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The Grapevine

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR VINESSE WINE CLUB MEMBERS



UNDERSTANDING SPICE AND ITS ROLE IN WINE

5 Fascinating Facts
About Zinfandel

Wine River Cruising
Through Europe

Sonoma-Cutrer: The
Chardonnay Superstar

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EDITOR'S JOURNAL

The Wine Factor When Wining and Dining Out

By Robert Johnson

***D**ining out can be expensive, especially if you intend to drink wine with the meal. Here are three things to keep in mind...*

1. The best restaurant wine lists are created by owners who love wine.

Have you ever noticed how similar wine lists are at different restaurants — particularly family-owned eateries with limited lists? In most cases, wine is an after-thought at best or a necessary evil at worst for the owners, who got into the business primarily because they love to cook. A typical list may consist of a "house red" and a "house white," perhaps a few name-brand whites and reds, and a White Zinfandel — known as a sweet, go-to choice for people who don't like dry wine.

But if you find a restaurant where wine is taken seriously, you could be in for a memorable culinary experience. At such restaurants, the owners stock the cellar with wines that pair harmoniously with dishes on the menu. That makes it easy for servers to recommend wines, and for diners to feel good about the choices they make.

2. Wine prices in restaurants help cover food and labor costs.

The restaurant business is notorious for being a money pit. It can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to build and furnish a restaurant — especially one with a theme —

creating a great deal of debt before the doors even open. As restaurateur-turned-television-personality Anthony Bourdain has noted, "If anything is good for pounding humility into you permanently, it's the restaurant business."

No wonder, then, that a wine list is looked upon not just as a revenue source, but an important profit generator. In 2014, according to GuestMetrics, the average price of a glass of wine in an American restaurant was \$10.77. Bottle prices were no more customer-friendly, as the average mark-up from the wholesale price can be anywhere from 200% to 500%. Food can't be marked up that much, so every glass or bottle of wine sold helps keep the doors open and people employed.

3. Corkage fees are not evil.

Because wine helps boost revenue and profits, I don't mind when a restaurant charges a corkage fee for wines brought in by diners. A *fair* fee, to help cover the cost of glassware and its upkeep, is between \$10 and \$20 per bottle — which is still probably less than the mark-up on a bottle you may purchase off the wine list.



5 Fascinating Facts About Zinfandel

Everything from pepperoni pizza to barbecued meats, and from thick, juicy steaks to dark chocolate goes with Zinfandel — depending on the style in which it's made.

Here are five fascinating facts about this expressive, personality-packed variety...

1. Zinfandel may be the most versatile grape variety of them all. It can be used to make sweet blush wines (known as White Zinfandel), dry red wines, dry rosé-style wines, sweet dessert wines and even Port-style wines. That diversity also makes it extremely versatile with food.

2. The term “Old Vine” has no legal meeting. Just like “Reserve” or “Vintner’s Choice,” it’s simply a designation the wineries may choose to include on a wine bottle. “Old Vine” is particularly common on Zinfandel bottles, simply because most of the oldest grapevines in California — some dating back to pre-Prohibition years — grow Zinfandel grapes. (The Grandpere Vineyard, located near Plymouth, Calif., was planted in 1869 and is still producing wine-worthy grapes.)

3. Zinfandel is genetically connected to Primitivo. Both have been shown to be the genetic equivalent of Crljenak



Kastelanski, a Croatian grape variety.

4. White Zin probably saved Zinfandel. It was the 1970s. America’s love affair with wine was kicking into high gear, with a strong focus on Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon. Up and down the state, Zinfandel vineyards were being eyed for either uprooting or grafting over to Cabernet — a variety than performs best in warmer climes, just like Zin. But when the sweet blush wine known as White Zinfandel was accidentally created by Bob Trinchero of Sutter Home Winery (the result of a stuck fermentation), a new product category was created, White Zin became uproariously popular, and countless Zinfandel vineyards were spared — some of which are being used for making red Zinfandel today.

5. As of 2013, there were 48,638 acres in California devoted to Zinfandel, led by San Joaquin County’s 19,098 acres. San Joaquin was followed, in order, by these counties: Sonoma, Fresno, Madera, San Luis Obispo, Mendocino, Amador, Sacramento, Napa and Merced.

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Sonoma-Cutrer: Superstar of California Chardonnay



Sonoma-Cutrer has been producing the finest quality wines since it opened as a vineyard company in 1973.

