

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

MARCH REFERRALS



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



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CHARCUTERIE & Wine



Charcuterie [shahr-koo-tuh-ree] is a French word which describes a store where meat products are sold. These delectable products come in the form of sausages, hams, rillettes, patés, bacons, confits, head cheeses, terrines... basically all those fatty, salty pork products we're told are not the most healthy for us. Despite this fact, many of us find these foods irresistible. Charcuterie is also a generalized term for all of these products, which traditionally are pork-based, but that's more of a guideline than a rule. We've carried over this fancy word into our English vocabulary and it's often associated with all things wine-related.

The trendy approach to the topic of charcuterie and wine is to suggest going against tradition. And while I'm going to present that side as well and hold nothing against it, I'm going to be upfront and honest and suggest I see no reason to veer away from tradition on this one, unless it is in the name of pure epicurious curiosity. There's nothing better to me than pairing a smoky, hearty full-bodied red wine with an assortment of dry cured meats and sausages. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's start from the beginning with some definitions.

Dry curing involves salting meat and keeping it in a cool room for a long time, a very long time. Obviously, there's more to it than that and

there can be wide variations, but the basic premise remains.

DRY CURED HAM

While we make good cured ham here in the States, such as dry cured Virginia ham, the old country still dominates in high quality cured ham production. France's gem, among many, may be Jambon de Bayonne. I could admittedly be biased with my love of all things Basque, but this traditional ham is simply outstanding. A similar, more well-known ham from Italy is prosciutto. Spain has serrano and Germany's Black Forest ham falls into this category.

DRY CURED SAUSAGE

Dry cured sausages are hard, dry sausages which do not need to be refrigerated. Again, sure we do it okay, but Europe has us beat in this department. France has its saucisson, Italy has salami and soppressata, Spain has chorizo, and Germany has landjäger.

COOKED SAUSAGE

Cooked sausage is the one area where we're pretty much on an equal standing with Europe. Although France's saucisson à l'ail (garlic sausage), boudin (blood sausage), and Italy's mortadella remain worldwide favorites. And we can't leave out Germany's frankfurter... the original hot dog. However, we think a good Cajun andouille will match up with anything out there.

NOW LET'S GET TO THE ...WINE

As already admitted, I personally am a traditionalist when it comes to pairing charcuterie with wine. I'm going to pull the cork out of a meaty bottle to match with my array of cured and smoked meats. I'm going to reach for a full-bodied Syrah or Rhône-style wine, or maybe even a Tempranillo, every time. These are rustic, hearty, meaty foods we're talking about. For many people, matching with equally rustic, hearty red wines is the way to go. Although don't just open any bottle of red wine. Often Pinot Noir is going to be too delicate and will be overpowered by charcuterie. And stay away from *Continued Inside*

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

ROBERT MONDAVI PRIVATE SELECTION - 2017 *Bourbon Barrel-Aged Cabernet Sauvignon*



Robert Mondavi Private Selection Cabernet Sauvignon is made from predominantly Cabernet Sauvignon grapes harvested from Monterey County. The grapes are picked at the peak of ripeness, after which the wine is aged and blended to deliver fruit flavors and complexity. A portion of the blend is aged for an additional three months using a combination of new and used Kentucky Bourbon barrels, creating one of the first Bourbon barrel aged wines produced in the United States. Bourbon barrels are 100% American oak barrels that have been charred to help impart deep toasty flavors and hints of vanilla and brown sugar. Cabernet Sauvignon is particularly suited for Bourbon barrel aging, Mondavi says, because its rich fruit character isn't overwhelmed by the flavors of the charred casks.

Layered and complex, this Bourbon Barrel-aged Cabernet Sauvignon leaps from the glass with aromas of blackberry cobbler, graham cracker, brown sugar, milk chocolate, coffee and smoke. A palate of blueberry pie, praline, sweet vanilla custard, caramel and mocha is framed by soft, chewy tannins and a hint of toasted oak on the lingering finish.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Petite Sirah, Malbec, Petit Verdot

14,5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2025

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

BRAVIUM - 2017 *Santa Lucia Highlands Rosé of Pinot Noir*



Bravium is located on Treasure Island, in the middle of the San Francisco Bay. To make this bone-dry Rosé of Pinot Noir, Derek Rohlffs picks fruit early to capture crisp acidity. He also bottles his rosé earlier than many of his peers to retain some of the fermentation bouquet and lively mouthfeel he and his assistant winemakers enjoy while crafting the wine. He borrows some of his rosé winemaking practices from Domaine Tempier, using a combination of direct pressing, short-term maceration, and saignée methods, creating a beautiful light red hue. With timely harvesting, no secondary fermentation, and a very light aging regimen, the wine is alive, vibrant, and tongue-tingling.

