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The Grapevine

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR VINESSE WINE CLUB MEMBERS

Sips and Swirls Between the Songs

**Take a Tour of
Bodegas Muga**

*Somm Secrets:
Ordering Wine
in a Restaurant*

**Orlando's Magic
(Wine) Kingdom**

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The 2013 Outside Lands Music & Arts Festival



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EDITOR'S JOURNAL

Did You Know?

By Robert Johnson

If you answer "yes" to three or more of the wine-focused questions that follow, you are a true wine geek. And I mean that in a good way!

- Did you know that wine grapes are still being grown in a one-acre vineyard that Thomas Jefferson planted more than 200 years ago? Of course, the grapevines and varieties are different today than in Jefferson's time, but that should not come as a surprise. History shows that Jefferson himself replanted the vineyard several times in search of the best varieties for the site.

possible to experience the mellowness-inducing pleasure of wine and the flavor of coffee together? Friends Fun Wine has introduced coffee-flavored wine in a can. What I'm wondering is how the company beat Starbucks to the punch.

- Did you know that fans of Barolo and Barbaresco wines should be able to enjoy their favorite elixirs for decades to come? Those two winegrowing regions in Italy have been granted UNESCO "World Heritage Site" status by the United Nations' World Heritage Committee. The Champagne and Burgundy regions of France will be considered for that status in 2015.

- Did you know that *Wine Enthusiast* has released its 2014 list of America's best wine restaurants? It's included in the August issue of the magazine, which also features a list of top BYOB restaurants.

- Did you know that Veuve Clicquot has buried 300 bottles and 50 magnums of Champagne in the Baltic Sea off the coast of Finland? It's part of an experiment to compare aging potential with cellar-aged wines. Four years ago, 168 bottles — some dating back to 1839 — were discovered in the same place, and some were still drinkable.



Game of Thrones

- Did you know that a line of wines based on the global TV hit "Game of Thrones" has been introduced? The various wines — reds and whites are included — are linked to the show's feuding clans, all under the "Wines of Westeros" banner.

- Did you know that it's now



8 Tips for Navigating a Wine List

Selecting a bottle of wine at a restaurant can be a daunting, intimidating task. Here are eight tips to help relieve the stress...

1. Peruse the restaurant's wine list online before you go. You may spot an old favorite, or at least get a good idea of what types of wine are featured — something you may not want to do when you're also trying to figure out what to eat.

2. Think backwards. Most people select their entrée, then ask the sommelier for wine suggestions. Just for fun, find a wine you know (or are pretty sure) you'll like, and then pick a dish to match it — or ask your server for a suggestion.

3. Verify the vintage. Many wines are very similar from year to year, but there can be vintage variances. If the vintage isn't listed on the wine list, ask.

4. When talking with a sommelier and trying to narrow down your wine choices, ask this question: "What do you drink at home that's on the list?"

5. You're having steak and your dining companion is having fish. What should you do? Pinot Noir is a



wise choice, especially if the fish is salmon. Otherwise, consider ordering two 375-ml. bottles (if available), or separate wines by the glass. In such instances, a well-selected by-the-glass list is worth its weight in gold.

6. Study how the wine list is constructed. If there are 20 red Burgundies and only four Italian reds, chances are the wine buyer or sommelier is a fan of red Burgundy and stocks an array to complement the menu. Other selections from other places probably are "filler." It's best to play to the restaurant's strengths.

7. It's okay to shop by price. An easy way to let the sommelier know is to point to a price on the wine list and tell him/her, "We're looking for something in this range."

8. Go wild. Sometimes the best choice on a wine list is something you've never heard of. Put your trust in the sommelier, and you just may be pleasantly surprised.



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Bodegas Muga: A Taste of Spain's Rioja Alta

There are countless wineries around the world that grow their own grapes, thus controlling the process from vineyard to bottle.

But Bodegas Muga, situated in the famed Rioja Alta region of Spain, takes things a step further. It actually has coopers on staff to build the estate's oak barrels and vats.

