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# The Grapevine

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR VINESSE WINE CLUB MEMBERS

## Enchanting B&B Inns of Oregon's Yamhill Valley

Does Vintage Reveal Anything  
About the Quality of a Wine?

When It Comes to Sparkling Wine  
in Napa Valley, Mumm's the Word

Recipes: Queso Fundido and  
Tillamook Cheese & Macaroni

Assuring the Future of Napa  
Valley's Revered Eisele Vineyard

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**Robert Johnson**

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## EDITOR'S JOURNAL

# What Would Alpana Drink?

By Robert Johnson

*In Chicago, the most prominent of all sommeliers is a young woman named Alpana Singh. She manages the wine lists for the city's leading operator of high-end restaurants, and also hosts a restaurant review program called "Check, Please!" on the local PBS station.*

Singh wrote a less-than-memorable book a few years ago, but her blog is must-reading for anyone who enjoys pairing wine with food. You can tap into her vast knowledge of the subject at: [WhatWouldAlpanaDrink.blogspot.com](http://WhatWouldAlpanaDrink.blogspot.com).

Although quite successful in her career, Singh maintains a down-to-earth attitude and readily admits to enjoying "comfort food" every bit as much as the fancy dishes created by the master chefs at the restaurants for which she works.

The fact of the matter is that many gourmet dishes can pose a wine-pairing challenge since they may have so many different flavors revealing themselves. The trick is to pair the wine with the most dominant flavor, but what if a dish has three or four dominant flavors?

Pairing with comfort food, on the other hand, is a relative snap.

Here are Singh's wine recommendations for a quartet of comfort food faves...

• **Barbecued ribs:** "The fruitfulness of a well-chilled rosé provides the perfect contrast to sweet and tangy barbecue sauce. This is a fun pairing, especially with a sparkling rosé."

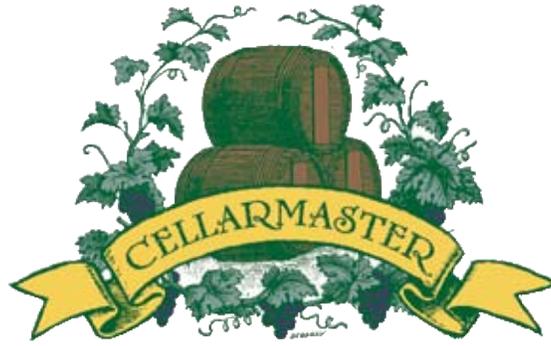
• **Grilled cheese sandwich:** "The acidity and tart cherry flavors of Sangiovese pair with the gooeyness of grilled cheese in very much the same way tomato soup does."

• **Burritos:** "The next time you're faced with a burrito bigger than your head, wash it down with a rich and fruity glass of Malbec. This

pairing works particularly well with chicken or steak burritos."

• **Fried chicken:** "I was introduced to this pairing about 10 years ago, and now I can't enjoy fried chicken without a glass of Champagne. The lemony zip of sparkling wine cuts through the oily richness of the chicken, cleansing your palate for the next bite."





## What You Can Learn from a Wine's Vintage

**A** bottle of wine typically has a year printed on its label. That is the wine's vintage, the year in which the grapes used to make the wine were harvested. It's a useful piece of information for a discerning wine drinker to have — to a certain degree.

Vintage dates were first placed on bottles — the earliest versions were painted on the bottles or written in chalk — for a very simple purpose: to let the wine drinker know how old the wine was.

Those early wines were not laid down for extended periods of time with the belief that they would gain complexity and enhance enjoyment, so the vintage date wasn't provided for that reason. Rather, the date was placed on the bottle as a reminder that the wine should be consumed before it had a chance to go bad.

This was particularly important when it came to white wines because — as is the case to this day — most whites have a shorter shelf life than most red wines.

Beyond the “use by” concept, vintages also can provide information about the wine's potential style and quality.



An excellent example would be the 2003 vintage in France, a country known for producing somewhat austere wines that can take years of cellar and bottle aging before they reveal all of their aromas and flavors.

But 2003 proved to be an exception to the rule. That year was extremely hot in France, and a vast majority of the wines ended up being more fruitful and softer

than usual, which made them much more accessible in their youth than is typical with French wines.

Even so, bottlings could still vary from appellation to appellation and even from chateau to chateau within a single appellation.

