

FOOD & DRINK

CONTACT
JOHNATHAN L. WRIGHT
775-327-6770
JWRIGHT@RGJ.COM

SECTION



Wednesday, December 14, 2011 • RGJ.com/food

EATING NEWS & NOTES

Wine for wildlife

From 2 to 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Dec. 28, Art Source Gallery, 9748 S. Virginia St., is offering a free Sip & Shop wine and biscotti tasting, with 20 percent off all art and holiday decor sales donated to Safe Haven Rescue Zoo. The zoo provides sanctuary, care and relocation for orphaned or injured wildlife.

Details: www.safehavenwildlife.com or 775-828-3525.

SIPS BENEFIT RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

From noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, more than 20 businesses in and around California Avenue and midtown Reno are presenting holiday wine sipping and shopping to benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities Northern Nevada. RMHC offers programs for children and families.

Purchase \$5 tickets at La Garage, 214 California Ave., or Junkee Clothing Exchange, 960 S. Virginia St. Party shuttle runs every 20 minutes.

Details: www.sipshopreno.com or 775-348-9375

LOCAL MUSHROOMS FOR HOLIDAY GIFTS

Sierra Edibles of Wellington has a large crop of hiratake mushrooms that could make a tasty holiday gift for the local food enthusiast on your list. Hiratake is the Japanese name for the family of oyster mushrooms.

Call 775-220-2696 for prices and delivery.

AT VINTAGE, SPARKLING WINE AND TRUFFLE TASTING

From 3 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Vintage Wine Shop, 6135 Lakeside Drive, is pairing sparkling wines with truffles. Cost: \$20.

Details: www.vintagewineshop.com or 775-824-9463.

VODKA FROM LOCAL IMPORTER WINS PLATINUM MEDAL

Gera Vodka, imported by Reno-based Knight International LLC, won a platinum medal last month at the 2011 International Review of Spirits presented by the Beverage Testing Institute of Chicago. Gera scored 96 points out of 100 in the \$25-a-bottle-and-under category.

Lithuanian-made Gera is sold in 1-liter bottles, not the traditional 750-milliliter size. Look for it at Ben's Fine Wine & Spirits, Scolari's, Whispering Vine Wine Co. and other retail and restaurant outlets.

MOÛT & CHANDON DINNER AT ATLANTIS' BISTRO NAPA

Bistro Napa in the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa, 3800 S. Virginia St., is presenting a five-course dinner featuring Champagne from Moët & Chandon and sparkling wine from Domaine Chandon of the Napa Valley. Cost of \$125 includes tax and tip.

Reservations: 775-824-4411.

— Johnathan L. Wright, RGJ

ON THE WEB

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

Follow the RGJ Food & Drink section on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/RGJDining>.



The 12 wines of Christmas



GRAPHIC BY
STEPHEN REICHERG

Holiday pours from around the world

By Laura Longero
longero@rgj.com

The holidays are all about togetherness. Which means many folks will find themselves reaching for the bottle — the wine bottle, that is.

And with a parade of parties and dinners, there's a never-ending choice of wines to pour and sip.

In the spirit of the season, I've suggested 12 wines for your holiday table. Pick and choose depending on what kinds of wines you and your guests

prefer; for wine and food pairing basics, see the sidebar accompanying this story.

Wines are listed in the order I tasted them. From all of us at Food & Drink, happy holidays and happy drinking.

Sparkling LUCIEN ALBRECHT CRÉMANT D'ALSACE BRUT ROSÉ

This wine is appealing because it has all the quality of Champagne without the sometimes-hefty price tag. Rosé sparklers are some of my favorites — their festive pink color makes it nearly impossible to

be in a bad mood, and bubbles lend any occasion a celebratory air.

Price: \$15 to \$20.

Varietal: 100 percent pinot noir.

Tasting notes: Pale pink, with a fine mousse and aromas of strawberries, raspberries, orange peel and freshly baked bread. Effervescent on the palate, with bright acidity and minerality. Pinot noir lends a round mouthfeel.

Pairs well with: Strawberries; salads with winter fruits like pomegranates and persimmons.

See WINES, 3E »

MAKE IT EASY WITH JENNIFER BUSHMAN

For busy holiday mornings, stacks of banana pancakes

Jack Johnson sings the virtues of banana pancakes — "I'll make you banana pancakes/Pretend like it's the weekend now."

I must admit, I'm not a steadfast banana fan, but creating this recipe inspired me to take another look.



ON THE WEB

For the Make It Easy recipe archive, visit RGJ.com, then cursor over the Local Life tab.

banana (from about 1 large or 2 small)
2 tablespoons butter, melted, then cooled

slightly

Preheat pancake grill or griddle pan to pancake setting or medium heat.

