

Château La Tour de Beraud

COSTIÈRES DE NÎMES BLANC

Château La Tour de Béraud is a property stretching over 30 acres, located in the southern part of the Rhône Valley. Being so close to the Rhone river, the property is naturally covered in flat, rounded stones called galets which are common in the valley. These stones allow the vines to easily draw nutrients and moisture from the clay and limestone soil below. They also impart some minerality and freshness.

All four of the grape varietals in this blend really do contribute their own very different characteristics. Grenache blanc is your base, full bodied and dry with stand-out flavors of pear and honeysuckle. Blend that 50/50 with Vermentino, a grape that kind of resembles Sauvignon Blanc which imparts lots of limey citrus flavors and lends great acidity. Now throw in a splash of Roussanne to add some depth of flavor with chamomile, brioche, waxy honey and apricot flavors. Then, just to keep the wine fresh and floral, finish by mixing in some Viognier. Tangerine, mango and fresh flower essences finish off this complex blending. It's aged in stainless steel to maintain those racy traits. This wine is true to southern Rhone form and a pretty classic blend.....minus the Vermentino (an Italian varietal). Our staff agrees that it makes this particular bottle stand out in a crowd.

I chose this wine because of its swiss army knife nature. It's dry, but has lots of fruit flavors. It's full bodied, but still racy and crisp. It's easy drinking, yet complex. Drink with food or without. Always in your pocket with everything you may need.

Grape: 40% Grenache Blanc, 40% Vermentino, 10% Roussanne, 10% Viognier

Pairing:

This wine would be fantastic with chicken, fish, seafood, and even pork chops or tenderloin. But for me, the perfect pairing would be on a picnic with a nice fresh goat cheese, maybe an apricot jam or mostarda, a crisp baguette, some olives and mixed roasted nuts.

MorisFarms Mandriolo

The Moris family has been in the Maremma region of Tuscany for over 200 years and are dedicated to completely organic viticulture. They have emerged as a premiere producer of "Super Tuscan" style wines. Super Tuscan wines are made using Bordeaux grape varietals, such as Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, or Petit Verdot. More often than not, they are a blend of both Bordeaux grapes and Tuscan grapes. A common blending, for example, is Sangiovese and Cabernet Sauvignon.

This wine, being predominantly Sangiovese, will have a lot of the traits you would find in young Chianti. It's a medium to full bodied wine with a lingering finish. Dark fruits like raspberries, plums and currants present with lush meaty tomato and some herbaceousness. I think the Cabernet shows itself in the body and mouthfeel of this wine, as well as imparting some more fruit flavors into the mix.

I chose this wine with pizza night in mind. I'm thinking classic pepperoni, but anything with red sauce will do. Stay away from black olives on the pizza. Nothing to do with the wine pairing, they are just disgusting. But seriously, pizza, pasta and breadsticks need a wine like this.

Side note: If you're really one of the homies, I bet you could score some MorisFarms olive oil from me too.

Grape: 80% sangiovese, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot

Pairing:

As mentioned above a classic pairing would be with a nice pepperoni pizza. However, if you want to take the cooking up a notch....a pairing with the classic Tuscan dish of Osso Bucco would be amazing. Finish it with some soft, creamy polenta and it would be a meal to remember.

Osso Bucco

5 pieces of veal shank (or pork, lamb, beef)

Salt and pepper, to taste

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

1.5 tbl dried rosemary

1.5 tbl dried thyme

1.5 tbl dried majoram

1 bay leaf

1/2 cup canola oil

1 onion, chopped

2 celery stalks, chopped

2 large carrots, chopped

1.5 tablespoon tomato paste

16 ounces of red wine

3 cups vegetable stock

Tie the veal shanks with twine. Pat the veal dry. Season well with salt and pepper. Coat the veal in flour and shake off excess.

Heat half the oil in a dutch oven or other heavy bottomed pan. Cook the veal in batches, until browned all over. Remove from the pot and set aside to rest.

Add remaining oil without cleaning the pot. Cook the onion, scraping up the remaining pieces of meat. Add the celery and carrot and stir until vegetables soften. Add the dried herbs. Increase the heat and add the tomato paste. Cook tomato paste until just starting to darken. Place the veal back in the pot. Add the wine and let it cook for 2 minutes, then add the stock, ensuring the veal is immersed in the liquid. Cover with foil, place in oven and cook until veal is fork tender.

