

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



May 2016 – *She's a Peach*

My mom is a peach. She prefers to give more than to receive, and one of the things she loves to give is food. She makes wonderful dinners, throws great parties, and more often than not, if you go to her house, you will leave with homemade jam. I wrote this menu with her in mind. She loves Champagne, Chardonnay, and dessert wines. Each is delicate yet has a certain inner strength.

Pancetta-Wrapped Peaches hits all five flavors: sweet, salty, sour, bitter and umami (read: savory). Sweet, fragrant peaches and slightly bitter basil are wrapped-up in salty, savory pancetta, which is fried crisp. Add a sour note by drizzling with a little aged balsamic vinegar, and you have all five flavors. An off-dry sparkling wine is the go-to beverage with this appetizer; bubbles cut the fat, and sugar offsets the bitterness. If you want to save on the cost of the wine, why not try a champagne cocktail? Made with cognac, sugar, and Angostura Bitters, champagne cocktails will make the most of a less-expensive sparkler.

Pouilly-Fuissé is a white wine appellation in the Burgundy region of France. These wines are always made from Chardonnay grapes. Pouilly-Fuissé has classic flavors of peach, apple, and melon and tends to be higher in acid and lower in sugar compared to California Chardonnays. Also, it typically undergoes malolactic fermentation, so it has a buttery flavor excellent for the richness of Lemon and Basil Roasted Sea Bass. Additionally, Pouilly-Fuissés are usually not aged in new oak. For this reason, oak won't overpower the floral flavors of the lemon and basil. If you can't find a Pouilly-Fuissé, look for a lighter style Chardonnay made with little or no oak.

Bring this special meal to an end with a German Eiswein made from the Riesling grape. Ice wines are classically made from grapes that have been left on the vine until winter comes and freezes them. When quickly pressed, the solid water stays behind. The super sweet syrup is made into a dense and perfumed wine with flavors of peaches and honey. It is the perfect partner for a Peach Melba Buckle made with fresh peaches and raspberries that are baked into a dense, moist cake.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Champagne Cocktail

INGREDIENTS

1 sugar cube
Angostura bitters
Champagne
Lemon or orange twist, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Soak the sugar cube in Angostura bitters and drop into a champagne flute. Top with a luxury champagne or a sparkling wine. Garnish with a lemon or orange twist.

Yield: 1 glass

Pancetta-Wrapped Peaches with Basil and Aged Balsamic

INGREDIENTS

16 thin slices of pancetta
2 medium freestone peaches—halved, pitted and cut into 8 wedges each
Salt and freshly ground pepper

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16 basil leaves
1 tablespoon olive oil
Aged balsamic vinegar, for drizzling

DIRECTIONS

Lay the pancetta slices out on a work surface. Set a peach wedge at the edge of each slice, season with salt and pepper and top with a basil leaf. Roll up the pancetta to enclose the peaches.

In a medium skillet, heat the olive oil. Add half of the wrapped peaches and cook over moderate heat, turning occasionally, until the pancetta is browned and crisp, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a platter and repeat with the remaining peaches.

Lightly drizzle the peaches with aged balsamic vinegar and serve.

Yield: 4 servings

Lemon and Basil Roasted Sea Bass

INGREDIENTS

Olive oil
(4) sea bass fillets
8 oz. cherry tomatoes
1 red pepper, sliced
1 yellow pepper, sliced
1 lemon, zest and juice
One handful of fresh basil, coarsely chopped
Salt and Pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Heat the oven to 400°C.

Mix the lemon juice, zest, basil and 2-3 tablespoons of olive oil. Season the fish and pour marinade over the sea bass fillets (save some basil to sprinkle over when serving).

Allow to marinate as you prepare the vegetables.

Place the tomatoes and peppers in one dense layer, drizzle with one tablespoon of olive oil, and season to taste. Roast for 5 minutes or until just starting to soften.

Remove the vegetables from the oven and lay the marinated sea bass on them and return to the oven for 15 minutes

The bass will be white and flaky when cooked and the vegetables soft. Sprinkle with basil and serve immediately with slices of lemon on the side.

Yield: 4 servings

Peach Melba Buckle

INGREDIENTS

4 tablespoons butter
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
3/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup milk
1 cup of sliced fresh peaches or 6oz. frozen
1 cup of fresh raspberries, or 6oz. frozen
1 tablespoon sugar

DIRECTIONS

Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position, and heat oven to 350 degrees.

Put butter in an 8-inch square or 9-inch round pan; set in oven to melt. When butter has melted, remove pan from oven.

Whisk flour, 3/4 cup of sugar, baking powder and salt in small bowl. Add milk;

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whisk to form a smooth batter. Pour batter into pan, then scatter fruit over batter. Sprinkle with remaining 1 Tb. of sugar.

Bake until batter browns and fruit bubbles, 50 to 60 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature with a dollop of whipped cream or a small scoop of vanilla ice cream, if desired.

Yield: 4-6 servings