The 2017 Bravium Santa Lucia Highlands Rose of Pinot Noir possesses a classic pink salmon color and very bright berry, tree fruit, and yeast-derived aromatic notes. Fresh and lively fruit flavors include peach pie with a creamy texture. This smooth and lightly textured wine is precise and persistent on the mid-palate and is balanced by crisp acidity and a clean, pleasing finish

100% Pinot Noir

13,3% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2021

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

DETIERRA VINEYARDS - 2015 *Puzzler* (Club Red)



De Tierra creates delicious, award-winning, and sustainably harvested wines to share from the unique terroir of Monterey County. De Tierra, as their name suggests, focuses on providing the best representation 'of the land'. Great wines begin in the vineyard, and it is their goal to translate the defining flavors of place into great wine! De Tierra sources grapes from several vineyards within the Monterey and San Benito Counties. De Tierra has worked hard to select sites that express both the highest quality of the growing region, as well as a strong commitment to sustainability.

Deep ruby and violet in color. Nose offers an array of fruit and minerality. These notes lead to plum, and chocolate covered raspberries with a hint of fresh meadow. Gentle, well integrated tannins balance well with notes of pomegranate, cedar, and fresh

grass, that leads to a nutty finish.

25% Petit Verdot, 25% Malbec, 25% Syrah,
15% Chardonnay, 5% Merlot, 5% Pinot Noir

15,1% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2022

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

ROBERT MONDAVI PRIVATE SELECTION - 2017 *Bourbon Barrel-Aged Chardonnay* (Club Blanc)



This Chardonnay is the first and only Chardonnay that blends the craftsmanship of California winemaking with the Southern tradition of Bourbon Whiskey aging, resulting in an incredibly bold sensory expression. They start their unique process with Chardonnay grapes carefully picked at the peak of ripeness from Monterey County vineyards. The wine is then aged and blended to deliver exceptional fruit flavors and complexity. Next, a portion of the blend is selected to be aged for an additional two months in a combination of new and used Bourbon Whiskey barrels. Their new barrels give the wine a deep, rich, toasty flavor. The used barrels, from a world renowned Kentucky distillery, add vanilla aromas and baking spice notes

The 2017 Bourbon Barrel-Aged Chardonnay is golden straw in color and opens with aromas of ripe, grilled pineapple, with hints of toasted marshmallow, and vanilla bean custard. Rich, creamy, and concentrated flavors of grilled pineapple, lemon custard, graham cracker, toffee, vanilla bean, baking spices, and toasty oak lead to a balanced acidity and lingering finish.

100% Chardonnay

14,5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2023

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued

overly fruit-forward reds, such as Merlots, if possible. You also want to avoid going too BIG in your red wine selection. Big Zinfandels, Petite Sirahs, even some Cabernet Sauvignons or Cab-based blends will simply overpower your palate and you may as well be eating sliced ham from the grocery store.

Now on to that other theory. Some people would cross a big “X” through the paragraph above and say that the time-honored tradition of hearty reds with charcuterie is so last century. Proponents of this other approach would say that full-bodied reds are the last thing you should open, and that instead you should try light-bodied reds, even chilled reds, including cool climate Pinot Noirs (such as Monterey County Pinot Noirs). This group also normally likes to suggest chilled rosés and off-dry Rieslings. And there are even some among them that recommend sparkling wines, especially sparkling reds wines (which do exist, but are somewhat rare.) The general idea here is that these wines will have lower tannin and alcohol levels which will better complement your salty charcuterie selections more evenly.

Again, it's not for me, but I absolutely recommend experimenting with wine pairing. After all, each of us has our own unique palate and may find a particular pairing amazing, even if no one else agrees. And here at A Taste of Monterey we've got you covered. We offer a variety of charcuterie options which you can try pairing with our outstanding wines. You'll receive your charcuterie plate beautifully presented and our knowledgeable staff will be able to thoroughly describe each selection to you. So come on in and see for yourself what kind of wine you prefer with charcuterie. Clearly there are a lot of different possibilities and even European charcuterie is fairly easy to find these days. And you always know where to find the wine!

Bryce Ternet - contributing editor and author of the recently released: *“The Stevenson Plan, A Novel of the Monterey Peninsula.”* See <http://www.mbryceternet.com/> for more.



VISITING Varietals



PETIT VERDOT

Pronunciation:

puh-TEET-vare-DOE

Definition: Petit Verdot is a variety of red wine grape, principally used in classic Bordeaux blends. It ripens much later than the other varieties in Bordeaux, often too late, so it fell out of favor in its home region. When it does ripen it adds tannin, colour and flavour, in small amounts, to the blend. Petit Verdot has attracted attention among winemakers in the New World, where it ripens more reliably and has been made into single varietal wine. It is also useful in 'stiffening' the mid palate of Cabernet Sauvignon blends.

