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THIS MONTH'S RECIPES BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

**TASTING TABLE**

Tasting Table is a website and newsletter for culinary enthusiasts.

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# WINE'S DIRTY LITTLE SECRET

BY LOGAN LEE

**TWO BIG TRENDS ARE** happening in wine right now. First, the 20s and 30s crowds are the largest wine drinking generation ever, and last year, millennials drank 44 percent of all the wine consumed in the US! Second, online wine sales are finally gaining traction. Over the last decade, as everything moved to being sold online in some fashion or another, wine was slow to the party. But that's all starting to change.

Now that you can finally find wine online, you'd probably assume that it's of the same solid quality as the kind you'd find at your trusted, local wine store - and a lot of it is! But part of this market has been taken up by what we call "bulk juice."

The dirty little secret in the wine biz is that some companies import huge bladders of this unfinished wine to the US and sell it off as their own. By unfinished, we mean wine that is either yet to be aged, needs further aging or is drinkable but still in need of bottling and labeling. That juice can then be manipulated in several different ways, such as adding a sprinkle of oak dust here and a dash of extra Chardonnay there and you've got yourself what legally is considered to be a whole new wine blend! Now slap a fun label on that puppy and get it up on the website. Easy, right?

Now you may be asking, "Yeah, easy, what's the big deal? There's nothing wrong with buying things in bulk, that's what makes Costco so damn awesome!" Well the big deal, in our humble opinion, is that wine isn't your average product. Winemaking is an art form, and every bottle tells a story. Bulk buying wine to slightly manipulate it and dress it up in a pretty bottle is masking the story the wine is trying to tell the drink - and it can often be because the juice itself wasn't all that great to begin with. This is doing a disservice to the wine industry and the wine drinker.

Wine is a romance product because it comes from a place, a year and a style. It is made by real people. And how the wine is made is important. Wine is art. As consumers, sometimes we just want a big, delicious glass at the end of a hard

day without knowing varietals, vintages, and any fancy wine words. And that's cool too. But why can't you have it both ways? We at WA would never try to cover up a wine's true identity - but we would collaborate with winemakers to bring you something awesome.

Which brings us to private labeling. Private labeling is when a winemaker crafts a vintage of wine and then sells it, either as a single varietal or as a blend unique to the collaborator. So while the wine is still produced by the winemaker, it's bottled in collaboration with the brand who owns it.

In this month's box, we're very excited to announce, we have introduced our first WA brand in collaboration with the acclaimed family winery, Caricolli Cellars.

Meet [La Pinot](#) (pg. 7). Born in 2013, it's from the Santa Lucia Highlands of California, and it's a Pinot Noir that tastes exactly like where it comes from. Wine geeks call this "terroir." We just think the juice tastes damn good. The Caricolli brothers are a real deal wine family and the WA Crew is crazy thrilled to have worked with them to create this label. You can find it in our subscription, on our wine list and in wine shops in NYC (more cities soon). I'd love to personally know what you think about our first partnership brand. Have thoughts? Email me at [logan@wineawesomeness.com](mailto:logan@wineawesomeness.com). For real.

Logan Lee

Wine Awesomeness Co-Founder and CEO

# HOW TO OPEN A RESTAURANT

BY SOPHIA LIZARDI

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY  
OF THOMAS KELLER  
RESTAURANT GROUP



AS ANY SUCCESSFUL restaurateur will tell you, opening a restaurant is one of the craziest things you can do. And the more prestigious the restaurant, the more complicated things become. So one can only imagine what being on staff, at what has come to be one of the most famous restaurants in the world, was like on opening night.

When asked directly, André Mack says simply, “It was insane.”

In 2004 André was hired as the beverage director at Chef Thomas Keller’s Per Se, perched on the southwest corner of Manhattan’s Central Park. This meant that he was not only holding rank as head sommelier but also running the bar, putting organizational systems in place to navigate the wine cellar, grooming a team of sommeliers and working with the lead bartender to craft cocktails.

