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The Grapevine

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR VINESSE WINE CLUB MEMBERS

Grape Expectations

New Year's Wine Resolutions for 2015

**Swiss Chocolate
Nirvana: Caillers**

**'Sideways' + 10:
Merlot Specialists**

**Somms' Darling:
Gruner Veltliner**

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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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EDITOR'S JOURNAL

4 Wine Resolutions for the New Year

By Robert Johnson

It's that time of year again — the time when we make all kinds of resolutions that last a week or two into the new year... if we're lucky.

With that in mind, I've come up with four wine resolutions that should be easy to keep. Feel free to use them as your own...

1. Embrace the details. As we get more and more "into" wine, we realize how many choices we really have. The bottles that fill supermarket shelves are just the tip of the iceberg, and even that relatively small number of options can be daunting. If you're looking to expand your knowledge base and discover new gems, embrace the "if you like... you might like..." method. First, pay attention to the variety of wine (Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Merlot, etc.), and then try another bottle of that type. Second, look at the wine's place of origin on the bottle. If you like a Cabernet Sauvignon from Alexander Valley, try another Cab from that same appellation.

2. Keep a journal. Every time you uncork or unscrew a bottle of wine, take a little time to jot down some notes about it — the aromas, the flavors, the mouthfeel, what you liked

about it and what you didn't like about it. Over time, you'll develop your own personal shopping guide.

3. Experiment with food and wine pairings.

In every issue of *The Grapevine*, we provide ideas and suggestions about selecting the right bottle of wine to accompany a specific type of food or cuisine. Keep in mind that these are just that: suggestions. Some of the best pairings are discovered by accident, when you're down to that last bottle of wine and you decide to open it with whatever you're eating. Remember, when it comes to food and wine pairing, there are no wrong answers; if you like the pairing... it's good!

4. Open that special bottle. Many of us have a bottle or two that we've been saving for a special occasion. Well, as I've gotten older, I've come to realize that every day is a special occasion, and that tomorrow is not guaranteed. So, even if it's not a birthday or anniversary or holiday, treat yourself to a special bottle every so often. Hey, you deserve it!





Gruner Veltliner: New Darling of Somms

From the boats and ships that travel the Danube River as it winds its way through Austria's Wachau Valley, steeply terraced vineyards provide a breathtaking backdrop.

But if your mode of transportation is an automobile, you can get an up-close look at the river-level plantings, as many of the narrow roads are lined with Gruner Veltliner grapevines.

Over the past two years, Gruner Veltliner (pronounced grew-ner velt-leen-er) has gained widespread popularity in the United States, as it has become the darling of sommeliers from coast to coast. The reason: its food affinity. Other than rich beef-based dishes such as stews or steaks, it's hard to find any food that doesn't pair well with Gruner Veltliner.

Sometimes referred to by somms simply as "Grooner" or even "Groovy," Gruner Veltliner is Austria's most widely planted grape variety, by far, and the finest renditions come from the vineyards lining the Danube in Wachau, Kremstal and Kamptal.



In the Wachau Valley, many of the wineries craft three bottlings of Gruner Veltliner, differentiated by alcohol level. Within those three designations, two distinctive styles have emerged.

One is spicy, weighty and quite complex, with layers of aromas and flavors. The wines made in this style tend to age gracefully for five years or more, and over time can develop a honeyed characteristic.

The other style is lighter and fresher, with less emphasis on spice (although the white pepper-like quality is still noticeable) and more emphasis on fruit qualities reminiscent of citrus. This is the style that sommeliers have embraced, as the wine pairs well with white meats, fowl and fish, as well as mildly spiced ethnic fare.

When Gruner Veltliner is in your wine glass, life truly is groovy.

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Duckhorn Vineyards



*A Decade After 'Sideways,'
Merlot Survives & Thrives*

"If anyone orders Merlot, I'm leaving. I am not drinking any (bleeping) Merlot!"

When movie-goers heard Paul Giamatti's Miles make that proclamation in the movie "Sideways," and in another scene heard him wax poetic about Pinot Noir, it changed the California wine industry — perhaps forever.

In reaction to public demand, wineries and growers planted new Pinot Noir vineyards up and down the California coast, from Santa Barbara to Mendocino. Today, there's even an American Viticultural Area that is devoted primarily to Pinot Noir: the sprawling Sonoma Coast.

