PAIRING FOOD WITH Light, Aromatic White Wines

THE RECIPES

4. Grilled Branzino
5. Duck Sausage Banh Mi
6. Pork Heart & Sausage Ragu
7. Steamed Mussels
8. Smothered Okra & Gulf Shrimp
9. Fava Bean Salad
10. Pipián Verde
2 Countries. 290 Years.
A singular shared pursuit of excellence.

When the Barton family presented Thomas Jefferson with a congratulatory bottle of Barton & Guestier wine, so began our shared passion for quality wines and culture.

Barton & Guestier
DEPUIS 1725
America’s #1 French Wine
**LIGHTEN UP**

A light, aromatic white wine conveys the essence of freshness, a lack of thickness on the palate and little to no oak-driven aromas and flavors.

These wines tend to come from cooler climates that sit close to the ocean. They are made from grapes harvested in early fall (September in the Northern Hemisphere, March in the Southern Hemisphere), which are fermented and then aged almost exclusively in neutral vessels that impart no additional flavors to the wine. Stainless steel tanks are the most common.

The list of light, aromatic whites includes wines from Austria, New Zealand, Chile, the coasts of Italy, Galicia in Spain, Alsace in France, the Cape Winelands of South Africa, France’s Loire Valley, and the countryside of southern England.

As the name implies, aromas are a key component of these wines, even Chardonnay (if it’s grown in a cool area and not aged in oak). They have an undeniable cleaness that can conjure images of fresh fruits, a grassy meadow, a mountain stream or even the inside of an oyster shell.

The acidity in these wines serves to refresh and cleanse the palate. As they’re almost always made without oak, a winery doesn’t have to invest in expensive barrels. This helps keep prices for these wines lower than for their rich, full-bodied brethren.

When buying light, aromatic whites, seek the newest vintage possible, assuming that the vintage is of good quality. With some notable exceptions, like certain Rieslings, these wines are not meant for aging, which is why many are sealed with screwcaps as opposed to corks.

The best matches for light, aromatic whites tend to be chilled soups, shellfish, salads, grilled fish, chicken and Asian/Indian foods. Spice is not the enemy of these wines, thus foods like Thai satay and the heat associated with some Chinese, Caribbean and Mexican cuisine will not overpower, or be overly accentuated by, these wines.
GRILLED BRANZINO
WITH TOMATO-PINOT GRIGIO SALAD

A favorite summertime wine, Pinot Grigio shows up in the glass and on the plate in this simple grilled dish from Ralph Scamardella, chef at LAVO in New York City.

4 1-pound whole branzinos (scaled and gutted, heads and tails removed)
Salt and freshly ground pepper
4 thyme sprigs
4 bay leaves
2 lemons (1 thinly sliced, 1 cut into wedges)
4 tablespoons, plus 2 ounces extra virgin olive oil, divided
2 whole ripe red tomatoes (preferably heirloom)
1 cup dry Pinot Grigio
Finely chopped parsley, for garnish

Fire the grill. Season the fish cavities with salt and pepper, then stuff each with a thyme sprig, a bay leaf and 2 lemon slices. Rub the outside of each branzino with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

Cut the tomatoes into quarters, place in a bowl, and season with salt and pepper. Cover with 1 cup of Pinot Grigio and 2 ounces of olive oil. Remove the tomatoes from the marinade and place on the grill until well charred. Transfer to a bowl. Heat up the leftover Pinot Grigio marinade in a pan on the stove over medium-high heat for about 3 minutes, then refrigerate to cool. Season dressing with salt and pepper, then drizzle over the grilled tomatoes.

Grill the branzinos over high heat, turning once, until browned and crisp—usually about 7 minutes per side. Sprinkle with chopped parsley, garnish with lemon wedges and serve with the tomato salad. Serves 4.

ST. PAULS 2013 PINOT GRIGIO (ALTO ADIGE)

Loaded with fragrant white flowers, ripe tropical fruit, juicy yellow peach and tart green apple, this has a creamy palate brightened by fresh acidity and depth that nicely balances the fresh herbs and tomato touches of the dish.
DUCK SAUSAGE BANH MI

Break out of your lunch rut with a ducky twist on the classic Vietnamese sandwich from Taylor Boetticher and Toponia Miller, owners of The Fatted Calf in San Francisco and authors of In the Charcuterie (Ten Speed Press, 2013).

