

BEST OF HOWARD
DINING BALLOT

WINE IN THE WOODS
& AROUND MARYLAND

MEET HOWCHOW'S
MYSTERY DINER

HOWARD

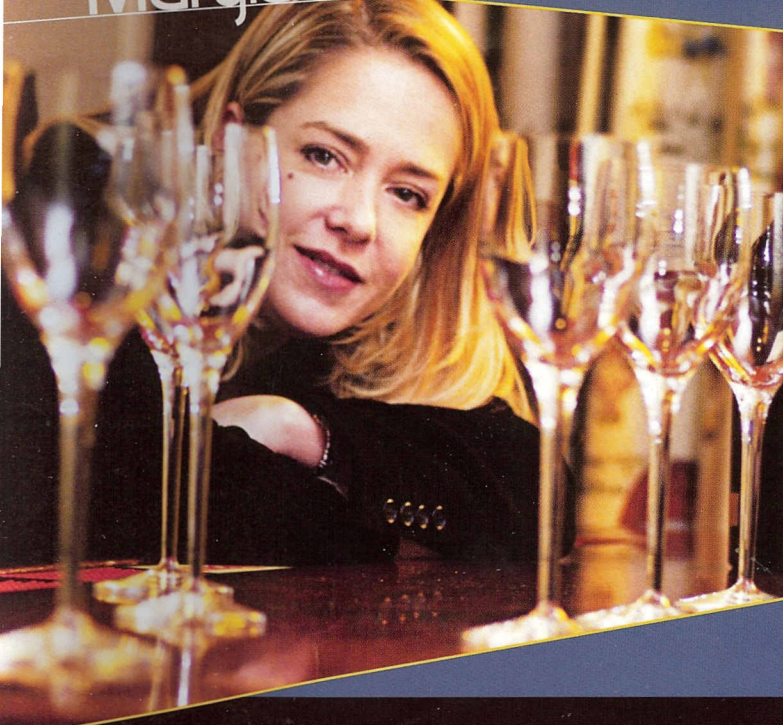
LIFE | PEOPLE | SHOPPING | DINING | FUN | INSPIRATION



dining**out** | 2010

Our annual guide to more than
250 local restaurants

APRIL 2010 • \$2.50



Something to Wine About

Laurie Forster shares her favorite Maryland food and wine pairings

Author and wine educator Laurie Forster — aka The Wine Coach — is excited about what she's been tasting in Maryland wines recently. As a veteran judge of the Maryland Governor's Cup, she has seen a "huge difference between 2004 and now," says Forster, explaining that very few wines are getting flagged as commercially unviable by the judges. "The level of quality has increased dramatically."

The Easton resident says she is drinking more Maryland wines at home as well as using them at her events as The Wine Coach, traveling the country and educating people about wine. Last year, Forster published a book, "The Sipping Point — A Crash Course in Wine," and shares her expertise during her weekly radio shows "Something to Wine About," on WBAL 1090AM.

For *Howard Magazine*, Forster shares her favorite Maryland wine-and-food pairings and explains what makes each the perfect match.

SEAFOOD: What Maryland table is complete without crab cakes or rockfish on the menu when the season is right? Forster shares this basic foundation for wine selection: "Match the weight of the food with the weight of the wine." Her choice is a Seyval Blanc from Serpent Ridge Vineyard in Westminster. The crisp acidity of this French-American hybrid goes great with anything you put lemon on. "It's a match made in heaven for seafood," she says.

CHICKEN: Forster recommends the 2008 unoaked Chardonnay from Bordeleau Vineyards & Winery in Eden near Salisbury. Bordeleau has a history of great Chardonnays, she says, and touts the tropical fruit tones and the weight of this wine when paired with chicken dishes. Unoaked refers to the wine being aged in stainless-steel containers instead of traditional oak barrels, eliminating the toast-like undertones of wines aged in oak.

BEEF: When it comes to a robust meal of red meat, Forster chooses the reds from Black Ankle Vineyards in Mount Airy, which she says rival those coming from California. Her favorite is Black Ankle's Rolling Hills 2007, a Bordeaux blend with full-bodied dark fruit, chocolate and vanilla flavors with

lots of tannins necessary to complement the taste of fatter meats. She also gives high marks to the winery's Crumbling Rock vintage "If you want to splurge."

CHEESE: A staples at fundraisers and networking events, wine and cheese go together like a handshake and a business card. Forster recommends Eric's Big Zin from Basignani Winery in Sparks, which pairs well with hard cheeses like Gouda, Parmesan reggiano and cheddar. This 100 percent zinfandel wine has jammy, spicy characteristics that also make it a good choice when serving blue cheese appetizers.

DESSERT: The right glass of wine can be dessert itself, says Forster, and such is the case with Vin de Jus, an award-winning ice wine from Elk Run Vineyards in Mount Airy. For those new to ice wines, they're made from grapes that are left to freeze on the vine, harvested frozen and crushed for optimal sugar content. Made from Riesling grapes, the floral flavors of Vin de Jus harmonize with any fruit-based dessert such as pies or tarts. Plus, says Forster, ice wines have a good aging ability. Don't be dismayed by the smaller bottle for the price of a large one. It takes more grapes to make ice wines than traditional varieties. **HM**