The staff undertook an 8-week training program where they learned fine dining techniques, how the restaurant was going to operate and understand the legacy of what was about to open. A ballerina was hired to teach the staff how to walk through the dining room, where they passed feathers to practice grace when walking between tables and passing plates.

“Chef wanted us to know it was a dance,” he says. And to put this in perspective, André mentions that on average a restaurant normally trains staff members for only about two weeks.

During training, to really immerse the team in the culture of Per Se, field trips were scheduled to visit local purveyors of ingredients and guest speakers came to educate the staff on the sourcing of food. For one field trip, the beverage team went to Brooklyn Brewery to see how the beer they actually sold in the restaurant was made.

“This was key,” says André, “I think sometimes you have to break outside of your element, go outside of your four walls to visit somebody, your supplier, partners and all those kinds of things to really get that part of it.”

A week before the scheduled opening night, plenty of dress rehearsals were held to practice all the structures that were put in place for a cohesive flow. Through role-playing, and even exchanging roles, it was a time for waiters to experience what it’s like to be a guest and for the chefs to experience what waiters do on the floor.

Despite this week’s of training, opening night ended in a tragedy. A fire broke out in the kitchen which ultimately caused the restaurant to be closed for a further two months. This didn’t stop the team though, and time was spent continuing to train with online quizzes to keep everyone sharp and motivated.

Superb service aside, Per Se’s wine program is run a little differently than other fine dining restaurants. Typically when a tasting menu is offered it is accompanied by a suggested wine pairing with each course. But at Per Se, the ethos of wine is that it should be a very personable experience, with each guest having a unique taste that should be catered to and explored. As a result, there are quite a few half-sized bottles on the wine list, encouraging diners to collaborate with their server’s knowledge of the menu and their own personal preference to decide what to drink.

Despite all of the aforementioned insanity, André is still at it. Despite the crazy hours and unending challenges, he’s opening his first restaurant of his own with his wife in their Brooklyn neighborhood of Lefferts Gardens. It’ll be an all American ham bar, where American charcuterie, cheese and wine will be the stars.

“We wanted to give back and we felt like the skills we had the best were our skills that we learned through hospitality and hosting people,” André says of the upcoming opening. “So we truly think of it as a continuation of our dining room.”

# 2013 LA PINOT, PINOT NOIR

100% Pinot Noir

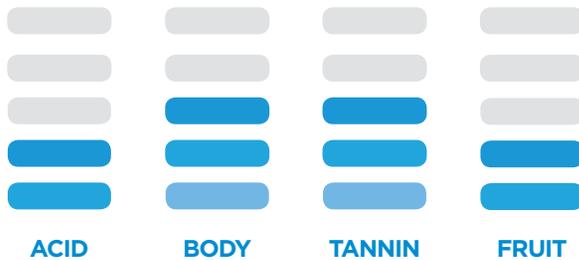


 Santa Lucia Highlands, California

 Harvesting mushrooms in your overgrown garden

 Arroz con Coco (Coconut Rice)

 West Coast - Lana Del Ray



 Baking spices with nuances of vanilla; sun-drenched dark plums intertwined with eucalyptus.

 Hints of blackberry bushes and wet mushrooms that keep the palate alive.

 This wine's dominant spice and earth notes are the perfect partner to hearty chicken and rice.

This is it. The first ever Wine Awesomeness collaboration wine. And we're so excited for you to try it. It's a savory red wine that's approachable, friendly and curious - just like us!

Ruby colored in the glass, with aromas of funky mushrooms laced with overly ripe raspberry notes. This Pinot Noir has a decidedly New World style - at 13% ABV it isn't as light as its Old World cousins. The booming earthiness that comes from the wood lends itself to aromas of sticky caramel candies, vanilla extract and stewed fatty dark red fruits. Being from the Golden State of California, the grapes are grown in a hotter climate, which is what gives it the plush red fruit vibes.