In large bowl, stir together flour, baking powder and salt. In smaller bowl, beat together eggs and milk until smooth. Stir egg mixture into flour, beating just until smooth; be careful not to overbeat. Stir in mashed banana, then melted butter.

Let batter stand 5 to 10 minutes. Lightly grease grill with a little oil or butter.

Use 1/4 cup batter for each pancake. Pour 4 to 6 pancakes onto grill. Do not try to turn over until bubbles begin to appear on uncooked surface and then break, leaving little



Stacks of banana pancakes — what to serve the morning of your big holiday meal. RICHARD STOKES/RGJ

holes behind. Turn once, cooking 1 to 2 minutes longer. Stack finished pancakes and cover with napkin to keep

warm. Or, place in single layer on baking sheet, cover with towel and keep in 200 F oven while remaining batter is cooked. Serves 4 to 6.

Wines/Crémant: Champagne quality, without the price

From 1E

2002 ROEDERER ESTATE L'ERMITAGE BRUT

Sparkling wines — and Champagnes from the Champagne region of France — are usually made year after year in a house style, with vintage wines being made only in exceptional years. Roederer Estate is in Anderson Valley, Calif., and is owned by the French producer Champagne Louis Roederer.

The 2003 Roederer L'Ermitage, which our local distributor does not yet carry, was rated one of the top 100 wines in the world by Wine Spectator magazine.

Price: \$35 to \$40.

Varietals: 52 percent chardonnay, 48 percent pinot noir.

Tasting notes: Pale gold, with rich aromas of brioche, almonds, toast and pear tart; round and full on the palate. The aroma is a combination of coming home and what I imagine heaven to be. Delicious and full-bodied for a sparkler; with its long finish and biscuity aromas, a great value.

Pairs well with: Hot buttered popcorn. Or chestnuts — roasting over the open fire, perhaps?

White

2010 EROICA RIESLING

This wine is a collaboration between Germany's Dr. Loosen and Washington State's Chateau Ste. Michelle. The wine, made in Washington State, receives consistently high ratings — the 2010 vintage garnered 92 points from Wine Enthusiast magazine and 91 points from wine critic Robert Parker.

Rieslings also tend to have lower alcohol than other wines — the alcohol content of this bottle is 12.5 percent — which makes them great for the holidays because you can drink a few glasses without getting silly.

Price: \$20.

Varietal: 100 percent riesling.

Tasting notes: Pale straw color, with aromas of mandarin orange, lime, apricot, melon and pebbles from a gurgling stream. On the palate, flinty and mineral, with refreshing acidity.

Pairs well with: Grilled fish tacos or spicy dishes.

2008 JOSEPH DROUJIN CHABLIS PREMIER CRU

Chablis is made from chardonnay grapes in the Chablis region of France. Chablis once was an ancient sea, a provenance that is reflected (via chalky soil) in its wines, which are super mineral and citrusy and traditionally aged in stainless steel tanks, not oak barrels.

Price: \$40.

Varietal: 100 percent chardonnay.

Tasting notes: Pale green-gold, with bright aromas of lime, lemon, orange peel and grapefruit.



Buehler zinfandel from the Napa Valley is elegant and balanced, not jammy and brutish like some zins. Serve it with your holiday roast. RICHARD STOKES/RGJ

Zings the palate with its vibrant acidity — like licking a nearly frozen spoon. Powerful, lingering finish.

Pairs well with: Oysters on the half-shell, classically. Also, because it's Dungeness crab season, try a glass of Chablis and cold cracked crab — all you need for life to be perfect is a few squeezes of lemon.

Rosé 2009 CALERA CENTRAL COAST VIN GRIS OF PINOT NOIR

Vin gris is a white wine made from red grapes. Vin gris translates as “gray wine,” but there's nothing gray here. This wonderful rosé received 91 points from Robert Parker. Rosé during winter, you say? I say yes. Rosé is a great cocktail wine that refreshes and goes amazingly well with hors d'oeuvres. So, while some don't bring rosé out to play until summer, I keep it in my wine fridge year-round.

Price: \$17.

Varietal: 100 percent pinot noir.

Tasting notes: Aromas of red cherry, cranberry, orange peel, strawberry and rose petals. Fairly brawny for a rosé but still crisp, with medium acidity and a fruity palate. Packs

quite a punch with 14.5 percent alcohol.

Pairs well with: Grilled salmon or tuna, but could stand up to a number of dishes.

Specialty SEKTHAUS RAUMLAND GRAPE-CASSIS COOLER

I just discovered this interesting bottle. It's a blend of wine, grape juice and cassis, so it's fairly sweet. Try it for dessert or pour it for folks who don't want a strong drink — its 7 percent alcohol is very low for a vinous beverage.

Price: \$15.

Varietals: 50 percent wine, 40 percent grape juice, 10 percent cassis.

