



WINE CLUB

Chicken Cacciatore

Serves four

Wine Pairing: 2008 Carlotta Cellars AD Red, California

This version of the quintessential comfort food strives for a balance of fresh, bright flavors. The rustic traditional Italian dish is an excellent showcase for the vibrant, fruity character of this Sangiovese dominated wine. The high fruit note and lively acidity in the wine also help to cut through the tomato-based sauce with great success.

1 (3-1/2-lb.) chicken, cut into eighths, or 3 lb. chicken legs and thighs

2-1/2- to 3-1/2 tsp. kosher salt (divided)

1-1/8 tsp. freshly ground black pepper (divided)

1/3 cup all-purpose flour

1/4 cup plus 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil (divided)

1/2 lb. button or cremini mushrooms, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices (2 cups)

1 large yellow onion, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices (about 1-1/2 cups)

1 large carrot, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices (about 3/4 cups)

1 large green bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices (about 1-1/2 cups)

1 large clove garlic, finely chopped (about 1 Tbs.)

1-1/2 cups dry red wine

1 tsp Oregano (optional)

(28-oz.) can whole tomatoes, with the juice

Garnish: chopped parsley

Heat the oven to 350°F. Arrange the chicken in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet or plate. Season with 2 tsp. of the salt and 1 tsp. of the pepper. (I like to massage the seasoning into the chicken to ensure it's evenly distributed.) Place the flour in a shallow dish. Dip the chicken in the flour, making sure to coat it on all sides, then return it to the sheet.

Place a large (12- to 14-inch), straight-sided sauté pan or a Dutch oven over high heat for several minutes. When hot, add 1/4 cup of the oil and heat until shimmering. Add the

chicken, skin side down (that way the fat “melts” as it cooks and gives you a bit more sizzle in the pan), in a single layer and sauté over high heat without moving it for about 4 minutes, or until browned on the first side. (If the pieces stick, that means they haven’t browned long enough. Let them cook a bit longer. If sticking continues to be a problem, use a sharp-edged spatula to loosen the skin from the pan.) Turn the chicken over and repeat, lowering the heat to medium-high if it gets too dark too quickly. Transfer the browned chicken to a clean baking sheet, trying to leave as much oil as possible in the pan.

Let the pan heat up for a minute over high heat. Add the mushrooms, season with the remaining 1/2 tsp. salt and 1/8 tsp. black pepper, and let them sauté, without stirring, for about 2 minutes. Stir and let the mushrooms sauté undisturbed for another 2 minutes. Stir again and repeat, if necessary, until they’re almost all seared and golden. Remove the mushrooms to the baking sheet with the chicken, leaving as much fat in the pan as possible.

Reduce the heat to medium-high. Add the remaining 3 Tbs. olive oil and then the onions, carrots, and peppers. Sauté until the onions are very soft, 10 to 15 minutes. Add the garlic and oregano and cook for 1 minute more, until fragrant.

Deglaze the pan with the wine, stirring to scrape up the browned bits. Add the tomatoes, squeezing them (with clean hands) as you add them to the pan to help them break down faster. Return the chicken and mushrooms to the pan and bring to a simmer. Cover the pan tightly with foil or a lid and place in the oven. Cook for about 40 minutes, or until the chicken is very tender.

The sauce should be the perfect consistency (like a rich soup rather than pasta sauce), but if it seems at all watery, transfer the chicken to a plate and tent with foil to keep warm. Simmer the sauce, uncovered, over medium-high heat until thickened, about 5 minutes. (How long this takes depends on how thin the sauce is and the dimensions of your pan. Just keep an eye on it so you don’t over-reduce it). Taste and add 1 more tsp. salt if needed. Garnish with chopped parsley and serve with rice, pasta, polenta or crusty bread.

— Lisa Schroeder, Danielle Centoni From *Book Mother's Best*, pp. 119-122



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Shrimp Salad with Feta, Tomato, and Watermelon

Serves four

Wine Pairing: 2009 Domaine de Labarthe Gaillac Blanc, France

Ripe, in-season ingredients are the key to this summery main-course salad, so use the best tomatoes and watermelon you can find.