## ARROZ CON COCO (COCONUT RICE)

CHEF ISABEL CÓRDOBA CASTRO

 Serves 4

- 1 coconut, flesh removed and finely grated
- 4 cups water, divided
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 tbsps unsalted butter
- ½ cup raisins
- 1½ cups long-grain rice
- 2 tps kosher salt

**MIX** the coconut in a medium bowl with 1 cup of the water, stirring to combine. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve over another bowl, squeezing the coconut to release all the liquid. Reserve the coconut flesh.

**COMBINE** the strained liquid in a medium saucepan with the sugar and butter over medium-high heat. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally until a dark rich caramel forms, 10 to 12 minutes.

**REPEAT** the soaking and straining process with the coconut flesh and the remaining water 3 more times. Reserve the coconut liquid and discard the flesh.

**ADD** the raisins once a caramel has formed and cook until softened, 2 minutes. Add the remaining coconut liquid and bring to simmer. Once simmering, stir in the rice and salt. Cook, covered, until the liquid is absorbed and the rice is tender, 30 minutes. Fluff with a fork and transfer to a bowl, then serve.

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## 2015 PRODIGO, NERO D' AVOLA

100% Nero d'Avola



Prodigo, Italy



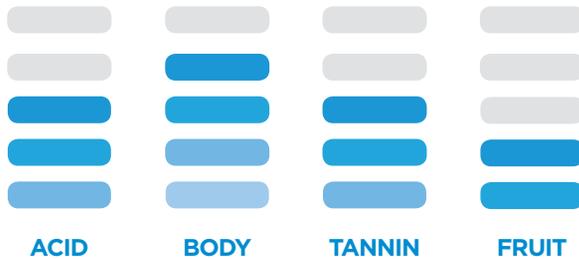
Sifting through a collection of wild flowers pressed inside old books



Detroit-Style Hawaiian Pizza



Diamonds on the Inside - Ben Harper



Fresh-picked, dirt covered raspberries, pressed underripe strawberries, currants and mint leaves.



A faint pop of sweetness with pink peppercorn and red chili flakes, plus frozen blueberries and earthy violets.



Both this bottle and this 'za are bursting with sweet fruit and a dash a spiciness - fight fire with fire.

This is the kind of wine that evokes memories of spring days when you were young and would go flower hunting. It has deep layers of earth and dark, almost black cherries. A lot of this intense flavor comes from the way the grapes are harvested - much later in the season so that they have time to really ripen, which increases the sugar and alcohol content. They then go through a drying process called "appassimento," giving them an even more intense flavor. This wine may taste slightly unfamiliar because Nero d' Avola is not a grape you come across every day. Sicily is known for its plethora of dope indigenous grape varieties, and Nero d' Avola is arguably one of the most acclaimed! This wine drinks like volcano juice, with savory tobacco and molten rock on the back of the palate.



## DETROIT-STYLE HAWAIIAN PIZZA

CHEF LOU TOMCZAK



Serves 2-4

### DOUGH

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup water, heated to 115°
- 1 tsp instant dry yeast
- Pinch sugar
- 2 cups bread flour
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tps kosher salt
- Olive oil, for greasing

### TOMATO SAUCE

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 cup crushed tomatoes
- 1 tsp sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp dried oregano
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### TOPPINGS

- 1 cup (5 oz) pineapple chunks
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup hot sauce
- 7 oz fresh mozzarella, torn into medium chunks
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup tomato sauce
- 4 oz sliced ham, torn into pieces

**MAKE** the dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook attachment, combine the water with the yeast and sugar. Let sit until frothy, 15 minutes. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour and salt until fully incorporated. With the motor running, add the dry ingredients to the yeast and sugar, and mix until a smooth dough forms. Transfer to a greased bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Allow to sit in a warm place for 30 minutes.

**GREASE** a 9-by-13-inch nonstick pan liberally with olive oil and stretch out the dough with your fingers to cover the pan entirely. Cover the pan with plastic wrap and let rest for 3 hours.

