

A photograph of a silver tray holding several wine glasses. The glasses contain different types of wine: red, white, and sparkling. A hand is visible at the bottom left, holding the tray. The background is a blurred restaurant setting with warm lighting and greenery.

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Villiera Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch, 2014
(South Africa)

Recipe Pairing

Vegetable Spring Rolls

Tangent Paragon Vineyards Grenache Blanc,
Edna Valley, 2012 (United States)

Recipe Pairing

Meyer Lemon Crab Salad with Fresh Mango

Bonny Doon Contra, California, 2012
(United States)

Recipe Pairing

Lamb Burgers with Mint Greek Salad Topping

Poderi del Paradiso Chianti Colli Senesi, 2011
(Italy)

Recipe Pairing

Roast Chicken with Corn Bread–Sausage Stuffing

Alain Jaume Haut de Brun, Côtes du Rhône,
2012 (France)

Recipe Pairing

Mustard-Glazed Pork Tenderloin

Penley Estate Condor, Coonawarra, 2012
(Australia)

Recipe Pairing

Grilled Peppercorn-Crusted Rib Eye

Explorer Collection

A NOTE FROM THE TASTING TEAM

Welcome to your Explorer Club shipment, which opens with a pair of delicious southern French–inspired Californians: a characterful white from the underappreciated Grenache Blanc variety that offers surprising complexity and verve for the price, and a complex Carignan-focused red blend from old vines crafted by the irrepressible Randall Grahm. A southern hemisphere pair follows in the form of a zesty, balanced and refreshing South African Chenin Blanc, along with a smoky, mineral Shiraz blend from the famous terra rossa soils of Coonawarra. We conclude with a brace of European reds: a rich, juicy, savory Sangiovese from the hills near Siena, and a classic, spicy Côtes du Rhône from a dynamic family-owned winery just outside Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

Villiera Chenin Blanc, Stellenbosch

VARIETY	YEAR	COUNTRY	REGION	TYPE	FEATURE
Chenin Blanc	2014	South Africa	Stellenbosch	Juicy, Fruity White	For Chenin Blanc Lovers

STORY

In 1983 cousins Jeff and Simon Grier took over the existing Villiera estate in Stellenbosch, South Africa's most famous wine region, and have since transformed it into one of the largest privately owned family wineries in the country. The two started their wine careers in the 1970s, training, respectively, to become viticulturalist and enologist. Stellenbosch is most famous for its Cabernet Sauvignon and other reds but also produces some wonderfully refreshing whites, particularly from Chenin Blanc, the country's signature white grape. Stellenbosch's climate is warm, but the maritime influence of nearby False Bay moderates the temperature, allowing white wines to stay in balance. This Chenin has so many of the classic qualities we love about this variety in South Africa—fruitiness, acidity and a focused richness.

SENSE

A bright straw color in the glass, the wine bursts with scents of quince, honeydew, lemon and pear.

SAVOR

This Chenin is dry in the mouth, with flavors of apple, light honey, plantain, pear and lemon rind, and a crisp, refreshing acidity.

SERVE

Chenin Blanc is loved by wine aficionados because it pairs exceptionally well with food. Its earthy, savory flavors complement poultry and freshwater fish, while its exuberant fruit and acidity will likewise make it great with lighter Asian fare, from Vietnamese spring rolls to papaya salads to Thai curries. Serve well chilled: refrigerate the bottle for 45 minutes before serving.



INGREDIENTS

- ½ lb. shiitake mushrooms
- 2 tsp. canola or peanut oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tsp. low-sodium soy sauce
- 7 oz. thin dried rice noodles
- 12 rice-paper wrappers, each about 8½ inches in diameter
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
- 2 ripe avocados, pitted, peeled and sliced
- 2 carrots, peeled and cut into matchsticks
- 1 cup packed mixed fresh herb sprigs, such as mint, cilantro and basil

Vegetable Spring Rolls

These refreshing rolls make perfect finger food for a spring or summer get-together; serve them with good-quality chili and peanut dipping sauces. Feel free to play around with different fillings depending on what's fresh at the market.

DIRECTIONS

Trim the stems from the mushrooms and discard. Cut the caps into slices; set aside.