Its foundation is built in the hillsides and rocky foothills in the region recognized as the Sonoma Coast appellation, which experiences long, even growing seasons thanks to the cool, foggy coastal climate. In the 1970s, the company planted several different grape varieties and virtually overnight Sonoma-Cutrer's Chardonnay grapes had gained a reputation for exceptional quality and were in high demand by many premium wineries.

Discussions about creating a cutting-edge winery began, and Sonoma-Cutrer gathered a crew of wine experts including Terrence Clancy, Brad Web, Bill Bonetti, Robert Haas, David Reid and Chuck Bennett. Under their guidance, Sonoma-Cutrer made Chardonnay its main focus, and it was to be made exclusively from the estate's own vineyards. In 1981, ground was broken for the new winery.

Today, Sonoma-Cutrer's flagship wine, Russian River Ranches, is the most requested Chardonnay in America's finest restaurants according to the annual *Wine & Spirits* Restaurant Poll.

Sonoma-Cutrer is dedicated to the pursuit of original expression in its wines. Each wine reflects its regional and seasonal climate and its specific vineyard character — its terroir. From the very first vintage of Chardonnay to the limited production of its world-

class Pinot Noir, this dedication has taken root and continues to grow.

The winery's "Grand Cru" philosophy is a unique assimilation of traditional Burgundian winemaking methods and its own technological innovation. It's a balance of tradition and discovery, bringing forth noble wines that express a sense of place, vintage after vintage.

In 1992, Sonoma-Cutrer officially launched its own Grand Cru program for the Les Pierres and The Cutrer Chardonnays. While wines labeled Grand Cru are made only in Europe, the term is a fitting title for Sonoma-Cutrer's program, which is defined by the same exacting standards and ideology. It is a commitment to



excellence without compromise. The winegrowing philosophy is a unique combination of traditional Burgundian winemaking methods enhanced by American state-of-the-art technological innovations.

Sonoma-Cutrer wines are all aged in barrels made of the finest French oak. Investment in the highest quality barrels is a key to producing the award-winning wines. The winery hires Merrandiers to select specific trees from forests in the heart of France to meet the exacting standards of the Grand Cru Program. This wood is then hand-split into staves and stacked on pallets to dry in open air for three years. Exposure to the elements helps to diminish saps, tars, resins and other undesirable components the wood may have. After it is dried, the wood is crafted by two small French tonnelleries (cooperages) where “Old World” craftsmen cooper the handcrafted barrels.

Sonoma-Cutrer adheres to what the French have known to work for decades: Aging wines in a temperature-controlled environment produces the highest quality wines. The cellars are specifically designed to provide space for the wine to age with 90% humidity, and stays at a constant, cool 58 degrees. This protects the wines from evaporation and oxidation.

While it is common for wine caves to be bored horizontally into a hillside, Sonoma-Cutrer’s exacting process led it instead to remove an entire hill. A meticulously designed, 20,000-square-foot cellar was then constructed on the site, and the hill was reconstructed upon completion.

Today, Mick Schroeter is Sonoma-Cutrer’s head winemaker, and his decorated and storied wine background made him superbly qualified to serve as only the third person in that position.

Winemaking is often a trade passed down from generation to generation, and Schroeter is no exception. Starting out on his own as an oenologist at Kaiser Stuhl winery in Australia, he wanted to blaze his own trail and had

no intentions of following in his father and uncle’s footsteps at the Penfold Winery. Then in 1982, as fate would have it, Penfold bought Kaiser Stuhl and reunited Schroeter with his family in the business.

Although he was already well-versed in winemaking, Penfold allowed him to continue his pursuit of total enlightenment, sponsoring his winemaking education at the famed Roseworthy College and providing him a scholarship to visit and study in Chile’s wine country. This was followed by a six-month tour around the world with his wife and a stop in California to work the wine harvest.

Schroeter rose rapidly through the Penfold system and had the privilege to be part of its red winemaking team, eventually working on the legendary Grange Hermitage, the benchmark of Aussie Shiraz. From there, he accepted an invitation from Geysers Peak Winery in California to take over as Vice President of Winemaking, and for 17 years was in charge of vineyard assessment, harvest scheduling, winemaking direction, budgeting and brand ambassadorship.

