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Number 2

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# The Grapevine

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR VINESSE WINE CLUB MEMBERS



## MARTIN'S JOURNAL

**W**hen you have adult children who have children of their own, you don't always celebrate holidays on the designated dates.

Or, as my daughter likes to put it, "Christmas is when you're here."

Likewise, "wine country" isn't strictly limited to Bordeaux or Tuscany or Napa Valley. It's wherever you find it. And these days, you're never that far from it. Not all 50 states are growing winegrapes (yet), but all have at least one bonded winery. In states where grapes aren't grown, juice may be shipped in, or wine may be made from other types of fruit. But anywhere wine is made is "wine country" to me.

And whenever I happen upon a winery, even in a far-flung locale, I make time to stop in, or make a note to visit another time. Some of the most enjoyable wines I've ever had came during unplanned stops.

Perhaps that's why we so enthusiastically embrace "under the radar" wineries here at Vinesse.

*Martin Stewart Jr.*

## Try a New Type of Wine & Strike a Delicious Chord

By Robert Johnson

**W**ine has been described as "bottled poetry." I tend to think of it as music to my ears.

Whether poetic or musical, wine is art. True, a lot of technology can go into 21st century winemaking, but the best bottlings continue to be made in limited quantities with hands-on care in the cellar.

Further proof of wine's designation as art comes from the way we perceive it. Or, more specifically, how our perception of it evolves over time.

My early experience with wine involved a juicy, if somewhat chewy, steak at a national family steakhouse chain, accompanied by a glass of "Chablis." Yes, white wine with red meat. But did I care? No. The wine was doing its job: taking a bit of the edge off of the day. Only later would I learn that the "Chablis" was not a fine wine from France, but rather a cheap, non-descript

blend of minor grape varieties from the great Central Valley of California.

I was 22 or 23 at the time. I would continue to drink California "Chablis" and "Burgundy" for another seven or eight years before encountering my "epiphany wine" (another story for another day) and embarking on a combination avocation/vocation — the best kind of career one could ever hope for.

In the ensuing years, I've been able to sample literally thousands of wines — hundreds of "types" from dozens of countries. The more I taste, the more my preferences evolve.

And that's where the music connection comes in. Today, I enjoy genres of music that I never would have even listened to when I was dining on

chewy steak and "Chablis." By keeping an open mind, I've expanded my experiences, and nearly all of them have been positive.

This weekend, try a type of wine you've never had before — perhaps a bottle included in this shipment. It just may strike a very beautiful chord.



Read more by Johnson in "Editor's Journal" on [VinesseTODAY.com](http://VinesseTODAY.com).



### OUR MISSION:

To uncover and bring you wine gems from around the world, which you're not likely to discover on your own, and which enhance your wine enjoyment.

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**Lawrence D. Dutra**

Editor:

**Robert Johnson**

Wine Steward:

**Katie Montgomery**

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### *I don't always agree with wine critics, particularly some of the better known ones.*

I guess it bothers me that a small handful of individuals can have so much influence over an entire industry. There's no doubt in my mind, for instance, that when big, buttery, oaky Chardonnays began getting 90-plus ratings from a couple of big-name critics, a lot of vintners changed the way they made Chardonnay to emulate those big ratings-getters.

In a similar manner, the term "pizza wine" has fallen into disrepute because, when it's written or uttered, it's done so with a negative connotation. The critic is basically saying, "This is a wine that you don't want to serve with a fancy gourmet meal; it's only good enough for pizza night."

To me, that's an insult to good pizza and a lot of perfectly good wine — and I suspect the folks at California Pizza Kitchen and other purveyors of gourmet pizza would agree.

If you're dealing with a really good pizza, you're experiencing some very tasty flavors — mozzarella and other cheeses, well-seasoned tomato sauce, spicy pepperoni, meaty mushrooms,

zesty green peppers and so on. And such flavors deserve a complementary wine — not some flavorless jug from the supermarket.

The classic vinous companion to pizza is California Zinfandel. It embodies just the right combination of acid, fruitfulness and spiciness to complement virtually any type of pizza, with the exception of Hawaiian-style.

But Zin isn't the only option. I've had great pizza dinners with Syrah, Primitivo, Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape and

the "G-S-M" (Grenache, Syrah and Mourvedre) blends of Australia.

Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape, because it's often somewhat herbal, is a great match when the primary pizza topping is green pepper.