Remove veal and reserve the braising liquid. Once liquid is cool, puree the liquid and save for use as the gravy for the final dish.

Meerlust Rubicon

Without a doubt one of the most iconic estates in South Africa, Meerlust has been growing grapes since 1756. The Rubicon was born in 1980 after a trip to Bordeaux inspired the owner to take his wines in a new direction. The name Rubicon refers to a point of no return, which is what they feel the Rubicon is for South African wine.

Each of the grape varietals used in the Rubicon are grown on different parts of the property, based on what soil characteristics best suit each grape. Iron rich clay for the Merlot, decomposed granite topsoil for the Cabernet, well drained stony soil for the Cab Franc and leafy old growth soil for the Petit Verdot. The Rubicon is definitely a full-bodied Bordeaux-style wine but will show more finesse and restraint due to high Merlot and Cabernet Franc percentage. Luxurious dark flavors, chocolate, cassis, coffee paired with plum and black fruits. Very perfumed.

I chose this wine to show the versatility and wide reach of the Bordeaux grapes. Also, to illustrate that there are other great wine producing regions outside of the core commonly thought of regions. I really like being able to introduce some of you to some new wine regions but with the luxury of using grapes I know are already well liked. Think of it as baby steps into a big bold beautiful wine world.

Grape: 49% Cabernet Sauvignon, 28% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 3% Petit Verdot

Pairing:

This wine would pair well with grilled steaks, casseroles, game meat, and slow braised meats. I think it would pair fabulously with rich short rib ragu. Serve over mashed potatoes, polenta, or with your favorite pasta....maybe even make into the base for a lasagna?

Short Rib Ragu

¼ Cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil
2.5lb boneless beef short ribs (or 4lb bone-in short ribs)
1 cups carrots, diced
1/2 cup celery, diced
1/2 white onion, diced
1 shallots, diced
1/2 tablespoon flour
3 ounces of tomato paste
1.5 cups red wine
1.5 cups beef stock
4 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
1 dried bay leaf
2 sprigs rosemary
2 sprigs thyme
2 sprigs parsley
Salt and Pepper, to taste

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 325°F

Heat oil until it is almost smoking in a heavy bottom pan

Salt and pepper the short ribs and sear the short ribs all on sides. Place seared short ribs to the side.

Saute the onion, shallots, carrots, and celery in the same pot. Add the wine and simmer until the liquid is reduce by half. Add the garlic, beef stock, and a bouquet garni (parsley, rosemary, thyme, and bay leaf). Add the ribs to the pot, cover, and place in the oven for 3 hours and remove once short ribs are fork tender.

Remove short ribs from the sauce and shred the meat. Remove the bouquet garni and throw away. Blend the sauce. Add meat back into the sauce.

Soutiran Millésime Grand Cru 2011

Millesime is the French word for “vintage.” When the harvest year is exceptionally good, a cuvée will be made with only the grapes of that year. 2011 was one such year at Soutiran in Ambonnay. Soutiran is a family run vineyard that prides itself on putting the necessary time and care into each of its champagnes. Valérie and Patrick Renaux-Soutiran are the third generation of the family domaine that produces clear, full, intense and elegant Champagnes of really excellent quality.

This wine spent 6 years on the lees. Lees are the dead yeast cells that remain after they have consumed all of the sugar from the juice, which impart the bready, yeasty, brioche flavors associated with champagne. This bottle is full of overly ripe and mature fruit flavors such as mealy pear, quince, and red apples. A bit of that spicy flavor you get from really dark honey stands out. It also has a good amount of minerality and chalky salinity.

Anyone who knows me knows why I chose this bottle. Drinking good wine is best done with good friends, and drinking Champagne is the epitome for celebrating. Champagne is complex and satisfying, but not to be taken too seriously. It's a party, after all. This wine will be there for you when you need it most, whether you got a promotion, finished a paper, closed on a house or just have the right group of people together. One word of warning for the uninitiated: great champagne will ruin mediocre champagne forever. Drink with caution, my friends.

Grape: 50% Pinot Noir, 50% Chardonnay

Pairing:

We firmly believe champagne is about the best thing out there in the wine world. It isn't just for celebrations; it is great with food. With this one, I'm not sure I'd want to mix it up with some food. It is so delicious; I'd want to just drink it to enjoy its amazingness. But, if you want to make it part of a great meal, I'd serve it with grilled pork, a seafood cocktail or crab cakes, or cheese plate filled with mild and soft cheeses. Bon appetite!