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# WINE ENTHUSIAST

THE WORLD IN YOUR GLASS

JULY 2014

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**SUMMER**  
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# SUMMER IN WINE COUNTRY

To inspire you to host your own California-style outdoor dinner party, Mike DeSimone and Jeff Jenssen take you to cookbook author rustic home of Brigit Binns in the rolling hills of Paso Robles wine country, capturing the gorgeous yet simple charm of one of her intimate summertime get-togethers.

PHOTOS TRINETTE REED & CHRIS GRAMLY  
STYLING ANDREA DE WIT











**FREE DELIVERY**  
Brigit Binns carries  
her wood-fired  
pizza to the table.

Entertaining comes naturally to Brigit—author of several cookbooks, including *The New Wine Country Cookbook*—and her husband, actor Casey Biggs.

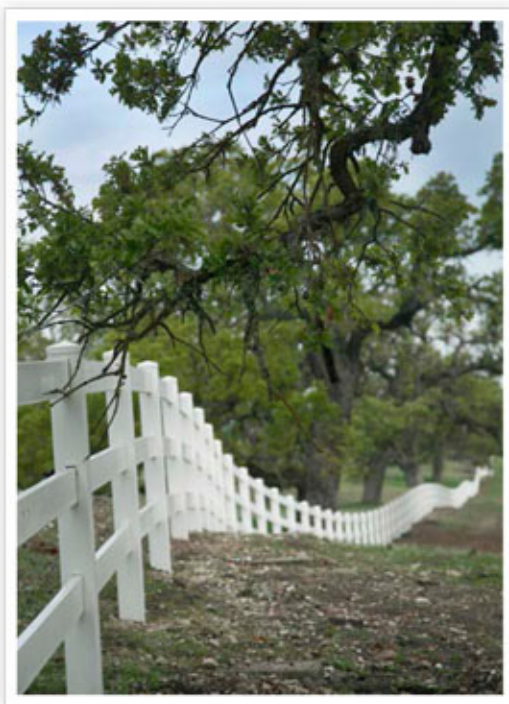
Asking guests to bring bottles is the easiest task on their checklist since the couple's party regulars includes a who's who of the local wine scene. There's Chloe Asseo, whose family owns L'Aventure Winery, and her fiancé, Arnaud Fabre, along with winemakers Riley Hubbard from Law Estate Wines, and Anthony Yount, who owns Kinero Cellars.

True to the laid-back vibe of the region, Brigit and Casey orchestrate dinner parties that are casual, lounging affairs, while still ensuring the menu is palate pleasing and the outdoor table motif is inviting and Instagram-ready.

Brigit's simple secret for making these afternoon-into-evening soirees relaxed and collegial is prepping hearty, comfort-driven gourmet dishes so her pals can help out and apply the finishing touches. At this gathering, her menu included a big, busy salad, pizzas and her mouthwatering take on s'mores—all foods that naturally invite easy-to-handle participation both in her kitchen and alongside her wood-burning stove.

Obviously, it's easy to throw a wine-country bash when you live in wine country and have winemaker friends. Assuming this is not you, don't fret. Simply invite guests to bring their favorite bottles from a single wine region that you want to celebrate.





## THE ARRIVAL

Your backyard banquet should evoke casual wine-country living, so save the table for the main course, and pour everyone a glass of white or rosé wine and savor appetizers while gathered in the kitchen or porch.

The couple loves to dish wood-fired olives, as everyone assesses the bounty of BYOB wine, strategizing which bottles to open and when.

The whites they poured first include Barton Family Wines's 2011 The River, a blend of Grenache Blanc and Viognier, and Cypher Winery's 2010 Chardonnay.

Then, it's on to the rosés: a L'Aventure Rosé, made from Syrah, Mourvèdre and Grenache; and Rancho Cellars's Galaxie Rosé, blended from Carignan, Mourvèdre and Grenache.



### POT OF BOLD

The couple's go-to starters: Wood-fired olives and sheep's milk cheese in grape leaves, with crusty torn bread on the side.



# Watercress & Tangerine Salad

With Black Pepper Vinaigrette

- 1 medium red onion, peeled, halved lengthwise, and then thinly sliced lengthwise
- 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1½ tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1½ teaspoons coarsely cracked black peppercorns
- ¾ teaspoon fine sea salt
- ⅔ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 small tangerines, peel and pith removed, supremed
- 6 small bunches watercress, coarse stems removed, washed and dried

In a bowl, cover the slivered red onion with ice water and let soak 25–30 minutes to mellow the flavor. In a large bowl, prepare the vinaigrette. Whisk together the vinegar, mustard, pepper and salt. Drizzle in the olive oil, whisking constantly until the mixture is emulsified. Drain the red onions well and pat dry with paper towels. Add the onions, tangerines and watercress to the bowl of vinaigrette, and toss together gently. Serve immediately. Serves 6–8.