It's hard to believe that 10 years have passed since "Sideways" stood the wine industry on its head. But we are happy to report that Merlot is still alive and well and taken very seriously by hundreds and hundreds of California wineries.

Three California North Coast estates that have always taken Merlot seriously are Duckhorn Vineyards, Matanzas Creek Winery and Clos du Val.

In fact, fundamental to Duckhorn's tradition was the early decision to focus on the production of Merlot. Dan Duckhorn felt that this elegant varietal was under appreciated in North America.

"I liked the softness, the

seductiveness, the color, the fact that it went with a lot of different foods," he said in an interview on the winery's website. "It seemed to me to be a wonderful wine to just enjoy. I became enchanted with Merlot."

Today, Duckhorn makes a number of single-vineyard Merlots, including its signature Three Palms Vineyard bottling, known for its abundant red fruit notes and minerality.

- Naturally defined by the three mountain peaks that envelop it, Bennett Valley existed for many years in quiet obscurity, bountifully sustaining an agricultural community that had all but forgotten the valley's



pre-Prohibition viticultural roots.

It wasn't until 1977, with the founding of Matanzas Creek, that the area's winemaking potential was once again unearthed. But Matanzas Creek didn't just breathe new life into the area, it helped revolutionize the entire industry and, in the process, put Bennett Valley back on the map.

Now, more than three decades after the release of its first vintage, Matanzas Creek stands at the forefront of California viticulture, and a leader in the production of Merlot. It makes both



Matanzas Creek Winery

180 acres of prime Carneros hillside vineyards. Clos Du Val's first release, a 1972 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, was chosen as one of six California Cabernets to compete against French

Bordeaux wines at the infamous 1976 Paris Tasting.

The winery also has long been known for its Merlot, made in an elegant style that marries balance with complexity.

Merlot may have taken a hit when "Sideways" became a hit movie a decade ago, but wineries like Duckhorn, Matanzas Creek and Clos du Val

stayed the course and continue to make coveted renditions of this on-the-rebound varietal.



Clos du Val

a Sonoma County rendition and an Alexander Valley-designated bottling.

• Born with a love of fine wine and a pioneering spirit, Clos Du Val founder John Goelet, a descendent of the Guestier wine merchant family of Bordeaux, searched for land in premiere wine growing regions across three continents more than 40 years ago to inspire a collection of four world-class estate wineries still flourishing today. Clos Du Val is the Napa Valley jewel in the Goelet family portfolio.

The Goelet family's original vision to produce world-class wines that express the terroir of the vineyards from which they are crafted remains the underlying essence of Clos Du Val wines and all of the Goelet Wine Estates sister wineries.

Goelet established Clos Du Val in 1972 with 150 acres of vineyards in what is known now as the Stags Leap District of Napa Valley. Soon after, he acquired

