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Cooking for Wine

How can you improve your pairings? Learn to cook with wine in mind from Ruth Van Waerebeek, executive chef for Concha y Toro. See the video at WineSpectator.com/video on the Pairing channel, along with more Cooking for Wine Videos and recipes.

Cabernet Sauvignon paired with

Grilled lamb skewers in merquén marinade with Chilean-style Mint Salsa and Quinoa

Merquén: A smoked chili-pepper mix from the indigenous Mapuche Indians. If merquén is not available, you can make your own spice blend with 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano, 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper, 1 teaspoon smoked paprika powder, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander seeds.

Merquén marinade:

1/2 cup olive oil
3 tablespoons plain yogurt, preferably whole-milk
2 tablespoons onion, grated
2 garlic cloves, finely minced
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, finely chopped
1 tablespoon merquén or smoked chili pepper mix

Lamb skewers:

1 1/2 pounds leg of lamb, de-boned and degreased, cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes
Fresh laurel leaves
4 small firm peaches, quartered
8 12-inch bamboo skewers, soaked in water for 30 mins

Chilean-style mint salsa:

1/4 cup scallions, chopped
1/2 cup fresh mint leaves
1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves
1/2 jalapeño pepper, seeds removed
1 clove garlic
3 tbs apple cider vinegar
1/3 cup canola oil
1/4 cup cold water
1 tablespoon sugar
Salt to taste

Makes 4 servings 12 tastings

Method

1. Prepare the marinade; combine all the ingredients for the marinade in a glass oven platter. Add the lamb, mix to combine and let sit for up to 2 hours.
 2. Prepare the Chilean mint salsa: Put all the ingredients in a blender and process until smooth. Taste and adjust the seasonings, this salsa should be brimming with flavour. Refrigerate until ready to serve or up to 3-4 days.
 3. Prepare charcoal, gas or electric grill to medium hot.
 4. Thread 3 pieces of lamb, 2 quarters of peach and 3 laurel leaves loosely on each skewer. Lightly oil grill rack. Grill skewers, turning occasionally, until cooked through, 10-15 minutes. Serve with mint salsa.
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Why this dish works with the Puente Alto Marqués de Casa Concha Cabernet Sauvignon

Flavor bridge: The fruit in the dish (peach, pear, fig, or quince) harmonizes with the ripe fruit in the wine.

Tastes: the wine's intense flavours and firm structure stand up to the richness of the lamb as well as the green mintiness of the salsa; the ripeness of the wine is a wonderful contrast to the spiciness of the merquén.

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Got questions or suggestions?

E-mail me, Gloria Maroti Frazee, Wine Spectator video and education director, at gfrazee@mshanken.com. Cheers!