Ultimately, while its vintage can provide a clue about a given wine's quality, only the wine itself can provide the “answer.”



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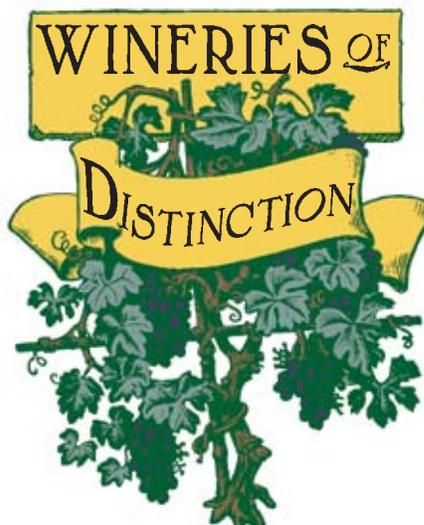
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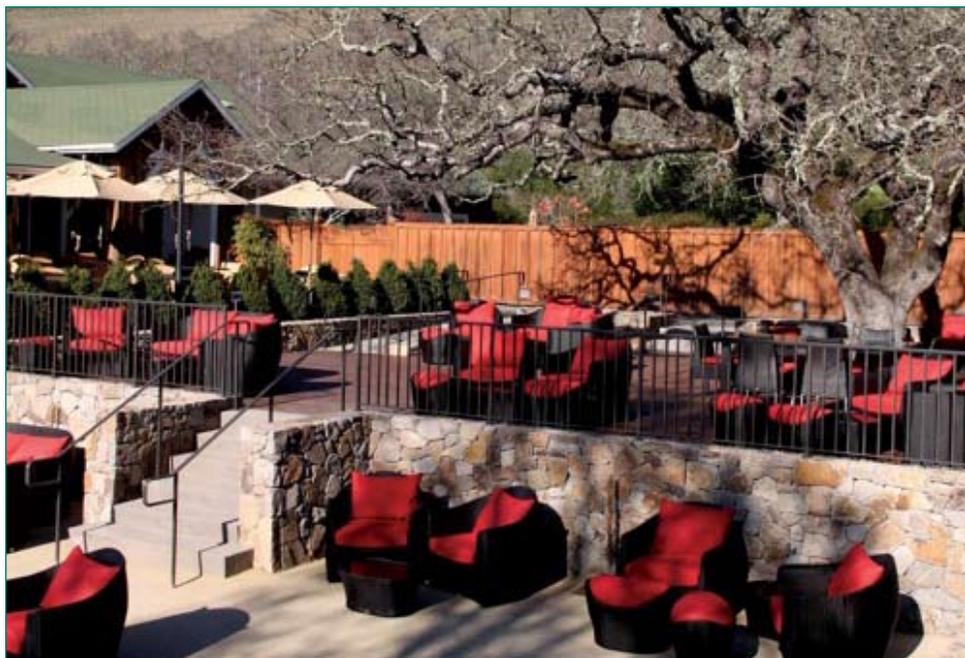
## Seeking Sparkling Wine in Napa? Mumm's the Word

*The year was 1979, and French Champagne house G.H. Mumm was looking for a place in the United States to make sparkling wine.*

Vintner Guy Devaux searched far and wide, ultimately settling upon a sub-region of the Napa Valley known as Carneros. There, the cool climate mirrored that of France's Champagne region — ideal for growing the primary varieties used in making bubbly: Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

The winery itself is located along Napa Valley's historic Silverado Trail, away from the hustle and bustle of the other north-south thoroughfare, Highway 29.

Although Devaux passed away in 1995, the winery honors his contributions by producing a sparkling





wine known as DVX.

The vintage currently in release — 2001 — has a brilliant golden-yellow hue with a gentle stream of tiny bubbles. As is the tradition with DVX, the wine is complex, rich and nicely balanced. Toasted brioche with a hint of oak spice greet you on the nose, followed by green apple, ripe freestone peaches and fresh raspberry on the palate. There's a lovely vanilla creaminess on the mid-palate that leads to a lingering, refreshing finish.

Winemaker Ludovic Dervin, born and trained in France, makes several other sparkling wines of the highest quality, embracing the traditional *méthode champenoise*.