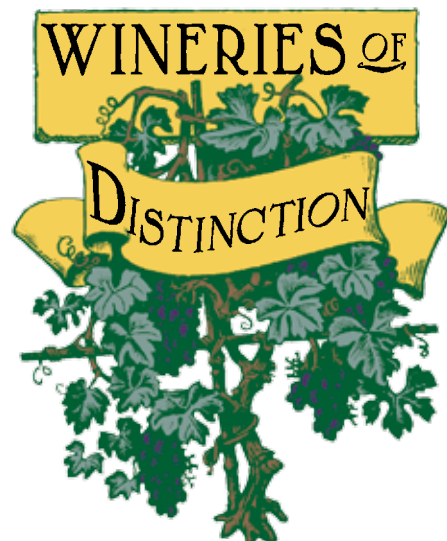
There are 14,000 barrels made out of different types of oak, including French (Allier, Tronçais or Jupilles), American, Hungarian, Russian and even a small consignment of Spanish oak.

One of the most traditional wineries in La Rioja, Bodegas Muga is located in the historic Barrio de La Estación — the railway station district — in Haro. The facilities, spanning some 270,000 square feet, are two centuries old, built mainly of stone and oak.

The winery was founded in 1932 by spouses Isaac Muga and Aurora Caño. Today, it's run by the third generation of the family.

"We are obsessed with quality," says Juan Muga, one member of that generation. "Everything we do is about continuously improving our vineyards, our winemaking and our people."

The Bodegas Muga vineyards cover 620 acres at the foot of the Montes Obarenses. The site's climate is exceptional due to the geography and orientation of the vines, as well as the surrounding climate — a mix of Mediterranean, Atlantic and Continental that combine to provide a most welcoming environment for growing wine grapes.





Torremuga room

The soil consists mostly of clay and limestone, and a number of small terroirs, better known as microclimates, accommodate the growing of numerous varieties — Tempranillo, Garnacha (Grenache), Mazuelo (Carignan) and Graciano among the reds, and Viura and Malvasia among the whites.

There are both “regular” and “Reserva” bottlings offered, and many consider the “star wine” to be the Selección Especial. The 2009 vintage is a sublime blend of Tempranillo, Garnacha, Mazuelo and Graciano that’s aged for 28 months in oak casks crafted especially for the cuvee.

While New World technology is used to ensure quality in every bottle, the style of the wines is Old World, showcasing distinct minerality and earthiness. To experience the essence of Bodegas Muga, one need simply pour a glass of Muga Rosé and serve it alongside Marcona almonds and slivers of Manchego cheese.

Tours of the estate are offered, and

include up-close looks at the imposing wooden tanks, the calmness of the aging rooms, and the heat and aroma of the cooperage. Tours last anywhere from an hour to 90 minutes and include tastes of two wines for an 8-Euro fee. To ensure a positive guest experience, advance reservations are required.

From vineyard to barrel to bottle, few wineries control every aspect of transforming grapes into world-class wines. Bodegas Muga is one, and the wines provide a true taste of Rioja Alta.

Winery 4-1-1

Bodegas Muga

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Festival Season: Sips and Swirls Between the Songs



Lollapalooza 2013 at Grant Park in Chicago

Rare is the wine festival that does not include some sort of music. The type of music doesn't seem to matter; the wine-drinking experience just seems to be enhanced by melodic sounds.

We're now deep into America's music festival season, and it dawned on us that not nearly as common is the music festival that includes some sort of wine — other than bland, by-the-jug offerings. It may have to do with necessary permits, or perhaps lack of wine knowledge among festival staffers.

Whatever the reason, there's a way to deal with a wine-less music festival: Visit a wine-focused restaurant in the festival's home city before or after the day's performances.

Space limits our ability to offer dining suggestions for all of the upcoming festivals this year, so we've decided to focus on six, each of which offers a nearby "wine experience" for any music lover who is so inclined...

■ **Lollapalooza** — Aug. 1-3 at Grant Park in Chicago. Headliners include Eminem, Outkast, Kings of Leon, Arctic Monkeys, Skrillex and Calvin Harris.

Dining suggestion: NoMI Kitchen, with its floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking Michigan Avenue, is that rare restaurant that serves up both magnificent views and magnificent food. Choices range from light bites to five-course culinary extravaganzas, and the wine list is one of the best in the city.