FOR THE DUCK SAUSAGE

2 pounds boneless, skinless duck meat, ground
10 ounces pork back fat, ground
1 tablespoon fine sea salt
2 teaspoons freshly ground pepper
1 teaspoon sugar
2 teaspoons fish sauce
1 tablespoon minced shallot
1½ teaspoons minced garlic
8 6-inch lemongrass stalks to use as skewers

FOR THE SPICY MAYO

½ cup mayonnaise
3 teaspoons Sriracha

FOR THE SANDWICH

1 French baguette, halved lengthwise
1 bunch fresh cilantro leaves
2 jalapeños, sliced
1 bunch fresh mint leaves
2 carrots, grated
1 lime, halved

Combine the sausage ingredients (minus the skewers) in a large bowl and mix well by hand. Divide into 8 equal portions and mold around the lemongrass stalk skewers. Cook on a medium-hot grill for 3 minutes per side. Remove from grill and take out the skewers. Stir together the mayo and Sriracha and spread it on each baguette half. Add the duck, cilantro, jalapeños, mint and carrots to one baguette half, squeeze the lime over all, and top with the other half. Slice into equal portions and plate. Serves 4–8.

S.A. PRÜM 2012
ESSENCE RIESLING (MOSEL)

This is off-dry, with low alcohol and a level of crisp acidity that stands up to the spice and fresh herbs in the dish.
PORK HEART AND SAUSAGE RAGU

Tony Maws, chef at Boston’s Craigie On Main, is known for his simultaneously inventive and comforting food. This rustic sauce might seem to call out for a red, but it pairs brilliantly with a white that can cut through the richness.

Sear pork sausage and hearts in a large pan over medium–high heat. Remove from pan and drain off excess fat. Add the vegetables, anchovy and chili flakes and cook until soft, approximately 5 minutes. Deglaze with the Armagnac and reduce until dry. Add the wine and reduce by half. Add 2 cups of the chicken stock and cook on medium–high heat until sticky. Add the remaining 2 cups of chicken stock and reserved meat and simmer, covered, until the meat is tender, for about 30 minutes. Add cream and simmer another 15 minutes. Finish with fresh herbs and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and freshly grated Pecorino Romano. Serve over your favorite pasta. Serves 8.

4 pork sausage links, roughly chopped
2 pork hearts, ground or roughly chopped
½ cup diced fennel bulb
1 cup diced white onion
½ cup diced carrot
¼ cup diced leek
¼ cup diced celery
1 tablespoon minced garlic
½ cup diced fresh porcini (or other wild) mushrooms
1 cup crushed tomatoes
1 anchovy (preferably salt-cured)
2 teaspoons chili flakes
½ cup Armagnac
1 cup dry magnac
4 cups good-quality chicken stock, divided
½ cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons each minced sage and parsley
Extra virgin olive oil, to finish
Pecorino Romano, freshly grated, to finish

DOMAINE ZIND-HUMBRECHT 2013 GEWURZTRAMINER (ALSACE)

This surprisingly dry wine has more to do with spice than richness, with a food-friendly peppery edge and rich baked-apple flavors. The fruit brings out the sweetness of the sausage, tomato and cream, while acidity provides balance.
STEAMED MUSSELS WITH TOMATO & SMOKED HADDOCK

Smoked fish enriches the sauce and makes a meal of mussels in this dish from Redding Roadhouse in Redding, Connecticut.

Ingredients:
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 leeks (white and pale green parts only), washed and thinly sliced
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon espelette pepper
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup clam juice
- 3 tomatoes, seeded and chopped
- 2 tablespoons minced parsley
- 5 pounds mussels, scrubbed and debearded
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1 pound smoked haddock (can substitute any smoked fish)
- 5 scallions, sliced as thin as possible

Instructions:
Melt the butter in a large pot over high heat, add the garlic and leeks, salt and pepper to taste, and cook for 4 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the pepper and wine, and cook for 1 minute. Add the clam juice, tomatoes, parsley, mussels and lemon zest, and mix thoroughly. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, covered, for 5 minutes, or until the mussels begin to open. Break the smoked fish into the pot, add the scallions, and cook for another 2 minutes to allow the flavors to develop.

To serve, transfer the mixture to a large serving bowl or divide among individual bowls, being sure to remove any mussels that didn’t open during the cooking process. Serve with crusty or lightly grilled bread to soak up the flavorful broth. Serves 4.

