



Tim's Wine Market

June 2021

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This month I have selected wines that work well with warm weather fare. I think you will find the white is perfect for just about any summer occasion, and the red for almost anything you cook on the grill. - TV

2020 Oysterman Muscadet - \$16

Muscadet is a large appellation located in the westernmost part of the Loire Valley, centered around the Pays Nantais, the maritime area dominated by the city of Nantes. Before you think this is a sweet wine, know that Muscadet has no relation to Moscato, the Muscadine grapes of Florida, or any other traditionally sweet wines. Rest assured, this white wine is quite dry. The region allegedly takes its name from the musky, aromatic qualities of the wines produced there.

Originally established by the Roman garrison at Nantes, the region became famous for white wine production due to the cool climate. After a debilitating frost during the 1709 harvest, most of the vineyards were replanted by order of Louis XIV, who introduced the Melon de Bourgogne grape to the area. This white grape varietal is less susceptible to frost and produces lean, mineral-driven white wines with plenty of acidity. Since its introduction to the Pays Nantais, Melon de Bourgogne has become the region's dominant white grape (and, in fact, one of only two legal varieties). Much of this mineral character comes from the soils of the region, a volcanic sub-soil called Gabbro, which is rich in magnesium and potassium. All of these factors produce one of France's most unique and versatile food-pairing wines, but as the name would imply, this is one wine that pairs excellently with oysters!

So why the "Oysterman" moniker? For one, the local cuisine is heavily seafood-centric, with Nantes being a place famous for world class, deep water oysters. This inspired our importer Frederick Corriher to produce this wine with one of his estate wineries, Guy and Jean-Luc Ollivier. Most of the fruit comes from hillside vineyards in the Muscadet Sevre-et-Maine appellation, with a small amount coming from nearby Muscadet Cotes de Grand Lieu as well. The average age of the vines is older in these appellations, averaging 45 years. All of the grapes in the brothers' 30 hectares of land are hand-harvested. This wine is destemmed by hand before immediate cold soak and fermentation in stainless steel. Immediately before shipping, the wine is filtered and bottled to preserve varietal freshness.

When you open this wine, make sure to serve it well-chilled. The Oysterman delivers instantly with notes of Meyer lemon, lime juice, white flowers, pineapple rind, and green apple. Drink now through 2022 with chicken piccata, grilled octopus, sashimi, and of course oysters!

Chateau Petit Frelon Bordeaux Supérieur "Cuvée Sarah" 2018 - \$16

Chateau Petit Freylon is located in the Entre-Deux-Mers region of Bordeaux, a growing region situated between the Garonne and Dordogne tributaries. The proximity to these two rivers, as well as the limestone soils present throughout, make the region ideally suited for the production of Cabernet Sauvignon-based wines. In the tiny village of St. Genis-du-Bois, population 100, the winery has stood for hundreds of years. But a recent change in ownership has elevated the quality and sustainability of the vineyards.

The new owners have invested heavily in the château's wine-making facilities, purchasing new tanks, barrels, and thermo-ventilation systems and re-fitting the old cellar. They also recently hired respected oenologist Gregory Dalla Longa to direct the winemaking. As a result, the wines have risen to the next level, with optimal ripeness for the grapes and better fruit and tannin extraction. This attention to detail has earned the wines several medals at prestigious competitions, such as the Concours Agricole, an event that celebrates all aspects of French agriculture. Additional environmental initiatives undertaken by the winery include efforts to improve biodiversity in the vineyard, recycle any and all waste, and to eliminate pollution wherever possible.

Thanks to the warmer vintages seen in Bordeaux over the past few years, the updated cellar technology has led to a dramatic jump in quality for the estate red wines. Once a Sauvignon Blanc-dominated winery, today the estate also produces three red cuvées, with the "Cuvée Sarah" being the Cabernet Sauvignon dominant bottling. The blend is approximately 75% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Merlot, which is very unique in this part of Bordeaux. After

harvest, the grapes are brought to the winery and mechanically destemmed. From there, the grapes see a three-day cold soak before fermentation takes place using carefully selected yeasts. The wine is then raked to French oak barrels, approximately 25% of which are new, where it matures for an additional 6 months. During this time the cellar is kept cool to prevent malolactic conversion. The wine is then filtered before bottling, and spends an additional 6 months in bottle before release.

When you open this wine you will want to decant it for at least half an hour. Once you do, notes of black plum, blackcurrant, red cherry, licorice, and cassis abound, with faint hints of vanilla and cedar from the oak aging. Drink now through 2025 with venison chops, sirloin steak, or beef stroganoff.

Garlic Oysters

This restaurant classic is great and quite easy once you shuck your oysters. It is a classic pairing with Muscadet, which is the inspiration for the combination.

Mix together the butter, parsley, white wine, garlic, shallots, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper in a bowl until thoroughly combined. Lay out a large piece of plastic wrap over a work surface and mound the butter mixture in the center. Fold the plastic over the butter and form into a log. Refrigerate until firm, at least 2 hours.

Set the oven broiler on medium-high heat.

Rinse the oysters in cold water and discard any open ones.

Shuck the oysters: Using a thick tea towel, hold an oyster firmly in one hand with the flat side facing up.

With your other hand, insert an oyster knife, or flat head screwdriver, into the oyster's hinge, easing it in where you can; make sure the hand holding the oyster is well protected by the towel. Once you feel the knife firmly anchored in the hinge, twist it to pop open the oyster. Clean your knife and then slide it along the top shell to release the muscle from the shell. If using a screwdriver use a paring knife to cut the muscle. Remove and discard the top shell. Run the knife under the oyster so it is resting in the bottom shell but is no longer attached to it. This ensures the oyster will easily slide into your mouth when eaten. Discard any oysters that have an unpleasant odor.

Cover an oven-safe serving dish with a layer of rock salt. Gently nestle the shells into the salt so they won't slide around while broiling. Top each oyster with a quarter-inch-thick slice of the compound butter. Broil until the butter is melted, golden and bubbling at the edges, 5 to 7 minutes.

Serve immediately with some crusty bread to soak up any leftover sauce.

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1/4 cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1 tablespoon white wine

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 shallot, minced

Salt and black pepper

2 dozen oysters

Rock salt, for broiling

Crusty bread, for serving

Duck Breast au Poivre

The peppercorns in this dish really work with the Cabernet Sauvignon based Chateau Freylon, really pulling out the spice qualities. Put the peppercorns in a zip lock bag and crush using a heavy skillet for even pieces.

Season each duck breast with salt then press each into cracked peppercorns to create a crust. Set aside for at least 10 minutes.

Combine red wine, port and brown stock. Boil the mixture until it reduces in volume to about 1/2 cup. Swirl in butter, set aside.

Sear duck breasts, peppercorns side down first to cook, about 2 to 3 minutes. per side. Cover and allow to rest for 10 minutes, then slice into 4-5 slices.

Pour off the fat in the pan and deglaze pan with reserved wine/stock reduction. Reduce to 2 tablespoons, adjust seasoning and serve over the duck breasts.

4 boneless half breast of duck

1/4 cup cracked black peppercorns

1/2 cup dry red wine

1/2 cup Port

3/4 cup beef stock, without salt is best

3 tablespoons butter, cut into six pieces and very cold or frozen