1-1/2 lb. raw extra-jumbo shrimp (16 to 20 per lb.), peeled (leave tail segment intact) and deveined

1/4 cup plus 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice

1 tsp. smoked sweet paprika

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1-1/2 tsp. honey

Vegetable oil, for the grill

1/2 medium head frisée, torn into bite-size pieces (4 cups)

3 cups small-diced seedless watermelon (about 1 lb.)

3 medium ripe red or yellow tomatoes, cored and cut into wedges

2 cups yellow cherry or pear tomatoes, halved

6 oz. feta, cut into small dice (1-1/4 cups)

30 fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced (1/2 cup)

Prepare a hot gas or charcoal grill fire.

In a medium bowl, toss the shrimp with 2 Tbs. of the lemon juice and the paprika; marinate at room temperature for 5 minutes. Thread the shrimp onto metal skewers or wooden skewers that have been soaked in water for at least 30 minutes. Season the shrimp on both sides with 1/2 tsp. salt and 1/4 tsp. pepper.

In a small bowl, combine the remaining 1/4 cup lemon juice with the olive oil, honey, and a pinch each of salt and pepper. Whisk well.

Clean and oil the grill grates. Grill the shrimp, flipping once, until firm and opaque throughout, 4 to 6 minutes total.

In a large bowl, gently toss the frisée with 3 Tbs. of the dressing. In a medium bowl, gently toss the watermelon, tomatoes, feta, basil, 2 Tbs. dressing, 1/4 tsp. salt, and 1/8 tsp. pepper. Divide the frisée among 4 plates and spoon one-quarter of the watermelon mixture over



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each. Top with the shrimp skewers, drizzle with the remaining dressing, and serve.

— Dina Cheney *Fine Cooking* 106, pp. 22

Butterflied Leg of Lamb with Garlicky White Beans

Serves eight

Wine Pairing: 2006 Sand T Cellars Syrah, Brookside Vineyard, Napa, California

The lamb cooks over a medium-hot fire in about thirty minutes. Since the thickness of the butterflied lamb varies from about 1 to 2-1/2 inches, it will end up rare, medium, and well done, to suit a variety of preferences.

For the beans:

5 whole cloves garlic, peeled, plus 3 cloves, smashed and peeled

3 fresh bay leaves

10 black peppercorns

1 large sprig fresh rosemary

1 lb. dried white navy beans, rinsed

1 tsp. kosher salt

1/4 cup fruity-peppery extra-virgin olive oil

For the lamb:

1 boneless butterflied leg of lamb (4 to 5 lb.)

1 Tbs. olive oil

6 cloves garlic, sliced

1/2 tsp. kosher salt

1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

1/2 cup chopped mixed fresh herbs, include if possible thyme, summer savory, rosemary, marjoram in approximately equal amounts, plus a few lavender blossoms (or use 2 Tbs. dried herbes de Provence)

Make the beans:

Tie the 5 whole garlic cloves, bay leaves, peppercorns, and rosemary in a cheesecloth bag and put them in a large pot along with the beans and salt. Cover by 4 inches with cold water and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer until tender, 2 to 2-1/2 hours. (The beans should be very slightly soupy, so add a bit of water during cooking if they become too dry; if they seem too liquidy, drain off some of the liquid.)



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Meanwhile, gently heat the 1/4 cup olive oil with the smashed garlic cloves until the garlic becomes fragrant. Remove from the heat and set aside to infuse. When the beans are done, remove the cheesecloth seasoning bag. Before serving, take the smashed garlic from the

olive oil and discard, stir the olive oil into the beans, and adjust the seasonings as needed. (The beans can be made the day before and reheated.)

Cook the lamb:

Prepare a charcoal or wood fire in a grill or heat a gas grill to medium high. Brush the meat with the olive oil and, with a sharp knife, make slits about 1/2 inch deep all over the meat. Insert the garlic slices in the slits. Rub the meat with the salt and pepper and then sprinkle with the herbs, pressing them into the flesh with the palm of your hand.

When the coals have become coated with white ash, oil the rack and grill the lamb for about 10 min., paying attention to flare-ups so it doesn't char or overcook. Turn and cook another 10 to 20 min. or until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the meat registers 130°F for medium rare. Transfer the lamb to a carving board or platter (one that will collect the juices) and loosely cover it with foil. Let stand for 10 min. before carving into thin slices. Serve with a little of the carving juices spooned over, accompanied by the white beans, drizzled with more olive oil, if you like.

