

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



February 2017 – BottleCru®!

Seriously, I don't know how I lived without my smartphone. It is so nice to have access to the world of information at the tap of a button. Put all that information into a great app, and you had me at hello. When the folks from BottleCru® asked me to help them out with the food and wine pairing portion of their fancy new wine app, I was delighted. Now, I am happy to share it with you!

Bottle Cru® has created a fun, interactive way to learn about, find, and pair the wines you love. Instead of looking at wines as just “varietals,” Bottle Cru® considers their “style.” A wine’s style is defined by many things, including where the grapes are grown and the decisions made during production. The style affects the taste of the wine and how it pairs with food. Of course, the best part of the app is the engaging “Vinotars®” that help you remember each wine style.

A unique feature of this app is that it is web-based. This means it is always up-to-date and won't take up any space on your phone. Since you don't download it to your phone, you won't find it on the app store. All you do is go to www.bottlecruapp.com and bookmark or add it to your home screen. Don't forget to create your own account so you can access all the wine styles and keep track of wines you have tasted.

Naturally, I'm rather partial to the database of over 500 food & cheese wine-pairings! It's like having La Sommelier on speed-dial to tell you what wine to choose for your dish. For example, let's say you are looking for a wine to go with Chilled Asparagus Salad (recipe below). You would go to the main menu of the BottleCru® App, tap on Food Pairings, and search for “asparagus.” Every food item featuring

asparagus will pop up. Tap the picture and “boom,” five wine options are offered. Grüner Veltliner, known as Racy Lina™ in the BottleCru® App, is one of my favorite wine styles with asparagus because it is intensely aromatic and flavorful. Classically, it has flavors of apple and pear with a hint of white pepper. These sweet and savory flavors will mask the slightly bitter flavor of the asparagus.

On the other hand, let's say you have a special bottle of Grenache, like a Châteauneuf-du-Pape. BottleCru® calls this wine style Earthy Gil™ because of its peppery, earthy flavors. If you want to know what the “Go-To” pairings are for this wine, start from the main menu, tap on Wines & Styles, and scroll down until you see Grenache Noir. After a tap and a swipe right, choose Earthy Gil™ from the three word clouds. One more swipe right and you will see a list of delicious foods that are perfectly suited to the ripe, baked red & black fruits of this wine. Try it with Roast Quail and Mushrooms a la Plancha. The delicate gaminess of the quail and earthiness of the mushrooms will bring those luscious fruits to the forefront!

So, now you know two ways to find great food and wine pairings, but here's one more. Let's say you know you want a fruit dessert but don't know which you one to try. Again, start from the Food Pairings at the main menu, and scroll through the categories of foods until you find “Desserts.” Select Fruit Desserts and find Peach and Apricot Tart. I have a great recipe for Peach Apricot Galette (which is basically a rustic tart). I love it with a sweet Pinot Gris from Alsace. BottleCru's name for this wine style is Sweet Piper™. Its full-bodied sweetness is balanced by lively acidity and a smooth texture. Its aromas of stone fruits are

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perfect with the peach and apricot flavors in the tart.

Be one of the first to try out this wonderful new app, and do it right away. The first 500 users will be grandfathered in for free. So, go on, sign-up today and Pair Up with BottleCru®!

Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in the San Francisco Bay Area. www.LaSommelierre.com

Chilled Asparagus Salad

INGREDIENTS

6 quarts salted water
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
32 stalks small to medium-size green asparagus, washed and ends trimmed
2 lemons, juiced
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1 teaspoon honey
2 tablespoons smooth Dijon mustard
4 tablespoons olive oil

DIRECTIONS

Bring the water to a boil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the sugar. Prepare an ice bath by filling a bowl, large enough to hold the asparagus, with cold water. Add some ice cubes. Plunge the asparagus into the ice bath before cooking to bring any limp stalks back to life. Remove from the ice bath and drop into the boiling water. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer back to the same ice bath. Allow them to sit in the ice bath for a few minutes. Dry the stalks once they are removed from the ice bath. Transfer the asparagus to a large plate or platter lined with a kitchen towel and refrigerate.



In a medium bowl, combine the lemon juice, white wine vinegar, honey and mustard. Stir to blend. Whisk in the olive oil in an even, steady stream. Season to taste. Just before serving, toss the asparagus in the dressing to coat completely.

Yield: 4 servings

Roast Quail

INGREDIENTS

8 whole quail, dry
Melted butter
Kosher salt
Celery sticks (to steady the birds)

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 500°F. Coat quail with melted butter and salt generously. Place in a roasting pan and steady with cut pieces of the celery stick. Try to prevent the quail from touching to speed the cooking process.

Roast in oven for 10 to 18 minutes. The lower end of the spectrum will give you quail that are juicy, succulent and a little pink on the inside — but pale. The higher end of the spectrum will give you a fully cooked, browner quail, but one that is at the edge of being dry. Rest for 5 to 10 minutes before serving. Put a bowl out for bones. Quail are best eaten with your fingers.

Yield: 4 servings

Mushrooms a la Plancha

INGREDIENTS

1½ pounds mixed cultivated (maitake, oyster, shiitake) and wild mushrooms (black trumpet, yellowfoot, hedgehog)

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2 tablespoons grapeseed oil (for high heat)
Sea salt
Black pepper
Lemon
Good extra virgin olive oil

DIRECTIONS

Season the mushrooms with the grapeseed oil, sea salt and black pepper. Heat a large cast iron skillet to high heat and gently wipe out the skillet with a lightly oiled rag. Add the mushrooms in a single layer and sear on one side. Stir gently and add to a mixing bowl. Add a few tablespoons of olive oil and a squeeze of lemon juice to the mushrooms and lightly mix.

Yield: 4 servings

“Winter” Peach and Apricot Galette

INGREDIENTS

1 store-bought, refrigerated 9-inch pie crust
OR homemade pie dough rolled out to about 12”
1 can sliced peaches or 3 fresh peaches, sliced
1 can apricot halves or ~8 fresh apricots, halved and pitted
Juice from ½ lemon (about 1-2 teaspoons lemon juice)
3 pinches of salt
1 – 2 tablespoons turbinado sugar (aka sugar in the raw)
1 egg, whisked with a bit of water

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Place pie crust on a rimmed cooking sheet lined with parchment paper or a Silpat.

Drain peaches and apricots. Slice apricot halves into thirds. Place drained peaches and apricots on center of crust in an even pile, leaving about a 2-3 inch border of crust around the fruit (if you use the store-bought crust, your border will be a bit smaller than the 12” homemade). Drizzle fruit with lemon juice, sprinkle with pinches of salt, then fold edges of crust up around the sides.

Once the border is folded up around the sides, brush the “crust” lightly but thoroughly with the egg wash. Sprinkle the crust liberally with turbinado sugar, and feel free to toss a few crystals of sugar on the fruit, too.

Bake for about 40 minutes, until the crust has browned nicely. Remove from the oven, let cool a few minutes, and then serve. If you let it cool a little longer, you can usually transfer the galette easily to a serving platter using a few flat spatulas and some care.

Yield: 6-8 servings