Four Seasons



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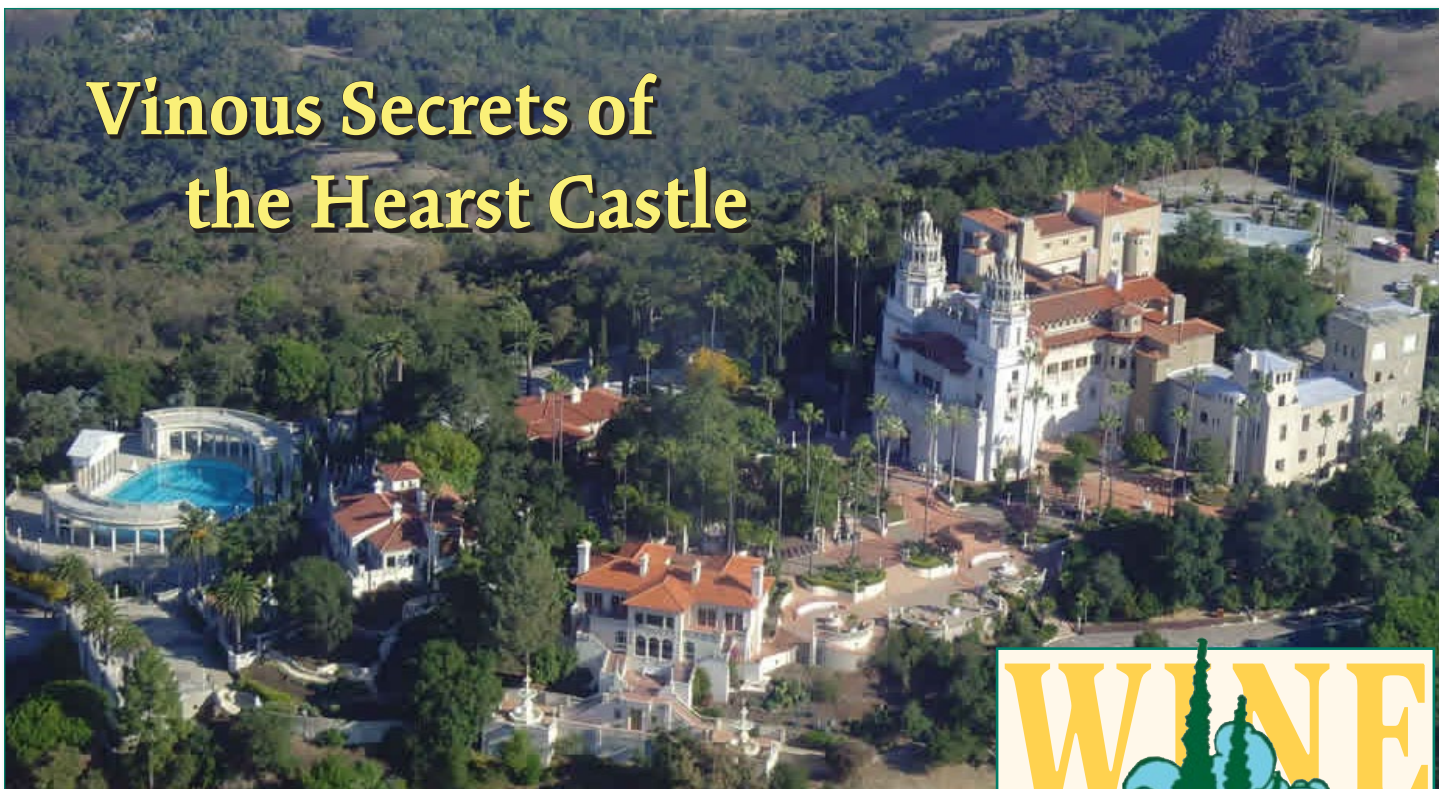
Matanzas Creek Winery

6097 Bennett Valley Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95404
707-528-6464

Clos du Val

5330 Silverado Trail
Napa, CA 94558
707-261-5251

Vinous Secrets of the Hearst Castle



During the period of Prohibition in America, newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst took an editorial stance for temperance but against the 18th Amendment.

“I consider the 18th Amendment not only the most flagrant violation of the basic American principle of personal liberty that has ever been imposed on the American public, but the most complete failure as a temperance measure that has ever been conceived and put into impractical operation,” he wrote.

At the Hearst Castle on California’s Central Coast, visitors who take the Cottages and Kitchen Tour can see

Hearst’s wine cellar, consisting of two rooms with double-vault doors in the basement of the Casa Grande building.

According to the castle’s website, the iron doors were installed as early as 1924. That August, Hearst’s secretary, Joe Willicombe, wrote, “Mr. Hearst told me to tell Mr. Rossi [the construction superintendent] to put the iron doors on the wine vault. Mr. Hearst wants to lock the vault



TOURING TIPS

and take the keys with him. He does not consider the wooden doors any protection against possible thievery.”

The wine cellar doors were always kept locked. As Hearst employee



VINESSE

Hot LIST



1 Hot Art Exhibit. Watercolor and acrylic paintings by Josef Frank are featured in an exhibition called “Blossoming” at the architecturally stunning Stift Melk abbey in Melk, Austria, outside Vienna. Among featured works is this vineyard depiction. Another reason for wine lovers to visit the Benedictine abbey: It sells Stift Melk-labeled wines that make nice souvenirs. The exhibition continues through Feb. 28. <http://www.stiftmelk.at/englisch/index.html>