If you were to ask Dervin to name the quintessential Napa Valley sparkling wine, his answer would inevitably be Mumm Napa's Brut Prestige. The winery's signature *cuvée*, this versatile wine is sourced from more than 50 prime Napa Valley vineyards to create an infinitely elegant, gorgeously balanced wine.

It's a wine with a golden peach color, tantalizing hints of melon, spice and toasty vanilla, and a crisp, lingering finish. Brut Prestige has

won more medals at major wine competitions than any other wine in its class.

Other Mumm Napa bottlings include Brut Rosé, Santana Brut, Brut Reserve and Blanc de Blancs, and most are available for tasting at the winery (for a fee; these sparklers are not cheap).

*Wine Enthusiast* magazine calls Mumm Napa one of America's best tasting rooms. "How do you decide where to end the day in Napa Valley?" the magazine poses. "Go to Mumm."

Visitors can enjoy table service outside on the patio, or taste in the glass-enclosed tasting salon — both offering stunning views of the surrounding Rutherford vineyards.

For a special treat, plan a leisurely two-hour seating on the recently opened Oak Terrace, tasting from an exclusive library flight while enjoying the spectacular view.

Guests may also take a guided tour of the winery, stroll through its Fine Art Photography Gallery, or browse for exclusive Napa Valley items in the wine shop. For a special occasion gift, check out the shop's collection of unique Champagne flutes.

When it comes to a truly memorable Napa Valley experience, Mumm's the word.

## Winery 4-1-1

### Mumm Napa

8445 Silverado Trail  
Rutherford, Calif.

### Winemaker:

Ludovic Dervin

### Open to the Public:

Daily, 10 a.m.-4:45 p.m.

### Terrace Reservations:

707-967-7700

### For More Information:

[mummnapa.com](http://mummnapa.com)

## Four Seasons



### WINES THAT MATCH THE SEASON.

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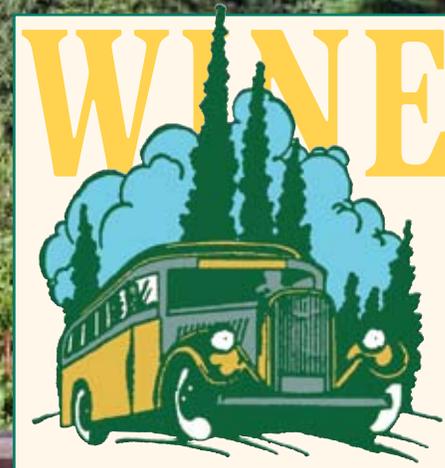
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# Bed & Breakfast Inns of Oregon's Yamhill Valley



## TOURING TIPS

**T**he Yamhill Valley is just minutes from Portland, but years away from the hustle and bustle of that Pacific Northwest city — particularly if you choose to stay in one of the valley's numerous bed-and-breakfast inns.

With dozens of wineries and numerous gourmet restaurants nearby, the valley is a wine lover's paradise.

Here are some of the B&Bs to consider when planning a Yamhill Valley getaway...

- **Angels Nest Inn.** Nestled among giant oaks and well-tended vineyards, this inn offers majestic views of the valley, lake and Belgian horse-inhabited pastures below. Because the views change from dawn to dusk, you may not want to leave.

- **A' Tuscan Estate.** This 1928 Colonial estate has been remodeled with a European flair, including hardwood floors, a fireplace and private baths. A Bocce/Petanque court is provided, presumably to help work

off the wonderful gourmet breakfast.

- **Avellan Inn.** This converted farmhouse is surrounded by 12 acres of woods and a working hazelnut orchard. It's a bird-watcher's paradise, and the multi-course breakfasts feature local seasonal products; special diets also can be accommodated.

- **Baker Street Inn.** This 1914 Craftsman-style inn features rooms with air conditioning and private baths. A lovely two-bedroom cottage also is available, and guests enjoy a multi-course, farm-fresh breakfast.

- **Black Walnut Inn.** Surrounded by vineyards, orchards and forest land, this luxurious inn evokes Tuscan villas of old. Inside, antiques, Old World details and the works

of local artisans provide an elegant atmosphere.

- **Brookside Inn.** This secluded retreat sits on 22 shaded acres with gardens, waterfalls and meadows. The daily breakfast reflects the diversity and quality of the ingredients of the region, making for a memorable culinary experience.

