

Port pairing recipe

The following recipe will be served at Madroña Vineyards, 2560 High Hill Road in Camino, during February. The relish will accompany Madroña's New-World Port.

Madroña Port, sweet onion and tart red cherry spiced relish

By Sandra Simile

- Ingredients**
 3/4 cup Madroña Port
 1 cup rice vinegar
 1/3 cup honey
 1/2 cup sugar
 1 1 inch piece of stick cinnamon
 1- 2 piece of vanilla bean, split lengthwise
 1 14 ounce can of tart red pitted cherries packed in water, drain, reserve the cherry water
 1 1/2 cups finely chopped sweet onion
 Salt and fresh ground pepper

Directions
 Place the first six ingredients, plus the reserved cherry water, in a 1 quart saucepan. Reduce the liquid at a brisk simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 30 (+ or -) minutes until you have a little less than 1 cup of liquid left in the pot. Add the onions and cherries and continue to cook at a brisk simmer for another 30 (+ or -) minutes, stirring occasionally, until there is very little syrupy liquid in the pot, the onions should still have a little crunch. If you are unsure of the consistency, take a quarter teaspoon of the remaining liquid in the pot and place it on a very cold plate it should be syrupy, not runny. The relish will become more set as it cools. Stir in a pinch of salt and a few grindings of pepper. Refrigerate when cool. Remove the cinnamon stick and vanilla before serving. Served chilled.

Chef's notes
 When using canned cherries it is a good idea to lightly pinch each one to make sure that there are no pits left in the cherries. Also, the stove fan will help reduce the smell of the simmering vinegar.

Pairings
 After the main course with cheese: Place a half teaspoon of relish on a small cracker (Late July Organic Saltines are a good choice) and top with a thin slice of either a medium aged Gouda (Beemster or Parrano) or Manchego. Another cheese option is to spread mild, creamy brie on a small cracker and top with a quarter teaspoon of relish. Either way these pair beautifully with Madroña Port.
 As part of the main course: Serve the relish as an accompaniment to roast venison and pair with Madroña Malbec or Petite Syrah. Or, serve as an accompaniment to roast pork with a Madroña Zinfandel.
 On a sandwich: Spread a thin layer of relish on a turkey sandwich and serve with a glass of Madroña Merlot.

PORT

meals; it is the difference between eating and dining.

"I was surprised and very delighted with the response from the restaurants. They had a choice of both our 2002 and 2008 vintages. They are paring a dessert dish with one or the other or, in some cases both."

Port (also known as Vinho do Porto and Porto) is a sweet, fortified dessert wine made from specific native Portuguese grape varieties harvested from the steep mountain cliffs of the Duoro River Valley in northern Portugal.

It received its name from the seaport city of Oporto (also called Porto) at the mouth of the Douro River, where much of the product is brought to market or for export to other countries in Europe.

One of the many stories about the creation of port wines starts in the late 1600s when because of difficulties between England and most of the wine producing areas of Europe — usually France and Spain — they started purchasing wines from Portugal.

However, they did not travel well and often showed up at their destination spoiled. To overcome this problem, the Portuguese winemakers started fortifying the wines with distilled grape spirits which stabilized the wine and solved the problem.

Another version of the story says that in the late 1600s an English wine importer sent two of his sons to the Douro Valley to look for wine. They happened upon a sweet, fortified wine being made at a monastery. They liked it and had it exported through Oporto to England.

Whichever version, if either, is correct, it doesn't really matter, because the result was a wonderful wine.

Fortify it

Port wines are now intentionally fortified early in the fermentation process when they are young and strong, and still have sugars that have not been converted to alcohol. The process kills the yeast, completely stopping fermentation and raising the alcohol content to around 20 percent.

In America and other countries, wines labeled port have been made for years — in California since the Gold Rush — from any number of different grapes, some Portuguese and some not. It actually became quite confusing to the consumer and did not make the port producers in Portugal happy.

In March 2006, the United States signed the "Agreement between the United States and the European Community on Trade in Wine." One of the provisions of this agreement covered the use of the port designation on wine produced outside of the Portugal. The law change disallows the use of the port designation on any new labels. Only those that are grand fathered may continue to use this designation on the labels.

There are more than 100 different grape varieties sanctioned for port production by the Port and Douro Wines Institute, although only five are widely cultivated and used.