■ **Newport Jazz Festival** — Aug. 1-3 at Fort Adams State Park in Newport, R.I. This year marks the 60th anniversary of this multi-generational celebration of jazz, with performers including the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, Trombone Shorty and Orleans Avenue, Bobby McFerrin, and Dr. John and the Nite Trippers.

Dining suggestion: 22 Bowen's has been described as "sophisticated, elegant and easy going." In other words, much like a glass of Pinot Noir or Merlot. Prime steaks and fresh-catch seafood are the specialties of the house, and the wine-by-the-glass list



TOURING TIPS

is one of the most comprehensive and well selected that we've seen.

■ **Outside Lands** — Aug. 8-10 at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. The extensive, eclectic lineup includes Kanye West, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, The Killers and Death Cab for Cutie. More so than other festivals, there's a big emphasis on food and wine, with the 2014 Taste of the Bay Area taking place on the festival grounds, and a Wine Lands tent housing dozens of labels, including Caymus, Hess Collection, Joseph Phelps, Navarro and Scharffenberger.

Dining suggestion: While San Francisco is home to hundreds of outstanding restaurants, we suggest eating at the festival since so many

types of food will be available, including a lamb and shrimp mixed grill (from Beast and the Hare), fried chicken and waffles (from Farmer Brown's Little Skillet), Gilroy garlic mac and cheese (from Homeroom) and Baja fish tacos (from Tacolicious).

■ **Bumbershoot** — Aug. 30-Sept. 1 at Seattle Center in Seattle. The festival gets its name from the colloquial term for umbrella, which seems appropriate for a city that gets so much rain. It's perhaps the most all-encompassing music festival in the country, with genres ranging from hip hop to Americana, and from rock to jazz, with a bit of electronic and soul thrown in for good measure.

Dining suggestion: Purple Café and Wine Bar, with four locations including downtown Seattle, features new American cuisine with a menu that changes by the season, complemented by a phenomenal wine list. If you're feeling adventurous, wines are available in creative flights, as are cheeses.

■ **Americana Music Festival** — Sept. 16-21 in Nashville. Nine venues, all in proximity to the downtown area, will host 165 music performances. The lineup includes performers both famous and under-the-radar, with names like the Avett Brothers, Billy Joe Shaver, Carlene Carter, Greensky

Bluegrass, Marty Stuart, Rodney Crowell, Paul Thorn and Ruthie Foster.

Dining suggestion: Flyte World Dining and Wine features the talented Chef Matthew Lackey, who strives to offer responsibly sourced meat and fish, along with locally grown produce, whenever possible. Middle Tennessee and the surrounding area provide a vast selection of delicious artisan foods. And the superb wine list, developed by co-owner Scott Sears, features an abundance of by-the-glass choices.

■ **BottleRock Napa** — May 29-31, 2015, at the Napa Valley Expo in Napa, Calif. Lessons learned from the longer 2013 festival and the scaled-back 2014 event should make for the best BottleRock yet next spring. The Cure, Railroad Earth, Outkast, Heart, The Fray and Eric Church were the headliners this year. If you can't decide whether you love music or wine more, BottleRock will put your eardrums and palate at ease.

Dining suggestion: Napa Valley is packed with famous and multi-starred restaurants, but in the city of Napa, it's tough to beat La Toque. New French cuisine is presented with creativity and flair, especially when it comes to the seasonal dishes. And the wine list, among the best in the entire valley, features nearly 2,000 options.

VINESSE

Hot LIST

1 Hot Belgian Quarter Restaurant. Regional dishes get a delicious makeover at Sorgenfrei Wein und Speisen in Cologne. It's a cheerful place with a solid wine list — which makes perfect sense, considering its name roughly translates to “no worries wine and food.”

<http://www.sorgenfrei-koeln.com>

2 Hot East African Retreat. It's called Segera Retreat, and it's situated in the heart of Kenya's Laikipia Plateau, known as an important migratory corridor. Indeed, the facility was built specifically for wildlife viewing, but the owner has created a destination that offers much, much more. The eight villas are on a working cattle ranch, yet luxury is everywhere, from the oversized beds to the collection of local art, and from huge bathrooms to a restaurant known as the Wine Tower, stocked with more than 2,000 bottles — all from family-owned wineries in Africa.