DOMAINE DE LA PÉPIÈRE 2014 SUR LIE (MUSCADET SÈVRE ET MAINE)

Muscadet, with its trademark bright acidity, is a favorite with shellfish. A sur lie style offers richness, and frequently a toasty or smoky quality, that highlights the smokiness of the fish.
SMOTHERED OKRA & GULF SHRIMP

Bring New Orleans home (and convert okra skeptics) with this Mardi Gras-worthy dish from Louisiana-born Justin Simoneaux, chef at The Boxing Room in San Francisco.

Put the shrimp shells in a pot and cover with 6 cups of water, bring to a boil and simmer while prepping the rest of the ingredients.

Heat a large heavy pot over medium heat and add the tasso. Cook until it starts to crisp. Add the onions and cook for 5 minutes, or until they begin to soften. Add the garlic and tomato paste and cook for another 5 minutes, stirring constantly so the tomato paste doesn’t burn.

Strain the shrimp shells from the cooking liquid and add 4 cups of this shrimp stock to the pot, with the tomatoes, tomato sauce, okra and bay leaf. Bring the mixture to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 20 minutes, or until the okra is tender. If the stew becomes too thick, add more of the reserved shrimp stock.

Add the shrimp, simmer another 10 minutes, then add salt and cayenne to taste. Serve over steamed rice. Serves 4–6.

**DOMAINE GÉRARD DUPLESSIS 2013 CHABLIS**

“This wine is on the crisp side, but without being too austere,” says Ian Becker, wine director of The Boxing Room. “The mineral and citrus balance the richness of the okra without overpowering the sweet and delicate flavors of the Gulf shrimp.”
FAVA BEAN SALAD
WITH CHAMPAGNE VINAIGRETTE

Mixed with fennel flowers and mustard greens, this vert-hued salad from chef Roberto Ivan at Piccolo Venice in Venice Beach, California, strikes the perfect harmony between sweet, bitter and earthy.

Place fava beans in a pot of boiling water and cook for 3–5 minutes. Drain the beans and place into an ice bath. Allow to cool, then drain, pat dry, and toss in a large bowl with the fennel flowers and mustard greens. Season with salt and pepper.

To make the dressing, mix together the mustard, honey and vinegar. Slowly pour in the olive oil while whisking until well combined. Pour over the salad and toss well. Finish with the Pecorino cheese. Serves 2.

8 ounces fresh fava beans, cleaned and shelled
1 bunch fennel flowers, rinsed and patted dry (can substitute fennel fronds)
1 bunch mustard greens, torn into small pieces
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons wildflower honey
6 tablespoons Champagne vinegar
4 tablespoons olive oil
2 ounces Pecorino cheese, shredded

Peppery aromas and bright flavors of citrus and pickle brine meld beautifully with the spicy mustard greens and sweet-tart dressing. The juicy acidity and clean, elegant finish refresh the palate.
**PIPIÁN VERDE**

This traditional sauce has many hallmarks of great Mexican food—herbs, spice, nuttiness, creaminess—and deserves a white of equal complexity. Chef Gonzalo Guzman of San Francisco’s Nopalito serves it with fish, but it works with chicken and pork as well.

**Ingredients**
- ½ cup toasted pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
- ¼ white onion
- 1 garlic clove, peeled
- 2 Serrano chilies, stemmed and seeded
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh epazote (found in Mexican groceries)
- ½ cup fresh cilantro
- 1½ cups spinach, chard or a combination
- 2 scallions
- ½ corn tortilla, toasted in a dry skillet until crisp
- 2½ cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons oil
- Salt, to taste

**Instructions**

Put all ingredients except oil and salt in a blender, and purée until smooth.

Heat the oil in a large deep skillet over medium-high heat, then add sauce (beware of the splatter) and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes, or until sauce is a bit thicker than heavy cream. Salt generously to taste.

Purée sauce again until smooth.

Serve immediately with seafood, chicken or pork.

**MARKUS HUBER 2014 TERRASSEN GRÜNER VELTLINER (TRAISENTAL)**

Grüner Veltliner’s classic peppery note is a great match for gently spiced dishes like this. The wine’s green-apple zestiness brightens the sauce’s green herbal notes, and its freshness offsets the creamy richness of the pumpkin seeds.
Let Wine Enthusiast Magazine be your companion to the world of wine. Each issue contains hundreds of wine, spirits and beer reviews plus wine news, features, travel recipes and much more. Your subscription includes guaranteed continuous service and savings off the newsstand price. You may cancel at any time and receive a full refund on all un-mailed issues.
COMING SOON:
Pairing Food with Rich, Full White Wines