

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



June 2013 – Raspberry Beret

Fresh raspberries were on my mind this month. Wine made from grapes offers a variety of flavors, including the flavor of raspberry, even though there isn't a raspberry anywhere near the fermenters when the wine is made. Yeast is truly nature's little miracle worker, creating brand new flavors from what the grapes give them. Of course, we do find wines made from a variety of fruits and vegetables that actually taste like their antecedents. As long as there is a sugar for the yeast to consume, you can make wine from it.

A terrific place that makes grape wines is The Terraces at Quarry Vineyards in Napa, just off the Silverado Trail. I had the pleasure of meeting with Ryan Calder on a warm spring day, and we started our tasting with his new Rosé blend. The wine is an ingenious blend of (white) Riesling grapes, early-picked Zinfandel, and saignée of Cabernet Sauvignon. Each component leaves its delicious footprint on the wine. The low-alcohol Zinfandel gives the wine an unmistakable berry quality; the Cabernet imparts a deeper tobacco, earthy quality; and the Riesling contributes the perfect high note of stone fruits like peach and apricot. Light and refreshing, this wine is a great partner for a starter of Watermelon and Red Onion Salad with tangy, spicy Raspberry Dressing.

Cabernet Franc wines can also exhibit berry flavors, but the fruitiness is usually offset with black olives and rich soil. Maybe that sounds odd, but those dark flavors keep wine from tasting like alcoholic Kool-Aid. Bring out red fruit flavors in wine by drizzling grilled chicken with Leslie Stiles' balsamic glaze (*Pair Up*, Feb 2010 www.LaSommeliere.com). Add mashed potatoes and roasted carrots to the plate and you have a super-fast supper that is elegant

enough to serve your most discriminating guest.

For dessert, see if you can find wine made from fruits other than grapes. (If you can't, a ruby port will substitute nicely.) I happen to have had the fortune to come across black raspberry fruit wine. Try this recipe for Cayenne Pepper Chocolate Truffles to nibble on while you sip the super sweet, concentrated raspberry flavor. Both are so intensely flavored, the smallest amount will satisfy your sweet cravings.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Watermelon and Sweet Red Onion Salad

INGREDIENTS

FOR RASPBERRY ESSENCE (makes 2 cups):

12 ounces frozen raspberries
1 (750 ml) bottle red wine (something with ripe fruit that's good enough to drink)
1 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

FOR DRESSING:

6 tablespoons Raspberry Essence
1/4 cup raspberry vinegar
2 tablespoons finely minced shallots
1 tablespoon honey
1/4 cup safflower oil
1 tablespoon Asian chile sauce
1/4 teaspoon salt

FOR SALAD:

2 medium red onions
2 bunches watercress
3 pounds fresh watermelon, preferably both red and yellow

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1/4 cup fresh mint leaves
Fresh berries -- raspberries, blackberries,
blueberries

DIRECTIONS

For Raspberry Essence: In a sauté pan, combine the raspberries, wine, sugar and pepper. Place over high heat, bring to vigorous boil and boil until 2 cups remain. Immediately pour the sauce through a medium meshed sieve, forcing all the pulp through the sieve by scraping it with a metal spoon. The sauce will last indefinitely in the refrigerator, but it may need to be thinned slightly with water before using.

In a medium bowl, combine all the dressing ingredients, then taste and adjust the seasonings.

Peel the onions, then cut into thin slices and separate into individual rings. Toss the onions with the salad dressing and marinate for two hours in the refrigerator, turning over every 30 minutes.

Remove and discard the woody stems from the watercress, then refrigerate the sprigs. Cut enough watermelon into 1- to 2-inch cubes, rectangles, triangles or other shapes, knocking away the seeds, to yield 8 cups. Cut the mint leaves into shreds and set aside. (The recipe can be completed to this point up to 8 hours ahead.)

Just before serving, arrange a bed of watercress on six chilled plates -- or a single platter -- and top with watermelon. Arrange the onions attractively on top. Drizzle the dressing over the melon and onions. Garnish with the mint and fresh berries and serve at once.

Yield: 6-12 servings

(On website)

Cayenne Pepper Truffles

INGREDIENTS

1 pound semi-sweet, good quality chocolate,
chopped
12 ounces unsalted butter
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
12 tablespoons heavy cream
2 ½ cups powdered sugar

Mixture:

1/3 cup powdered sugar
2 tablespoons cocoa powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger

DIRECTIONS

Melt chocolate, butter and cayenne. Stir until smooth. Remove from heat and mix in cream and powdered sugar. Cover and chill overnight. Scoop truffles and roll into desired balls. Roll in topping mixture to coat truffles. Store in refrigerator until serving time.

Yield: 3-4 dozen