<http://www.segera.com>

3 Hot Northwest Wine and Food Event. The dates have been announced for the 6th annual Taste of Tulalip, an annual celebration of wine, food and tradition held at the Tulalip Resort Casino, near Seattle. Award-winning guest chefs will prepare special meals, more than 120 wineries will pour their current releases, and there will be an array of wine seminars and cooking demonstrations.

<http://www.tasteoftulalip.com>

For Further Information

Lollapalooza

<http://www.lollapalooza.com>

NoMI Kitchen

<http://hyatt.com/gallery/nomi/kitchen.html>

Newport Jazz Festival

<http://www.newportjazzfest.org>

22 Bowen's

<http://www.22bowens.com>

Outside Lands

<http://www.sfoutsidelands.com>

Bumbershoot

<http://bumbershoot.org>

Purple Café and Wine Bar

<http://www.thepurplecafe.com>

Americana Music Festival

<http://americanamusic.org>

Flyte World Dining and Wine

<http://www.flytenashville.com>

BottleRock Napa

<http://www.bottlerocknapavalley.com>

La Toque

<http://www.latoque.com>



Maceration. One of the most important parts of the winemaking process, particularly among red varieties. Grape juice and skins are fermented together, imparting tannins and color.

Nebuchadnezzar. A large — make that *giant* — format bottle that holds the equivalent of 20 standard-sized bottles (15 liters in all).

Off-Dry. Term for a wine that is slightly sweet.

Peak. The time when a wine tastes and smells its best (obviously, quite subjective).

Quintessa. A highly respected, red-wine focused estate established in the Napa Valley by Agustin and Valeria Huneus in 1990.

Ripasso. Process in which dried grapes or pomace is added to a fermented wine for a period of maceration to increase its intensity.

VINESSE STYLE

Orlando Wine Bars

Orlando is the amusement park mecca of the East Coast, with Disney and Universal operating multiple parks and others offering dozens of stand-alone attractions.

Fortunately, when wine drinkers need a break from all the “excitement,” three outstanding wine bars offer a relaxing vinous respite...

■ **Eola Wine Company** — Designed to be a place where people could hang out with friends and share some laughs... not to mention good wine. It offers more than 70 wines by the glass, as well as creative wine flights. An assortment of flatbreads, cheeses, charcuterie, appetizers and desserts complement the wines, and there even are craft beers for the non-wine inclined.

Two locations: 430 East Central Blvd., Orlando, 407-481-9100; and 136 Park Ave., Winter Park, 407-647-9103.

■ **Funky Monkey Wine Company** — “Stylish yet unconventional.” That’s how this wine bar’s website describes the vibe and vision of Funky Monkey, which offers Asian-influenced dishes to complement its selection of wines. The Stuffed Avocado, for instance, is like none you’ve ever tasted, filled with spicy ahi tuna, cream cheese, spicy mayo, masago, sriracha and eel sauce. The focus is on fresh ingredients, essential for a menu so heavy on sushi. Wine dinners are held regularly.

Two locations: 912 N. Mills Ave., Orlando, 407-427-1447; 9101 International Dr., Orlando, 407-418-9463.

■ **The Wine Room** — For those who want to sample a lot of wines, this is the place to go. It offers more than 150 choices in 1-oz., 2.5-oz. and 5-oz. pour sizes, along with an array of artisan cheeses, flatbreads, wraps, small plates and sweets.

270 S. Park Ave., Winter Haven, 407-696-9463.

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APPELLATION SHOWCASE



The Rutherford district of California's Napa Valley first gained worldwide recognition in 1939 when Georges de Latour won a gold medal at the Golden Gate International Exposition for his 1936 Beaulieu Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon.

Since that time, BV's Private Reserve wines have set a standard for many of the appellation's wineries. While several other varietals, such as Sauvignon Blanc, grow well there, Cabernet Sauvignon performs best in the vineyards of Rutherford.

The Rutherford viticultural area is approximately six square miles, beginning just south of Cakebread Cellars and BV Vineyard #2 along Highway 29. It ends at Zinfandel Lane, 3.3 miles to the north, and stretches across the valley (two miles at its widest point) from Mt. St. John on the west to the Vaca Mountain Range on the east.