And what about Hawaiian-style pizza? It's a challenge mainly because of the pineapple, which eliminates all red wines from the equation. What I like to do is order it with just a very small amount of tomato sauce, and then pair it with sparkling wine — Blanc de Blancs, Brut or Rosé. It needn't be a well-aged, vintage Champagne. In fact, I prefer a youthful, fruit-forward sparkler. Give it a try; you may be pleasantly surprised

Don't let those snobby critics prevent you from enjoying two of life's guilty pleasures — pizza and wine — together.





## WINE A TO Z

**Hanepoot.** An ancient grape of South Africa, sometimes known as Muscat of Alexandria. It's typically used to make sweet fortified wines — tasty, but not as esteemed as Port.

**Isinglass.** A gelatinous material that is used in clarifying wine. It's obtained from the air bladders of sturgeons (mainly) and other fish, which could fall into the category of “more information than you need to know.”

**Jug Wine.** An inexpensive wine of so-so quality, typically sold in large bottles. An example: the California “Chablis” described in this issue's cover story.

**Keller.** The German word for cellar.

**Legs.** The rivulets of wine that inch up on the inner surface of a wine glass. Sometimes referred to as “tears.” Some place great importance on a wine's legs, but in reality, they reveal little about the wine.

## APPELLATION SHOWCASE

### COLUMBIA GORGE & COLUMBIA VALLEY

*Located in the Nation's only Congressionally designated National Scenic Area are two of Oregon's 14 American Viticultural Areas.*

Columbia Gorge and Columbia Valley are situated among waterfalls and sheer cliffs, and offer panoramic views of the majestic Columbia River.

Together, these grape-growing regions span the Columbia River into Washington state, and include more than two dozen wineries and 35 vineyards.

The extreme variance in climate (a cooler, marine-influenced climate to the west, and continental high desert

to the east) means this area can successfully grow a wide range of classic varietals, including Chardonnay, Merlot, Syrah and even Tempranillo.

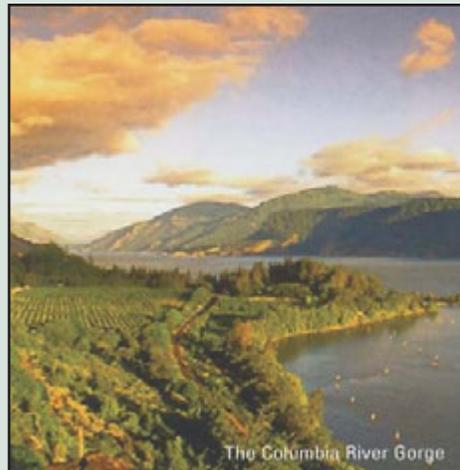
In fact, vintners are experimenting with a wide array of varieties, learning which ones fare best in the various microclimates. It's an exciting time to visit the neighbor regions because, in some cases, customer input is helping owners

decide the varieties on which they should concentrate.

At last count, there were 19 tasting rooms within the regions' 40-mile span, making for a perfect long-weekend getaway. For a longer sojourn, visitors may tack on a windsurfing lesson,

a white-water rafting trip across the Columbia, or a brewery tour.

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## VINESSE STYLE

### A KISS THAT'S MORE THAN A KISS

*You could spend thousands of dollars on a diamond ring intended to tell the recipient, "I love you."*

Or you could spend a few cents on a piece of milk chocolate that conveys the very same message. We speak, of course, of the Hershey's Kiss, which is celebrating its 100th birthday.

Is there any confection more stylish than the Kiss? It's 25.5555 calories of melt-in-your-mouth bliss — but only after carefully removing the protective silver foil, aided by a paper plume printed with, "KISSES KISSES KISSES KISSES."

In recognition of the centennial of the Kiss, here are a few lip-smacking pieces of trivia...

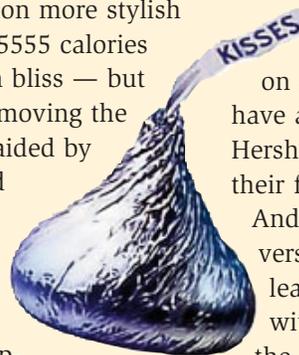
■ Kisses are older than M&M's (1941), Tinkertoys (1913) and sliced bread (1912).

■ For 100 years, only war could stop the Kiss. Production paused from 1942 to 1949 because of foil rationing during the World War II era.