In a large nonstick fry pan over medium-high heat, warm 1½ tsp. of the oil. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant but not browned, about 30 seconds. Add the mushrooms and sauté until they have released their juices, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the soy sauce and cook until the pan is dry, about 1 minute. Transfer to a bowl; set aside.

Bring a pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add the noodles, stir to separate and cook until tender, 3 to 5 minutes or according to the package instructions. Drain in a colander and rinse under cold running water. Wipe the pot dry, return the noodles to the pot and toss with the remaining ½ tsp. oil.

Fill a large, shallow bowl with very hot tap water. Soak the rice-paper wrappers, 1 or 2 at a time, until flexible, about 30 seconds. Shake off any excess water and stack the wrappers on a plate. Place 1 wrapper flat on a work surface. Arrange a combination of noodles, bell pepper, avocado, mushrooms, carrots and herbs across the center of the wrapper; fold the ends in over the filling and then roll up tightly from the edge closest to you. Repeat to make the remaining rolls.

Cut the rolls in half on the diagonal and serve immediately.

Makes 12 rolls

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Healthy in a Hurry*, by Karen Ansel, MS, RD and Charity Ferreira (Weldon Owen, 2011).

MORE RECIPE IDEAS

- Oven-Roasted Trout with Potatoes
- Pad Thai

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Tangent Paragon Vineyards Grenache Blanc, Edna Valley

VARIETY	YEAR	COUNTRY	REGION	TYPE	FEATURE
Grenache Blanc	2012	United States	California Central Coast	Juicy, Minerally White	Great for Starters

STORY

Tangent is a brand from the Niven family, grape-growing pioneers of the Edna Valley and owners of other successful labels like True Myth and Baileyana. Tangent is a unique concept in that it's entirely devoted to exploring "the limitless possibilities of white wine." In service of that mission, Tangent experiments with various uncommon white grapes including Albariño, Viognier and Grenache Blanc. Believed to have originated in Spain, Grenache Blanc is a mutation of red Grenache and is known for its crisp structure, broad body and intensely minerally core. Tangent sources its grapes from the cool Edna Valley on California's Central Coast and relies on the formidable talent of Baileyana winemaker Christian Roguenant, a Burgundian who has worked in California for over 20 years. Roguenant has an excellent touch, especially with whites, in that he highlights fruit without losing minerality, as shown in this complex white.

SENSE

The mélange of aromas includes hints of tangerine, lime blossom, smoke and white peach.

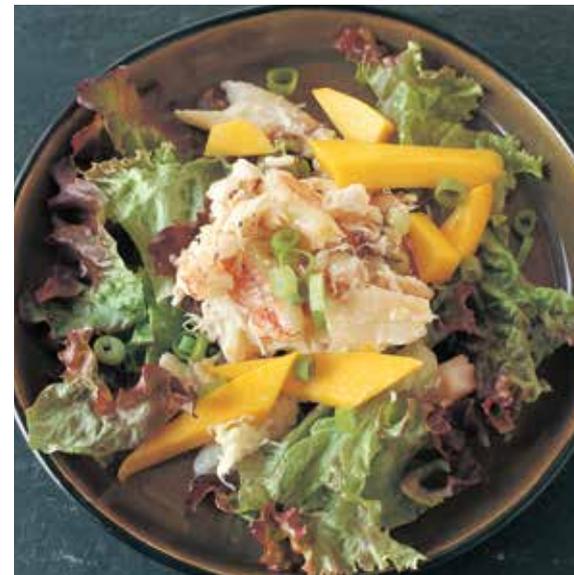
SAVOR

A racy verve underlies lemon, apple and herb flavors in this surprisingly complex Grenache Blanc.

SERVE

The minerally texture of the Tangent Grenache Blanc makes it a great match for fish and rich shellfish like scallops, crab, prawns and lobster, especially if they are served with savory preparations based on herbs, vegetables, fruits and spices instead of more unctuous ingredients like butter and cream. Serve well chilled: refrigerate the bottle for 45 minutes before serving.