2 Hot Bocce Destination. There have been bocce courts at a number of Napa Valley and Sonoma County wineries for years. Now, Talbott Vineyards in Carmel Valley, Calif., offers bocce outside its in-town tasting room. It’s a great way to work up a thirst for Talbott’s fine wines. <http://www.talbottvineyards.com/Visit/Carmel-Valley-Tasting-Room>

3 Hot Napa Valley Restaurant. Ad Hoc is a locals’ favorite in Yountville, Calif., featuring the exquisite cuisine of Thomas Keller, served in memorable three-course meals. The wine list is stellar, and on most days, there are more than 20 selections by the glass. <http://www.thomaskeller.com/ad-hoc>



Wilfred Lyons said in an interview, “Mr. Hearst would lock up his cellar and you couldn’t get into it. I mean, even the butler had to order ahead.”

Hearst served wine to guests throughout Prohibition, tapping his extensive collection of bottlings from the Alsace, Bordeaux and Burgundy regions of France, and the Rhine and Moselle regions of Germany.

Grapes were grown on the Hearst property, but were used for eating, not making wine. Ironically, much acreage in the surrounding San Luis Obispo County, mostly barren during Hearst’s lifetime, today is devoted to vineyards

that produce the “raw materials” for world-class wines.

The Cottages and Kitchen Tour provides a look at both the personal and practical sides of the castle. It lasts 45 minutes, covers approximately three-quarters of a mile, and includes about 176 steps (both up and down). The cost is \$25 per adult and \$12 per child (ages 5-12), and the ticket includes a viewing of the film, “Building the Dream,” at the Hearst Castle Theater.

For further information, and to help you plan your Hearst Castle visit, go online to hearstcastle.org.

As part of the Cottages and Kitchen tour you will descend a spiral staircase from outside Casa Grande into Hearst’s private wine cellar.





Ullage. Small space of air in a wine bottle's neck.

Viticulture. The science of growing wine grapes.

Wachau Valley.

Prime grape-growing area of Austria, known for its steeply terraced vineyards.



Xarel-lo. Wine grape of Catalonia, often used in making sparkling Cava.

Yeasts. Natural or commercial organisms that issue enzymes triggering the fermentation process.

Zierfandler. Wine grape indigenous to Austria, grown in an area just south of Vienna.

VINESSE STYLE

CAILLER CHOCOLATE

When you think of Switzerland, what comes to mind? Perhaps the Swiss Alps, noted for their natural beauty and abundant ski resorts. Or maybe your mind's eye brings fine, handcrafted clocks and watches into focus.

But if you have a sweet tooth, another image likely comes to mind... and promotes drooling: fine Swiss chocolates. And there's no better place to experience this stylish Swiss treat than the Maison Cailler chocolate factory in the town of Broc.

There, a guided tour provides a complete overview of Cailler, its history and its products. Presentations cover the different stages in the Cailler chocolate production process — from roasting to crushing to milling to milk processing to mixing to grinding to

conching to tempering to molding to packaging.

The past comes to life through a selection of photographs that trace the factory's history from its humble origins in 1898 up to the 1960s.

Appetites whetted, visitors can then visit a specially designed shop that sells the entire range of Cailler of Switzerland chocolates. Then they can rest their feet with a specialty coffee or chocolate drink in the Cailler café — a relaxing way to conclude a visit to a renowned purveyor of stylish chocolates.



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APPELLATION SHOWCASE

Marlborough, New Zealand



Marlborough is New Zealand's flagship wine region that, in combination with its expressive renditions of Sauvignon Blanc, has elevated the country to the international wine stage.

But as we've learned in recent years, Marlborough offers depth in both grape varieties and terroir.

Pioneers first planted the region in 1873, with further vineyards established gradually into the 1960s. Following a lull, grapes were planted again beginning in 1973, despite stiff opposition from local farming and forestry interests.

Today, viticulture is dominant, with nearly 50,000 acres of vines (approximately two-thirds of the national total) under the care of wine producers of all sizes.

Consistently ranking as one of New Zealand's sunniest and driest regions, Marlborough's Wairau Valley was referred to by the Maori as *Kei puta te Wairau* — "the place with the hole in the cloud" — reflecting the outstanding protection offered by the topography. The Wairau River bisects the valley west to east, with the Richmond Ranges to the north and medium-sized foothills to the south.

The combination of a cool yet high-sunshine climate, low rainfall and free-draining, moderately fertile soil produces uniquely vivid wines across a wide range of varieties and styles.