It is his long track record of success and illustrious career in Australia and California, along with twice being named “Winemaker of the Year” at the London International Wine & Spirit Competition, that gave Schroeter the encompassing experience to take the reins at Sonoma-Cutrer. He considers it one of the industry’s true dream jobs, and says he is honored to carry on the brand’s storied legacy but also eager to take it to new heights.

Winery 4-1-1

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Cruising Europe in Search of Wine

Viking River Cruises, Emerald Waterways and Uniworld are among the cruise lines offering wine-themed river cruises, and all are worth checking out if you'd like to experience European wine regions at a nice, slow, casual pace.

Yet another option is Avalon Waterways, which has cruise ships featuring an array of facilities and conveniences. You can tap into the complimentary Wi-Fi to keep in touch with family and friends back home, stay perfectly in style with a visit to the hair salon, and keep up with daily workouts at the fitness center. In short, Avalon ships are built with an impressive collection of amenities to enhance one's journey all along the way.

Here's a look at some of Avalon's wine-themed river cruises in 2015...

■ Grand France Wine River Cruises (16 days from Paris to Cote d'Azur, departing March 24 and October 20)

— This vacation showcases France's scenery, history and culture as you sail along its beautiful rivers.

Embark in Paris and head northwest along the Seine River into the picturesque Normandy region. Dock at Conflans and choose between a guided excursion to Vincent van Gogh's Auvers-sur-Oise or Napoleon and Josephine's elegant Chateau de

Malmaison. Next up: your choice of a guided visit to Claude Monet's stunning gardens at Giverny or remarkable Bizy Castle. Then it's on to Joan of Arc's historic Rouen, where you choose between an included excursion to the poignant Normandy landing beaches or a fascinating "Taste of Normandy."

Continue to Les Andelys — home of Chateau Gaillard, built by England's King Richard the Lionheart in 1196 — and enjoy free time to explore this medieval town on your own. Return to Paris, where you'll disembark and travel south to fascinating Beaune for a wine tasting.

In Chalon-sur-Saone, board your second cruise ship and sail on to medieval Tournus, Macon, the twin cities of Tournon and Tain l'Hermitage, Viviers, Avignon, and Arles, as well as France's gastronomic capital of Lyon, where you have time to explore this fascinating city. Your vacation ends with an overnight in the stunning Cote d'Azur on the French Riviera.



TOURING TIPS

■ **Burgundy and Provence Wine River Cruise (11 days from Cote d'Azur to Paris, departing March 29 and October 29)** — Opportunities abound on this grand vacation to learn about France and to taste its sumptuous wines and cuisine.

Your adventure begins with two overnights and guided sightseeing in Paris, the "City of Light." Travel south to fascinating Beaune for a Burgundy wine tasting, then board your ship in quaint Chalon-sur-Saone and set sail for lovely Tournus, Macon, France's gastronomic capital of Lyon, as well as medieval Tournon, charming Viviers, Avignon and Arles. Before disembarking your ship in Arles, sail through the peaceful Camargue area.

Your vacation ends with an overnight on the French Riviera, also



known as the Cote d'Azur. This cruise vacation has it all — historic sites, charming towns, spectacular cuisine and more.

■ **The Legendary Danube Wine River Cruise (11 days from Prague to Budapest, departing October 24)** —

From the splendor of Prague to the gypsy violins of Budapest, you'll treasure every moment of this memorable Danube River cruise.

Enjoy three nights in Prague with guided sightseeing, as well as time to explore the city on your own. Discover the Hradcany Castle grounds, wander through Prague's Jewish Quarter, shop for hand-cut crystal, savor authentic Czech dumplings, stand in the square where protestors demonstrated against Communism, or visit one of the many churches.

Then drive to Nuremberg and set sail for medieval Regensburg, Passau, Vienna and Budapest, with guided sightseeing in each city. Sail through the fascinating Main Danube Canal and witness the scenic beauty as you cruise past quaint towns. Attend a beer tasting, tour Melk's splendid Benedictine Abbey, and experience the music, art, culture and historical sites in romantic Vienna.

■ **The Blue Danube Discovery Wine River Cruise (13 days from Budapest to Prague, departing November 1)** —

The delightful Danube sets the stage for this incredible journey as you sail through beautiful scenery and quaint towns.

Begin in Budapest, Hungary, with two overnights and guided sightseeing. Enjoy Hungarian cuisine, explore its

famous produce market (Central Market Hall), wander around the former royal palace grounds, explore its famous churches, or visit one of the many museums.

