

# Tasting Monterey

A WINE ENTHUSIAST'S MONTHLY JOURNEY THROUGH MONTEREY'S WINE COUNTRY



**STORE HOURS**

A Taste of Monterey  
Cannery Row  
Sun-Thu 11am-6pm  
Fri-Sat 11am-8pm\*

Food service begins at  
11:30am daily

\*No new member tastings  
after 6pm

**FEBRUARY REFERRALS**



Refer a friend to the Monterey Wine Club, and after they join, you get a \$20.00 Gift Card!



Scan QR to...



## WINE & PIZZA - Think Holistically



About a year ago, we presented an article on pairing wine with burgers. In that article we conveyed how there's no shame in trying to match some of your favorite nice wines, Monterey County wines, of course, with your burger of choice. And now, we'd like to offer another guilty pleasure combo. That other indulgence - pizza! After all, who doesn't like pizza every once in a while? And, as one infamous wedding crasher said; "It's like pizza, baby. It's good no matter what!"

As with any wine and food pairing selection, start with the basic flavor profiles of the food. Obviously with pizza there's a wide variety to consider when one thinks of toppings such as anchovies, ground sausage, artichoke hearts...but let's begin with the basics. Crust, sauce, and cheese.

Crust really makes little difference, so we'll move on to sauce. And, let's get the rare white pizza sauce out of the way. We're just going to go out on a limb and say, in these cases, go with Chardonnay. This is the best opportunity you'll ever encounter to have a Chardonnay paired well with pizza.

Now, let's move on to the much more popular tomato-based sauce. Tomatoes are naturally acidic, so matching acidic with acidic is a good start. What are acidic wines? In the red department, you'll probably be amazed to hear that a general characteristic of red Italian varietals is that they tend to be high in acidity. Bizarre that Italian reds are a natural match for pizza, isn't it?

There are also a couple other Italian varietal characteristics that increase their match-ability with pizza (and tomato-based pasta). In addition to generally being high in acidity, Italian reds are not traditionally over-oaked, and many tend to have softer more moderate tannins than a lot of other red varietals.

Italian grape varietals have been grown in California since the Gold Rush days, so you don't need to run out and pick up a bottle of Chianti the next time you order a pizza. Red Italian varietals grown in California include Barbera, Nebbiolo, Dolcetto, Montepulciano, Refosco, and Primitivo, among others. And, of course, we can't forget the most important red Italian grape varietal of them all, which is the primary grape of Chianti wines - Sangiovese! Lucky for us, Sangiovese is the most widely planted varietal in Monterey County of this Italian list.



But, let's consider some other factors, as most people like some form of topping on their pizza. And, by opening up this new category, we'll present other varietal options. This ranges from Zinfandel (the less bold style of it is considered a natural match for many pizzas) to Riesling (yup, we just said that). We'll begin with the broad category of meat toppings. Here think of the toppings and what flavors will be most prominent. Sure, the tomato sauce and cheese will be there, but will you taste these very much over pepperoni or spicy sausage? A nice spicy Syrah could be nice. Or, try a Cabernet Sauvignon if you have multiple flavors of meat on your pizza pie.

You can think of veggies on pizza the same way. And, this also presents an opportunity *Continued Inside*

# MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

## BIG SUR VINEYARDS - 2013 *Pinot Noir*



Monterey County's Big Sur Vineyards can be called bold, but considering owner Lenora Carey, that's not just referring to the wines. The fruit for their wines is sourced from sustainable vineyards in the county, including the Arroyo Seco and Chalone AVAs. 1,000 cases are produced annually, with some single-barrel limited release specialties, like the 2013 Pinot Noir, a wine too good to blend.

Big, unstinting aromas of dark bramble fruit, vanilla and spice. On the palate, silky tannins give way to red brambles, strawberries, and rhubarb with an undertone of earthiness. The finish is long and voluminous, drawn out by hearty acidity and red berries.

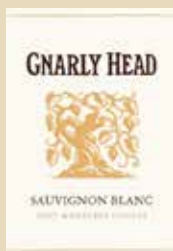
100% Pinot Noir

14.4% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2020

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

## GNARLY HEAD - 2017 *Sauvignon Blanc*



The majority of the fruit for Gnarly Head Sauvignon Blanc is selected from vineyards in the San Bernabe region of Monterey. As one of the coolest growing regions in California, this vineyard contributes grapes with crisp, bright acidity and brilliant flavor concentration. The grapes were carefully harvested during specific windows of time in which the varietal displayed the ideal balance of characteristics, then brought to the winery where they were gently pressed and transferred into stainless steel tanks. In order to retain the crisp acidity and fruity characters of the wine, this Sauvignon Blanc aged entirely in stainless steel.