"I like pouring Tangent GB for people who are tired of Chardonnay but want to try something different and still delicious." - JI, Wine Buyer



INGREDIENTS

- 2 Meyer lemons
- 1½ lb. lump crabmeat, picked over to remove any shell fragments
- ¾ cup mayonnaise
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- ½ tsp. sugar
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 mangoes
- 1 large head red leaf lettuce, leaves torn into bite-sized pieces
- 4 green onions, white and light green portions, thinly sliced

Meyer Lemon Crab Salad with Fresh Mango

Meyer lemons, sweeter and more floral than traditional lemons, infuse the dressing with their heady citrus perfume. Creamy-textured mangoes add a tropical flair, but sweet, delicate crabmeat is the star of the show.

DIRECTIONS

Finely grate the zest of 1 lemon. Halve both of the lemons and juice the halves to measure 5 Tbs.

In a bowl, combine the crabmeat, mayonnaise, lemon zest, 4 Tbs. of the lemon juice, ¾ tsp. salt, and ½ tsp. pepper and stir gently to mix. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

In a small bowl, whisk together the remaining 1 Tbs. lemon juice, the sugar, ⅛ tsp. salt and several grinds of pepper until the sugar dissolves. Slowly whisk in the olive oil until well blended to make a dressing. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

Peel the mangoes and then cut the flesh into pieces about 1½ inches long and about ¼ inch thick. Don't worry if the mango pieces are irregular in shape.

In a large bowl, toss the lettuce with a pinch of salt and a few grinds of pepper. Whisk the dressing to recombine, then drizzle it over the lettuce and toss well. Taste and adjust the seasonings. Divide the dressed lettuce evenly among individual plates, arranging it in a mound in the center. Place a spoonful of the crab mixture on each mound of lettuce, dividing it evenly. Scatter the mango pieces around the crab and sprinkle with the green onions. Serve immediately.

Serves 6

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *New Flavors for Salads*, by Dina Cheney (Weldon Owen, 2009).

MORE RECIPE IDEAS

- Pan-Roasted Clams with Potatoes and Fennel
- Roasted Fish with Lemon-Almond Bread Crumbs

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Bonny Doon Contra, California

VARIETY	YEAR	COUNTRY	REGION	TYPE	FEATURE
Red Blend	2012	United States	California	Spicy, Juicy Red	Great for BBQ

STORY

Bonny Doon is the iconic wine brand created by Randall Grahm, one of the most influential and intriguing wine personalities in the U.S. Californian by birth, Grahm is one of the pioneers of Rhône varieties in California. Indeed, it was he, dressed in blue polyester on the cover of *Wine Spectator* in 1989, who was dubbed the first “Rhône Ranger.” Grahm issues puns as generously as he does wines, with labels like “Critique of Pure Riesling” and “Cardinal Zin” becoming mass-market icons. He sold those brands, but Bonny Doon, named for its small hometown near Santa Cruz, remains his signature high-end brand. Contra is a wine that recalls California’s vinous past, a red Rhône blend that emphasizes 56% Carignan (from 100-year-old vines in Contra Costa County), with the balance comprising Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre and a soupçon of Cinsault. The result is a simply delightful red with resounding freshness and personality.

SENSE

Look for aromatic suggestions of tar and leather underneath the rich evocation of blueberry, plum and cranberry.

SAVOR

Old-vine intensity and flavors of smoldering dark fruit are beautifully integrated in this juicy blend.

SERVE

Lean steaks and roasts provide the meaty base that will show off the Bonny Doon Contra at its finest. Lamb is a classic partner to Rhône blends, while beef will be terrific in playing to the sweet fruit. Pork and game will also be delicious. For accent ingredients, black pepper, mild spices and green herbs work well, as do earthy ingredients like mushrooms.

Serve a little cooler than room temperature: refrigerate the bottle for 10 minutes before serving.

“Let’s try the real Bonny Doon again... for the very first time. If you know what I mean, great. If not, then just pop the cork and enjoy!”