- **Dream Giver's Inn.** Situated on 10 acres overlooking vineyards, this inn is decorated with Pacific Northwest flair, including a large stone fireplace that greets guests upon their arrival. A full breakfast is included, along with packaged snacks and assorted beverages.

- **Dundee Manor.** Luxury abounds on this four-and-a-half-acre property that's surrounded by vineyards. Gourmet meals are prepared and served alfresco or in the European dining room that's filled with antiques from four continents.

- **Hopewell Bed & Breakfast.** This property has two private cottages, each

Dundee Manor



with a private deck, barbecue and spa. Breakfast is served at the guests' leisure either in their room or on the deck. And if Mother Nature cooperates, the sunsets can be glorious.

• **Kelty Estate.** This historic home in the heart of wine country boasts incredible food, beautiful gardens and immaculate accommodations. Wine and cheese is served upon arrival, and limo service and winery tours are available.

• **Lobenhau Bed & Breakfast & Vineyard.** This unique tri-level lodge-style B&B is nestled in a peaceful wooded setting. Each guest room has a private bath, along with access to a deck that overlooks a spring-fed pond.

• **Mattey House.** The 1892 Victorian is a place for romance and relaxation. The adjacent vineyard can be viewed through the original stained glass

windows, and visitors enjoy sipping a glass of wine on the porch in the late afternoon.

• **Steiger Haus.** An architecturally delightful, classic inn with old European country character and a lovely wooded garden setting. It's located within walking distance of McMinnville's downtown shops and restaurants.

• **University House.** If it's privacy that you seek, this beautifully appointed B&B is the answer as it's available to only one party per night, and the owners live next door. Amenities include antiques, large fireplace, secluded hot tub and customized breakfast.

• **Wine Country Farm.** This historic French-style house sits on 13 acres with a fantastic view of the Willamette Valley. Guests can ride horseback or take a buggy through the vineyards. Three rooms have fireplaces, and a wonderful breakfast is served.

• **Yamhill Vineyards.** This winery has a two-room inn, enabling guests to totally immerse themselves in the winemaking experience. As part of the gourmet breakfast, grape juice from the vineyard is served.

## For Further Information

**Angels Nest Inn**  
Newberg, Ore.  
503-538-7876

**Dream Giver's Inn**  
Newberg, Ore.  
503-625-1476

**Mattey House**  
McMinnville, Ore.  
503-434-5058

**A' Tuscan Estate**  
McMinnville, Ore.  
503-434-9016

**Dundee Manor**  
Dundee, Ore.  
503-554-1945

**Steiger Haus**  
McMinnville, Ore.  
503-472-0821

**Avellan Inn**  
Newberg, Ore.  
503-537-9161

**Hopewell B&B**  
Salem, Ore.  
503-868-7848

**University House**  
Newberg, Ore.  
503-538-8438

**Baker Street Inn**  
McMinnville, Ore.  
503-472-5575

**Kelty Estate**  
Lafayette, Ore.  
503-864-3740

**Wine Country Farm**  
Dayton, Ore.  
503-864-3446

**Black Walnut Inn**  
Dundee, Ore.  
503-538-8663

**Lobenhau B&B  
& Vineyard**  
Carlton, Ore.  
503-864-9173

**Yamhill Vineyards**  
Yamhill, Ore.  
503-662-3840

**Brookside Inn**  
Carlton, Ore.  
503-852-4433

# VINESSE

## Hot LIST

**1 Hot Napa Valley Inn.** Napa's Candlelight Inn has been described as "a fairytale with all the modern amenities." Adjacent to Napa Creek and shaded by giant redwoods, the 1929 English tudor-style mansion boasts elegant rooms with flat-screen TVs and DVD/CD players, sumptuous linens, fireplaces and two-person Jacuzzi tubs. Guests begin the day with a three-course gourmet dinner and end it with hors d'oeuvres. And the inn's concierge staff can make restaurant reservations, arrange winery tours, etc.  
[candlelightinn.com](http://candlelightinn.com)

**2 Hot Wine Country Art Gallery.** Located on Main Street in St. Helena, Calif., Art on Main has recently brought in a number of new original works by renowned landscape artists Erin Dertner, Tim Howe, Pamela Anderson and Mel Amaral. The gallery also is home to unique "pop" animal art and sculptures. A gallery stroll is a great way to break up a day of wine tasting.  
[imagesnapavalley.com](http://imagesnapavalley.com)