Soils from three alluvial fans are primarily gravelly, sandy and loamy. The fans are formed from shattered, well-bedded sandstone, and their deposits are high in gravels. Deep and well-drained, the fans have pockets that allow runoff to easily flow to the streams and Napa River. Rutherford soils are dominated by the Franciscan marine sedimentary materials with some volcanic deposits (primarily Bale, Pleasanton and Yolo loams).

One of the more unusual aspects about Rutherford is that it has a higher radiant value than other parts of Napa Valley. Because the area is located at Napa Valley's widest point, it spends more time in the sun.

Warm summer days ripen Rutherford grapes, giving way to cool evenings. An average summer day may drop 12 degrees immediately after sunset. This fluctuation allows the fruit to ripen at a steady pace; temperatures north and south of Rutherford can vary as much as 10 degrees. Rutherford has an average rainfall of 26-36 inches per year. Although typically mild, spring can bring freezing temperatures at night during March and April.

Although bordered on the west and east by two mountain ranges, the Rutherford viticultural area does not extend above 500 feet in elevation. Regardless, the elevation is quite pronounced. Vineyards creep up the nearby hillsides from the Napa River in the center of the appellation, which lies just 172 feet above sea level.



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Q As we drove through Temecula (Calif.) recently, we were told that there were other wineries around the San Diego area. Is this true? Are there any that you'd recommend visiting?

A It's true. At last count, there were just shy of 40 wineries in the area bordered roughly by Fallbrook to the north, Warner Springs to the east, San Diego to the south and the Pacific Ocean to the west. Most are family-operated, very small-production businesses with limited business hours, or open by appointment only. Among those that keep fairly regular guest hours is Deer Park Winery in Escondido, which features an



Deer Park Winery

adjacent auto museum that also includes a Barbie doll collection, Coca-Cola memorabilia and other collectibles. Eagles Nest Winery in Ramona has a guest cottage that can be rented for vacations or special events. You can't book it in August, September or October, however. During those months, the cottage is inhabited by family and friends helping with the grape harvest. You can download a map of San Diego area wineries at sandiegowineries.org.

“A glass of Champagne excites the appetite and is a reset button for your palate. There is nothing more perfect to get you ready for eating.”



— Bobby Stuckey of Frasca Food and Wine in Boulder, Colo., quoted in Food and Wine magazine

Mumm's the Word — Reims is the capital of France's Champagne region, and is home to numerous sparkling wine houses that offer informative and entertaining tours, including at least one each day presented in English. The cellars at Mumm are particularly impressive, and the Mumm facility is conveniently located near the center of the city and train station.



Did You Know? — One of the first vineyard-designated wines to attain widespread recognition was the Martha's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, made by Napa Valley's Heitz Cellars. It debuted with the 1966 vintage.

Flavor Enhancement — To help brighten up gazpacho, a splash of red wine can be a real eye-opener. Looking to enliven your next tuna salad? Add a little bit of white wine. Bonus tip: When adding wine to dishes, use the wine you intend to drink with the dish.

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The average size of a vineyard, in acres, in Oregon's Willamette Valley.

(Source: Food and Wine magazine)

The Cuvaision winery was established in 1969 on the Napa Valley side of the Carneros growing region. Dedicated to a philosophy of producing vineyard-driven wines, Cuvaision employs block-by-block farming methods and a hand-crafted, vineyard-to-bottle winemaking approach. The resulting wines are balanced and complex, showcasing the distinctive characteristics of this cool climate estate. “At Cuvaision, we are compelled to reduce our winery’s impact on the environment,” says President Jay Schuppert. “Going solar and being certified Napa Green are only a few initiatives which support what we are trying to achieve. Because there is a shared concern from the staff as well, we turn to our organization and grassroots networks with our staff, their families and friends to find ways of creating change from within.”



FOOD & WINE PAIRINGS



Under-the-Radar Pairings

July is packed with “food days” — those official (or otherwise) celebrations of everything from (in the case of July) corn fritters to jelly beans.