## PAIR IT WITH...

**Barton Family Wines 2011 The River**  
A blend of 56% Grenache Blanc and 44% Viognier from Paso Robles, widely considered Rhône-blend country. Grenache Blanc's acidity and minerality brightly balance Viognier's depth and viscosity, nicely matching the citrus and vinaigrette.





## A WORK OF ARTICHOKE

The primal thrill of tearing into a steamed-then-roasted artichoke and slathering it in lemon aioli is the vegetable version of covering the table with newspaper and opening crabs with a hammer and pliers. Simple, sumptuous and striking to look at, it just may become your favorite dinner-party dish.







VINO VISTA  
The couple's view  
of Paso Robles



## THE TABLE AS AN OASIS

Most of your time will be spent around it, so take time to make your tablescape worthy of the landscape. To set a lazy summery scene, Brigit uses soft hues, mixing her own vintage honey-colored dishes with turquoise plates from Pottery Barn, while accenting the table with herbs, fresh flowers, grape leaves and a hand-hewn wood cutting board.

Cream-colored linen napkins with delicate edging are from AndBe Boutique in Paso Robles, as are glass jar vases and candleholders.

A side-serving table keeps the dining surface uncluttered and elegant. Situating your table under a large tree provides not only provides a dramatic backdrop and cooling shade, it's ideal for stringing lights to keep the mood magical after sunset.





## THE PIZZA-MAKING PARTY

Roll out the pizza dough and let the communal topping fest begin.

This group activity isn't a way to lessen your workload (remember, you'll still need to prep everything), it provides a narrative for the dinner party.

"Assuming you have all the ingredients at the ready, having friends help out is great way to give them some ownership with the dishes," she says. "It not only keeps people together, talking and laughing, but it's this great little experience and connection they all shared and is a storyline we all can keep referring to as the party progresses."

Straying from the usual cheese-and-tomato pie, Brigit's signature pies include a calamari and chorizo pizza and a slab bacon and fresh fig pizza.

No wood-burning oven or pizza steel? Transfer the dough to and from the grill using a rimless cookie sheet, and grill for 1 minute per side before adding toppings. If your grill has no cover, lightly pan-fry raw items like calamari or bacon before adding to the pizza.



**STRIKE A CORD**  
For making wood-fired pizzas, the couple says the secret is using a mix of red, white and blue oak.







# Calamari and Chorizo Pizza

With Caramelized Fennel and Shaved Manchego

**1** tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling

**1** small bulb fennel, quartered, cored and slivered crosswise (greens reserved for garnish)

**1** tablespoon medium-dry white wine, like Viognier

Fine sea salt

One 9-ounce dough ball, room temperature

Rice flour and cornmeal, for shaping and cooking the pizza

**3** ounces cured chorizo, skin removed and sliced very thinly on the diagonal

**3** ounces shaved Manchego, or other aged sheep's milk cheese

**3** ounces calamari rings and tentacles

**¼** teaspoon black lava salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Torn fresh fennel tops or dill, for garnish

Place a heavy baking steel on the lower oven rack of your oven and preheat it to its highest setting (usually 550°F) for 1 hour.

With 10 minutes left in the preheating, dust a board and your hands with rice flour, then stretch and pull the dough (don't press) into a roughly 13-inch round or oval—don't try to make it perfect. Transfer to a wooden pizza peel (or upside-down large, rimless baking sheet) liberally sprinkled with cornmeal.

Working quickly, drizzle the dough evenly with about 1 tablespoon of olive oil and scatter the fennel evenly over the top, leaving a 1-inch border.

Arrange the chorizo evenly and top with the shaved Manchego, again leaving a 1-inch border. Scatter with the calamari rings and tentacles and black lava salt. Jiggle the dough on the peel to make sure its still mobile, then slide it onto the hot baking steel. Bake until the edges are golden and the cheese melts, about 8–11 minutes. Remove the pizza and place on a cutting board, then grind plenty of black pepper over it. Garnish with the fennel tops, slice and enjoy. *Makes one 13-inch pizza. Recipe may be doubled.*

## PAIR IT WITH...

**Copia Vineyards's 2012 The Cure**

A small-batch Syrah-based blend, with 4% Grenache and 4% Mourvèdre.

