

Tasting Monterey

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

COMING EVENTS

Friday, July 1, 2011
First Fridays Art Walk
 A Taste of Monterey
 Old Town Salinas
 5:00pm-8:00pm*
 Stop by A Taste of Monterey in Old Town Salinas on your journey through the First Fridays Art Walk. Enjoy art from a featured local artist, while we stay open later!

Thursday, July 28, 2011
Thirsty Thursdays
 A Taste of Monterey
 Old Town Salinas
 5:00pm-7:00pm*
 Join us on the last Thursday of every month from 5pm to 7pm. A Taste of Monterey, Oldtown Salinas is keeping its doors open later and offering special wine by the glass prices. Featured Winemaker and 30% off wine and gifts (discount for club members only).

Friday, July 29, 2011
Last Fridays Wine Bar
 A Taste of Monterey
 Cannery Row
 6:00pm-9:00pm*
 Join us on the last Friday of every month from 6pm to 9pm. A Taste of Monterey, Cannery Row is keeping its doors open later and offering special wine by the glass prices. Start your weekend off with a relaxing view and a glass of Monterey's finest.

* No new tastings after 5:45pm

Wine with a Burger ???

Yes, you can do it! Summer is finally here. Most of us will feel summer's call to fire up the grill soon. And, chances are pretty good that before long you're going to feel a craving for America's favorite warm weather indulgence: the good old hamburger.

I've actually heard this line uttered before, and I'm sure you have as well: If you insist on having wine with a burger, there's no reason to crack open anything but whatever not-so-pricy red you have available. Of course, the "all-American" way is to have a beer with your burger instead...but let's counter by arguing, and firmly arguing, that there's no need to downgrade your wine selection just because you're serving burgers...and wine is less filling as well! So, let's take a closer look.



For our discussion, we are going to stick with consideration of the traditional principal substance of a classic burger: ground beef. So, if we are just considering beef and bun, we could compare our vino choices to what they would be for a traditional steak. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and even Chardonnay (recall May's newsletter article) come to mind. But, there aren't too many people that stick with a plain burger, so let's go a step further.



We all know that hamburgers come in many shapes and forms, and this is precisely where you should consider pairing your wine - the "fixins" (toppings). As with other foods (e.g. fish), how you complement your hamburger could be what you remember most about your tasty burger. And, while Cabs and Merlots could still be options, there are many other avenues to explore.

Let's start off with what is likely the most common burger topping or condiment of them all: ketchup (this allows us to also consider tomatoes in the same discussion). Tomatoes are naturally tannic, acidic, and in the form of ketchup, we have sweetness added. Pairing a slightly acidic and/or slightly sweet wine with low tannins, while keeping in mind the backbone of the burger, the beef, could turn out to be a delectable venture. Sangiovese and Aussie-style bright Syrahs are solid choices in the red category. A white such as Albariño or even off-dry Rieslings or Gewürztraminers can be good calls; a semi-dry rosé would likely not disappoint.

Mustard is perpetually popular as well, and keep in mind that mustard comes in many differing forms- yellow, brown, spicy, deli-style...so consider this as well when you pick your wine. Chardonnay can be wonderful with mustard. If you're a barbeque sauce on your burger type, the tangy spice of the sauce could pair nicely with a Zinfandel or a fruity, full-bodied Syrah.

Another thought - how about a slightly chilled red wine? Some traditionalists out there may never consider such a thing, but some red varietals actually are surprisingly nice with a slight chill to them, which will bring out fruitiness in some reds. This is also a bonus for red-lovers, as in hot weather it will be refreshing. Varietals to try include Gamay Noir (as in J.Lohr's Valdiguié and French Beaujolais wines), Merlot and Malbec (Mission Trail Malbec pulls it off delightfully).

Of course, many don't even consider a burger to be a burger without a slice of melted cheese on it. The addition of cheese may or may not have grandiose impacts on a burger's ultimate showing, all depending on the choice of cheese. For example, a mild cheddar combined with other flavor elements may not really leave much of an impression more than adding some gooeyness to the meat. However, add something powerful like blue cheese, and due consideration is definitely required! Consider that dry-style Rieslings are a nice match to blue cheese in the white category, and red wine lovers may want to reach for a Cab or a Zin.

The addition of sautéed mushrooms will add earthiness to your burger. One can also find earthy characteristics in a multitude of red varietals, especially in some Pinot Noirs, so have fun and experiment. Adding onions? Whether

Continued Inside

JULY REFERRALS



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

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

PARAISO VINEYARDS - 2008 Chardonnay



The 2008 Estate Chardonnay represents their first vintage of Chardonnay made exclusively of Dijon clones. Planted in 2002 on their estate vineyard in the Santa Lucia Highlands, these vines are maturing just as they had hoped, giving them exemplary Chardonnay winegrapes.

A full 85% of this wine went through malolactic fermentation, providing a rich, creamy mouthfeel. This portion was fermented in 20% new and 80% one-to-three year-old French oak barrels. The other 15% of the wine was fermented in stainless steel, bringing a crisp element to lighten the structure a bit.

The finished wine has aromas of orange blossom, lemon custard, vanilla bean and pie crust, with complementary flavors of pineapple and apple pie. It has a creamy texture and the acid structure balances nicely, making this a great food wine.

100% Chardonnay

14.2% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2011

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

SYCAMORE CELLARS - 2008 Pinot Noir



Crafted by long-time residents of the Sycamore Flats, Rob Madsen and Dennis Kuchta, this robust red captures the uniqueness of the Arroyo Seco AVA. The canyon maintains warm temperatures which help develop high sugar levels in the grapes between 23-25 brix. The cool coastal breeze from the Pacific contributes to its depth and balance. This Pinot Noir has a complex structure, smoky undertone, lush fruity highlights and a silky tannin finish.