**3 Hot Tasting Room Non-Wine Gift.** Wine isn't the only product you can buy at winery tasting rooms. For instance, at Hop Kiln Winery in the northern Sonoma County community of Healdsburg, in-the-know foodies snag a bottle of delicious grainy mustard, which is infused with Zinfandel. The mustard is so flavorful that it can transform a humble hot dog into a culinary treat.  
[hopkilnwinery.com](http://hopkilnwinery.com)



**E**laborado por. Phrase found on some wine bottles from Spain, meaning produced by. Another common phrase is *embotellado por*, meaning bottled by.

**F**lowery. Term used to describe a wine with a floral aroma, typically restricted to white varieties.

**G**raft. Process of splicing one grape variety onto another variety, or onto a disease-resistant variety of rootstock.

**H**eurige. A restaurant attached to an Austrian winemaker's home where the food typically is made from scratch and the wine served is the vintner's own.

**I**mbottigliato all'Origine. Italian term denoting a wine bottled by the estate that produced it.

**J**umilla. Winegrowing region in southeast Spain, where 90 percent of the wine is made from the Monastell (a.k.a. Mourvedre) grape.

## VINESSE STYLE

### GOURMET MUSTARD

*For many years, two iconic restaurants along California's Mendocino Coast were the Noyo River Restaurant and the Rendezvous — owned by Lionel and Rose Jacobs.*

More dedicated or passionate restaurateurs would be difficult to find. They took every detail seriously — and that included making their own gourmet salad dressings and mustards.

So popular were these condiments that customers more or less shamed Chef Lionel into making them available to take home. Once the decision was made to venture into that arena, the Noyo brand was founded.

Demand was such that, over time, production became a full-time endeavor. The company relocated to a slightly more dense population area and was renamed the Napa Mustard Co.

Later, daughter Cindy joined the company, and today she is the sole

proprietor. She runs the business with the same vigor and commitment as did her parents, and all of the gourmet mustards are allergen-free, fat-free, trans fat-free, gluten-free and low in carbs. Some also are carb-free and sugar-free.

Among the many “flavors” of mustard now offered are curry, Cognac and pepper, garlic and honey, Merlot and spice, sesame, garlic Dijon, balsamic and herb, tequila jalapeno, Zinfandel-orange, Zinfandel and garlic, tropical mango, crunchy cranberry Dijon, Merlot 'n chocolate, sake wasabi and orange espresso.

To learn more about the company and its gourmet mustard offerings, visit its Web site: [napamustard.com](http://napamustard.com) or [gourmetfoodmall.com](http://gourmetfoodmall.com)



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## APPELLATION SHOWCASE



### *Mosel Valley, Germany*

**F**or most of its existence, the German wine region now known simply as the Mosel went by the more geographically inclusive moniker of Mosel-Saar-Ruwer.

It's an important region because in a country known for Riesling, the Mosel produces the most noble renditions. To reach its full potential, Riesling needs extra days of sun; ripening is very late, usually not until the latter half of October. And in the Mosel, the climate accommodates its lateness.

In 1996, the vineyard area in Germany planted with Riesling exceeded that of Muller-Thurgau, thus making it Germany's premier grape variety in terms of area in addition to nobility. And it has reigned supreme every year since.

The Mosel River is the sinuous spine of the region, changing direction so often as it flows northeast toward the Rhine that it meanders nearly 150 miles to cover about half that distance were it flowing in a straight line.

Together with its two small tributaries, the Saar and the Ruwer — hence the original, more expansive name of the region —

the Mosel composes one geographical entity. Although each river's vineyard area produces a wine with its own distinctive personality, the three share a family resemblance: a fragrance reminiscent of spring blossoms, a pale color, light body and refreshing, fruity acidity.

Most of the wines display their finest charms in their youth, although the late- and selectively-harvested wines merit aging.

Along the serpentine route of the Mosel, the river banks rise so sharply that the vineyards carpeting the slopes are among the steepest in the world, with some planted at an astounding 70-degree gradient. On these precipitous inclines, nearly all labor must be done by hand. That includes tying each vine to its own 8-ft. wooden stake, and carrying up the slate soil that has washed down with the winter rains.