- TM MW, Wine Buyer, Master of Wine



INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup quinoa
- 1½ cups water
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 10 oz. large plum tomatoes, halved, seeded and finely diced
- 1 Persian cucumber, finely diced
- 3 Tbs. diced feta cheese
- 2 Tbs. plus ½ cup finely chopped red onion
- ½ cup chopped fresh mint
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 1¼ lb. ground lamb
- 1½ tsp. sweet paprika
- 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for brushing

Lamb Burgers with Mint Greek Salad Topping

Here, juicy burgers are topped with a serving of Greek salad. Mint-scented quinoa stands in for a bun to absorb the delicious flavors. Try using sheep’s-milk feta cheese, which lends a fresh taste to the dish.

DIRECTIONS

Rinse and drain the quinoa 4 times, then place in a saucepan. Add the 1½ cups water and a pinch of salt and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer until all the water is absorbed, about 15 minutes. Turn off the heat and let stand for at least 5 minutes.

In a small bowl, stir together the tomatoes, cucumber, feta, the 2 Tbs. onion and 2 Tbs. of the mint. Season with salt and pepper.

In a bowl, combine the ground lamb, paprika, the ½ cup onion, ¼ cup of the mint, 1 tsp. salt and a few grinds of pepper and mix gently to blend. Form the lamb mixture into 4 patties, each ½ inch thick. Using your thumb, make an indentation in the center of each patty. Season with salt and pepper.

Heat a large fry pan over medium-high heat and brush with olive oil. Add the patties to the pan and cook, turning once, about 3 minutes per side for medium-rare, or until done to your liking.

Fluff the quinoa with a fork. Stir in the 1 Tbs. olive oil and the remaining 2 Tbs. mint. Season with salt and pepper. Divide the quinoa among 4 warmed plates and top each with a lamb patty. Spoon the tomato mixture generously over the patties and quinoa and serve immediately.

Serves 4

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Weeknight Gluten Free*, by Kristine Kidd (Weldon Owen, 2013).

MORE RECIPE IDEAS

- Grill-Smoked Pork Shoulder with Spice Rub
- Grilled Lamb Kabobs with Mint-Yogurt Sauce

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Poderi del Paradiso Chianti Colli Senesi

VARIETY	YEAR	COUNTRY	REGION	TYPE	FEATURE
Sangiovese	2011	Italy	Tuscany	Smooth, Fruity Red	Famed Appellation

STORY

The town in Tuscany where this wine is made, San Gimignano, is Tuscany's only famous place for white wine. However, this picturesque hilltop village also produces fantastic classic Chianti red wine, as displayed here. San Gimignano is in the subregion of Chianti Colli Senesi, which literally means “Chianti of the hills around Siena.” This zone also contains Montalcino and Montepulciano, the towns that make Tuscany's most ageworthy wines. For this bottling, Poderi del Paradiso (“farm of paradise”) uses the Sangiovese strain of Sangiovese, which is noted for its richness and structure. In the capable hands of renowned winemaker Paolo Caciorgna, though, the grape's power is artfully subdued to produce this charming Chianti.

SENSE

Showing a classic Chianti nose, this buoyant red smells of cherry and licorice, with a hint of rose and walnut.

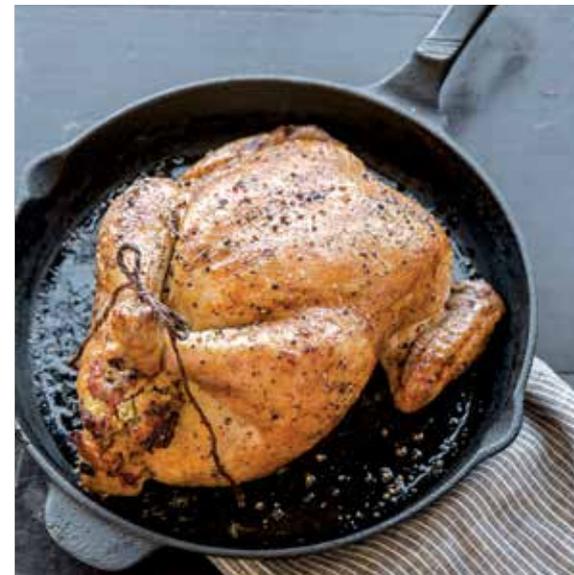
SAVOR

In the mouth, look for cherry and creosote notes atop hints of cranberry and anise. Savory accents of tar and resin add an earthy gravity.

