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Why you need to forget
all the rules and

drink whites this winter

By Mike DeSimone & Jeff Jenssen
Photos by Ben Fink

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hen faced with drinking white wine when there's a chill in the air, many people recoil, tighten up and only see red. The archaic, unwritten law that all whites must be shelved until spring is not only silly, it also means *you're applying rules to having fun* when wining and dining with friends and family.

Don't be that person.

That said, not every white is going to work in winter. The cold season is the time for bold comfort food with lots of cream, butter and cheese (perfect alongside oaky whites) and heated spices (perfect for tempering high-acid blancs).

And let's not forget the challenge when trying to pick whites with those ubiquitous wintertime red-meat dishes. Broaden your palate and sharpen your pairing skills by complementing the spices and side dishes instead.

As the mercury plunges and nights grow longer, remember there's something other than snow that can brighten up a cold winter's day.

Pairing 101 Comfort Food

Grilled Cheese: Cheese, butter and toasted bread are pretty much a no-brainer when it comes to wine pairing. A nice, oaky Chardonnay will do the trick. Stick with a classic and choose one from Burgundy or Napa.

Beef Stew: Rich, tender and juicy beef stews are a great way to beat the winter blues. Pair yours with a California Marsanne from Santa Barbara or Paso Robles. The ripe fruit flavors, rich minerality and hints of brown baking spices, like cinnamon and nutmeg, make this a match made in heaven.

Chili: Beef, tomatoes and spice call for high acid and strong tropical-fruit flavors that can compete. Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand or South Africa will definitely fit the bill.

Black Bean Soup: Think Albariño. Whether from Spain, California or Washington State, the bracing acidity, stone-fruit flavors and citrus notes easily complement the earthiness of this full-flavored soup.

Chicken Soup: Grandma's chicken soup deserves a well-made Pinot Grigio from Italy or a Pinot Gris from California or Alsace. The crisp minerality and light floral notes make every mouthful a sheer delight.

Vegetable Soup/Minestrone: Consider a light white wine with a heavy mineral profile like Malvasia from Italy or Istria. The crisp, clean notes showcase the ripe, intense vegetable flavors of these hearty soups.

Roast Chicken: A Rhône-style blend—whether from France or California's Central Coast—will offer nice spice and floral overtones to go with chicken rubbed with lemon and herbs.

Meat Loaf: Shake up mom's Sunday meat loaf and pair it with an oak-aged Semillon from South Australia. Ripe fruit flavors, rich fullness and caramelized toffee notes provide great balance for all that meaty goodness.

Chicken Pot Pie: Light, buttery pastry crust and savory chicken chunks cry out for a California or Rhône Valley Viognier. Graceful ripe fruit flavors and zesty acidity are a great match for this traditional American classic.

Lasagna: Serve a bright white with this Italian-American favorite, like a Fiano from southern Italy. The wine's fresh citrus notes will hold up to the tomato, and the almond and honey notes will complement the baked mozzarella.



CHARDONNAY

Cull & Pistol Lobster Bisque

Recipe courtesy Dave Seigal, chef, Cull & Pistol Oyster Bar, New York City

Named for lobsters that have lost one or both claws, Cull & Pistol is located in New York City's bustling Chelsea Market. A seasonal raw bar and creative seafood dishes are served alongside a focused, yet interesting selection of wines and craft beers.

- 3 female lobsters (1 pound each)**
- ¼ cup olive oil**
- 3 ounces butter**
- 1 head of garlic, peeled and cloves sliced crosswise**
- 2 leeks, white part only, diced**
- 2 medium onions, peeled and diced**
- 2 celery stalks**
- 3 plum tomatoes, diced**
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste**
- 1 cup dry white wine**
- ½ cup Cognac**
- 2 quarts lobster or fish stock**
- 1½ cups heavy cream**
- 1 bunch tarragon**
- 3 sprigs of thyme**
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch**
- Salt and black pepper to taste**

Remove tails and claws from all lobsters. Cut bodies lengthwise using a large, heavy-duty knife and remove light-green entrails—save any dark-green roe for another use.

Place a 9-quart, heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add oil and butter. Add garlic cut side down and all lobster parts, cooking until garlic is toasted and lobsters have turned deep red in color.

After about 5 minutes, add leeks, onions and celery. Stir until they turn translucent, about 5 minutes. Remove claws and tails from pot at this point.

Add plum tomatoes and tomato paste. Stir until the tomato paste coats the whole pot and barely starts to caramelize, approximately 4–5 minutes.

Add white wine and Cognac and stir, allowing the alcohol to cook out. When the liquid has reduced to less than half, add fish stock, cream, tarragon and



PAIR IT

Julia Travis, Cull & Pistol's general manager, suggests pairing Jacques Puffeney's 2010 Arbois Chardonnay with the lobster bisque. "The richness of a Jura Chardonnay would complement the creaminess of the bisque, while adding a nice dose of well-integrated acid to also cut through the soup's richness," she says. "Additionally, the nutty qualities of this wine in particular will bring out the added depth from the Cognac and the earthiness of the tarragon."



thyme. Simmer on low heat for 20 minutes.