■ Though originally hand-wrapped, the chocolate was machine-wrapped starting in 1921. Today's machines can wrap 1,300 Kisses in a minute. More than 80 million Kisses are produced a day in factories in Pennsylvania, California and Virginia.

■ According to Hershey's, more than half of Americans surveyed said that if stranded on a desert island, they'd rather have an unlimited supply of Hershey's Dark Chocolate Kisses than their favorite book.

And speaking of the dark chocolate version, you may be surprised to learn that it matches beautifully with many red wines. If you see the words "chocolate oak" in the description of a wine, a dark chocolate Hershey's Kiss would make a tasty companion.



## BEING GREEN

Chairman of the Board Donald Cameron says producing glass bottles for the wine industry in an environmentally friendly way was an objective of Cameron Family Glass Packing in the Port of Kalama, Washington, from the very beginning. "Our furnace, which is the largest electric glass furnace in the world, allows us to minimize the impact on the environment because there are no harmful emissions," he explains. "By comparison, similar facilities operate furnaces that are powered by fossil fuel, which produce harmful greenhouse emissions and are subject to the ever-rising price of natural gas." The company also will make recycling a top priority for the facility that's now under construction. The wine bottles will be made at least in part from recycled glass from Washington and Oregon. Recycling programs will be launched in surrounding communities where glass is currently being dumped into landfills, and the company will even recycle all water used during the glass-making process. "Being environmentally conscious is an absolute priority for us," remarked Cameron. "We're on the cutting edge of what America is trying to do now in being environmentally friendly."



## An Orange Disguised as a Grape?

***One aspect of wine appreciation that can be very confusing to newcomers is the notion that a beverage made from grapes will typically smell and taste like fruit other than grapes.***

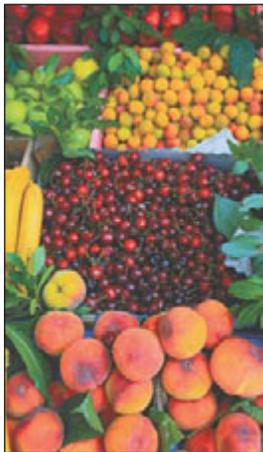
Especially for one raised on Welch's grape juice, the first sip of wine can be a daunting experience. There's no grape flavor, even the small amount of alcohol can seem harsh at first, and there's little, if any, sweetness. That last factor can be particularly off-putting to the Soda Pop Nation.

As a result, wine falls into the category of "acquired taste." It's rare to find a young twentysomething who enjoys wine on a regular basis.

Part of it is social. We don't start attending lavish dinner parties until we're "coupled," and corporate banquets with free-flowing, high-end vino are populated mainly by executives with years on the job.

Part of it is economic. Wine — *good* wine, that is — costs more than beer. And since the beverage selection for frat parties is more about quantity than quality, the keg is king.

But even when one sets the social



and economic aspects aside, wine remains an acquired taste because it's so darn complicated. It sometimes seems as if each answer about wine begs another question.

White or red? Dry or sweet? Light or full-bodied? And that doesn't even begin to address the dozens of varieties one could encounter.

Because of all the variables, the best quality that one interested in wine could possess is an open mind. Forget about Welch's. Forget about grapes. And open your mind to all the aroma and flavor impressions that wine offers.

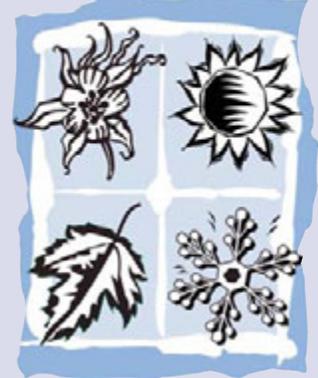
The best example of how one fruit can mimic another is found in Muscat Canelli. The Muscat grape, transformed into wine, can smell exactly like an orange.

Ah, if only the story stopped there. Muscat also can smell and/or taste like lemon or lemon verbena or white peach.

Some grape/wine varieties may share common aromas and flavors, but each has its own unique spectrum. Gewurztraminer combines rose, geranium, passion fruit and litchi notes. Malvasia Bianca has a honeyed fragrance. Move to reds, and various red and black fruit impressions emerge.

Daunting? We'd prefer to think of wine appreciation as challenging, not to mention fun. One never learns all there is to know about wine and that may be the secret of its allure.

