

# PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



## September 2019 – Fruits of Labor Day

September is a great month in Northern California. The summer fog on the coast lifts, it is warm and sunny, and summer stone fruits as well as fall tree fruits are both available. This menu takes advantage of some of my go-to flavor combinations as well as the fruits of the season.

Viognier is often described as a pretty wine. I think this is because it has a perfumed aroma and flavor. It is similar to Chardonnay in its weight and is sometimes aged in neutral oak barrels, giving it a roundness that many enjoy. Any stone fruit flavors of peach and nectarine will echo the nectarine in the Arugula Nectarine Salad. Normally, plain fruit is too sour for wine, but the pine nuts and blue cheese add fat and salt to offset the acid. Additionally, the vinaigrette of this salad uses mild raspberry vinegar so as not to make matters worse.

The combination of bacon with scallops is a tried and true favorite; however, I am not a fan of wrapping bacon around the outside of scallops because neither ends up properly cooked. Invariably, the bacon is soft and the scallop is overcooked. When I found this recipe, I felt it offered the best of both worlds: crispy bacon and medium-rare, succulent scallops. The wine shallot pan sauce is a fantastic addition. Pinot Noir would be an excellent pairing partner with this dish as it has moderately high acidity to provides a palate cleanser for the fat from the bacon and stands up to the wine sauce. If you don't want to open a new wine, continue on with the Viognier from the first course. Viognier is one of the few wines that won't make scallops taste metallic. You can use the Viognier or the Pinot Noir when making the pan sauce to further tie the dish to the wine. Keep the rest of the plate simple

with steamed white rice and a sautéed green vegetable of your choice.

To take advantage of the first apples of the season, go all-out with this recipe for homemade Apple Brandy by pairing it with the Apple Pear Crisp. If you want to make a smaller portion of the brandy, the recipe can easily be cut down.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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## Arugula Nectarine Salad

### INGREDIENTS

4 cups fresh arugula or baby spinach  
4 cups torn Bibb or Boston lettuce  
3 medium nectarines, sliced  
2 Tablespoons pine nuts, toasted  
2 Tablespoons crumbled blue cheese

### DRESSING:

2 Tablespoons raspberry vinegar  
2 teaspoons sugar  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
Dash pepper  
3 Tablespoons olive oil

### DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, combine the first five ingredients. In a small bowl, whisk vinegar, sugar, mustard, salt, and pepper. Gradually whisk in oil until blended. Drizzle over salad; toss to coat.

Yield: 8 servings

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## Seared Scallops with Bacon

### INGREDIENTS

6 slices bacon, cut into 3/4-inch pieces  
1 pound large sea scallops (about 16)  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
2 Tablespoons minced shallot (about 2 shallots)  
1 cup light red or white wine  
2 Tablespoons unsalted butter

### DIRECTIONS

Heat a large sauté pan over medium-low heat and add bacon. Cook slowly, stirring frequently, until brown and crisp, about 8 minutes. Remove bacon with a slotted spoon, and transfer to a paper-towel lined plate.

Drain excess fat, leaving a thin coat on the bottom of the pan. Increase heat to medium, add scallops to the pan, and sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste. Cook until golden brown and opaque, about two minutes per side.

Transfer scallops to the serving dish and add shallots to the pan. When shallots are translucent, add white wine; scrape browned bits from the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon. Cook until liquid is reduced by half, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in butter. Pour sauce over scallops and top with reserved bacon.

Yield: 4 servings

## Apple-Pear Walnut Crisp

### INGREDIENTS

#### WALNUT CRISP TOPPING:

1½ cup California walnuts, divided

¼ cup all-purpose flour  
1/3 cup brown sugar  
½ cup quick-cooking oats  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
½ cup butter, chilled and sliced into one tablespoon pieces

#### APPLE PEAR FILLING:

3 Granny Smith apples, peeled and sliced into ¼-inch slices  
2 Anjou pears, peeled and sliced into ¼-inch slices  
½ cup granulated sugar  
2 Tablespoons cornstarch  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1 Tablespoon lemon juice  
Ice cream (optional)  
Caramel sauce (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

#### TOPPING:

Add one cup of walnut pieces to a food processor and pulse until finely ground. In a small bowl, combine ground walnuts, flour, brown sugar, oats, and cinnamon. Cut butter into mixture until a coarse crumb forms. Coarsely chop the remaining 1/2 cup of walnut pieces and stir into crumb mixture until incorporated. Set aside while preparing the fruit filling.

#### FILLING:

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a bowl, toss together apples, pears, sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, salt, and lemon juice. Place fruit mixture in the bottom of a 10-inch cast-iron pan or baking dish. Sprinkle walnut crisp topping mixture over the top of the fruit. Bake for 45 minutes or until fruit mixture is hot and bubbly and topping is golden brown. Serve immediately. Top with ice cream and

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a drizzle of caramel sauce for extra decadence.

Yield: 4 servings

## **Apple Brandy**

### **INGREDIENTS**

2 cups sugar

1 cups water

2 pounds apples, sliced

½ liter brandy

2 whole cloves

1 cinnamon stick (3 inches)

Additional whole cloves and cinnamon sticks

### **DIRECTIONS**

Combine sugar and water in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until sugar is dissolved. Remove from the heat.

Place apples in a large glass or plastic container; add the sugar mixture, brandy, cloves, and cinnamon stick. Cover and let stand at room temperature for at least two weeks, stirring once a week. Strain brandy mixture; discard apples and spices. Pour into glass bottles. Place an additional three cloves and one cinnamon stick in each bottle.

Yield: About 16 oz.