SERVE

This Chianti will be delicious with an appetizer platter of thin-sliced hard salami and aged Parmigiano-Reggiano, but it will also pair well with main courses of chicken, beef, lamb and game. And while they're dense, the Chianti's polished tannins help make the wine fairly flexible when it comes to the various preparations of these meats; it will pair well with everything from quick-cooking lean cuts like lamb riblets to slow-braised stews and well-marbled roasts.

Serve a little cooler than room temperature: refrigerate the bottle for 15 minutes before serving.



INGREDIENTS

½ lb. sweet Italian sausage, casings removed

3 Tbs. olive oil

½ yellow onion, chopped

2 celery stalks, chopped

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

2 garlic cloves, minced

6 fresh sage leaves, chopped

¼ cup dry white wine

5 cups corn bread cubes, each about ½ inch across (about three-quarters of an 8-inch square pan of baked bread)

1 large egg, lightly beaten

1 cup low-sodium chicken broth

1 roasting chicken, 5 to 6 lb.

Roast Chicken with Corn Bread–Sausage Stuffing

In this classic roast chicken, achieve beautifully browned skin by drying both the skin and the inside cavity thoroughly before cooking. Cool the stuffing completely before adding it to the chicken cavity.

DIRECTIONS

Preheat an oven to 425°F.

Warm a nonstick fry pan over medium-high heat. Add the sausage and cook, stirring occasionally and using your spoon to break up any clumps, until the meat is cooked through, about 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a large bowl. Do not wipe the pan clean, and keep it over medium-high heat.

Warm 1 Tbs. of the olive oil in the pan. Add the onion and celery and season with salt and pepper. Sauté until the vegetables are soft, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and sage and cook just until soft, about 1 minute. Stir in the wine, bring to a simmer and cook until the liquid reduces by half, about 2 minutes. Transfer to the bowl with the sausage. Add the corn bread, egg and broth and combine well. Set aside.

Remove the giblets from the chicken and discard (or reserve for another use). Pat the bird dry with paper towels. Brush the outside all over with the remaining 2 Tbs. olive oil and season well inside and out with salt and pepper. Fill the cavity of the chicken with as much of the stuffing as possible. Place the chicken, breast side up, in a roasting pan or cast-iron skillet. Roast in the oven, basting once with the pan juices about halfway through, until the center of the stuffing and the thickest part of a thigh away from the bone both register 165°F on an instant-read thermometer, about 1½ hours. If the chicken or the stuffing starts to get too brown during cooking, cover with aluminum foil.

Remove the chicken from the oven, cover loosely with aluminum foil and let rest for 10 to 15 minutes. Transfer the stuffing from the chicken to a serving dish. Carve the chicken, arrange on a platter and serve immediately.

Serves 4 to 6

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Chicken Night*, by Kate McMillan (Weldon Owen, 2014).

MORE RECIPE IDEAS

- Pork Braciolo with Tagliatelle and Tomato Sauce
- Wood-Fired Pizzas with Salami and Basil

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Alain Jaume Haut de Brun, Côtes du Rhône

VARIETY	YEAR	COUNTRY	REGION	TYPE	FEATURE
Red Blend	2012	France	Côtes du Rhône	Juicy Red	Rising-Star Winemaker

STORY

Winemakers in the southern Rhône since 1826, the Jaume family has witnessed the evolution of the rich, voluptuous wines of Châteauneuf-du-Pape from simple regional delicacy to world-class wine. Châteauneuf-du-Pape, which can only be produced by a very limited area of vines, is not made in huge quantities. Wishing to share their winemaking talents with a wider audience, the Jaumes purchased vineyards in many other areas of the southern Rhône, both for their estate label, *Domaine Grand Veneur*, and for their *négociant* label, *Alain Jaume*, which uses fruit that the family buys from other approved growers. The skill that the Jaume family has developed over generations is apparent in this Côtes du Rhône. Considered by many a humble wine, Côtes du Rhône in the hands of the Jaumes becomes a mini Châteauneuf-du-Pape, showing a representative balance between black fruits, earthy complexity and a broad structure with a long finish.