Tasting notes: Traditional wine aromas are harder to detect because of the fruit — the overwhelming aromas are grape and cassis. On the palate, it is sweet and effervescent, but it is more restrained than it could be.

Pairs well with: Chocolate cake or brownies.

Red

2010 MEIOMI PINOT NOIR

The producer, Belle Glos, is known for its highly rated pinot noirs. Winemaker and owner Joseph J. Wagner has crafted for Caymus, too.

Grapes are sourced from Monterey, Santa Barbara and Sonoma counties, Calif., for this wine that's an excellent value.

Price: \$20.

Varietal: 100 percent pinot noir.

Tasting notes: Deep ruby color. Opulent aromas of juicy plum, black cherry, cola and vanilla. On the palate, weighty and smooth, with a round mouthfeel and plush tannins. Tastes like velvet feels. A lingering finish calls to have another sip.

Pairs well with: Cinnamon-crust pork tenderloin.

2009 PENNER-ASH WILLAMETTE VALLEY PINOT NOIR

The view from the winery is one of the best in Oregon's Willamette Valley. Unfortunately, Northern Nevada doesn't have access to most of the winery's outstanding pinots, viognier and syrah, but this bottling is available locally.

It's worth a trip to the winery to try all the pinots created by husband-and-wife duo Lynn Penner-Ash (winemaker) and Ron Penner-Ash (vineyard manager).

Price: \$40.

Varietal: 100 percent

PAIRING WINE AND FOOD

Although much of what people drink is determined by their palates and preferences, you might still consider the menu when choosing wines to serve or drink. Here are some guidelines:

» **Balancing weight:** Wine and food that are of similar weight ensure one doesn't eclipse the other. A juicy steak, for example, is best had with a glass of cabernet sauvignon.

» **Balancing flavor intensity:** A complex wine will shine with rich food, but a delicate wine will be overcome. So, have a buttery Napa chardonnay with that clam chowder rather than a more delicate white Burgundy.

» **Regional matches:** Food and wine from the same place naturally go together. Example: Coq au vin and red Burgundy.

» **Be complementary:** Marry similar flavors to create a mirror image — think barbecued ribs and a fruity zinfandel.

» **Fruitful contrast:** Two different flavors can have a symbiotic relationship when put together. Rich antipasti meats go delightfully with a fruity pinot grigio.

— Laura Longero, RGJ

pinot noir.

Tasting notes: Pale ruby, with elegant aromas of cassis, black cherry, plum and vanilla. Restrained fruit, balanced acidity, medium body. A whisper of woody earthiness — like a gentle forest breeze, not cigar box knock-you-over-the-head earthiness.

Elegant and restrained, but still powerfully complex, with a haunting finish.

Pairs well with: Classic boeuf bourguignon.

2007 TRE DONNE D'ARC

D'Arc is named for Joan of Arc. Tre Donne wines are made by three sisters: Antonella, Rosanna and Daniela Lequio from Piedmont, Italy. As one of three sisters myself, I first tried the wine on a whim and loved it — and its affordable price.

Tre Donne wines have been awarded the Small Vineyards Discovery distinction. The designation goes to small-production wines that are hand-harvested, Earth-friendly and from a family-owned estate.

Price: \$17 to \$20.

Varietals: 40 percent barbera d'Alba, 30 percent pinot noir, 20 percent dolcetto d'Alba, 10 percent freisa.

Tasting notes: Deep garnet, with earthy aromas of mushrooms, forest floor, raisins, black cherries and plums. On the palate, balanced with bright acidity and medium weight, complexity. Black-fruit juicy.

Pairs well with: Spaghetti Bolognese or penne arrabiatta with sweet Italian sausage.

2010 BUEHLER VINEYARDS NAPA VALLEY ZINFANDEL

Many zinfandels can be too jammy and over-extracted, seemingly wanting to punch you in the face when you meet rather than shake your hand. This is not one of those wines. Buehler zinfandel is elegant and structured, not over-the-top.

Price: \$16.

Varietals: Zinfandel and petite sirah.

Tasting notes: Deep ruby, with luscious aromas of vanilla, juicy plum,

baking spices, blueberry and blackberry. Leaner than expected from that full-bodied nose. Powerful but balanced — fruit is the star of the show, acidity the opening act. Long, lingering finish.

Pairs well with: Roasted red meat or barbecue.

2006 CARREFOUR NAPA VALLEY CABERNET FRANC

Carrefour means “meeting place” or “crossroads” in French, and there are many meeting places in Reno to grab a glass or bottle because proprietors Greg and Marilyn Nitz are locals who split their time between Northern Nevada and Napa Valley. The couple makes other outstanding wines, but the cab franc is always my favorite, year after year.

Price: \$34.

Varietals: 96 percent cabernet franc, 4 percent merlot.

Tasting notes: Inky, deep ruby, with aromas of cigar box, black currants, blackberries and smoke. Powerful notes of blueberry, cocoa and oak. Full-bodied and elegant, with a lingering finish. Think Katharine Hepburn.