In fact, there is not a single day in July that is not devoted to at least one type of food. Several days have two concurrent celebrations, and two — the 14th and the 20th — have *three*. July 14 is Macaroni Day, National Grand Marnier Day and Bastille Day, while July 20 is a dream for anyone with a sweet tooth: National Lollipop Day, National Ice Cream Soda Day and National Fortune Cookie Day.

Obviously, not all foods are great pairing partners for wine, but perusing the list of July food days reveals a few possibilities that aren’t exactly top of mind...

■ **July 4 — National Barbecued Spareribs Day.** If you’re going beyond burgers and hot dogs on Independence Day, spareribs are a tasty treat and Zinfandel is the wine to serve. Its luscious fruit flavors meld nicely with the sweetness of the barbecue sauce.

■ **July 11 — National Blueberry Muffin Day.** A number of wines suggest blueberry in the flavor spectrum, including Malbec

(particularly renditions from Argentina), Mourvedre, Petit Verdot and Petite Sirah. But with a just-out-of-the-oven blueberry muffin, nothing beats a fruit-forward Shiraz (a.k.a. Syrah) from Australia.

■ **July 12 — National Pecan Pie Day.** Among the wines that exhibit a general “nuttinness” (i.e., not necessarily a pecan-like flavor) are Pinot Blanc, Roussanne, Semillon and Verdejo. But when you add sweetness to the equation, the best pairing partners for pecan pie are Cream Sherry or Port.

■ **July 17 — National Peach Ice Cream Day.** Some “late harvest” dessert wines are so sweet and so “thick” that winemakers often suggest pouring them over vanilla ice cream for a unique sweet treat. Think of it as a sundae for adults. Well, it just happens that there’s also a wine that can be poured over peach ice cream because it exudes a peachy impression of its own: Moscato. And unlike dessert wines, Moscato adds another fun dimension to the ice cream dish: bubbles.

Four Seasons



WINES THAT MATCH THE SEASON

Summer — wines for barbecues, picnics or just for sipping. Fall — wines for hearty, harvest-time dishes. You get the idea. All wines are selected by our Tasting Panel to pair beautifully with the foods you love.

EACH SHIPMENT INCLUDES:

- 4 bottles of specially-selected wines
- Detailed Tasting Notes for each featured wine

WINE COLOR MIX:

Reds, Whites, or Mixed

FREQUENCY:

4-times per year, plus a special holiday shipment

PRICE:

\$98.99 average per shipment including shipping

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MUSHROOM RISOTTO

This recipe yields 6 servings, and this dish pairs nicely with any Chardonnay that exhibits some creaminess.

Ingredients

- 6 cups chicken broth, divided
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1-lb. Portobello mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 1-lb. white mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 2 shallots, diced
- 1-1/2 cups Arborio rice
- 1/2 cup Chardonnay
- Sea salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped chives
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Preparation

1. In a saucepan, warm the broth over low heat.
2. Warm 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir in the mushrooms, and cook until soft (about 3 minutes). Remove mushrooms and their liquid, and set aside.
3. Add 1 tablespoon olive oil to skillet, and stir in the shallots. Cook 1 minute.
4. Add rice, stirring to coat with oil (about 2 minutes).
5. When the rice has taken on a pale, golden color, pour in wine, stirring constantly until the wine is fully absorbed. Add 1/2 cup broth to the rice, and stir until the broth is absorbed. Continue adding broth 1/2 cup at a time, stirring continuously, until the liquid is absorbed and the rice is al dente (about 15 to 20 minutes).

6. Remove from heat, and stir in mushrooms with their liquid, butter, chives and Parmesan cheese. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

GRILLED CHICKEN BREASTS

Because of the ingredients and the cooking process, this is one chicken dish that pairs beautifully with red wine, especially Pinot Noir. This recipe yields 4 servings.

Ingredients

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- Seasoning salt, to taste
- 2 teaspoons dried parsley

Preparation

1. Preheat outdoor grill for medium-high heat. Lightly oil the grate.
2. Dip chicken in lemon juice. Sprinkle with the onion powder, ground black pepper, seasoning salt and parsley. Discard any remaining lemon juice.
3. Cook on the prepared grill for 10 to 15 minutes per side, or until no longer pink and juices run clear.

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