

Orangewood Wines

Small Wineries, Great Wines

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Introduction

Today is Fathers' Day. Best wishes to all of you who are fathers and those who have a father.

Yesterday was the official start of summer. Arizona is the hot spot of the nation, with fires racing through the parched landscape and Covid-19 infections accelerating. I had thought that I would ramble about something other than the pandemic this month, but I was wrong.

Leslie admits that she is a barbeque maven and gives us a glimpse of what she is grilling and sipping this summer.

Grilling Season

Portfolio Notes - by Leslie Zellmer

This time of year, I almost refuse to turn on my oven and instead use my grill. Yes, it is 112° outside but I pop out there for only a few minutes at a time to check temps and flip foods. It provides a chance to run back inside and cool off in between. Here are some of my tried and true summer grill options and pairings to match, guaranteed to keep you cool. Please, share with me some of your favorite grilled foods and what you like to pair them with!

Swordfish: I prep this the same way every time because I love the flavors of a combo of soy, honey, lemon and garlic, with either butter or oil for this fish. It is slightly sweet with some umami vibes. With this prep, a floral white with some weight would be fun, but Chardonnay works great, too. For reds, stick with medium to lighter bodied wines with lower tannin levels (Nebbiolo, Pinot Noir).

Pairing Suggestions:

Husch Chardonnay - Mendocino, CA: Swordfish has some heft to it, perfect for a Chardonnay. This wine has a great balance of fruit, acid and roundness. It has a fresh feel to it, making it great with a fresh piece of fish. Get the lemon and butter for this one.

Dominique Piron Cotes du Py - Beaujolais, France: This works fabulously well with my go to marinade mentioned above. This wine from the Morgon area of Beaujolais is deep and brooding for a lighter bodied wine. It can maintain its depth with the meaty swordfish and compliments the flavors of the fish.

Salmon: I tend to do something different with the Wild Sockeye Salmon each time I prepare it. It can be an Asian riff, herb driven (either dill or rosemary)

or sometimes a citrus prep. You get the idea. Of course, what you put on it determines what to pair with, so I will be general here. My go to with Salmon is Pinot Noir. It has been my favorite match for a couple of decades, but there are other great options like Gamay, Pinot Grigio, Soave, Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Albariño, Sancerre and sparkling. Oh my! I always try to keep in mind the weight of salmon doesn't usually handle heavy wines, unless there is a heavy sauce to accompany.

Pairing Suggestions:

Cosa Obra Sauvignon Blanc – Sonoma, CA: This wine is bright and fresh with a fleshy mouthfeel and would make a complimentary pairing for the dill versions of salmon.

Lingua Franca Avni Pinot Noir - Eola-Amity Hills, OR: With a beautiful dusty cherry aroma and flavor, this is a win with salmon. The body weights match up beautifully, the savory finish on the wine leaves you wanting another bite of fish and another sip of wine.

Veggie kabobs: If you ask me what my favorite food is, my answer is VEGETABLES! I am nowhere near being vegetarian or vegan, but let me tell you, I am the veggie queen! One of my favorite ways to have them is skewered and grilled (my other fave is roasted). Most people that are not vegetarian/vegan do not think much about what to pair with veggies, but the veggie queen does. Grilled Veggies can be earthy, caramelized and sometimes juicy. Stick with light, and/or, savory reds, rosés and crisp whites.

Pairing Suggestions:

Thomas Sancerre Blanc - Sancerre, France: This acid driven crisp Sauvignon Blanc has some flint on the palate and freshness that make it great with grilled vegetables. Throw some goat cheese on top and you will find yourself ascending to culinary greatness.

Hendry 7&22 Zinfandel - Napa Valley, CA: This savory, peppery and juicy Hendry Zinfandel is a homerun with grilled veggies. Add the flank steak below for a heartier meal.

Flank Steak: This has been my go-to cut of beef lately. Flank is lean; it cooks at high heat for a short time, so the real time goes to the marinating process. My favorite style of marinades for flank are those based with balsamic or a Korean style (think gochujang). Since this is a lean steak, you don't need a really big red as you would for Ribeye, for example.

Pairing Suggestions:

Dorina Lindeman Reserva Tinta - Alentejo, Portugal: I recently made flank and topped it with Chimichurri. The earthy and savory wine was a match made in heaven with the vinegar driven topping upon on the iron rich steak.

Mi Terruño Reserva Malbec - Mendoza, Argentina: This medium bodied wine, with fruit grown in the top tier Lujan de Cuyo area of Mendoza, is a bold but juicy wine that will make your mouth water for another bite of steak.

The Rambler

Arizona is having a lot of wildfires. We have had two close to us in Cave Creek. While these fires are now contained, we still have our horse trailer hitched up, and we have practiced trailer loading. We also have our valuables ready to throw in a car or truck should the "go" come to us. We have about 380,000 acres burning in several fires that are largely uncontained around the state. We had a couple of close ones, but there has been no loss of life so far.

Covid-19 infections are accelerating in Arizona. The infection rate is ten times what it was at the end of April: 268 new per day then, now over 2400 (seven day average). Arizona has 10% of America's new infections, while our population is only 2% of that of the USA.

After complaining that there is little in the way of facts, I did manage to find four over the last month:

1. Spain conducted extensive testing for Covid-19 antibodies. The presence of antibodies indicates that a person has had Covid-19. They tested 30,000 people across much of Spain. They found that 5% already had had the virus. Given the population of Spain is about 47 million, 5% suggests about 2.35 million have had the virus. Reported infections are 245,000 - a tenth of the antibody estimate.
2. The Chinese tested 11 million people in Wuhan following a second flare-up of the virus. They tested for infection rather than antibodies. They found 300 people with the virus.
3. New Zealand declared themselves virus free.
4. Use of an inexpensive steroid, for those hospitalized, reduces the death rate.

What we still don't know:

1. What other side effects remain for those people who recover.
2. Whether antibodies provide any protection from re-infection - this is a prerequisite for a vaccine.

What we recommend in addition to social distancing and handwashing:

1. Use of face masks. A friend gave me one patterned with wine labels. Thank you, Lisa. It's a physical barrier. Can't hurt, and is probably helping slow these pesky viruses down. And Maricopa County, including all of Metro Phoenix, now mandates their use.
2. Take your temperature in the morning, and stay home if it reaches 100.4°.

I expect that we will see a more nuanced approach to dining out. I think people will favour nearby restaurants, rather than traveling to other communities. This trend will be reinforced by all those people who continued to work from home after the lock down was lifted.

In Orangewood we have a structure where each sales person has a number of accounts they work with in their own community. We used to all meet once a week to taste wine, compare notes and crack puns. Now, we are avoiding that weekly face to face, allowing each sales person to belong to their smaller community, and thus reduce the spread of infection across communities.

Meanwhile, Laurie and I have been observing our alcohol consumption. It has definitely gone up - but we make up for it by starting earlier in the day.

Cheers,

Richard and Laurie
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