Alongside the increasing range

of varieties, the diverse soils and meso-climates have revealed sub-regions — including Southern Valleys, Wairau Valley and Awatere Valley — and it is within these that Marlborough's exciting future lies.

In the Southern Valleys area, soils and meso-climates vary, but tend to be heavier with more clay than seen in the Wairau Valley. It gets cooler and drier farther south into the valleys.

Old riverbed and riverbank soils, and diverse aspect and rainfall provide numerous meso-climates within the Wairau. Broadly, it covers cooler, drier inland sites; barren, stony, early-ripening sites; and sea-breeze moderated coastal sites. The soils are more gravelly to the north, closer to the riverbed.

The Awatere Valley is the most geographically distinct sub-region. Situated south of the Wairau Valley and stretching inland from the sea, it climbs toward the inland Kaikoura ranges. Cooler, drier, windier and often with a degree of elevation, the vineyard sites with typically lower yields produce bright, aromatic Pinot Noir and dramatic, distinctive Sauvignon Blanc.

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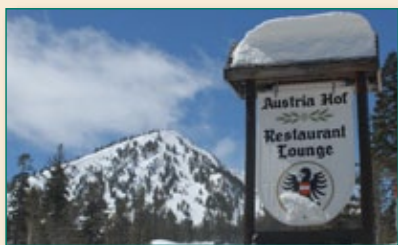
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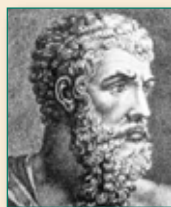
Q I've read a lot about cooking with wine. Does it really matter what type of wine you cook with?

A Absolutely. The first thing you should know is that you should never, ever... ever... cook with "cooking wine," which is typically sold in supermarkets. Most of those products taste dreadful, and many are laced with salt. When a recipe calls for wine, your best bet is to use the wine that you intend to drink with the dish. While it's true that some subtle nuances of the wine are lost in the cooking process, it's also true that some of the qualities remain — and that will help make the food and wine pairing sing.



Did that picture in our "Food & Wine Pairings" department get you hungry for wiener schnitzel? Well, the good news is you don't have to go to Vienna for a fairly authentic schnitzel experience. In the California ski resort of Mammoth, Austria Hof Restaurant & Bar offers a tasty rendition of the Austrian classic. Other main course options include *jaegerschnitzel*, *sauerbraten*, and a sausage sampler plate. Want to bring your own wine? The corkage fee is \$15 per bottle. Reservations: 760-934-2764.

“Quickly, bring me a beaker of wine, so that I may wet my mind and say something clever.”



— Aristophanes

In a recent survey, *Parade* magazine asked readers which treats they'd like to magically become calorie-free. The top five answers: 1. ice cream and shakes; 2. chocolate; 3. pizza; 4. soda; 5. alcoholic beverages.



386

Wine consumption in the United States in 2013, in millions of gallons.
(Source: Statista.com)

“Given that wine has long been marketed as a natural product, it is of little surprise that this industry has been one of the



first agricultural sectors to embrace the concept of sustainability, particularly to evoke in consumers a feeling that wine is a natural product and not industrially manufactured,” writes Roger Kerrison, a consultant who works in the food and beverage industry in the fields of design, development, systems and management in sustainability for Asia Pacific consultancy Aura Sustainability. “In New Zealand, where our head offices are based, there is a strong industry approach toward promoting wines as ‘sustainable.’ There is now an industry-wide environmental management program in place, and there are efforts to ensure that much of the industry is certified to this program. New Zealand’s lead has seen similar programs put in place in other world wine regions such as California, Oregon, South Africa and Australia. The wine industry is working to recognize initiative in areas such as organic production, bio-dynamics, carbon labeling and packaging innovation. This leading approach by the wine industry is to be applauded, but we need to bear in mind that sustainability is not just about the environment, it’s about social and economic impacts as well.



Here’s one more wine resolution for 2015 (to supplement the four suggested in “Editor’s Journal”): **Share**. Wine tastes better when you share it with family or friends. Really — it does!

FOOD & WINE PAIRINGS



Wiener Schnitzel

It is a dish that may have originated in northern Italy, where it's known as costoletta alla Milanese, but it has become the undisputed national dish of Austria.