Then, board your river cruise vessel and sail westward, with guided sightseeing in magical Vienna, Passau and medieval Regensburg. Also

take a guided walk in the charming town of Durnstein and see the baroque Stiftskirche, and visit the awe-inspiring Benedictine Abbey in Melk. Enjoy wine tasting in Melk and beer tasting in fascinating Regensburg.

Disembark your ship and travel to the "Golden City" of Prague for a final three overnights, guided sightseeing, and plenty of free time to discover the Hradcany Castle grounds, wander through Prague's Jewish Quarter, shop for hand-cut crystal, savor authentic Czech dumplings, stand in the square where protestors demonstrated against Communism, or visit one of the many churches.

To learn more about Avalon river cruises, visit www.avalonwaterways.com.



VINESSE

Hot LIST

1 Hot Wine Festival. *Bon Appetit* magazine conducts a number of wine festivals each year, but none is more anticipated than Vegas Uncork'd, which in 2015 will be held April 23-26. Venues include the Aria, Bellagio, Caesars Palace and MGM Grand resorts, and among the scheduled events are "Decadent Delights: Wine and Chocolate Pairing," "Premier Pairings With Krug Champagne and Guy Savoy," and "Creative Cantonese and Wine at Hakkasan." www.vegasuncorked.com

2 Hot Thai-and-Wine Restaurant. Whether in Sin City for Vegas Uncork'd or simply a weekend getaway, check out Chada Thai & Wine for fabulous food and an amazing collection of rare and well-aged Riesling bottlings. The sweetness of German Riesling is the perfect complement to chef Bank Atcharawan's spicy Thai cuisine. In addition to those special bottles of Riesling, there's also a well-selected and fairly priced wine-by-the-glass list. www.chadavegas.com

3 Hot Niagara Region Wine Bar. You'll find 20 wines by the glass and 150 by the bottle at Parings Wine Bar in Williamsville, N.Y. The wines are sourced from France, Italy, Germany, New Zealand, Australia, Argentina, as well as America's own Pacific Coast. The eclectic food menu combines traditional favorites with a variety of unusual appetizers, entrées, sandwiches, and mouth-watering desserts. www.paringswinebar.com



Growing Season. For a grapevine, runs from the emergence of the first buds of springtime through the late summer and early fall harvest.

Hang Time. Amount of time between flowering and harvest that grapes are left on the vine. The goal: optimal physiological ripeness.

INAO. The *Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité*, which oversees French appellation laws.

Jammy. Describes a wine that tastes like cooked, baked or stewed fruit.

Kabinett. German term for a wine of quality, typically the driest of the country's best Rieslings.

Lees. Solid particles that settle at the bottom of a tank or barrel following fermentation. Contact with lees adds mouthfeel to a wine.

VINESSE STYLE

V MARKETPLACE

A festival-style center once known as “Vintage 1870,” V Marketplace offers upscale specialty shops, galleries and restaurants, a wine tasting cellar, and Napa Valley’s original hot air balloon company, all housed within and around the historic Groezinger Winery complex.

Meandering cobblestone walkways, scenic views and lush picnic gardens surround the property. Special events and entertainment are scheduled year-round.

The V Marketplace complex was originally built in 1870 by German-born vintner Gottlieb Groezinger. One of the largest winemaking facilities of its day, the Groezinger Winery and family home occupied more than half of the 23-acre family estate. It included a massive brick winery, a brandy distillery, a steam power plant, creamery, brick stables and barns, and a two-story estate mansion to the north of the property. The property was sold by the Groezinger family in 1889, but remained an operating winery under successive owners until 1955.

Hosting a handful of specialty shops and two small cafes, the buildings were reopened in 1968 as the Vintage 1870 specialty shop complex. Over the past decades,

and under subsequent ownership, the buildings have undergone continuing restoration to carefully blend the character and charm of yesteryear with the richness of the present day.

Since opening in 1968, V Marketplace has distinguished itself as Napa Valley’s landmark icon of shopping, entertainment and special events. The center now welcomes over half a million visitors from around the globe through its doors each year.

Located at 6525 Washington St. in Yountville, V Marketplace is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.



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APPELLATION SHOWCASE



MARTHA'S VINEYARD, MASS.

Among the more controversial American Viticultural Areas is Stag's Leap in California's Napa Valley.

