

# PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



## March 2014 – Fresh from the Garden

Every year, spring feels like a new beginning. Many people make New Year's resolutions to eat more healthfully starting in January; I think spring is a more natural starting point. Here is a wonderful menu that takes advantage of fresh produce and offers wines to pair with them. Keep in mind that vegetables are notoriously difficult to pair with wine because they have bitter flavors. I chose a lightly sweet/floral white wine to offset the bitterness and a red wine lower in tannin, since tannin is the bitter component in a red wine.

Start with a salad of "less bitter" greens. Choose butter lettuce for its mild flavor, baby romaine for crunch, and young spinach for color. For added texture, include vegetables like mushrooms, green onion, and some diced Campari tomatoes (surprisingly good year-round). Top your salad with a dressing that is not too acidic, like the Tarragon Vinaigrette listed here. Pair with a white wine like Verdelho. Originally from Portugal, Verdelho is a white wine that reminds me of Pinot Grigio. It has soft citrus flavors accented by pretty floral notes. Quite a few wineries in California are choosing to make this wine in both a dry and lightly sweet style. Of course, if you can't find a Verdelho, Pinot Gris/Grigio works in a pinch.

Next, we have salad's quintessential partner, soup. Spring Vegetable Soup with Pesto has so many healthful ingredients; I feel healthier just reading the recipe! The good news is that it incorporates ingredients that soften the bitterness of the "green" ingredients and make it more wine friendly. The starchy richness of the beans and potatoes along with the sweetness imparted by the carrots and peas are helpful to a wine pairing. When choosing a partner for this

soup, I immediately think of Italian grapes because of their naturally higher acids. Dolcetto comes to mind because it has relatively lower tannins than some of its brethren. Another low-tannin red is Pinot Noir.

For dessert, I wanted to share a recipe that I had as a child when visiting my grandmother who lived near the orange-growing capital of California, San Bernardino. This Fresh Orange Pie was so unique and delicious; I had to get the recipe from Edwards Mansion. It is possible to pair this dessert with an Orange Muscat wine, but perhaps sparkling water with orange slices would be a fresher ending to this deliciously fresh meal.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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## Tarragon Vinaigrette

### INGREDIENTS

¼ tsp. kosher salt  
1tbsp. white balsamic vinegar  
4½ tbsp. olive oil  
¼ tsp. egg yolk  
½ tsp. honey  
½ tsp, tarragon, chopped fine  
½ tsp. shallots, chopped fine  
Fresh ground pepper to taste

### DIRECTIONS

Whisk together salt and vinegar. Add remaining ingredients and whisk for 15 seconds or until texture is thick.

Yield: about 1/3 cup or enough for 6-8 salad servings

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## Spring Vegetable Soup with Pesto

### INGREDIENTS

Soup:

- 1 cup(s) dried navy or white beans, rinsed
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon(s) fresh thyme, finely chopped
- 2 medium leeks, diced and rinsed well
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 8 ounce(s) Red Bliss or Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 pound(s) plum tomatoes, cubed
- 2 cup(s) low-sodium vegetable broth
- 4 ounce(s) green beans, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 small zucchini, cubed
- 1 cup(s) fresh shelled or thawed frozen peas

Pesto:

- 2 small garlic cloves
- 2 cup(s) (loosely packed) fresh basil leaves
- 1/4 cup(s) finely grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoon(s) extra-virgin olive oil

### DIRECTIONS

Cover beans with 6 cups cold water in a large pot. Bring to a boil; remove from heat. Let stand, covered, 1 hour.

Drain beans; return to pot. Cover with 3 quarts cold water. Add bay leaf and thyme; bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium; simmer, partially covered, until beans are barely tender, about 2 hours.

Add leeks, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, broth, and 2 cups water. Simmer, partially covered, until the beans are tender, about 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Make pesto: Finely chop garlic in a food processor. Add basil; process. Add cheese and oil; process until combined.

Add green beans and zucchini to pot. Cook, uncovered, 20 minutes. Add peas; cook until soft, 5 to 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Divide among bowls; top each with 1 heaping teaspoon pesto.

Yield: 6 servings

(on website)

## Fresh Orange Pie

### INGREDIENTS

Crust:

- 1 cup pecan crumbs, crushed
- 1 cup shredded coconut
- 1/4 cup softened butter
- 1/4 cup sugar

Filling:

- 5 tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 1/2 cups fresh squeezed orange juice
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup orange marmalade
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
- 6 large Navel oranges, peeled and sectioned

### DIRECTIONS

Combine the crust ingredients and press on the bottom of a buttered 10" pie plate. Save a small amount of crumbs for the garnish. Bake at 375° for 10-12 minutes. Cool overnight covered in wax paper.

Dissolve cornstarch in 1/4 cup of the orange juice. In a saucepan, mix remaining orange juice, sugar, marmalade, vanilla, cinnamon

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and nutmeg. Heat while constantly stirring; add orange juice/cornstarch mixture. Continue to cook until mixture is thick and clear. Add orange sections and mix gently. Pour into cooled pie crust. Chill 3-4 hours. Serve at room temperature, garnish with sweetened whipped cream and remaining crust crumbs.

Yield: 6-8 servings