresh parsley
- 2 1/2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon pine nuts
- 1/4 teaspoon minced garlic
- A dash of salt
- A dash of coarsely ground pepper
- 2 salmon fillets (6-oz. each)

Preparation

1. Tear bread into pieces and place in a food processor. Pulse until fine crumbs are formed. Set aside 1 tablespoon.
2. To the remaining bread crumbs, add the basil, parsley, oil, pine nuts, garlic, salt and pepper. Cover and process until finely chopped.
3. Coat a baking sheet with cooking spray, and place salmon on the sheet.
4. Spread with pesto, and sprinkle with reserved bread crumbs.
5. Bake at 400 degrees F for 20 to 22 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with a fork and crumbs are lightly browned.

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