We speak of the breaded, fried veal cutlet known as *wiener schnitzel*, and there is no better place to savor authentic *wiener schnitzel* than in Vienna. After all, you'll find part of the dish's name in the city's name: In Austria, Vienna is known as Wien.

Countless restaurants serve *wiener schnitzel*, but no restaurant does it better than Figmuller Wollzeile, which has three locations in Vienna — the original, opened in 1905; a second, just a few doors down the street, built to handle the overflow; and now a third, a few additional doors away, to handle the overflow from the second restaurant.

If you're fortunate enough to land a table at the original restaurant, you'll be able to hear the dish being prepared. That's right, you'll hear it. Each *wiener schnitzel* is hammered flat until it's about 12 inches in diameter — large enough

to completely cover a dinner plate.

Figmuller Wollzeile offers a number of traditional Austrian dishes, including broiled beef with chive sauce and apple horseradish; glazed calf's liver with fried onion rings and baked apple; and veal goulash with butter dumplings.

But if you have time for only one big meal in Vienna, the *wiener schnitzel* — simply prepared with flour, eggs and bread crumbs, then fried to a golden brown — is the dish you must have.

Servers will recommend Gruner Veltliner, Austria's signature white wine, to accompany the *schnitzel*, and that's a solid choice. It also pairs well with Chardonnay, Riesling, Chenin Blanc and Gewurztraminer. Prefer red wine? Opt for a fruit-forward Pinot Noir (known in Austria as Blauburgunder or Blauer Spatburgunder).

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VEGGIE POT PIE

Winter is here, which means it's time for food that warms the heart and soul. This recipe yields 8 servings, and this dish calls for a rich, buttery Chardonnay.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2 small heads fennel, finely chopped
- 1/2 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and finely chopped
- 12 ounces white button mushrooms, sliced
- 1 small russet potato, peeled and diced
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup low-sodium mushroom broth
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 cup frozen baby green peas
- 1/4 cup fresh chives, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup parsley
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar
- 1 large egg yolk
- 7 ounces frozen pie dough, defrosted

Preparation

1. Heat oven to 400 degrees F, and arrange a rack in the middle.
2. Melt butter over medium heat in a 4-quart Dutch oven or heavy bottomed saucepan.
3. When it foams, add fennel, onions and carrots, and cook until just soft and onions are translucent (about 2 minutes).
4. Add mushrooms and potato, season well with salt and freshly ground black pepper, and stir to coat. Cook, stirring rarely, until mushrooms have let off water and are shrunken (about 6 minutes).
5. Sprinkle flour over vegetables, stir to coat, and cook until raw flavor is gone (about 1 to 2 minutes).
6. Carefully add broth and milk, stirring constantly until mixture is smooth. Bring to a simmer over medium heat and cook until slightly thickened (about 5 minutes).
7. Remove from heat. Add peas, herbs and vinegar, and stir

- to coat. Season well with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Turn filling into an 8-inch by 8-inch baking dish.
8. Whisk egg together with 2 teaspoons water and a pinch of salt until evenly mixed. Set aside.
9. Cut dough to fit over baking dish. Place dough over filling and tuck into the edges of the dish. Brush dough with egg wash and cut slits in the top to vent.
10. Place on a baking sheet and bake until crust is golden brown and mixture is bubbling (about 25 to 30 minutes). Let sit for 10 minutes before serving.

FOUR-CHEESE MARGHERITA PIZZA

This easy-to-prepare pizza matches nicely with Zinfandel, Pinot Noir or Italian red wines. This recipe yields 8 servings.

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 8 Roma tomatoes, sliced
- 2 (12-inch) pre-baked pizza crusts
- 8-oz. shredded Mozzarella cheese
- 4-oz. shredded Fontina cheese
- 10 fresh basil leaves, washed and dried
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese

Preparation

1. Stir together olive oil, garlic and salt. Toss with tomatoes, and allow to stand for 15 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
3. Brush each pizza crust with some of the tomato marinade. Sprinkle the pizzas evenly with Mozzarella and Fontina cheeses. Arrange tomatoes on top, then sprinkle with shredded basil, Parmesan and feta cheese.
4. Bake until cheese is bubbly and golden brown (about 10 minutes).

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