

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



January 2018 – Winter Whites

Winter is the season when red wines find their way to the table a bit more often than whites. It makes sense; winter foods tend to be richer and fattier, matching the full body and tannins of red wine. However, that doesn't mean that white wines should be left out completely. There are certain white grapes which produce full-bodied, rich, white wines, and they are perfect partners to the comfort foods we love in the colder months.

The three classic grapes of the Rhone Valley in France are Viognier, Marsanne, and Roussanne. Together they make up a wonderful blend fittingly called a White Rhone. You can find them from their home region in France, but this classic combination can be found in other areas of the world as well, most notably California and Australia. White Rhones are full in body (read: alcohol) and have a silky viscosity. The flavors are floral and herbal, with notes of stone fruit like white peach. Seared Scallop with Pistachio appetizer is a light but warming dish that combines the velvety texture of scallops with crunchy pistachios. Scallops tend to make some white wines taste metallic, Viognier is not one of them. It's presence in a White Rhone blend makes it essential for scallops.

Another full-bodied white wine is a Montrachet from Burgundy, France. Made from Chardonnay grapes, it undergoes malolactic fermentation that converts tart, apple-tasting malic acid into buttery lactic acid. Pair a full-bodied Chardonnay with Chicken Madeira/Marsala. Madeira is made in Portugal from Sercial, Verdelho, Bual, and Malmsey. Marsala is made in Italy with a whole host of Italian grapes, both white and red. You can use either of these fortified wines to make this dish. They are very

similar in flavor and strength. Also, they have a nutty flavor that works with the richness of the Chardonnay.

The final, full-bodied grape for this meal is Semillon. It is made into both dry and dessert wines. Semillon is one of the few grapes that flourishes in the presence of botrytis; the best way to get delicious, sweet, dessert wines. Classically, it is blended with Sauvignon Blanc grapes in the Sauternes region of Bordeaux, France. However, you can find it from many other wine-growing regions as well. Try it with the Quesadilla Cake listed here. This not-too-sweet cake is easy to make and reminds me of a dense cornbread. It does not have a strong cheese flavor, and you can even make it from the "green can" Parmesan!

So, go on. Pair Up!

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Seared Scallop with Pistachio

INGREDIENTS

½ cup pistachio nuts, peeled and unsalted
2 tablespoons chives, finely chopped
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 tablespoons butter
12 sea scallops
salt & pepper, to taste
½ lemon, just the grated zest

DIRECTIONS

Finely chop the pistachios and place in a bowl with chives, oil, and lemon juice.

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Heat the butter in a pan, season the scallops, and fry them about 1–2 minutes on each side.

Place on a tray and top each scallop with the pistachio mixture. Top each with a few strands of grated lemon zest.

Yield: 4 servings

Chicken Madeira or Marsala

INGREDIENTS

1 ¼ cups Madeira or Marsala wine
¾ cup chicken stock
1 packet unflavored gelatin (2½ teaspoons; 10g)
4 boneless, skinless chicken cutlets, each pounded about ½ to ¼ inch thick (1¾ pounds)
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
About 1 cup all-purpose flour
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
10 ounces cremini mushrooms, sliced
4 medium shallots, minced
2 medium cloves garlic, minced
¼ teaspoon dried thyme
3 tablespoons cold unsalted butter
1 teaspoon soy sauce
Fresh lemon juice, to taste
Minced fresh parsley, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Combine Marsala and stock in a mixing bowl or large measuring cup and sprinkle gelatin all over surface. Set aside.

Season chicken cutlets all over with salt and pepper. Dredge each cutlet in flour.

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat and cook chicken until browned

on both sides, about 3 minutes per side. Remove from pan.

Add mushrooms to and cook, stirring frequently, until mushrooms have released their juices and browned well, about 10 minutes. Add shallots, garlic, and thyme and cook, stirring, until shallots are translucent, about 2 minutes.

Deglaze the pan with Marsala mixture and cook until liquids are reduced by about three-quarters. Add butter and soy sauce and whisk constantly until emulsified and sauce takes on the consistency of heavy cream. Season with salt and pepper. Taste sauce and adjust with lemon juice as needed.

If the sauce begins to break at any point, swirl in a splash of water to bring it back together. Spoon sauce over chicken. Garnish with parsley and serve.

Yield: 4 servings

Quesadilla Cake

INGREDIENTS

2 cups Bisquick
1 cup sugar
¼ cup Parmesan cheese
1 stick butter, melted
1 egg, beaten
1¼ cup milk

DIRECTIONS

Mix dry ingredients. Add milk, egg, and butter one at a time, mixing in between each addition. Put into greased 8X10 baking dish and bake at 325°F for 45 minutes.

Yield: 6-8 servings