Made using grapes from L'Aventure's vineyard, this heavyweight effortlessly stands up to the spicy chorizo and briny calamari.



**THE SCOOP**  
Sheep's milk ice cream  
from Negranti Creamery  
in Paso Robles.

# Provencal Strawberry Galette

With Blueberries  
And Ice Cream

**Dough:**

- 8 ounces (2 sticks) unsalted butter, very cold
- 1¾ cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup coarse cornmeal
- ¾ teaspoon minced fresh rosemary
- 1 teaspoon finely grated zest of an organic or well-scrubbed lemon
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 large egg yolks, lightly beaten

**Filling:**

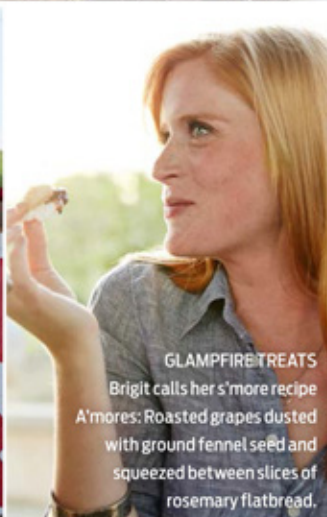
- 1 pound strawberries, hulled (in-season only)
- ½ cup lavender jelly, or ginger or apricot preserves
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar

**For serving:**

- 1 small basket blueberries, about 6 ounces
- 1 pint sheep's milk ice cream

**PAIR IT  
WITH...**

**Clos Solène's 2012  
Sweet Clémentine**  
A true sweetie with  
strawberry aromas,  
bright acidity, an  
elegant trace of  
tannins and no  
cloying heaviness.



**GLAMPFIRE TREATS**  
Brigit calls her s'more recipe  
A'mores: Roasted grapes dusted  
with ground fennel seed and  
squeezed between slices of  
rosemary flatbread.





Cut the butter into small pieces and place on a plate. Chill in the refrigerator for 25 minutes, or in the freezer for 10 minutes. In a bowl, combine the flour, cornmeal, rosemary, lemon zest, sugar and salt. Chill the bowl in the refrigerator for 20 minutes.

Dump the dry ingredients into a food processor and pulse briefly to blend. Scatter the cold butter over the top and give it a few 5-second pulses, just until the mixture looks like coarse breadcrumbs. Remove the lid, add the egg yolks and drizzle 3 tablespoons of ice water over the top. Pulse for 10–15 seconds, until the dough just begins to clump together. If the mixture doesn't clump, add up to 2 tablespoons of water, one at a time, pulsing briefly in between—don't over mix!

Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and gather into a thick disk. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for at least 1 hour, then let the dough stand for 10 minutes before rolling. Preheat the oven to 375°F and place a shelf in the center position. Quarter the strawberries lengthwise (halve really large berries crosswise before quartering lengthwise).

Place dough on a baking parchment covered with flour. Roll out and form a 15-inch round that's less than ¼-inch thick. Then, slide the pastry-topped parchment onto a large, rimless baking sheet.

Brush the preserves over the dough, leaving a 2-inch border. Place the strawberries over the preserves. Using a metal spatula to help, gently lift the edges of the dough, folding them in, creating a bowl-like effect. Brush any exposed dough with melted butter and sprinkle the sugar over the whole tart. Bake for 45–55 minutes, until the crust is golden.

Slide the tart-topped parchment paper onto a cooling rack and let stand for 5 minutes. Now slide onto a platter and scatter any remaining strawberries and the blueberries on top. Cut into wedges and serve with a scoop of sheep's milk ice cream on the side.

Serves 6.



For the full wine list and more of Brigit's recipes visit [winemag.com/summerlist](http://winemag.com/summerlist)

## THE MENU

### APPETIZERS

- Whole Artichokes in the Wood Oven
- Oil-cured Olives in the Wood Oven
- Rinconada Dairy Sheep's Milk Cheese in Vine Leaves

### PIZZAS

- Meyer Lemon, Sautéed Leek and Caper Pizza with Taleggio
- Calamari and Chorizo Pizza with Caramelized Fennel and Shaved Manchego
- Slab Bacon and Fresh Fig Pizza with Fontina and Thyme Flowers with a Farm Egg

### SALADS

- Watercress, Tangerine and Black Pepper Vinaigrette
- Grilled Zucchini with Feta and Mint

### DESSERTS

- Strawberry and Blueberry Galette
- Negranti Creamery Vanilla Sheep's Milk Ice Cream
- "A'Mores" with roasted grapes 🍷