Gnarly Head Sauvignon Blanc is a standout. This refreshing white wine is bursting with aromas of bright citrus and nectarine that are followed by crisp flavors of honeydew melon and green Granny Smith apple on the palate. Medium-bodied with an opulent mouth feel, this wine extends into a lingering, zesty finish and pairs well with roasted artichoke salad with lemon and mint, grilled marinated shrimp, or pesto pasta.

100% Sauvignon Blanc

12.9% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2021

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

## ESTANCIA - 2014 *Reserve GSM* (Club Red)



Estancia is translated from the Spanish word for "estate," and emphasizes their conviction that the world's best wines capture the essence of their place of origin. With over 30 years of experience, Estancia relies on the benefits of boutique-style winemaking techniques, including whole-cluster fermentation, gentle punch downs, and barrel fermentation. It is this crafting of the wines, from grapes to bottle, that results in their consistent and superior wine quality. The biggest influence on the climate of Monterey County vineyards is invisible, yet its effects are undeniable. The canyon beneath Monterey Bay generates cool Pacific air that results in slow and gentle ripening of the grapes – ideal conditions for crafting excellent quality wines

Deep, dark plum in appearance with aromas of lush fruit, violet, and raspberry with notes of nutmeg, cigar box, cider, and cherry. Intense berry fruit flavor with well-integrated oak.

48% Grenache, 42% Syrah, 10% Mourvedre

14.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2020

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

## BIG SUR VINEYARDS - 2017 *BSV White Wine* (Club Blanc)



Big Sur Vineyards is known for its small lot, hand-crafted wines and from the get go, owner Lenora Carey has been inspired by the wines grown in the Southern Rhône region of France. She and winemaker Ryan Kobza produce a selection of award-winning, Rhône-style wines from single varieties of Syrah, Petite Sirah, Grenache and Viognier to blends of Rosé of Grenache and Cinsault, Big Sur Red, Grenache, Syrah and Petite Sirah, and their new release of Viognier and Grenache Blanc aptly named Big Sur White.

The opening salvo of aromas leans heavily on the dried and preserved fruits. Orange peel, apricots and cherries are overt while undertones of dried herbs, leather and flinty minerality round out the aromatic complexion. These qualities transition readily to the palate with a citrus-like acidity that completes the structure. Bright but not austere..

75% Viognier and 25% Grenache Blanc

14.4% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2021

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

## Cover Article Continued



to pair a white wine. A pizza topped with peppers, olives, onions, or mushrooms could be lovely with Pinot Noir, but how about a highly acidic white wine? Sauvignon Blanc would be a good bet.

Then there are the other pizza creations that can make for very interesting wine combos. How about the classic Hawaiian ham and pineapple? With the cheese and tomato sauce, this is a tough one, but this is probably the only pizza where we'd recommend you pop open a Riesling. And, we can't leave out seafood pizza. Although we've shown in the past where the tradition of automatically thinking white wine with fish is not always the only option, in this case we'd suggest not going much bolder than a Pinot Noir in reds, with Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Grigio are recommended as whites.

A Taste of Monterey offers a delicious menu of selections, including five choices of flatbreads, a very close cousin to pizza. Our flatbread options include: Margherita, Pig Wizard, Chicken Artichoke, Viva Italia and Coastal Carnivore. From the names alone we're sure you can image the wide range of toppings on each and with over 20 different wines by the glass available, there is ample opportunity to experiment with pairing wines as we've suggested here.

Therefore, while keeping the subtle tones of the sauce and cheese in mind, when selecting your wine with pizza, think of what wines would then pair well with the different meats, veggies, seafood, or combination thereof. As always though - we all have different tastes, and while we've tried to show you what could pair best, the best pizza-wine match is whatever you enjoy. Wine with pizza has long been downplayed, hence the term "pizza wine." But, we hope the next time you pick your pizza wine you will consider the holistic flavor combinations and put some thought into your wine selection.

## RECIPE

### Marinara Syrah Sauce

#### Ingredients:

1 tablespoon	good extra virgin olive oil
1 cup	chopped yellow onion (1 onion)
1 1/2 teaspoons	minced garlic
1/2 cup	red wine, such as Syrah, Chianti or Cabernet
1 (28-ounce)	can crushed tomatoes, or plum tomatoes in puree
1 tablespoon	each of basil and Italian parsley
1 1/2 teaspoons	kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon	freshly ground black pepper



#### Method:

Heat the olive oil in a large (12-inch) skillet. Add the onion and saute over medium heat until translucent, 5 to 10 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 more minute. Add the wine and cook on high heat, scraping up all the brown bits in the pan, until almost all the liquid evaporates, about 3 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, parsley, salt, and pepper. Cover, and simmer on the lowest heat for 20 minutes.