There are a number of different kinds of port, but the ones usually found in the marketplace are called "normal ports," tawny, barrel aged for over six years; ruby, barrel aged less than six years, and white port.

The Madroña New-World Port is a ruby style port, made from different Portuguese grape varieties, all of which are grown in the Madroña vineyards.

The 2008 vintage, for example, is made of seven of these varieties: Alvarahao, Touriga Nacional, Tinta Cao, Sousao, Bastardo, Tinta Roriz and Tinta Amarella. It has a alcohol content of just over 18 percent, residual sugar at 9.4 percent and a cellaring potential of 10 plus years.

Just pour it

El Dorado County restaurants featuring Madroña New World Port this February include:

Annabelle's Chocolate Lounge (El Dorado) — Medley of specialty chocolates with both the 2002 and 2008 vintages.

Bricks (Placerville) — Bricklayer's chocolate cake with the 2002 vintage.

Café Luna (Placerville) — Chocolate port pudding cake, chocolate crème brûlée or chocolate truffles with

both vintages.

Heyday Café (Placerville) — Chocolate decadence cake with macerated berries with both vintages.

Independent (Placerville) — Rhubarb berry crisp with both vintages.

Joanie's (Shingle Springs) — Triple layer chocolate decadence cake with the 2002 vintage.

Powell's Steamer Company and Pub (Placerville) — Chocolate raspberry decadence cake or fromage chaffe with both vintages.

Sierra Nevada House (Coloma) — Death by chocolate with both vintages.

Snooty Frog (Cameron Park) — Chocolate mousse with the 2002 vintage.

Each day in February the Madroña Winery tasting room will be pouring one vintage of the New-World Port, components of the 2011 vintage or a vertical tasting of several vintages with cheese and chocolate.

There will also be a special vertical tasting of the 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2008 vintages of New-World Port at Annabelle's Chocolate Lounge in the town of El Dorado on Thursday, Feb. 9, from 5:30 until 6:30 p.m. Winemaker Paul Bush will take you through a tasting of these four vintages, with accompanying chocolates, so that you can discover the fruitness, the complexities, and ageworthiness of Port. Tickets are available at both the winery and Annabelle's.

The 2008 vintage of Madroña's New-World port will be poured at the upcoming "A Chocolate Affair" at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds on Saturday, Feb. 11, from 6 until 9:30 p.m. Tickets for this event, sponsored by Soroptimist International of Cameron Park/El Dorado Hills and Placerville, are available at 530-344-1476.

Madroña Vineyards is located at 2560 High Hill Road in Camino. The tasting room is open daily from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m.

For more information about the restaurants, pairings and port facts call 530-644-5948 or visit madronavineyards.com.

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A LOSS program to assist those suffering from health, divorce, family, death, suicide, employment or any losses. Marshall Hospital, Wed, 7:30pm-9pm, 3191 Turner. Call Dr. Pender, Psychologist, Marriage, Family & Child Counselor, (800)486-8156, x15000

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Amicable Universal Think Tank meets Thursdays at 11am. Factual definition of human commonalities, problems, solutions. Bring your suggestions, a smile, and good thoughts. Arnold (530)626-0868

BIPOLAR INSIGHTS Meet at Marshall Medical Health Library, 681 Main St, # 103, Plville, every Tues, 7pm; and meet at Green Valley Church, 3500 Missouri Flat Rd, Rm 304, every Mon, 7pm; \$5 donation, (530)642-0859

BUDDHIST MEDITATION, Thu eves, 7-9pm, No cost, suitable for beginners & advanced. Call for further information, (530)306-7264, metaphoto@mac.com

COUNSELING: 55+ adults who need help with grief, depression, aging issues, feeling lonely or isolated, or stress, call Senior Peer Counseling located at the Placerville Senior Center. CALL: (530) 621-6304

EL DORADO COUNTY REPUBLICAN WOMEN FEDERATED (Since 1952) meet at Denny's, Placerville, 1st Mon of ea. mo except September. Register 10:30am, lunch 11am. For reservations: Denise, (530)676-3788 or Teresa at (530)647-2511

EL DORADO MINERAL & GEM SOCIETY meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month, 7pm to 9pm, at the Mother Lode Lion's Club, 4701 Missouri Flat Rd. Visitors are welcome at this educational meeting. For info, call (530) 676-2472