It's a job worthy of hazard pay, and the payoff is some truly magnificent wine.

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**Q** I've been told that it takes about three years for a vine to produce grapes that are good enough to be used for wine. Is this true, and if so, why does it take so long?

**A** It's true. When a grapevine is first planted, its first job is to develop a deep and healthy root system, and a solid stalk. Virtually all of its energy goes toward those pursuits, which means there's little energy left over for producing fruit. Once the roots are established and the stalk is strong, the plant's energy is redirected to the fruit. Vines can produce wine-worthy grapes within three years, but there typically is a considerable jump in quality each annum in years four, five and six.



If you're interested in trying different kinds of wine, there's an easy trick to finding ones you may like: identify specific qualities about the wines you know you enjoy. For instance, if you



like the herbal quality of Sauvignon Blanc, chances are you'll also embrace Austrian Gruner Veltliner, which is defined by its herbal and white pepper notes. Likewise, if you like the spiciness of Gruner Veltliner, you'll very likely enjoy (red) Zinfandel, which also has a spicy quality. There is no single wine that is absolutely unique; there will always be some aroma or flavor in one type of wine that also can be found in another.



**A** memorable toast from the late, great comedian Groucho Marx: "I drink to your charm, your beauty and your brains — which gives you a rough idea of how hard up I am for a drink."

**T**rinchero Napa Valley has opened for business in St. Helena, Calif., providing a showplace for the fine wines of Trinchero Family Estates. The property includes a 22,000-square-foot winery, a state-of-the-art culinary center, a tasting room and a picnic area. The winery focuses on estate-grown, single-vineyard wines.



**T**he Eisele Vineyard is one of the historic jewels of the Napa Valley. To keep it that way, in 1998, the owners converted it to organic. Then in 2001, it was certified biodynamic. Today, the winery makes its own biodynamic preparations, and has completely eliminated the use of sulfur. Why did Bart Araujo decide to take the work-intensive steps to go well beyond sustainable farming? "What does sustainable mean?" he answers. "It means I get to farm as close to organic as possible, but if I get scared, I can nuke anything I want." Instead, he has gone the extra mile to help preserve Eisele for decades to come.

“Wine and our expectations of it are profoundly linked with age and time. Of all the food and drink we consume, only wine can live (and indeed change wonderfully for the better) for decades — even, exceptionally, for a century or more. Yet its life span is never certain: its aging process is unpredictable enough to seem to wear a mantle of mystery.”



— Wine writer Hugh Johnson

75

Humidity percentage that is ideal for a wine storage area. When the humidity is below 50%, the risk of the wine evaporating and oxygen entering the bottle increases. When the humidity reaches 85%, the risk of mold developing on the cork increases.

## FOOD & WINE PAIRINGS

### DRIED LEGUMES

*Just hearing the word “legume” can make one think of O.J. Simpson, a fate that no respectable foodstuff should have to suffer.*

So let’s forget about “The Juice” and talk about the wine — specifically, which wines make good pairing partners with favas, chickpeas, lentils, limas, et al.

Why the interest in legumes? Because they’re already common on restaurant menus and are becoming more so in home cooking. As a group, they’re among the more versatile sources of protein, and most are inexpensive, which means you needn’t scrimp on the main course. That said, they’re so filling that they could function as a main course.

Among the more popular, wine-friendly legumes are:

- **Gigandes.** These white beans are huge and creamy in texture. You’ll most often encounter them in restaurants during the fall, when they’re harvested.
- **Baby white limas.** If Gigandes are Goliath, then baby white limas are David. They’re flat and very small, and depending on the recipe, take only half as much time to cook as Gigandes.
- **Lentils.** Is there a more satisfying meal on a cold



night than lentil soup?

Because dried legumes can be quite hearty and filling, they should be served with a hearty wine. Color-wise, think: red.

But not just any red. Pinot Noir matches beautifully with any number of dishes, but its silkiness and smoothness are not attributes when it comes to pairing with

legumes. The same holds true for those mellow renditions of Merlot.

Instead, opt for a Rhone red from France, or a California wine from a vintner who’s a member of the “Rhone Rangers.” A bottle of Chateauneuf-du-Pape would be wonderful, as would varietal bottlings of Syrah, Grenache or Mourvedre.