**HEAT** the olive oil over medium heat, meanwhile, to begin making the tomato sauce. Add the garlic and sauté until lightly golden, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the crushed tomatoes, sugar and oregano. Reduce the heat to a low simmer and cook for 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Let cool.

**PREHEAT** the oven to 500°. In a small bowl, toss the pineapple chunks with the hot sauce to coat, then marinate in the fridge for 1 hour.

**ASSEMBLE** the pizza by laying down the cheese over the dough, starting from the perimeter and working your way into the center. Spread two strips of marinara sauce lengthwise along the pizza. Top with pieces of torn ham and then chunks of the marinated pineapple.

**BAKE** the pizza until the center is risen and the edges and cheese are golden brown, 15 to 17 minutes. Cut into squares and serve.

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# 2014 EVOLÚCIO, BLAUFRÄNKISCH

100% Blaufränkisch



- Weinland, Austria
- Screening a movie outside on a mid-summer evening
- Pickled Mushroom Toast
- Float On - Modest Mouse



- Aromas of sun-drenched raspberry jam, which finishes with a smooth funk that smells like blackberry bushes lining horse stables.
- Tangy, funky and tart, this wine tastes like the first cool day of fall after a relentless summer.
- The bright acidity and funkiness on the palate will seamlessly meld with pickled vegetables.

Blaufränkisch, also known as Pinot Noirs' funky-ass little sister who wears feathers in her hair, has all the dopest dance moves, and doesn't let the little things get her down. This grape is a native to the cooler climate in Austria which shows through in its glistening acidity. Drinks like freeze dried raspberries were tossed into a glass of ice-cold freshly squeezed lemonade.

Poppy and electric in your mouth, it brightens up every inch of your palate. It makes you feel like you're on an extended vacation, in a beautiful place where it is eternally early fall. With its beautiful acidity and light body, this wine is an ideal pair for pouring a brimming glass and inviting friends over to lounge on the floor of your living room to watch a romantic comedy.



## PICKLED MUSHROOM TOAST

CHEF GABRIEL HEDLUND

Serves 2

### PICKLED MUSHROOMS

- 1½ cups black trumpet mushrooms
- 1½ cups maitake mushrooms
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup white wine vinegar

### MUSHROOM BLANQUETTE

- 4 cups mushroom stock
- 4 tbsps unsalted butter
- 1 egg, plus 1 yolk
- 1 tbsp sour cream

### PICKLED MUSHROOM TOAST

- Two 1½-inch-thick slices hearty sourdough bread, toasted
- Pickled mushrooms
- Mushroom blanquette
- Thinly sliced chives, for garnish

**COMBINE** the mushrooms and allow to sit loosely packed in a tall, airtight container (preferably a quart container). In a small saucepan, combine the sugar, water and vinegar. Bring to a boil, whisk to ensure the sugar is dissolved and remove from the heat. Allow the pickling liquid to completely cool and pour over the mushrooms. Add a small weight on top of the mushrooms to ensure they are completely submerged, cover with a lid and allow to pickle in the refrigerator for 1 week. Drain before serving.

**MAKE** the blanquette, once the mushrooms are pickled. In a medium saucepan, bring the mushroom stock to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook until the liquid has reduced to 1 cup, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer the reduced mushroom stock to a blender. While the motor is running, add the remaining ingredients, replace the lid and blend on high for 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer the blanquette back to the saucepan and warm over low heat, 1 to 2 minutes. Don't turn up the heat too high or the mixture will overcook and the eggs will scramble.

**TRANSFER** the toast to serving plates, add the pickled mushrooms, spoon over the blanquette, sprinkle with thinly sliced chives and serve.

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# CORK CONFIDENTIAL

BY **BIANCA BOSKER**



**THE FOLLOWING IS** an excerpt from Bianca Bosker's new book, *Cork Dork: A Wine-Fueled Adventure Among the Obsessive Sommeliers, Big Bottle Hunters, and Rogue Scientists Who Taught Me to Live for Taste*. Here, Bianca shares how she first fell into the unique and - often - wild and crazy world of the wine industry and those who inhabit it.