SENSE

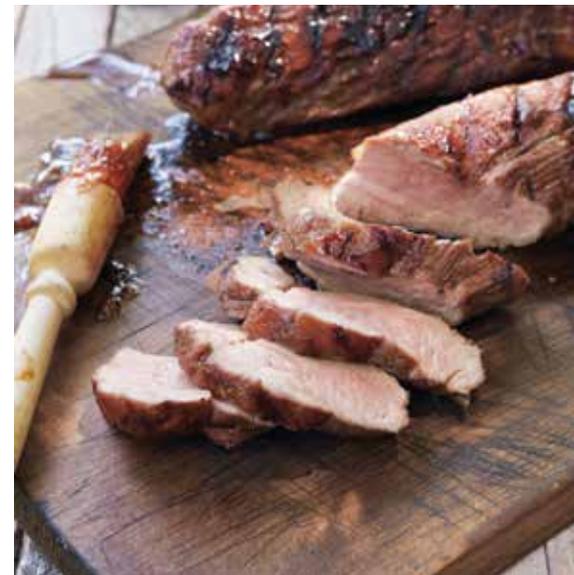
The wine's deep reddish-purple color matches its aromas—a dark, complex mélange of blackberry, black licorice, pepper, violet and bitter chocolate.

SAVOR

For what is essentially a medium-bodied wine, this Rhône blend has a lot of intensity. Concentrated notes of boysenberry and violet expand from the midpalate to other parts of the tongue.

SERVE

Côtes du Rhône wines are celebrated for their versatility, and the Alain Jaume is no exception. With its medium body and elegant integration of flavors, the wine pairs with white meats such as roasted chicken and pork cutlets, as well as with leaner cuts of beef like flank or hanger steak. The berry flavors are an excellent match for slightly charred meats off the grill, while the wine's juiciness works well with hard cheeses. Serve a little cooler than room temperature: refrigerate the bottle for 15 minutes before serving.



INGREDIENTS

For the marinade:

½ cup tamari or reduced-sodium soy sauce

¼ cup firmly packed light brown sugar

2 Tbs. dry sherry

½ tsp. granulated garlic

½ tsp. ground cinnamon

2 pork tenderloins, each 1½ to 2 lb., silver skin removed

1 jar (10 oz.) red currant jelly

2 Tbs. Dijon, English or other spicy mustard

Mustard-Glazed Pork Tenderloin

Pork tenderloin cooks fairly quickly and can feed a lot of people. For delicious success every time, remove the silver skin on the tenderloin before cooking, grill over medium heat and don't overcook the meat.

DIRECTIONS

To make the marinade, in a small bowl, stir together the tamari, sugar, sherry, garlic and cinnamon. Place the pork in a large sealable plastic bag and pour in the marinade. Seal the bag, turn to coat the pork with the marinade and refrigerate for at least 4 hours, or preferably overnight.

At least 30 minutes before you plan to begin grilling, remove the pork from the refrigerator. Discard the marinade and pat the tenderloins dry with paper towels.

To make the glaze, in a saucepan over low heat, combine the jelly and mustard and heat until the jelly melts. Do not stir until just before the jelly has melted. Set aside.

Prepare a medium-hot fire in a grill. Brush and oil the grill grate.

Place the tenderloins on the grill directly over the fire and cook until nicely grill-marked, 3 to 4 minutes. Roll them about one-quarter turn, brush the cooked side with the glaze, and cook for another 3 to 4 minutes. Roll and brush again, then continue in this manner for a total of about 15 minutes for medium. If the glaze begins to burn, move the tenderloins to the edge of the charcoal grill or lower the heat of the gas grill. The pork is ready when it feels fairly firm to the touch, or an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part registers 145°F. The internal temperature of the tenderloins will rise a few degrees as they rest.

Transfer the tenderloins to a cutting board, brush one more time with the glaze, and let rest for about 5 minutes. Slice on the diagonal against the grain and arrange the slices on a platter. Brush with any remaining glaze and serve immediately.

Serves 4 to 6

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Grill Master*, by Fred Thompson (Weldon Owen, 2011).