Embroiderers' Guild of America, Inc., "Hanging By A Thread" Chapter, meets the 2nd Monday of ea. mo. at 6pm in the Planning Comm. Rm of the El Dorado County Gov't Center, Bldg 'C', 2850 Fair Lane Ct., PV (530)621-2639

Fleet Reserve Assoc. Br. 275. Reg. Meeting 4th Wed. ea Month Soc. 6pm, Dinner 7pm Meeting 8pm Breakfast 7-11am 1st Sunday ea Month Veterans Memorial Bldg. 130 Placerville Dr Info: Dave, 644-5385

10 Meetings

Forebay Horseshoe Pitching Club meets every Thursday at 6 pm at Forebay Park on Forebay Rd in Pollock Pines. April-September. Beginner to novice men, women & Juniors. Join anytime or come by to watch. More info at (530)823-8658, Rick

GOLD Country Treasure Seekers, a metal detector hobby club for coins, jewelry, & artifacts, meets the 3rd Monday of ea mo. 7pm, at the Senior Center, 937 Spring St. "Need help finding lost jewelry?" Call Ken Wright, (530)621-3034

HANGTOWN FIBERS GUILD - For all crafters using fiber; Spin, weave, knit, crochet, felt or quilt. Meets 3rd Thursday, 9:30 am Social, 10 am Meeting & program, contact Joan Johnson, (530)642-2878

HANGTOWN Women's Tennis Club, membership open to all women tennis players. Fees minimal, "Round Robin" play every Wed a.m. at El Dorado High School courts, guests welcome! Other social activities, (530)626-5292

INTERNATIONAL WORLD DANCING Classes will exercise your brain & body! New dancers welcome! Tues, 7-10 pm, line & couples; Beginners, 7-8 pm, \$3, at 100F Hall, 467 Main St (side door), Plville. For info, call (530)622-7301 or 644-1198

IS SOMEONE YOU KNOW GAY? PFLAG (Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays) meets the 4th Monday of every month, except holidays, at 6:30pm, Federated Church in Placerville. Call (530) 621-6700 for info.

NAMI-A support group for families of the mentally ill meet the 1st Tues of ea mo, 7:00-8:30pm, Conf. Rm A, 330 Fair Ln, Plville, & the 3rd Thursday of ea mo 7:00-8:30pmat the Marshall Community Health Library, 681 Main St #103, Midtown Mall Plville. Call to sign up, (530)644-5404; (530)677-2676

10 Meetings

MARINE CORPS LEAGUE meets the 1st Friday each month at the Veteran's Hall, Fairgrounds, Plville. Social hr. 5:30; Potluck dinner, 6:30 followed by bus mtg. All former & active Marines & FMF Corpsmen and spouses invited. Call Dick for info (530)622-9855

OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS is a 12-step recovery program for compulsive overeaters. Meetings: Mon at 6pm & Wed at 12:30pm, 2979 Coloma St, Plville; or Sat 10-11am, 4253 Fowler Ln, Diamond Springs, (530)622-5678, Sandra

PLACERVILLE TOASTMASTERS. Develop your public speaking skills! We meet the 1st, 2nd & 3rd Wed, 7-8:30pm, Raleys Event Ctr, 166 Placerville Dr, Plville, (530)748-7731 <http://hangtown.freetoasthost.net>

REPUBLICANS - El Dorado West Republican Women Federated meet on the 2nd Monday each month, 11:15 am, at Denny's, Coach Lane, Cameron Park. No meetings in July & August. We welcome all! Info: (530)676-8380

RETIRED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ASSOC OF CA invites all Cal-Pers retirees to our luncheon mtg on the 3rd Monday ea month at Denny's/Fairlane Ave. New speakers monthly. Let's stand together to protect our pensions! Call (530)622-5827 for info

SEXAHOLICS ANONYMOUS-A recovery program for those who want to stop sexually self-destructive thinking & behavior. Meetings in El Dorado County on Mon & Sat evenings. Contact us: (916)491-1772

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United Democrats Club meets the 4th Thursday of each month at noon at Denny's, Placerville (except Nov and Dec). Call 530-642-8775

10 Meetings

WIDOWED Persons Association of California meets monthly for lunch. This is an opportunity for widowed men & women to take part in planned social activities. Info & reservations, membership call (530)642-1420, or (530)622-8414

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