### Four Seasons



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# A Wine Oasis in America's Beer Capital

**W**isconsin is much more closely associated with beer than wine.

But 20 miles north of Milwaukee (home of Miller Brewing Company), there's a Wisconsin wine oasis in the historic town of Cedarburg. The Cedar Creek Winery is located in the Cedar Creek Settlement, a restored woolen mill on the banks of Cedar Creek, which now provides a relaxing and unique shopping experience.

In 1864, three rugged pioneers, led by Diedrich Wittenberg, built the stone mill to capitalize on the demand for wool products brought on by the Civil War. The building and dam were built entirely by hand from stones removed from the creek bed and nearby quarries, and huge tamarack timbers cut from the extensive bogs that covered the area.

The rushing waters of Cedar Creek were channeled down a mill race and through an open-flume waterwheel. The 50-horsepower that the creek generated ran 21 looms and knitting machines, which converted the heavy Wisconsin wool into the best quality yarns, blankets and worsted flannels.

The mill had the first electricity in Cedarburg. In 1897, a water-powered generator was installed that provided electric power for the mill and the owners' nearby homes.

In 1971, Jim and Sandra Pape saved the boarded-up mill from the wrecking ball



## TOURING TIPS

and a future as a parking lot. Realizing a dream, the two entrepreneurs combined their interests in historic preservation, winemaking, art and antiques, and renovated the mill into a working winery and a group of owner-operated shops and studios.

The 1864 mill and adjacent buildings on or near the corner of Washington and Bridge have become known as the Cedar Creek Settlement. Today, more than 25 restaurants, antique stores, gift shops, artists' studios and a forge and potter's studio join Cedar Creek

Winery to make up this historical village of shops, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The centerpiece of the Settlement is the winery and its cool limestone cellars, where the various varieties and blends are fermented, aged and bottled. Visitors may sample the wide range of vinous pleasures, and guided tours are available.

Cedar Creek Winery is open year-round, but the two best times to visit are on the third weekend of March for the Winery and Settlement Open House, and the third weekend of September for the Wine and Harvest Festival.

Any visit to Cedar Creek Settlement should begin with an espresso drink at Good Karma Coffee. Sufficiently caffeinated, you're ready to browse the three floors of shops and studios. Grab a light lunch (crepes, salads, soups or sandwiches) at the Cream and Crepe Café before heading to the winery for a tour and tasting.

Time and energy permitting, take in a few nearby attractions, including the Wisconsin Museum of Quilts and Textiles, the Cedarburg



Cultural Center (a community gathering place that hosts theatrical performances, concerts and art exhibits), and what is believed to be the last covered bridge in Wisconsin, built in 1876.

For dinner, if you're visiting on a Friday, head to Morton's for the weekly fish fry. Otherwise, consider Klug's Creekside Inn for cozy candlelit dining (and an expanded German menu on Wednesdays and Sundays), or Galioto's Vintage Grille for prepared-from-scratch dishes and a solid wine list.

Cedarburg may not be what we traditionally think of as "wine country," but there are ample wining and dining opportunities to fill the time between shopping and sightseeing.

## For Further Information

**Cedar Creek Settlement**  
866-626-7004

**Cedar Creek Winery**  
800-827-8020

**Good Karma Coffee**  
414-745-3421

**Cream and Crepe Café**  
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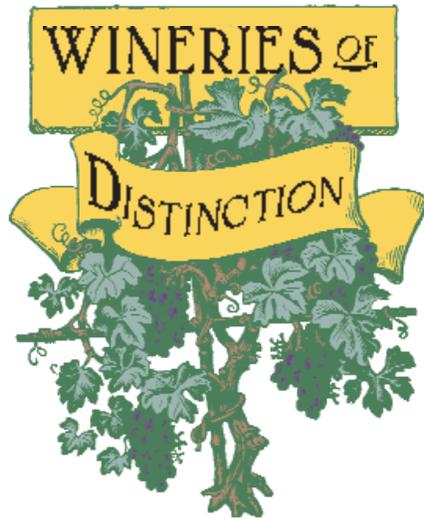
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**Morton's**  
262-377-4779

**Klug's Creekside Inn**  
262-377-0660

**Galioto's Vintage Grille**  
262-377-8085



## At Collier Falls, Vintage Dictates the Winemaking

***F**inding Collier Falls Vineyards takes either some advance planning or just a very lucky break.*

The family-owned winery is located in the far northwest corner of Sonoma County's Dry Creek Valley — definitely off the beaten path. You either have to know where you're going (MapQuest is of little help in this rural area) or accidentally run into it.