MORE RECIPE IDEAS

- Roast Leg of Spring Lamb with Mint Sauce
- Roast Chicken with Dried Herb and Spice Rub

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Penley Estate Condor, Coonawarra

VARIETY	YEAR	COUNTRY	REGION	TYPE	FEATURE
Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon	2012	Australia	South Australia	Rich, Earthy Red	Special Occasion

STORY

For Penley Estate founder Kym Tolley, the career of winemaker might seem to be less a matter of choice than of obligation: on his mother's side his ancestor is Penfolds' founder Christopher Rawson Penfold, and on his father's side he is linked to another of Australia's pioneering wine families, the Tolleys. And yet, ask the unassuming Australian what he would do if he were not a winemaker and he says, "I've not been able to think of anything else I'd prefer to do. Wine-making satisfies all my creative urges." Prior to establishing Penley Estate in the Coonawarra region, Tolley gained invaluable experience working for Penfolds under legendary winemaker Max Schubert. In the 20 years since establishing Penley, Tolley has guided the winery to international renown. Condor, one of Penley's entry-level offerings, is a velvety blend of Shiraz and Cabernet that beautifully exudes classic Penley elegance and depth.

SENSE

The nose evokes blackberry and currants aromatized with camphor, cedar and smoke.

SAVOR

The burst of dark fruit flavors with smoky and herbal highlights is followed by ripe, chewy tannins.

SERVE

The tannins and oak in this wine call for a rich counterbalance of well-marbled steaks, chops or roasts. Stews and hearty casseroles of beef, lamb or sausage make excellent cool-weather choices. In good weather there's no better partner than a rib eye from the grill. When selecting seasonings, herbal flavors in a dry rub or marinade will pick up the herbal notes, while a delicious topping of blue cheese or compound butter will soothe the wine's tannins.

Serve a little cooler than room temperature: refrigerate the bottle for 10 minutes before serving.

"The uniqueness of flavor that comes from Cabernet grown on this tiny strip of Coonawarra is part of the reason I got into the wine business. Opening new possibilities of something familiar like that is very cool."
- MR, Wine Buyer



INGREDIENTS

½ cup mixed peppercorns, preferably a blend of black, white, pink and green

4 boneless rib-eye steaks, each 12 to 14 oz. and about 1 inch thick

Kosher salt, to taste

Grilled Peppercorn-Crusted Rib Eye

Using a blend of peppercorns of various colors puts a twist on this classic steak preparation. To get the best coarse texture, seal the peppercorns in a plastic bag and crush them with a rolling pin or heavy pan.

DIRECTIONS

Prepare a medium-hot fire in a grill.

Meanwhile, place the peppercorns in a sturdy plastic bag and seal the bag. Using a rolling pin, meat mallet or heavy pan, crush the peppercorns until they are coarsely crushed. Set aside.

Season the steaks with salt, then generously sprinkle the crushed peppercorns on both sides of each steak, pressing them so they adhere. Grill the steaks, turning once, until well marked and cooked to medium-rare, 4 to 5 minutes per side, or until cooked to your liking. Transfer to a carving board and let rest for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.

Serves 4

Williams-Sonoma Kitchen

MORE RECIPE IDEAS

- Grilled Leg of Lamb with Mint Raita
- Classic Steaks au Poivre

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Guide to Wine

Learn everything you need to know about wine, from grape varietals and growing regions to tasting, serving and pairing with food. *Learn more at williams-sonoma.com/guidetowine.*

Sparkling

The best sparkling wines are fermented twice to produce carbon dioxide and create those celebratory bubbles. Only sparkling wine made in France's Champagne region may be called Champagne, but many regions are now making high-quality sparkling wines that are perfect for holiday toasts and everyday aperitifs.

Champagne

Champagne must be made from specific grapes—Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier—in the traditional method of fermentation. It comes in two styles: vintage, from grapes of a single year, and nonvintage, made by blending wines from several years.

TASTING NOTES: yeast, lemon, toast
REGION: France (Champagne)

Prosecco

Prosecco refers to wine made from the Glera grape in the designated Prosecco region of northeastern Italy. It has a fruity bouquet and light body, with none of the toasty and yeasty aromas common in Champagne.