100% Pinot Noir

14.3% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2012

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

CHESEBRO WINES - 2009 Sauvignon Blanc (Club Blanc)



Mark Chesebro, grower and winemaker, grows wine grapes in his own vineyards: the Cheseboro Home Ranch Vineyard and Cedar Lane Vineyard. The Cedar Lane Vineyard is located in the Arroyo Seco appellation and is adjacent to the southern end of the Santa Lucia Highlands appellation. Not only are the wine grapes grown in this vineyard used to make Cheseboro wine, but Chesebro also supplies fruit to several central coast wineries including Morgan, Bernardus and Tudor.

Made 100% from the exotic Sauvignon Musque clone, this wine gives intense floral aromatics of citrus and herbs, with a mouthful of flavor. Intense tropical fruit, white peach, lime and other citrus flavors arrive with a clean and refreshing texture. Fully ripe at 22° Brix, the Musque clone was picked at varying ripeness to take advantages of its' crisp citrus flavors when picked earlier, and its' melon and rounder exotic flavors when picked later.

100% Sauvignon Blanc

14.1% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2012

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

PARAISO VINEYARDS - 2008 Syrah (Club Red)



The 2008 estate grown Syrah perfectly expresses the potential for Rhône-varietal wines from the Santa Lucia Highlands. The 2008 growing season was extremely cool, leading to gentle development on the vine. They picked this fruit in the second and third weeks of October, and employed a 36-hour cold soak in small open-top fermenters prior to yeast inoculation. The must was punched down two times daily before pressing. After fermentation, the wine was aged for more than a year and a half in seasoned French oak barrels, primarily from coopers Bernard and Seguin-Moreau.

This stellar Syrah shows ripe blackberry and white pepper characteristics, along with sage and earthy notes. It is nicely balanced by structured tannins and vanillin oak. The mouthfeel is weighty, making it a wonderful partner to hearty beef and lamb dishes, especially off the grill.

100% Syrah

14.7% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2014

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued

you grill them first, on their own, makes a huge difference. Grilled onions will caramelize and will exhibit sweetness, while raw onion slices will increase acidity and add to the presence of spice.

Lettuce? It's not even worth a mention on its own, as lettuce's most common taste is that of water, and any wine will taste just fine next to water. Pickles? Actually, if you're having wine with your burger, pickles are one topping you may want to avoid altogether or at least significantly limit. Too much pickle on your burger can rob your palate of the mélange of flavors it may experience otherwise, wine or no wine involved.

So, there we have it. Of course, the most important thing is for you to enjoy whatever wine you personally prefer with your burger. However, the next time you fire up the grill and toss on some burgers, we recommend that you consider the whole sensory package of the hamburger experience before you pop open just any bottle of red wine you happen to have around!

- Bryce Ternet

Contributing author for *A Taste of Monterey* and is the author of three books. See www.mbryceter.net for more.



A YEAR In the Vineyard



Now let's get back to the vineyards to see what mid-summer brings.

Last month we reported that in early summer the fruit begins to form after being fertilized on the vines- the "fruit set" stage. Fruit-set is in full force in the vineyards these long summer days. This is when those little grapes start to emerge, but things don't always transpire perfectly.

An abnormal fruit set could occur, resulting in potentially devastating yields from a vine. An abnormality called "coulure" can happen when there's an imbalance of carbohydrate levels in the vine and the result will be for some berries to never develop or to sprout only to fall to the ground shortly afterward. Vine diseases such as "boron deficiency" and "fanleaf" can also set in and these will cause substantial worry for any grower. These diseases will cause an imbalance in the skin to pulp ratio (i.e. how much berry of a grape is surrounding a seed) making the later winemaking process especially challenging.

But have no fear! Even in years of unfavorable weather and vine diseases, the grape survives! Depending on the year, mid to late July is also typically the time that the grapes begin to ripen, known as "veraison"...but we'll hold off on that discussion until next month.

Cheers until then!

RECIPE

Inside-Out Cheeseburger

Why put the cheese on top of the burger when half of it just melts off? Instead, form the burger around the cheese, so you can char the meat and safeguard the more delicate flavors. Use any mixture of hard or semihard cheeses-Emmentaler and Gouda or Asiago and Parmigiano-Reggiano also pair well.

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

1/4 cup	shredded Cheddar cheese
1/4 cup	shredded Gruyere cheese
1 pound	90% lean ground beef
1 tablespoon	Worcestershire sauce
1 1/2 teaspoons	paprika
1/4 teaspoon	freshly ground pepper

Method:

1. Preheat grill to medium-high or preheat the broiler.
2. Combine Cheddar and Gruyere in a small bowl.
3. Gently mix beef, Worcestershire, paprika and pepper in a large bowl, preferably with your hands, without overworking. Shape into 8 thin, 4-inch-wide patties. Mound 2 tablespoons of the cheese mixture on each of 4 patties, leaving a 1/2-inch border. Cover each with one of the remaining patties. Crimp and seal the edges closed.
4. To grill: Lightly oil the grill rack (see Tip below). Grill the stuffed patties over medium-high heat, about 4 minutes per side for medium-well. (Be sure not to press the burgers as they cook or they'll split open and the cheese will ooze out.) To broil: Cover a broiler pan with foil and coat with cooking spray. Broil the stuffed patties in the upper third of the oven, about 4 minutes per side for medium-well. In either case, let the burgers stand for 5 minutes before serving.

To oil a grill rack: Oil a folded paper towel, hold it with tongs and rub it over the rack. (Do not use cooking spray on a hot grill.)





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PLEASE SEND QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS TO:

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CLUB SAVINGS

Remember, as a Club Member, you receive a 15% discount on all purchases (20% for Quattro and Cellar members) and a weekly complimentary tasting.

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