Spend enough time in the wine world, and you'll find every connoisseur has a story about the bottle that launched their obsession with wine. Usually, their epiphany arrives via, say, a 1961 Giacomo Conterno Barolo sipped in a little restaurant in Piedmont, Italy. It's something of a formula: Europe + natural splendor + rare wine = moment of enlightenment.

My wine epiphany came slightly differently: at a computer screen. And I wasn't even drinking—I was watching others do it.

At the time, I was a tech reporter who'd spent five years covering the Googles and Snapchats of the world for an online-only news site, and I was doing most things via screens. My version of wine connoisseurship: choosing between wines from a bottle and a box. And to be honest, this didn't bother

me much—until I stumbled upon the World's Best Sommelier Competition. I became obsessed. I lost entire afternoons watching videos of competitors uncorking, decanting, sniffing, and spitting as they competed in what was essentially the Westminster Dog Show, with booze. I later found out that one contestant had taken dancing lessons to perfect his elegant walk across the floor. Another hired a speech coach to help him modulate his voice into a velvety baritone, plus a memory expert to strengthen his recall of vineyard names.

For this elite clan of sommeliers, serving wine is less a job than a way of life. They lick rocks to improve their taste buds and sacrifice marriages in the name of palate practice. They have to analyze, describe, and discern variations of flavor in a liquid that's compound-for-compound the most complicated drink on the planet.

The more I learned about these "cork dorks"—the somms, the big-bottle hunters, even the rogue flavor scientists—the more sterile my tiny corner of experience appeared. Their life was sensory cultivation. Mine was sensory deprivation. I wanted to know what life was like for them at the

extremes of taste, how they'd gotten there, and what drove their fanatical obsession with wine. The only way to find out, I reasoned, was to become one of them.

When you inform your friends and relatives that you have left your stable job as a journalist to stay home and taste wines, you will begin to get concerned phone calls. You say: I'm going to hone my senses and find out what the big deal is about wine. They hear: I'm quitting my job to drink all day and improve my chances of ending up homeless.

I told them there was nothing to worry about. I was going to get a job in the wine industry. I would be able to pay the rent.

But after nearly two months there was still no job, not even the prospect of one. And I was drinking more. Going to wine events, cracking open two or three bottles of Pinot Noir at a time. When my husband went out without me, friends asked him, "Where's Bianca?" and then, in a hushed voice: "Is she drinking?" Every job I'd tried to finagle my way into so far wanted the one thing I didn't have: experience. But when I met Joe Campanale, the superstar co-owner of four Italian restaurants in Manhattan, something funny happened.

A bite.

"Our cellar hand—actually, she just got injured and she won't be able to do the necessary . . ." Joe let his gaze stray to my nonexistent biceps. "Well, it's a little bit of a physical job," he explained. "Can you lift boxes?"

Not really, no, but of course that's not what I told Joe. I wanted to hear more about this cellar hand business. I quickly discovered that was the polite title—around the restaurant, it was called cellar rat.

Never mind that. I was desperate. Desperate to break into the industry, desperate to prove I was not on the fast track to rehab, and certainly desperate enough to ignore all the warning signs. As the name "cellar rat" implies, I was

at the very bottom of the restaurant-world heap. I was the lowest form of life, scurrying around the coldest, darkest corners of the restaurant, best not seen by polite company. I was charged with cellaring, stocking, marking, tracking, lugging, and inventorying bottles. And like an over-sized rodent infiltrating a reputable establishment, I wreaked havoc on order and civility. I lost bottles, dropped bottles, hid bottles, and made entire cases of wine disappear.

But it was a start. In the year to come, I'd be getting hazed in underground blind tasting groups, stalking the floors of Michelin-starred dining rooms, guzzling Burgundy at wine "orgies" for the mega-rich, getting studied by neuroscientists, going behind-the-scenes in mass-market wine factories, and even serving wine under the direction of a pirate captain bottle-prodigy.

