

wine

ADVENTURE

THE WINE MAGAZINE FOR WOMEN

Gina Gallo

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Your Guide to Being a Grill Goddess

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Vino Venus Vita

Discovering what works with each wine is such an individual preference that people will learn much about their own preferences as well as how others perceive flavors.



By Jim May

All Fired Up!

BBQ and Wine Pairings to Bring Out
Your Inner Grill Goddess

When the warmth of summer finally shakes us out of the cool, crisp mornings and early evenings of spring, we want to relax on the patio, soak up that balmy sunshine, invite some friends over, open some wine and barbeque a simple meal as effortlessly as possible.

Or, possibly, grilling just isn't your thing.

No doubt about it – firing up that charcoal or gas beast and dealing with the heat, smoke, fire and grill seem like such a manly thing to do. Grilling highly seasoned, heavily marinated cuts of beef and pairing them with big, bold red wines is definitely the Neanderthal approach to a summer feast. Being vaguely genetically tied to homo erectus, I find nothing wrong with that on occasion; however, there is another approach that is more refined, elegant and easy.

So grab those tongs and get in touch with your inner grill goddess.

The first components to consider, of course, are the wines and the company. Do your guests like to play it safe with wine? Are they intimidated? Or can they be adventurous? What style wines would they like to approach: light, fruity, rich, oaky, spicy, sweet, full-bodied or enormous?

In the beginning of the evening in the warmer climates, it is best to start with the lighter wines. Cool, clean, citrusy and herbal Sauvignon Blancs can be one of the most versatile food wines around. Grilled or fresh vegetables drizzled with good olive oil are an organic match. Skewered shrimp marinated in citrus and garlic also only take minutes to cook and can be served hot or room temperature.

Crisp and refreshing dry Rosés can be served with light or fuller-bodied fare. They are light-bodied but with



Skewered prawns (left), marinated in garlic, olive oil, salt & pepper and served with a lemony mint dipping sauce, pair perfectly with a crisp Sauvignon Blanc.

Use the barbequed prawns as a great salad topper (center) or accompany with grilled ears of corn. For a salad course, try a non-traditional Caesar: grill hearts of romaine lettuce and top with dressing and croutons.



much more interesting flavors of strawberry, orange, watermelon, cherry pie, cranberry and roses. A simply prepared and grilled pork chop will make the fruit in the wine literally pop on your tongue without dominating your tastebuds.

When red wines come out, they should reflect the weight of the dishes as well as the wine. Pinot Noirs go wonderfully with grilled Portabello mushrooms with a creamy bleu cheese stuffing. Zinfandel, Sangiovese and Tempranillo kick up that fresh berry and spice factor and enhance any smoky or tomato-based dishes.

The easy way to casually entertain with different wines is to offer a course with a variety of sauces that will bridge the flavors of a variety of wines. For instance, get a few of those large peeled prawns we referred to earlier, put 6 to 8 on a skewer per guest, place in a baking dish and drizzle a little oil, garlic, salt and pepper marinade on them for an hour or two. Now make a few interesting toppings that will act as a bridge between the food flavors and a variety of wines.

A lemon-mint pesto sauce goes harmoniously with Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Blanc or light Chardonnay. An orange and ginger sauce can

enhance a dry or off-dry Rosé or Beaujolais, as well as lighter Pinot Noirs. A Spanish-style thick and creamy Romesco sauce consisting of puréed roasted peppers, garlic and almonds can work well with Tempranillo, light Zinfandels and Sangiovese. A rosemary, lemon and olive tapenade mixed with a little chopped tomato will give a nice Mediterranean flavor to the shrimp and hold up to the heavier red wines such as Cabernet, Syrah or Zinfandel. You don't need to do all these at once, but mix and match as needed for the amount of wines and guests.

Each of these sauces can be made up to a couple days ahead of time, chilled and brought out to room temperature at your own pace. When you are ready to eat, grill the skewers for about 2-3 minutes per side, pile on a platter and serve warm, or relax, have another taste of wine, and serve at room temperature.

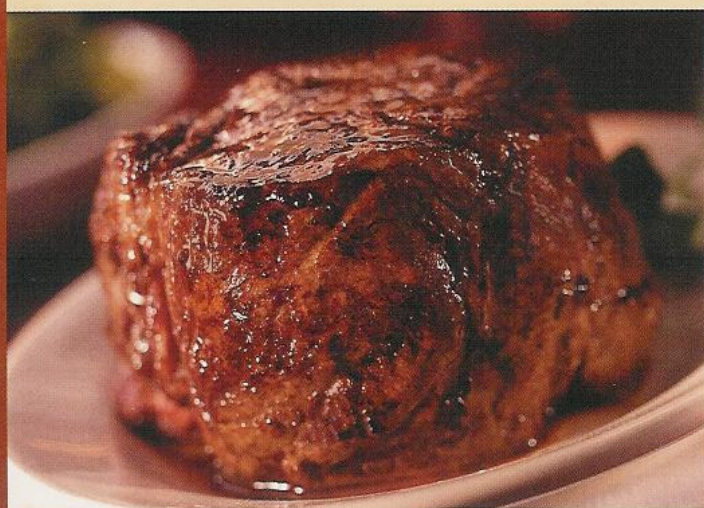
If you have an assortment of any of the above mentioned wines, everyone can mix and match the flavors of the sauces with the shrimp with the wine of the moment in their glass. Discovering what works with each wine is such an individual preference that people will learn much about their own preferences as well as how others perceive flavors.