The controversy centered on an apostrophe. Ultimately, it was decided that the AVA's name would not include an apostrophe, while Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, which was founded in 1970, would keep its apostrophe.

Another controversial AVA is situated all the way across the country in Massachusetts. In fact, Martha's Vineyard is America's easternmost AVA, the island being about four miles off the coast.

What was the source of the controversy surrounding Martha's Vineyard when the AVA was proposed in the early 1980s? A vineyard, ironically enough, in the Napa Valley. *That* Martha's Vineyard is farmed by the Heitz winery, and is known for producing one of America's most acclaimed Cabernet Sauvignon wines.

Ultimately, the AVA for Massachusetts was approved because the island's name can be traced back to 1602.

The Martha's Vineyard AVA is part of the much larger Southeastern New England AVA. It includes

Chappaquiddick Island, but does not include Nantucket Island — even though Nantucket is home to the famous Nantucket Wine Festival.

Although much effort was put into achieving AVA status for Martha's Vineyard, not many grapes are grown and not much wine is made on the island. That's too bad, because the climate is well suited for winegrape growing. It's a maritime climate that's heavily influenced by the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf Stream current, the sandy soils drain well (important for stressing the vines), and the growing season can be up to three weeks longer than in California, enabling grapes to ripen fully.

Early plantings on Martha's Vineyard were native American varieties, but vinifera varieties were introduced in 1971 with the goal of kick-starting commercial production.

For further information on the Nantucket Wine Festival, which in 2015 will be held May 13-17, visit www.nantucketwinefestival.com.

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Q We're going to be spending some time in Sacramento [California], visiting the state capitol, the California State Railroad Museum and Sutter's Fort. Are there any interesting places to go wine tasting in the city?

A Yes! Check Old Rail Bridge Cellars, which has a tasting room on the 14th floor of the Elks Tower at 921 11th Street. The location is significant because the tracks that cross the I Street bridge once linked Sacramento to the vineyards of Napa and Sonoma. Today, Old Rail Bridge Cellars brings top-quality winegrapes to Sacramento and transforms them into wine at a facility a few blocks away on 16th Street. To make a wine-tasting appointment at the tasting room on 11th Street, known as the Penthouse Lounge, go to <http://railbridgecellars.net/penthouse>.



Navarro Vineyards, located in Mendocino County's bucolic Anderson Valley, celebrated its 40th birthday in 2014 and was named Winery of the Year at the California State Fair. Congratulations to the Bennett and Cahn families!

“You see product placements for Corona in ‘Fast & Furious 6,’ but no one’s saying, ‘Drink more Gamay.’ We’re that public service announcement.”



— *Sommelier Justin Vann of Public Services bar in Houston, Texas, on the role sommeliers play in promoting wine to a new generation of drinkers*

Honig Vineyard & Winery in the Napa Valley town of Rutherford is known far and wide for its “green” practices — including the use of sniffer dogs. Imagine a nose that is thousands of times more powerful than a human’s when it comes to detecting subtle odors. Put that nose on a golden retriever, give it some extensive hands-on training, and you have the latest weapon in the winegrape growers’ war on the vine mealybug. In 2005, Michael Honig worked with Dr. Bonnie Bergin, founder of Assistance



Dog Institute (now known as Bergin University) in Santa Rosa, to help train some special golden retrievers. Referred to as “sniffer dogs” by grape growers in Napa and Sonoma counties, they could detect the female mealybug pheromone. Early detection of the bug allows the grower to treat or remove a vine or two, alleviating any broad use of pesticides.

Vine mealybugs are difficult to detect, being nearly invisible to the naked eye, and hide under bark and roots. Dozens can fit inside of a one-inch square. They attack vineyards by feeding on the tender vines and leaving a heavy excretion of honeydew that promotes the growth of black, sooty mold. The vine mealybug has been held in check on the North Coast to date, and area growers are being proactive in their efforts to make sure it doesn’t get established.

5 Number of barrels of wine produced from two tons of winegrapes. That equates to around 1,500 bottles (standard 750-ml. size).

Although the optimum temperature for storing wine is around 50 degrees, it’s better to keep it in the 60- to 70-degree range than to subject it to wider fluctuations — especially high heat in the summertime. Heat spikes will “cook” wine, rendering it less enjoyable at best or undrinkable at worst.



