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STYLE



SMART LIVING IN BALTIMORE

the FOOD issue

Dinner parties with a twist
A locatarian's cooking weekend
Underground restaurants
Baltimore's first family of food
Dishing about entrées sent back to the kitchen

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THINGS WE LIKE

soup on the grille

Matthew Siegmund, promoted from sous-chef to head chef earlier this year at **Oregon Grille**, has roasted soups on his mind this season. Roasted butternut squash soup. Roasted corn and potato chowder. Roasted fennel and tomato bisque. "They're just a good way to start off a meal and get you into the spirit of fall." His soups are made from scratch, using his own in-house stock, but he has an extra trick up his chef's sleeve. "If you want a roasted soup, make your stock from roasted chicken, and not a boiled



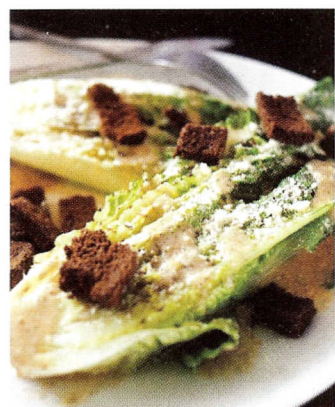
chicken stock. It doubles up the flavor." They grow their own herbs out in the garden, so Siegmund takes full advantage of the thyme, oregano, chives and "sometimes fresh dill, depending on the soup. A cream of roasted chicken

with fresh dill offers a real depth of flavor." What's the trick to a good soup? "I was raised on limiting the amount of salt we used because my mother had high blood pressure, so I learned to cook using more spices and herbs, and less salt. Many people over-salt their soups, and a good soup just doesn't need that. Plus, when you roast the meats and vegetables, the flavors are already that much stronger." And Oregon Grille has something special to serve up with all this lush flavor: atmosphere. A seat in the main dining room by one of the fireplaces presents the ultimate cold-weather soup experience. 1201 Shawan Road, 410-771-0505, theoregongrille.com

NEW ON THE SCENE

fashionable food

Banksy's Cafe is where haute couture (the decor's Burberry-style plaids) meets the Ice Kreme Sandwich (a Krispy Kreme doughnut loaded up with vanilla bean ice cream) and the Bay Mac (a three-layer potato roll stuffed with a Lexington Market-style crab cake and shrimp salad). Look for other yummy choices like the Chicken Cacciatore Pizza and the Lasagna Pizza. So, where does the fashion fit in? Cafe owner Robert Banks says it's a nod to the some of the tony stores in the Lake Falls shopping center. "Samuel



Parker Clothier and L'Apparenza are just next door," he says. "I want those shoppers to feel comfortable coming in to eat." Banks also wants the soccer moms who toodle down Falls Road to know that they can "come in and feed a family of four for under \$30." The place is fun and relaxed and the food (the Bay Mac is only \$11) will fill you up for a lot less than a shopping bag full of Tory Burch. *Lake Falls Village, 410-377-4444*

SIPPING IN STYLE

a perfect match

Does the thought of selecting wines for your next party make you queasy? You are not alone. Many people find choosing wine a stressful task, but it doesn't have to be. Think of wine as an ingredient in the recipe for a particular dish, not an independent course. It should taste as good when enjoyed with a dish as it does alone. The following guidelines will help focus your choices and create stress-free pairings.

> **Match "like weights"** Specifically, match the weight of the wine with the weight of the food—light fare with lighter-bodied, more delicate wines, and fuller-bodied wines with bigger foods. Most of us wouldn't think to order a light, fruity Sauvignon Blanc with a filet mignon. Conversely, a glass of hearty Cabernet Sauvignon doesn't go well with a delicate seafood salad. Think of a boxing match—would you put a heavyweight in the ring with a featherweight?

> **Think of your pairing strategy—contrast or complement?** We have all heard the sayings "opposites attract," or the converse, "complementary partners make the best matches." Sound like relationship advice? It is, but these rules also create successful food and wine pairings. Contrasting uses diverse flavors to enhance the differences; whereas complementary matches flavors to enhance the similarities. Think of a seafood dish in a creamy sauce. You could complement it with a rich, mellow white like Chardonnay or contrast it with a crisper white like Pinot Gris.

> **Salt needs acid** Acid in wine is that tangy or sour sensation felt on the tongue. That factor is found in crisp wines like Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Albariño, to name a few. Salty foods neutralize or soften acidity in a wine and need to be paired with higher-acid wines. Most meals should have at least moderate acidity. If the dish is particularly salty or briny, e.g., oysters, crabs, pickled items, etc.—look for crisp or high-acid wines.

> **Fats soften tannins** Tannins are naturally astringent substances found in grape skins, and are perceived in our mouths as a sense of dryness. Reds with firmer tannins are a natural pairing with a fattier dish like red meat, cheese or stew. Try a Cabernet Sauvignon with a bite of steak and notice how the tannins soften in your wine. Bold reds pair nicely with heartier dishes—Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Malbec or Syrah.

> **Sweet with spicy** Fruity or sweeter wines tone down spicy foods, whereas high-alcohol, dry wines intensify the heat of spices. If you are serving spicy cuisine, look for wines that are fruity and even a bit sweet to counteract. Whites that work with spicy food include lush whites like Riesling, Viognier, Gewürztraminer or Sauvignon Blanc. Reds that pair nicely with spicy dishes include fruity, lower tannin wines such as Beaujolais, Pinot Noir or Shiraz.

In the end, wine pairing is subject to personal taste. Chances are you and your guests may not agree on the best pairing for each course, but these rules can simplify selecting wines. So when entertaining, you can concentrate on the most important pairing—enjoying time with your guests!

—Laurie Forster

Laurie Forster, The Wine Coach®, is a wine educator who creates corporate events, group tastings and team-building seminars. She is the author of "The Sipping Point: A Crash Course in Wine," and can be heard each week on WBAL Radio 1090AM. Visit thewinecoach.com.