MOO-VING TO MEAT

The enjoyment and simplicity of grilling a nice piece of meat is hard to beat. The traditional accompaniment to a complex or older red wine is to keep the entrée simple as a counterpoint to the complexity of the wine.

If you are lucky enough to have a special old or complex bottle of red wine, a simple treatment and tender cut are best. A thick, marbled filet with baked potato and sautéed mushrooms do just fine with a mature Cabernet or Bordeaux. The complexity of the wine should not have to compete with complex sauces or spicy seasonings. Just savor those expanding wine flavors with each bite of the meat and life is good.

But meat doesn't necessarily have to be served with your 20-year-old red wines. Contrary to tradition, you can use those flavor bridges to adapt your steak to (gasp) white wines! Season a New York, London broil or flank steak with salt and lemon pepper. Cook medium-rare and squeeze fresh lemon juice on top. Let it rest under a melting pat of butter for about 5



minutes, slice and serve. With a rich Chardonnay, you have a food-pairing epiphany. Of course, a lobster tail, cooked on the grill in its shell, stuffed with garlic and butter, can do no harm alongside the meat, either.

NON-TRADITIONAL GRILLING

Having fun on the grill can be part of the entertainment, too. You can grill the salad course with great gastronomic success. Grill hearts of romaine or radicchio until lightly charred and drizzle with lemony herb vinaigrette or a more traditional Caesar dressing. Toss with wine-friendly cheeses and nuts and voila!

Making pizzas over coals or gas-covered barbeques is another way to get the whole group involved. Start with pre-made pizza dough or even store-bought crusts like Boboli. Buy or make a sauce or two, like marinara and pesto. Grate some cheeses: Fontina, Parmesan, smoked Gouda, (fresh mozzarella is nice sliced); slice tomatoes, olives, asparagus, red bell

So remember barbeque doesn't always mean 'burgers and dogs' or Neanderthal slabs of meat smoking away the bugs (and your guests) in sweltering heat.

peppers, endive, arugula, wild mushroom and basil. Add some interesting meats, such as smoked salmon, duck or chicken; lamb or poultry sausage; fennel salami or proscuitto. Set out a table with all these ingredients and let each person put the oiled dough on foil on the grill, turning when brown on one side and topping to their heart's content to match the wine of their choice. Cover and heat through. Remove and slice as you go.

For your dessert, summer fruit is easily prepared over the grill. One of the favorites at our house is stuffed peaches or apricots. Simply remove pits and fill with mascarpone cheese blended with ginger and almonds, or add a little liqueur, like Grand Marnier. Place your fruit on the grill, cover and heat through, about 10-15 minutes. Serve with a chilled Champagne or fizzy Italian Muscat d'Asti and your work on the grill is done—and kitchen clean-up is a breeze!

So remember, barbeque doesn't always mean "burgers and dogs" or Neanderthal slabs of meat smoking away the bugs (and your guests) in sweltering heat. Grilling brings easy refinement and elegance when the warmth of summer finds you relaxing on the patio with friends and family during breezy, balmy evenings, opening wine and pondering what to eat.

Recipes

LEMON-MINT PESTO

- 1/3 cups walnuts
- 3 cloves garlic
- 2 cups fresh mint leaves, cleaned and de-stemmed
- 1 cup basil, cleaned and de-stemmed
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon sugar

Add walnuts and garlic to a food processor and chop coarsely. Add remaining ingredients and process until smooth. Add more olive oil as needed to make a smooth, thick sauce. Season with salt and pepper to taste. May be used with as a topping with chicken, seafood or vegetable pastas.

GRILLED PEACHES STUFFED WITH GINGER MASCARPONE

Serves 8

- 1 pint mascarpone cheese
- 3 oz. candied ginger, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon powdered ginger
- 2 tablespoon Grand Marnier (or orange liqueur), optional
- 8 medium to large peaches

Mix cheese with candied ginger, powdered ginger and orange liqueur and let sit at least one hour.

Halve and pit peaches. Fill cavity with cheese mixture, place cheese side up on grill over a hot barbeque. Cover and cook until warmed through, about 10 minutes. Serve warm or room temperature with sparkling wine, Muscat or a slightly sweet Riesling or Gewürztraminer.

ORANGE AND GINGER DIPPING SAUCE

Makes about 3/4 cup

- 1/4 cup shallot, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, peeled and minced
- 1/4 cup frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
- 1/3 cup chicken stock
- 2 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 3 tablespoon fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 tablespoon black sesame seeds (optional)

Combine all ingredients. Add more stock if necessary to make the sauce cling to grilled shrimp, scallops or strips of skewered chicken breasts.



Taming the Flame

Secrets for Hot-and-Quick Grilling and Low-and-Slow BBQ

Elizabeth Karmel



GET SET...GRILL!

"Move over honey, I'm grilling tonight!" Elizabeth Karmel, America's BBQ Queen, has TWO smokin' websites:

www.GirlsattheGrill.com is on fire with grilling pointers and recipes targeting the Miss and Mrs. of the house. If your inner shopping diva craves the hottest grilling tools and serving dishes, then

www.grillfriends.com is for you! You can also buy Elizabeth's latest girl-meets-grill book, *Taming the Flame* (Wiley & Sons, 2005).