Under the tutelage of a group of cork dorks who, the course of a year and a half, became my mentors, tormentors, drill sergeants, bosses, and friends, I came to grasp how wine could be the gateway to an experience that took you somewhere and revealed something, without you ever leaving your seat. Before, I could have tasted a wine and, on a good day, told you I was drinking wine. Now, I understood that a knockout glass could leave you with a story—about an iconoclast in Tuscany who said *Vaffanculo!* to Italy's wine rules and planted French Cabernet Sauvignon vines, or a lazy cellar dweller who botched his task of cleaning the winery's barrels. I became persuaded of an idea I had once been highly skeptical of: that beauty in flavor belongs on the same aesthetic plane as beauty in art or music.

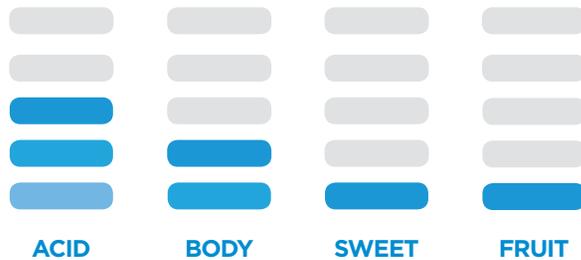
I understood that to taste better is to live better. We've all heard of mindfulness. But over the course of my journey, I came to treasure another mindset: sensefulness. It's by tuning in to our senses that we can fully make sense of the world, and truly live in the moment. And it begins with something we all can do: paying attention.

## 2014 LE CHARMEL, MUSCADET

100% Melon de Bourgogne



- Loire Valley, France
- Taking in the view from the roof of your new apartment
- Farro Verde with Feta and Olives
- No Diggity - Chet Faker



- Lots of white flowers with a subtle addition of rice cakes and underripe cantaloupe.
- Like golden apples and yellow Sour Patch Kids that have been soaking in Sprite.
- Salty Feta and olives will be stoked to have the crisp brightness of this wine balancing things out.

Muscadets are awesome! They're made from the grape Melon de Bourgogne, which originated in Burgundy but has flourished in the gorgeous, star-dusted, Loire Valley of France. Heaps of hay and straw notes that come through with a citrus element that is perfect for any night of the week. Not overpowering in its overall body and palate so this wine stands up well on its own.

On the nose, freeze-dried yellow peaches and lavender sit on a pile of powdered seashells, while on the palate this wine is round in a juicy, chewy way. Lemon and lime come out with the sandy yet dusty minerality. Medium acidity brightens up the back of your palate making your mouth pucker.



### FARRO VERDE WITH FETA AND OLIVES

CHEF ANDREW CARMELLINI

Serves 4-6

- 3 cups water
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1½ cups farro verde
- 2 tbsps olive oil
- ½ cup celery, diced, leaves reserved for garnish
- ½ cup fennel, diced, fennel fronds reserved for garnish
- ¼ cup red onion, diced
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup pitted Castelvetrano olives, quartered
- 2 tbsps parsley, roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp thyme leaves
- Lemon juice, to taste
- 2 tbsps crumbled feta cheese, for garnish

**BRING** the water and salt to a boil over high heat in small saucepan, add the farro verde and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pan partially with a lid and simmer until the farro verde is tender, 15 to 20 minutes.

**HEAT** oil over medium heat in a large sauté pan, while farro is cooking. Add the celery, fennel and red onion, and cook until tender, 7 to 9 minutes.

**ADD** the cooked farro verde to the sauté pan along with the black pepper, olives and herbs. Season the farro verde mixture with salt and lemon juice. Transfer the farro verde to a serving platter and garnish with the feta cheese, celery leaves and fennel fronds, then serve.