— Georgeanne Brennan From *Fine Cooking* 39, pp. 64-68



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Leek Tart with Bacon & Gruyère

Serves six as a main course, twelve as an appetizer

Wine Pairing: 2009 Chateau La Roque Découverte Blanc, Pic Saint Loup, Coteaux du Languedoc, France

Paired with a green salad and a glass of crisp white wine, this tart is perfect for lunch or a light dinner. I also like to cut it into thin wedges and serve it as an appetizer along with aperitifs. It's delicious warm or at room temperature.

For the tart shell:

- 9 oz. (2 cups) unbleached all-purpose flour**
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme**
- 1/4 tsp. table salt**
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper**
- 5-1/2 oz. (11 Tbs.) cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes**
- 5 to 6 Tbs. ice-cold water**

For the filling:

- 3 thick slices bacon, cut into small dice**
- 1 oz. (2 Tbs.) unsalted butter**
- 3 large leeks (white and light green parts only), cleaned and sliced crosswise 1/4 inch thick to yield about 4 cups**
- 1 Tbs. unbleached all-purpose flour**
- 2 large eggs**
- 1/3 cup heavy cream**
- 1/3 cup whole milk**
- 3/4 tsp. kosher salt**
- 1/8 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- 2/3 cup grated Gruyère (or Emmentaler)**



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Make the tart shell:

In a food processor, pulse the flour, thyme, salt, and pepper to blend thoroughly. Add the butter and pulse until the butter pieces are about the size of rice grains (about eight 1-second pulses). Add the ice water 1 Tbs. at a time through the feed tube while pulsing in short bursts until the dough starts coming together. It may still look crumbly, but if you press it with your

fingers, it should become compact. (Don't add more water than absolutely necessary to get the dough to cling together.) Turn the dough out onto a clean work surface and, using your hands, gather and press the dough into a rough ball, blotting up the stray crumbs.

Transfer the dough to a piece of waxed paper, shape it gently into a disk, and wrap it tightly to keep it from drying out. Refrigerate for at least 45 minutes. (The dough can be made up to 2 days ahead.) Position a rack in the center of the oven and heat the oven to 450°F. Unwrap the dough, set it on a lightly floured surface, and if necessary, let sit until pliable. Roll the dough out to a 14-inch circle about 1/8 inch thick.

Transfer the dough to an 11-inch fluted tart pan with a removable bottom and press it carefully into the corners and up the sides of the pan. Let the edges of the dough hang over the rim of the pan and then roll the rolling pin over the top of the pan to cut away the excess dough. Prick the surface of the dough all over with a fork, line it with parchment, and fill it with pie weights or dried beans. Put the pan on a rimmed baking sheet and bake until the edges of the tart shell are dry and flaky (but not browned), about 10 minutes. Remove the weights and parchment; the center should still be moist and raw. Prick the bottom again and return the shell to the oven. Bake until the bottom surface is completely dry, 5 to 7 minutes more. Remove from the oven and let cool.

Lower the oven temperature to 375°F.

Make the filling:

In a 12-inch skillet, cook the bacon over medium heat until it's crisp and golden brown, about 5 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to a dish and set aside. Discard all but about 2 tsp. of the bacon fat. Set the skillet over medium-low heat, add the butter, let it melt, and then add the leeks. Stir to coat them with the fat, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir the flour into the leeks and cook uncovered, stirring, for about 2 minutes to cook off the raw-flour flavor. Set aside and let cool slightly. In a medium bowl, lightly whisk the eggs. Add the cream, milk, salt, nutmeg, and several grinds



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of pepper and whisk until blended. Add the bacon and leeks to the mixture and stir to combine.

To assemble the tart, scatter 1/3 cup cheese over the cooled tart shell and pour in the egg mixture. Spread the leeks evenly. Scatter the remaining 1/3 cup cheese evenly over the top. Bake until the custard is set and the top is light golden brown, about 35 minutes. Let cool on a rack for at least 30 minutes before serving.

— *Ruth Lively From Fine Cooking 89, pp. 23*