Strain the liquid through a fine mesh chinois into a smaller pot. In a separate bowl, make a slurry by dissolving cornstarch into 2 tablespoons of water. Pour this mix into the soup while stirring over medium heat. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Remove lobster meat from shells by cracking claws with the back of a heavy knife. The tail meat can be removed by cutting tail in half lengthwise. Dice meat into desired size and poach in soup to finish cooking just before serving. Garnish with chives or tarragon, if desired. *Serves 6.*

SAUVIGNON BLANC

Willow Lodge's Barking Frog White Cheddar Mac & Cheese with Truffle Oil

Recipe courtesy Bobby Moore, executive chef, Willow Lodge's Barking Frog, Woodinville, Washington

Featuring American cuisine with Pacific Northwest accents, the Barking Frog offers a dizzying array of Washington State wine choices. Set on the grounds of the exquisite Willow Lodge, the Barking Frog is within driving distance of more than 100 winery tasting rooms.

- 4 tablespoons butter**
- ½ cup all purpose flour**
- 1 quart whole milk**
- 3 cups heavy cream**
- 2½ pounds Tillamook White Cheddar, grated**
- 1 tablespoon salt**
- 1 pound elbow macaroni, cooked and drained**
- 3 tablespoons breadcrumbs**
- 2 teaspoons truffle oil**

Melt butter over medium heat, then whisk in the flour. Make a blond roux by cooking flour and butter until it smells slightly nutty and is light golden.

Slowly whisk milk and cream into the roux and bring to a boil. Cook for just a few minutes, stirring often to avoid burning on the bottom of the pan.

Take mixture off stove, add cheese and salt, and stir well until melted and smooth. Add cooked pasta, mix well, spoon into bowls and top each with small amount of breadcrumbs. Broil until toasted on top.

Top each bowl with a dash of truffle oil and serve. *Serves 8 as a side dish.*

VIIGNIER

Pork Loin Roast with Rosemary, Balsamic Vinegar and Vanilla Fig Jam

Chef Kendra Bailey Morris returns to her Southern roots with this slow-cooker pork roast recipe. It gives a heady nod to the classic combination of sweet and tangy. What results after hours of slow cooking is amazingly tender, slightly sweet, herbaceous pork with a nice vinegary tang.

Fig Jam

10 to 12 fresh figs, destemmed and flesh chopped (about 2 cups chopped)
¼ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup honey
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
¼ teaspoon vanilla bean paste or extract
1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary
Pinch of cayenne pepper

Pork Roast

1 boneless pork loin roast (3–4 pounds)

1 teaspoon minced garlic
½ teaspoon minced fresh rosemary
¼ teaspoon salt, or to taste
⅛ teaspoon black pepper, or to taste
1 large onion, sliced
1 teaspoon all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon unsalted butter, softened

Combine all ingredients for fig jam in saucepan. Bring to boil and simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes or until thickened. Set aside.

Spray inside of slow cooker with cooking spray. Trim excess fat and silver skin off the pork roast. Rub pork loin with the garlic, rosemary, salt and pepper.

Put onions in the slow cooker and lay the pork, fat-side up, on top.

Smother pork well with fig jam. Cover and cook on low for 6–8 hours, basting every 2 hours, if possible, until the internal temperature of the meat reads 145°F. Transfer pork to a cutting board and let rest.

Pour leftover pork juices and onions into a saucepan and bring to a boil. Continue to cook over medium heat, uncovered, for 10 minutes. Separately, combine flour and butter and mix into paste. During the last minute or so, whisk paste into pork juice/onion mixture. Cook sauce until slightly thickened. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Slice pork and place on a serving platter. Spoon the sauce over the pork, serving remaining sauce on the side. *Serves 8.*

PAIR IT >>>

Kendra Bailey Morris, author of *The Southern Slow Cooker*, pays homage to her home state by pairing Virginia Viognier with the sweet and tangy flavors of this slow-cooked pork roast. "Barboursville Vineyards' 2010 Reserve Viognier just begs to be enjoyed alongside this complex combination of flavors," she says. "Barboursville's take captures the many unique characteristics of Virginia's official state grape, boasting rich golden hues that give way to supple stone fruits like nectarine and peach. This Viognier's classic bright acidity, while more pronounced in its younger years, mellows into 2013 and will continue to do so."



PAIR IT

Matt Davis, wine director at the Barking Frog, recommends DeLille Cellars' 2012 Chaleur Estate white. "This Sauvignon Blanc blended with Sémillon has notes of ripe apricot wrapped in vanilla bean and baking-spice oak tones," he says. "The wine is rich enough to be comforting, yet crisp enough to cut through the mac and cheese, leaving you ready for the next bite."