FOOD & WINE PAIRINGS



In New Mexico, St. Clair Winery takes fire-roasted Hatch green chiles, cold-soaks them in white wine, and produces a wine that's semi-sweet, slightly spicy and quite smooth, especially when served chilled.

A chile pepper in wine? That is perhaps the most extreme example of vinous spiciness. Other spice impressions are far more subtle, lending nuance and complexity to a wine, rather than a dominant flavor.

Spice — defined as a dried seed, fruit, root, bark or vegetable substance — usually is used to enhance the flavor of food, to elevate the color of a dish, or, in some cases, to mask other flavors. In a wine, it can add another aroma and/or flavor element to complement the natural fruit flavors.

“Spiciness” in wine does not imply that a burning sensation has been created, nor that a specific spice has been added to the cuvee. Rather, the spiciness occurs either naturally, via the flavors of the grapes, or through human involvement, via the type of oak barrels selected for aging.

In some cases, a specific spice comes to mind when one smells and/or tastes a specific wine. Examples include anise in Sangiovese, pepper and clove in Syrah, white pepper in Grenache and Gruner Veltliner, basil

and tarragon in the wines of Provence and Italy, cinnamon in Cabernet Sauvignon and Gewurztraminer, and mint in New World reds (particularly Napa Valley Cabernet).

An impression of fennel is found in many red and white wines, and clove can often be detected in wines aged in well-toasted barrels.

Oak is used like a “seasoning” by vintners who wish to add flavor and palate appeal to a wine, or perhaps “fill in” a flavor or aroma “hole.”

On the nose, the primary influence of oak is to underscore aromas that center on the spice rack — clove, cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice.

In many cases, however, a distinct aroma or flavor won't jump out of the glass, even though there's a definite impression of spiciness. That's when the catch-all descriptor — spicy — typically is used.

Whether occurring naturally in the wine or imparted by oak barrel aging — or even by adding a green chile pepper to the cuvee — spice is another factor that makes drinking wine so enjoyable and so interesting.

Light & Sweet

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PRICE:

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SMOKED SAUSAGE CASSOULET

On cold winter and cool spring nights, this dish will warm you up. This recipe yields about 8 servings, which makes it perfect for sharing with friends along with a bottle (or two) of Zinfandel.

Ingredients

- 2 bacon slices
- 2 cups chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 (14.5-oz.) cans diced tomatoes, drained
- 2 (15-oz.) cans Great Northern beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 pound lean boneless pork loin roast, trimmed and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1/2 pound reduced-fat smoked sausage, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 8 teaspoons finely shredded fresh Parmesan cheese
- 8 teaspoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Preparation

1. Cook bacon in a large skillet over medium-high heat until crisp. Remove bacon from pan, and crumble. Add onion, thyme, rosemary and garlic to drippings in pan, then sauté 3 minutes or until tender. Stir in crumbled bacon, salt, pepper and tomatoes, and bring to a boil. Remove from heat.
2. Place half of beans in a large bowl, and mash with a potato masher until chunky. Add remaining half of beans, pork and sausage, and stir well. Place half of bean mixture in a 3 1/2-quart electric slow cooker, and top with half of tomato mixture. Repeat layers.
3. Cover and cook on low for 5 hours.
4. Ladle into bowls. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and parsley.

ITALIAN TUNA BALLS

Here's a rare dish that pairs well with either white wine (Chardonnay or Sauvignon Blanc) or red wine (Sangiovese). This recipe yields 4 servings.

Ingredients

- 2 cans (160g) tuna in olive oil, drained (reserve a little oil)
- Small handful of pine nuts
- Freshly grated zest of 1 lemon
- Small handful parsley leaves, roughly chopped
- 50g fresh breadcrumbs
- 1 egg, beaten
- 400g spaghetti
- 500g jar pasta sauce

Preparation

1. Flake the tuna into a bowl, then tip in the pine nuts, lemon zest, parsley, breadcrumbs and egg. Season and mix together with your hands until completely combined.
2. Roll the mix into 12 walnut-size balls.
3. Put a large pan of salted water on to boil, then cook the spaghetti according to package instructions.
4. Heat a little of the tuna oil in a large non-stick frying pan, then fry the tuna balls for 5 minutes, turning every minute or so until completely golden. Drain on kitchen paper.
6. Heat the tomato sauce, then toss together with the pasta and tuna balls.

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