## VISITING Varietals



### PINOT NOIR

**Pronunciation:** Pee-noh-n'wahr

**Definition:** Pinot Noir may be the toughest grape to grow, but the effort is often well worth the constant care and investment. It is a fickle grape that demands optimum growing conditions, opting for warm days consistently supported by cool evenings. As for style, Pinot Noir is typically a lighter-medium bodied, fruit-forward red wine. Flavor Profile: Pinot Noir is a dry, red wine that typically exhibits fruit-forward character with strawberry, cherry, raspberry and blackberry fruit taking the cake for palate presence. Notable earth-driven layers are also quite common in a glass of Pinot, with herbal, mushroom, leather, and game-like qualities being fairly familiar. Warm spice notes also make their way into the Pinot Noir palate profile, often in the form of cinnamon, clove and smoky, tobacco nuances.

**Food Pairing:** Enjoying a red wine palate profile in a white wine style, the lighter-bodied, rich fruit character components of many Pinots give it a step up in the glasses of both red wine and white wine drinkers. Pinot Noir is well-suited to pair with a wide variety of ethnic dishes, classic cuisines and traditional foodie favorites, thanks in large part to its consistent acidity, subtle, silky tannins and lighter-bodied style. Perfect Pinot pairings include pork and poultry, beef and bacon, cheese and chocolate, fish, lamb, mushrooms, fresh herbs, and wild game. Pinot Noir plays well with creamy sauces, spicy seasonings and is considered by many to be one of the world's most versatile food wines.

CHEESE *Varietals*



**FETA**

**Pronunciation:** FEH-tuh

Feta is undoubtedly one of the most famous Greek cheeses. In fact, Feta occupies 70% stake in Greek cheese consumption. To create traditional Feta, 30 percent goat's milk is mixed with sheep's milk of animals grazing on pastures in the specific appellation of origin regions. Now-a-days, many stores sell goat and cow's milk feta as well. The firmness, texture and flavour differ from region to region, but in general, cheese from Macedonia and Thrace is mild, softer and creamier, less salty with fewer holes. Feta made in Thessaly and Central Greece has a more intense, robust flavour. Peloponnese Feta is dryer in texture, full flavoured and more open. Local environment, animal breeds, cultures all have an impact on the texture, flavor and aroma of Feta.

On the whole, Feta is a pickled curd cheese that has a salty and tangy taste enhanced by the brine solution. The texture depends on the age which can be extremely creamy, or crumbly dry. Upon maturation of 2 months, Feta is sold in blocks submerged in brine. The cheese can be used as a table cheese or melted on a traditional Greek salad, spanakopita, pizza or pie. It tastes delicious with olive oil, roasted red peppers and nuts. If required, it can be washed under water to remove the extra saltiness. The salty flavor of Feta pairs well with beer, Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc and Zinfandel.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

In order to better serve our members, we need to receive any new info and changes regarding your status (i.e., change of address, new credit card number, etc.) by the 20th of each month.

PLEASE NOTIFY US BY CALLING  
(888) 646-5446.

Any information received after the 20th of each month will not take effect until the following month. Change of address updates, for the upcoming shipment, called in after the 20th, may be subject to a special handling fee.

**VISIT US ONLINE**

WWW.TASTEMONTEREY.COM

# MIX & MATCH

ANY OF THE CURRENT OR PREVIOUS CLUB WINES TO RECEIVE **25% OFF 12 BOTTLES** OR **20% OFF 6**

FEBRUARY SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 04/30/2019	REGULAR PRICE*	12-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*	6-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*
	Big Sur 2013 Pinot Noir		\$28.00	\$21.00	\$22.40
	Gnarly Head 2017 Sauvignon Blanc		\$12.00	\$9.00	\$9.60
	Estancia 2014 Reserve GSM		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	Big Sur Vineyards 2017 BSV White Wine		\$28.00	\$21.00	\$22.40
JANUARY SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 03/31/2019			
	Muirwood 2016 Merlot		\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
	Barrymore 2017 Rosé of Pinot Noir		\$23.00	\$17.25	\$18.40
	Carmel Road 2014 Drew's Blend Pinot Noir		\$28.00	\$21.00	\$22.40
	Muirwood 2016 Chardonnay		\$18.00	\$13.50	\$14.40
DECEMBER SELECTIONS		PRICES EXPIRE 02/28/2019			
	Ranch 32 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	Cru 2016 Cru Unoaked Chardonnay		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
	Cru 2014 Montage Pinot Noir		\$25.00	\$18.75	\$20.00
	Sofia 2017 Blanc de Blancs		\$19.00	\$14.25	\$15.20
PRIVATE RESERVE CLUB		PRICES EXPIRE 02/28/2019			
	Mesa del Sol 2013 Zinfandel		\$38.00	\$28.50	\$30.40
	Wrath 2015 Destruction Level		\$39.00	\$29.25	\$31.20
	Mission Trail Vineyards 2016 Reserve Chardonnay		\$42.00	\$31.50	\$33.60

TO ORDER, CALL TOLL-FREE: 888-646-5446

\*PRICES LISTED REFLECT PRICE PER BOTTLE. NO OTHER DISCOUNTS APPLY.