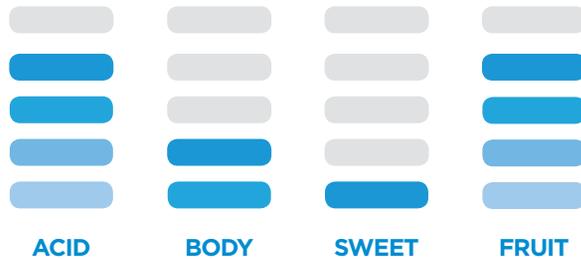
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## 2015 EXEM, BORDEAUX BLANC

60% Sauvignon Blanc, 40% Semillon



- Bordeaux, France
- Planting a plethora of herbs in your neighborhood garden
- Vegan Eggplant BLT
- Call On Me - Starley



- Musty, wet asphalt and flowers mixed with tropical notes of passionfruit and fleshy papaya.
- High, laser-beam-like acid that is bewitchingly plush and makes the back of your cheeks tingle.
- This French white is a natural pairing for fresh vegetables like eggplant, heirloom tomatoes and radishes.

This wine is slightly reminiscent of a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc with its tropical notes and paradise feels, but the added Semillon gives it more texture and loads of herbaceous green, tree-trimming notes. Underripe green pear skin on the palate with layers of ocean breezy vibes that brighten things up. The body on this bottle is racey and light, with a lasting finish that makes your mouth come alive. Its acidity is breathtaking and pairs well with anything that has a nice crisp to it, like roasted potatoes or a flakey white fish. It's the perfect partner to get wrapped up in on sunny days and chilly nights!



## VEGAN EGGPLANT BLT

CHEF JARED SIMONS

Serves 6

- 2 large (12 oz) Japanese eggplants, sliced lengthwise into ¼-inch strips
- 2 tbsps liquid aminos
- 1 tbsp light brown sugar
- 1½ tsps liquid smoke
- 1 tsp maple syrup
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- ½ cup vegan mayonnaise
- 2 tbsps lemon juice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 12 slices sourdough bread, toasted
- 3 heirloom tomatoes, sliced thick
- 4 red radishes, thinly sliced on a mandoline
- ½ Maui onion, thinly sliced on a mandoline
- 1 head frisée lettuce, roughly torn

**PREHEAT** the oven to 225° and line a baking sheet with a wire rack. In a medium bowl, toss the eggplant with the liquid aminos, brown sugar, liquid smoke, maple syrup and cayenne pepper to coat. Let marinate at room temperature for 30 minutes, then drain and arrange on the wire rack, making sure the eggplant strips do not overlap.

**DRY** the tray of eggplant in the oven until crisp, 1 hour and 15 minutes to 1½ hours. Transfer the dried eggplant to a plate to cool.

**MIX** the vegan mayonnaise with the lemon juice in a small bowl, until smooth, then season with salt and pepper.

**LAY** three slices of toasted sourdough on a cutting board and spread each with some of the lemon mayo. Place two slices of the tomato and a few slices of the eggplant bacon, radishes and onion on the sandwich. Pile some frisée over the vegetables and top with another piece of toasted sourdough spread with the lemon mayo. Slice in half and serve.

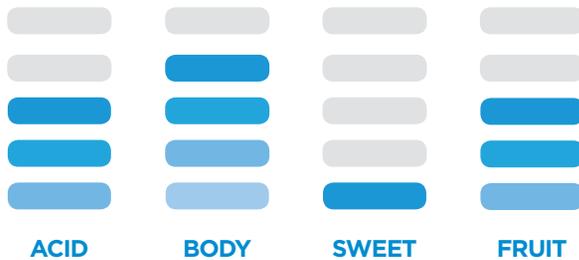
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## 2015 OPP, PINOT GRIS

100% Pinot Gris



-  Willamette Valley, Oregon
-  Use in place of a fuzzy blanket during a particularly harsh snowstorm.
-  Sqirl's Salted Chocolate Cookies
-  On + Off - Maggie Rogers



-  Smells like the morning brine of ocean air with energized apple, supple guava and electric lime.
-  After plump roundness (like whole milk) you get a technicolor acidity with an unending finish.
-  A wine with this amount of body drinks more like milk than anything else - which means you're gonna need some cookies.