But it's worth seeking out, because it's producing some wonderful, distinctive wines from the grapes grown in its hillside vineyards.

Much of the credit goes to winemaker Cecile Lemerle Derbes, who grew up in Reims, France, and spent a lot of her spare time in the family's Champagne region

vineyards. Before she was old enough to drink wine, she already was very experienced at growing Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Petit Meunier grapes.

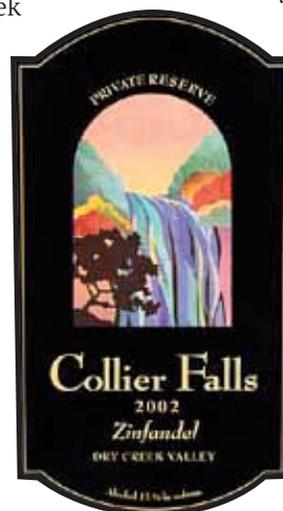
After earning degrees in Viticulture and Enology at the University of Reims, she went to work making Champagne for Bollinger and Jacquart. In 1991, she moved to California and joined the Schug family's winery in the Carneros region. A brief stay at F. Korb (which specializes in sparkling wine) was followed by a stint at Golan Heights Winery in Israel. Then it was back to California for a big step up in her career: Director of Wine Production at Napa Valley's Opus One.

After marrying, moving to Healdsburg and giving birth to twins, Cecile wanted to stay closer to home. That's when she joined Collier Falls, where she could practice her craft and still get home at a reasonable hour. It has been a perfect fit for her and for Collier Falls proprietors Barry and Susan Collier.

During her studies in France and via her vineyard and cellar experience in three countries, Cecile has come to believe that there is no "recipe" for successful winemaking.

"Great wine starts with great grapes," she asserts. "The vintage will dictate the winemaking protocol — respecting and reflecting the quality of the grapes in the wine."

Little wonder the wines of Collier Falls are so sublime. They're the result of exceptional grapes being entrusted to an artisan winemaker.



*(Editor's Note: Two bottlings from Collier Falls — a Cabernet Sauvignon and a Zinfandel — are currently being featured by the Elevant Society.)*

# Quotes Du Jour

■ *One of the great columnists of the 20th century, Art Buchwald, on wine writing:* “When it came to writing about wine, I did what almost everybody does — faked it.”

■ *Chef and author Jasper White, on matching food and wine:* “I haven’t had much luck in pairing red wine with lobster.”

■ *Actress Brigitte Bardot, on the impact of sparkling wine:* “Champagne is the only thing that gives me zest when I am tired.”

■ *Madame de Pompadour, with another viewpoint on sparkling wine:* “Champagne is the only wine that leaves a woman beautiful after drinking it.”

■ *And one final sparkling observation, this from singer Tina Turner:* “Whenever I drink Champagne, I either laugh or cry... I get so emotional! I love Champagne.”

# Q AND A

**Is there any benefit in using a rubber seal with a vacuum pump when storing an open bottle of wine?**

— **Jim Longley**

There are a number of vacuum seal products on the market. The idea behind them is to remove the oxygen from an opened bottle, since exposure to oxygen greatly accelerates wine’s “aging” process. Once a bottle is opened, any remaining wine will lose a bit of its aroma and flavor with each passing day — think of it like a beer going “flat” — and the vacuum seal products are intended to extend a partially-consumed bottle’s life by several days. Do they work? To some degree, yes. But it’s always a better idea to consume a bottle of wine within just a day or two of it being opened. As for the rubber seal, assuming it has been treated with some sort of neutralizing chemical or compound, it should be fine. Untreated rubber both absorbs

aromas and gives off its own, and rubber is not an aroma you’d want in your wine glass.

**A friend of mine performed a “trick” at a recent party where we were tasting French wines. He was able to tell whether a bottle was from Bordeaux or Burgundy without looking at the label. How did he do it?**

Your friend is no David Copperfield. He may be a bit sneaky, but a magician he’s not. Traditionally, Bordeaux bottles are tall and “high-shouldered,” while Burgundy bottles are squatter with sloping shoulders. Your friend simply noted the shape of the bottle and was able to identify its place of origin.