Pairs well with: Seared hanger steak with chimichurri and sautéed mushrooms.

2008 B.R. COHN OLIVE HILL ESTATE VINEYARD SONOMA VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON

The first bottle of this wine I ever tasted was given to me as a birthday present from a dear friend, so it brings back fond memories of celebration. B.R. Cohn is located in the heart of Sonoma Valley, Calif.

Price: \$45 to \$55.

Varietal: 100 percent cabernet sauvignon.

Tasting notes: Inky purple, with aromas of blueberry, cedar, cassis, lavender, toast and black plum. Robust tannins yield to smoother tannins, and earthy cedar sings on the palate. Fine balance between acidity, tannin and fruit. Powerful but not overpowering — think of a brash co-worker who secretly has a heart of gold.

Pairs well with: Grilled steak — what else?

Classic, all-American, lattice-top apple pie for the season

Alison Ladman

Associated Press

There are plenty of fancy variations of apple pie, but sometimes you just need an all-American classic. And so we created this simple — and simply delicious — recipe.

The method is basic, but the results are anything but. The key is to cook the apples slightly before spooning them into the unbaked crust. This prevents them from deflating during cooking, which inevitably leaves you with a domed (and disappointingly empty) top crust shell.

We also loved the look of the traditional lattice top. It's easier than it appears. But if you're not up for that, simply roll out the top crust and set it whole over the pie. It still will be beautiful and just as delicious.

CLASSIC LATTICE APPLE PIE

For the crust:

2 cups all-purpose flour



The key to successful classic apple pie is to slightly cook the apples before spooning them into the unbaked crust. MATTHEW MEAD/AP

- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 2 tablespoons sugar, divided**
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cold, cut in chunks**
- 1/3 cup water**
- 1 egg, separated**
- 2 tablespoons rolled oats**
- 1 tablespoon milk**

To make the crust, in the bowl of a food processor, pulse

together the flour, salt and 1 tablespoon of the sugar. Add the butter and pulse until the mixture forms chunks the size of peas. Pulse in the water 1 tablespoon at a time, just until the mixture forms a dough. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Reserve the eggs, oats and milk for later.

For the apples:

- 8 baking apples (such as Granny Smith or Golden Delicious), peeled, cored and sliced (about 8 cups)**
- 3/4 cup sugar**
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar**
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon**
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg**
- 1/4 teaspoon salt**
- 2 tablespoons water**
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch**

Meanwhile, make the filling. In a large deep skillet, combine the apples with the sugar, vinegar, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. Cook over medium heat, stirring and turning gently until the apples are just tender, about 5 minutes.

Stir together the water and cornstarch, then add to the

apples. Continue to cook until the juices thicken, about 1 minute. Set aside to cool.

Heat the oven to 350 F. Place a pizza stone in the oven, if available.

Divide the dough into 2 pieces, one slightly larger than the other. On a floured surface, roll the larger piece out to a 12-inch circle.

Fold the dough in half to make it easier to move, then transfer it to a 9-inch pie plate, unfolding it and allowing it to settle into the bottom. The crust should overhang the edge slightly.

In a small bowl, beat the egg white until slightly frothy. Brush it over the surface of the crust. Sprinkle the oats over the bottom of the crust, then spoon the apple filling into the crust.

On a floured surface, roll the smaller piece of dough to a 10-inch square. Using a pizza cutter or a paring knife, cut the dough into 1-inch strips. Weave the strips in a lattice across the top of the apple filling.

Alternatively, roll the dough into a 10-inch circle and simply

transfer to the top of the pie for a full crust.

Fold the overhang of the crust under the bottom crust, gently tucking them into the pie dish, then crimp the edge. If using full top crust, use fork or knife to poke vents in crust in a decorative pattern.

Beat the egg yolk in a small bowl with the milk and brush over the surface of the pie crust. Sprinkle with the remaining 1 tablespoon of sugar.

Bake on the pizza stone or on a baking sheet set on the rack in the lowest position of the oven until the crust is golden brown, about 45 minutes. Cool before cutting. Serves 8.

Nutrition information per serving (values are rounded to the nearest whole number): 480 calories; 210 calories from fat (43 percent of total calories); 24 g fat (15 g saturated); 1 g trans fats; 75 mg cholesterol; 67 g carbohydrate; 5 g protein; 6 g fiber; 310 mg sodium.

Butler Gourmet Meats
Special Holidays Deserve Quality Meats!

Prime Rib **Spiral Honey Glazed Ham**
Fresh Turkeys **Smoked Turkeys**
Holiday Sausage

Call Today to Place Your Order!
1909 N. Carson St., Carson City NV
775-883-0211 **www.butlermeats.com**
Closed Sundays

RJ-0000402320