From bad-ass winemaker André Mack comes this OPP Pinot Gris - OPP being short for "Other People's Pinot." When a neighboring winery went out of business, André scooped up a few barrels of Pinot Noir that still needed bottling, referring to it as the "other people's pinot" - and so a label was born. OPP has since come to include this Pinot Gris varietal.

Freshly bloomed lilies, chalk dust and white gummy bears. Watered down canned pineapple, white chalky earth notes braided into crisp fresh flowing water. No residual sugar brightened with a bouncy blonde cheerleader-like acidity. Pinot Gris and Pinot Grigio are made from the same grape but Pinot Gris is a more serious, New World white, while Pinot Grigio is a more casual style that will likely be the House White at your local watering hole.



## SQIRL'S SALTED CHOCOLATE COOKIES

CHEF JESSICA KOSLOW

 Makes 18

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tsps baking soda
- Pinch fine sea salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks) room-temperature unsalted butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup light brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup, plus 1 tbsp, granulated sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 9 oz Valrhona chocolate (70 to 85 percent cacao), roughly chopped
- Fleur de sel, for garnish

**COMBINE** the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda and salt in a large bowl. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter, sugars and vanilla until extremely fluffy, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the flour mixture and mix until a smooth dough forms, then fold in the chocolate. Wrap the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

**PREHEAT** the oven to 350° and line 2 sheet pans with parchment paper. Shape the cookie dough into 1¼-ounce (2-tablespoon) balls, then place them 2 inches apart onto the prepared sheet pans. Sprinkle each with a pinch of fleur de sel.

**BAKE**, rotating halfway through, 11 minutes, then remove from the oven. While they're still hot, use a 2¾-inch round cookie cutter to make the cookies perfectly round. Let completely cool, then serve.

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## DIY: HOSTING LIKE A TRUE CHEF

BY PAIGE VILLIARD

**CHEFS KNOW A THING OR TWO** about making good food, but they also know how to make an event of it. Whether it's their own restaurant, a party or cooking for the family, chefs have all the tricks for creating a delicious, fun - and somehow - relaxing experience.

While creating a fabulous meal - not to mention the cocktails and elegant place settings - the chef seems poised (how are they not sweating?! ) and always has everything ready by the time the guests arrive. Ask any chef and I'm sure he or she will tell you it's far from perfect, but they sure make it look great - and you can too. It's all about what happens way before the guests arrive. These organization tips will get you ready for the second your guests arrive.

**Plan a menu.** You might find it frustrating when your sister-in-law sends out a holiday menu a month in advance, but it really is necessary to plan ahead, even if it's more like a week. You might consider produce that are in season, picking one style or theme to follow for the dishes, and you should consider the time it will take to make the dishes you've chosen, and what part of the kitchen you'll be working in. If all of your dishes require an oven - it may be worth reconsidering some choices.

**Prepare. Prepare. Prepare.** Planning a menu also means establishing a gameplan. If you've chosen a dish that you've never made before, it may be worth practicing

first. Decide which things can be cooked ahead of time (saucy dishes develop more flavor over time!) and what can be chopped or prepped in advance. A cooking schedule might seem crazy to you, but keeping track of what dishes have been made and what time things have to go in the oven will help you be ready by the time your guests arrive, which reminds us: you can set the table or arrange any dishware the night before to get it out of the way.

**Variety, but not too much.** As much as it pains us not to have a whole lineup of great wines, you really need to stock up on just one or two wines (a white and a red will do). The same goes for beer and cocktails, keep it to one or two. Your guests don't need a whole bar, and if they don't find something they like, then they are a guest you'll never please and shouldn't bother even trying.

**Keep it simple.** This goes for the whole night. You and your guests should be able to enjoy the party with ease. Remember that one great dish can go a long way. You don't necessarily have to prepare a table-long feast for everyone to be satisfied, but serving buffet or family style is a great idea!

**Sit down and throw a few back.** Being the chef (and host) is supposed to be fun. Organize and prepare as much as you can so that you enjoy the occasion as much as your guests. And then pray that everyone pitches in with clean up...

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