The name Petit Verdot ('small green') refers to one of the main problems with the grape, that often the berries fail to develop properly without the right weather during flowering. It also refers to the late ripening which usually comes too late for the Bordeaux climate. Petit Verdot also has a peculiar characteristic in that it produces more than two clusters per shoot.

Petit Verdot creates a dark, purple, full-bodied red wine characterized by dense, dark fruit, including blackberry, black cherry, and black plum. Spicy notes of leather, coconut, smoke, and dark chocolate commonly mark this wine, which offers bold tannins and ages beautifully. Blended with Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and other Bordeaux reds, Petit Verdot can balance out a perfect Meritage, but don't overlook the stand-alone Petit Verdots; they are beautiful, dark, weighty wines perfect for a winter's night. Pair with steak, rich sauces, barbecue, and strong cheeses to showcase both wine and food to their maximum potential.

RECIPE

RED WINE POT ROAST *with Porcini***Ingredients:**

- 1 cup low-salt chicken broth or beef broth
- 1/2 ounce dried porcini mushrooms
- 1 4-pound boneless beef chuck roast, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
- 2 celery stalks with some leaves, cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh marjoram plus sprigs for garnish
- 1 28-ounce can whole peeled tomatoes, drained
- 1 cup dry red wine

**Method:**

Preheat oven to 300°F. Bring broth to simmer in saucepan. Remove from heat; add mushrooms, cover, and let stand until soft, about 15 minutes. Transfer mushrooms to cutting board. Chop coarsely. Reserve mushrooms and broth separately. Sprinkle beef with salt and pepper. Heat oil in heavy large ovenproof pot over medium-high heat. Add beef and cook until brown on all sides, about 15 minutes total. Transfer beef to large plate. Pour off all but 1-tablespoon drippings from pot. Place pot over medium heat. Add onion and celery. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and sauté until beginning to brown, about 8 minutes. Add garlic, chopped marjoram, and reserved porcini mushrooms; sauté 1 minute. Using hands, crush tomatoes, 1 at a time, into pot. Cook 3 minutes, stirring frequently and scraping up browned bits from bottom of pot. Add wine; boil 5 minutes. Add reserved mushroom broth, leaving any sediment behind. Boil 5 minutes. Return beef and any accumulated juices to pot. Cover; transfer to oven. Cook 1 1/2 hours. Turn beef and continue cooking until tender, about 1 1/2 hours longer. Transfer beef to cutting board; tent with foil. Spoon fat from surface of juices in pot. Bring juices to boil; cook until liquid is reduced to 4 cups, about 7 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Cut beef into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Transfer to platter. Spoon juices over, garnish with marjoram sprigs, and serve. Yield: Six servings - Source: Epicurious.com

CHEESE

Varietals



PORT SALUT

Port Salut is a semi-soft pasteurized cow's milk cheese from Pays de la Loire, France, with a distinctive orange rind and a mild flavor. The cheese is produced in wheels approximately 23 cm (9 inches) in diameter, weighing approximately 2 kg (4.4 lb).

Though Port Salut has a mild flavor, it sometimes has a strong smell because it is a mature cheese. The smell increases the longer the cheese is kept — this however does not affect its flavor. It can be refrigerated and is best eaten within two weeks of opening.

The cheese was developed by Trappist monks during the 19th century at Port-du-Salut Abbey in Entrammes. The monks, many of whom had left France during the French revolution of 1789, learned cheese-making skills to support themselves abroad, and brought those skills back upon their return after the Bourbon Restoration. The name of their society, "Société Anonyme des Fermiers Réunis" (S.A.F.R.), later became their registered trademark, and is still printed on the wheels of Port Salut cheese.

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.

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MARCH SELECTIONS	PRICES EXPIRE 05/31/2019	REGULAR PRICE*	12-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*	6-BOTTLE DISCOUNT PRICE*
 Robert Mondavi Private Selection 2017 Bourbon Barrel-Aged Cabernet Sauvignon		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
 Bravium 2017 Santa Lucia Highlands Rosé of Pinot Noir		\$20.00	\$15.00	\$16.00
 DeTierra Vineyards 2015 Puzzler		\$26.00	\$19.50	\$20.80
 Robert Mondavi Private Selection 2017 Bourbon Barrel-Aged Chardonnay		\$17.00	\$12.75	\$13.60
FEBRUARY SELECTIONS	PRICES EXPIRE 04/30/2019			
 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
PRIVATE RESERVE CLUB	PRICES EXPIRE 05/31/2019			
 Line Shack 2016 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon		\$26.00	\$19.50	\$20.80
 DeTierra Vineyards 2015 '5 by 5' Bordeaux Blend		\$56.00	\$42.00	\$44.80
 Carmel Road 2015 North Crest Pinot Noir		\$55.00	\$41.25	\$44.00

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