TASTING NOTES: apple, pear, floral
REGION: Italy (Veneto)

Champagne-Style Sparkling Wine

The same traditional grapes and methods are used in other regions to make high-quality sparkling wines that rival their French cousins.

TASTING NOTES: apple, pear, toast
REGIONS: California, Australia (Tasmania), New Zealand, South Africa

Cava

This Spanish sparkling wine uses a traditional method but is made from different native grapes, including Macabeo, Parellada and Xarel-lo. It has a similar yeasty aroma to Champagne and is usually much lower in price. Cava can also be enjoyed as rosé.

TASTING NOTES: hazelnut, lemon, mineral
REGION: Spain

Rosé

Rosé wines are casual, bursting with red-fruit flavors and perfect for sipping al fresco. Their pink color is created by fermenting juice with dark skins for a short time. The best versions are dry and crisp, popular in the south of France and northern Spain. Most rosés should be enjoyed as soon as they are purchased.

Merlot

Dry rosés made from Merlot are common in France's Bordeaux region and are now being made in California as single-varietal rosés and blends.

TASTING NOTES: pomegranate, cherry, cranberry
REGIONS: France (Bordeaux), California

Mourvèdre

Mourvèdre is the primary grape used in the wines of Bandol in northern Provence, producing a dry, crisp rosé. It may be blended with Grenache, Syrah and other grapes.

TASTING NOTES: dried cherry, raspberry, cranberry
REGION: France (Bandol)

Syrah

Syrah is typical in many of the rosés of France, often blended with other local grapes. It's made as a single-varietal rosé in France's Languedoc region, where it may be dry and crisp or fruity and full-bodied. While Syrah's typical barnyard aromas do not show in a rosé, the wine is still imbued with spice.

TASTING NOTES: strawberry, raspberry, cranberry
REGIONS: France (Rhône & Languedoc), California, Australia

Grenache

Southern France and Spain grow Grenache well, thanks to their warm climates. The ripe grapes make rosés with bright fruit and a full mouthfeel; in Spain, they are known as *rosados*, and the grape is called *Garnacha*.

TASTING NOTES: raspberry, grapefruit, strawberry
REGIONS: France (Tavel), Spain (Rioja & Navarra), California

Pinot Noir

Pinot Noir is made in two styles in the Old World: refined and fruity in Burgundy, and brisk and low-alcohol in the Loire Valley. In the New World, California produces elegant Pinot Noir rosés as well.

TASTING NOTES: quince, floral, strawberry
REGIONS: France (Marsennay & Sancerre), California (Napa, Sonoma & Santa Barbara)

Dessert

Fragrant sweet wines have complex flavors balanced by brisk acidity. Some of the best examples are made from grapes allowed to stay on vines long past the usual harvest time, which concentrates their flavors. Enjoy these wines after dinner with strong cheeses or alongside dessert.

Muscat

The Muscat grape makes pleasantly sweet wines, some of which are fortified. It can also be found as Moscato d'Asti in northern Italy, a refreshing, low-alcohol sparkling wine.

TASTING NOTES: dried apricot, floral, honey
REGIONS: France, Italy (Asti), California, Australia

Vin Santo

Made in central Italy, Vin Santo means "holy wine" and is considered one of the best dessert wines in the world. It's a nutty wine with concentrated fruit, made from Trebbiano and Malvasia grapes.

TASTING NOTES: fig, dried apricot, caramel
REGION: Italy

Sémillon

Sémillon is the basis for Sauternes, a prized and rare dessert wine made by leaving Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc grapes on the vine longer than normal to concentrate their sugars. It's only made in years when noble rot, a beneficial fungus, affects the grapes, lending a musty flavor to the wine.

TASTING NOTES: dried apricot, hazelnut, honey
REGIONS: France (Bordeaux), California, Australia

Port

There are two kinds of port: ruby port and tawny port. The former is blended from a variety of young wines and aged just a few years before bottling, resulting in a wine with juicy, fruity flavor. The best, made from a single vintage, can age in bottle for decades. The latter is aged for many years in barrel, developing a nutty flavor and caramel color from gradual oxidation.

TASTING NOTES: fig, chocolate, prune
REGION: Portugal



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