To make the pairings even more sublime, season your legume of choice with just a dash of pepper.

And if you happen to be a big pepper fan, add a few more shakes and opt for a bottle of spicy California Zinfandel.

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**WINE COLOR MIX:**

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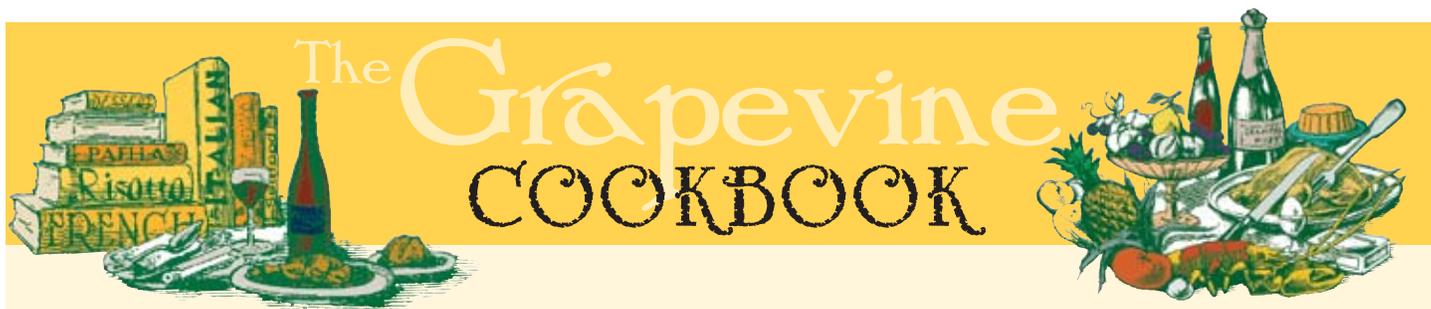
**FREQUENCY:**

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## TILLAMOOK CHEESE AND MACARONI

Yes, we've switched up the name of this classic American dish, for two reasons: 1. in honor of the 100th birthday of Tillamook, a name synonymous with cheese in the Pacific Northwest; and 2. without the cheese, what would this dish taste like? This recipe makes 4-6 main course-sized servings, and an outstanding wine partner would be either Merlot or a white sparkling wine. Add chopped chunks of shellfish, and Sauvignon Blanc becomes the wine of choice.

### Ingredients

- 8 oz. dry elbow macaroni
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 2-1/2 cups Tillamook medium shredded cheddar cheese, divided

### Preparation

1. In a large pot, bring 3 quarts of water to a boil. Add 2-1/2 teaspoons salt and macaroni. Cook according to package directions. Drain cooked pasta in a colander and set aside.
2. Prepare sauce while pasta is cooking. In a medium saucepan, over medium heat, melt butter. Whisk in flour and cook 3 minutes, whisking constantly. Gradually add milk and bring just to a boil, whisking constantly.
3. Reduce heat and simmer, whisking often, until sauce thickens slightly (4-5 minutes). Add salt, pepper and 2 cups of cheese. Stir until cheese is melted.
4. Remove pan from heat and fold in pasta. Pour

into prepared baking dish, then sprinkle top with remaining cheese.

5. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until cheese is bubbly and top begins to brown. Let sit 5 minutes before serving.

## QUESO FUNDIDO

Need a dip for your "March Madness" party? Try this one, and enjoy it with a glass of Sauvignon Blanc. This recipe serves 6.

### Ingredients

- 4 oz. Mexican chorizo, casing discarded
- 3/4 cup white onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup ripe tomato, seeded and finely chopped
- 2 poblano chiles, roasted, peeled, seeded and finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried Mexican oregano
- 1/2 cup Sauvignon Blanc
- 9 oz. grated Mexican melting cheese, such as Asadero, Chihuahua or Manchego
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped
- Tortilla chips

### Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees.
2. Combine chorizo and onion in a non-stick sauté pan or skillet and cook over medium heat, stirring and breaking up the chorizo into small pieces, until nicely browned (about 7 minutes).
3. Stir in tomato, chiles and oregano, and cook for 2 minutes.
4. Transfer mixture to an 8-inch shallow casserole or baking dish, and stir in the grated cheese.
5. Transfer to oven and bake until the cheese just melts (about 3 minutes).
6. Sprinkle with cilantro and serve immediately with chips.

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