

# PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



**February 2010 – Valentine’s Day**

## **Compromise**

If one likes red and the other white, here is a menu that will bring the two together. Classic California chardonnay and cabernet are intensely flavored and demand rich dishes that will not be overpowered by their substantial oak influence.

Start off the evening with a sheep’s milk cheese from Spain called manchego. In my opinion, manchego will pair with almost any wine. The chardonnay will go beautifully with the delicate, nutty flavor of the cheese. Take it one step further and cut a block of red, quince paste into a heart shape and smear a bit on top of each slice of cheese. This trick will bring out the black currant flavor of the cabernet.

The wines will continue to work well with the main course: Gorgonzola Pasta with Grilled Fillet Mignon and Balsamic Reduction. Marbled beef and a creamy sauce will smooth out any rough tannins imparted by the grape or the barrel. All the while the food will echo the unctuous flavors created during malo-lactic fermentation (a secondary fermentation that almost all red wines undergo and which is responsible for the buttery flavors found in California chardonnay). On the side, a Caesar salad will offer freshness.

In the end, it is not Valentine’s Day without chocolate. My favorite chocolate pairing is chocolate cake with hot coffee. The crumbly texture of the cake washed down with the bitterness of coffee can’t be beat.

So, go on. Pair Up!

*Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in the San Francisco Bay Area. [www.LaSommelier.com](http://www.LaSommelier.com)*

## **Caesar Salad**

### **INGREDIENTS**

½ cup olive oil  
2 cloves garlic, chopped  
½ tsp. Dijon mustard  
½ lemon, juiced  
1 anchovy filet

Salt and pepper  
Croutons  
Romaine Lettuce  
Fresh Grated Parmesan Cheese

### **DIRECTIONS**

Blend dressing ingredients. Tear lettuce, and dress lightly. Season with salt and pepper. Add cheese and croutons and toss. Leftover dressing will keep for about a week in the refrigerator.

Make your own home-made croutons by cutting up day-old bread, drizzling with olive oil and sprinkling with kosher salt. Bake for 15-20 minutes at 275°.

## **Gorgonzola Pasta with Grilled Fillet Mignon and Balsamic Reduction**

### **INGREDIENTS**

(2) Grilled Fillet Mignon Steaks, seasoned and cooked to your liking  
½ lb. your favorite pasta, cooked

*Gorgonzola Sauce:*

1 cup heavy cream  
3 oz. crumbled gorgonzola

*Balsamic Reduction (courtesy of Leslie Styles):*

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½ cup balsamic vinegar

½ cup red wine

1 shallot, cut in half

1 sprig rosemary

## DIRECTIONS

*To make Balsamic Reduction:* gently simmer vinegar, wine, shallot and rosemary until reduced by half. Remove shallot and sprig. Leftovers can keep in fridge indefinitely.

*To make Gorgonzola Sauce:* Simmer cream in medium sauce pan until it starts to reduce. Add cheese and melt. (Sauce will thicken as it cools.)

Toss pasta with sauce, perch a beef fillet on top and drizzle the reduction over meat.

Yield: serves two generously