*Have a question about wine? Log on to Vinesse.com and click on the “Ask” box. Some questions will be featured here and on VinesseTODAY.com.*



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### AUSTRALIAN WINE BY THE NUMBERS

7 — Australia's rank among all of the world's wine-producing countries.  
 16 — Australia's rank in wine consumption. 78 — Percentage of Australian wineries that have tasting rooms, known as "cellar doors." 29 — Percentage of Australian wineries that offer dining.  
 11 — Percentage of Australian wineries that offer overnight accommodations.  
 230 — Number of new wineries that opened in Australia in 2007.  
 2,176 — Total number of wineries in Australia. 68 — Number of recognized wine regions in Australia.

### NEW FRENCH LAW: NO BUTTS ABOUT IT

The image of the smoky French café is now just that — merely an image. On New Year's Day, France became the latest country to enact a ban on indoor smoking. Will the new law prove to be the death of Parisian café culture? Only time will tell, but wine lovers are applauding the move. Said one: "Now, we'll actually be able to smell the wine."

### IT'S NOT REALLY ABOUT THE WINE

Wines bottled under the Marilyn Merlot label — depicting images of the late actress, Marilyn Monroe — have traditionally been good,

receiving ratings in the 80-84 range from *Wine Spectator*. But the wine takes a back seat to the labels, and the labels have made the wines collector's items. Its maker still has a few bottles of the inaugural 1985 vintage available — at \$3,800 a pop. A better value is a vertical of vintages 1985-96, which goes for \$8,000. If you consider \$666 per bottle a value, that is.

### THAT \$7,500 BOTTLE OF WINE MAY BE A FAKE

"In vino veritas." Translated, that old Roman proverb proclaims that there is truth in wine. Perhaps, but there now is a national probe into the



authenticity of certain bottlings of rare French wine. Over the last year-and-a-half, a number of collectors have filed lawsuits against dealers and auction houses,

accusing the sellers of distributing fakes — old bottles refilled with much younger and lesser wine — or being less than diligent in verifying their authenticity. Some magnums of rare Bordeaux bring upwards of \$75,000, so there's a lot at stake — so much so that the FBI now has joined the investigation.

### EXACTLY WHAT IS A GOOSEBERRY, ANYWAY?

One of the descriptors you'll read for Sauvignon Blanc — particularly those from Loire, France, or New Zealand — is gooseberry. It's rare to find gooseberries in the United States, but they're common in northern Europe. The berries are green in hue and very... and we do mean *very*... tart.

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# The Grapevine COOKBOOK



## SAUTEED TROUT

This recipe from the Hanover Inn in Hanover, New Hampshire, serves two, and matches beautifully with Chardonnay.

### Ingredients

- 2 Rainbow, Brook or Brown trout, 12- to 16-oz. each
- 2 cups oatmeal
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 cup Chardonnay
- 1 stick butter
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Dash Lea & Perrens Worcestershire Sauce
- 1/2 cup julienne leeks or scallions

### Preparation

1. Clean and eviscerate trout, and dry on clean towel. (Removal of head is optional.)
2. Salt and pepper cavity of fish and skin. Let stand.

3. Place 1/2 cup oatmeal in blender and grind to a fine flour. Add whole oaks back to flour in a bowl and mix. Season lightly with salt and pepper.
4. Coat fish with buttermilk. Remove excess milk and roll in oat flour.
5. Heat a thick-bottom skillet on medium heat. Add 1/2 stick of butter. Brown on both sides to a medium to dark brown. Remove fish to a warm platter.
6. Dump out excess fat. Add fresh butter and brown lightly. Add leeks or scallions and sauté briefly. Deglaze with wine and reduce slightly. Add lemon to taste. Pour over fish or serve on side.

## SALMON WITH PINOT NOIR SAUCE

Try this tasty dish, which serves four, with Pinot Noir.

### Ingredients

- 1 1/2-lbs. salmon filet, cut into 4 pieces

- 1 shallot, chopped
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1/2 bottle Pinot Noir
- 3 Tbs. balsamic vinegar
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 3 Tbs. butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

### Preparation

1. Combine shallot, garlic, tomato, wine and vinegar in a sauce pan. Reduce over medium heat to half the amount.
2. Add chicken stock and reduce sauce by half again. Whisk in butter.
3. Heat a Teflon-coated sauté pan over high heat. Brush salmon with olive oil and season with salt and pepper.
4. Add fish and sear until nicely browned. Finish cooking on reverse side over medium heat.
5. Salt and pepper to taste. Drizzle sauce over salmon.



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