

3401 Mt Diablo Blvd  
Lafayette, CA 94549  
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5443 Clayton Road  
Clayton, CA 94517  
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## **Tortoise Creek Viognier, Vin de Pays d'Oc 2007**

Created in 1990 by Mel and Janie Master, a British couple who have lived in both the south of France and the US, Tortoise Creek is dedicated to varietal distinction among a line of wines from Languedoc and CA's Central Coast.

This viognier is sourced from select growers in the Argeliers, between Narbonne and Beziers, in the Minervois appellation. Producing perfectly ripe fruit is a testament to the warm climate and gravely soils there. Their winemaking techniques are very modern; the juice stays at 32°F for ten days before fermentation in order to enhance its fruity aromas. Fermentation is maintained at 55°F to express all the aromatic potential, bringing good balance to the wine. After that, the wine stays on its fine lees to achieve body and optimal expression. No oak was used during the winemaking process.

***Thieves' price: \$8.99***

## **Champagne Poached Scallops** **(yield: 24 appetizers)**

### Ingredients:

1 baguette loaf, cut into 24 pieces  
2 cups Champagne  
1 fresh lime  
24 large scallops

### Red pepper pesto:

2 large red bell peppers, washed and halved with stems and seeds removed  
3 garlic cloves, finely minced  
3 tablespoons pine nuts, chopped  
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Salt, if needed

### Directions

Roast or grill the red bell peppers until the skins are charred then, using tongs transfer them to a covered container such as a small pan with a lid or even a plastic zip-loc bag to let them rest. Peel them when cool.

Prepare the pesto. Cut the peeled red peppers brunoise (julienne then crosswise into 1/8-inch pieces) and combine with garlic, pine nuts, and olive oil. Fold in parmesan cheese and season with freshly ground black pepper. Add salt only if needed, since the cheese will add saltiness.

Toast the baguette slices lightly on a baking sheet and set aside.

Bring Champagne to a boil in a saucepan. Squeeze in juice of lime, then add scallop and poach until they are no longer translucent. Remove scallops to a utility platter and let Champagne reduce by about two-thirds.

Spoon some red pepper pesto onto each slice of bread and top with a scallop. Top with a small amount of the champagne reduction and serve.

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## **Paso a Paso Tempranillo, La Mancha 2007**

Here is a great example of what a fine wine negociant can do with his grower-producer-distributor relationships. This is world-class tempranillo, produced in an “international” style specifically for export to the US, and imported directly by the same company that distributes it. This way, Sr.

Jorge Ordoñez can ship it in large quantities, and offer it to the broad market at a remarkable value. La Mancha, in the very arid center of Spain, is the largest continuously planted vineyard region in the world. Based on its warm, dry climate, this tempranillo is full-bodied, and expresses great concentration of dark fruits such as bing cherry and plum. Six months’ maturation in French oak barrels ensure a rich, sweet mouthfeel, while softening the rougher tannins present in the finish. 100% varietal, and dee-lish!

***Thieves’ price: \$9.99!***

# **Chili Rubbed Flank Steak**

## **(serves 4)**

### Ingredients

2 to 2 1/4 pounds flank steak  
1 1/2 tbsp grill seasoning, a palm full and a half  
1 tbsp dark Mexican chili powder, a palm full  
1 lime, zested  
Cooking spray or oil to coat grill or grill pan  
2 tablespoons butter  
1 cup white rice  
1 small onion, chopped  
1/2 red bell pepper, chopped  
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped  
2 cloves garlic, chopped

### Directions

Preheat outdoor grill or indoor grill pan to high. Rub the meat with a mixture of grill seasoning, chili powder and the lime zest. Let meat stand 10 minutes. Grease grill surface then add meat and cook 7 to 8 minutes on the first side, 5 to 6 minutes on the flip side for medium doneness.

For the rice, heat a medium sauce pot over medium heat. Add butter, and when melted add rice and toast for a couple of minutes. Add the onion, bell pepper, jalapeno and garlic and cook for a few minutes to begin to soften the veggies. Add stock and raise heat to bring up to a bubble. Stir in the tomato paste and hot sauce. Reduce heat to simmer, cover the pot and cook 18 minutes, until rice is tender. Add shrimp to the pot in the last 5 minutes of cooking. The shrimp will steam on top of the rice. Cook the shrimp until pink and firm. Combine the seafood and cilantro into the rice and season with salt, to taste.

Season sliced tomatoes with salt and dress the avocado with lemon juice. Make 4 stacks alternating the tomatoes with avocado and onions.

Slice the steaks and serve on a bed of shrimp rice, the guacamole stacks alongside. Garnish the guacamole stacks with cheese crumbles.

2 cups chicken stock  
2 tablespoons tomato paste  
2 teaspoons hot sauce, eyeball it  
1 pound small to medium shrimp, peeled and deveined  
2 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro leaves or flat-leaf parsley  
Salt  
2 ripe beefsteak tomatoes, sliced  
2 Hass avocados, halved, scooped from skin and sliced  
1/2 lemon  
1 small red onion, thinly sliced  
1/2 cup crumbled queso Asadero

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## **Jenke Semillon, Barossa Valley 2008**

The Jenke family were part of a wave of German immigrants who fled religious persecution in Silesia (East Germany) in the mid-19th Century, and landed in South Australia. Their family's vineyards are situated along the North Para River, which runs southwest from the Barossa Ranges toward the Southern Ocean. The oldest vines were planted in the 1970's on the original estate property. This is Kym Jenke's 20th consecutive varietal Semillon release. It has a pronounced fruity, lemongrass and zesty lemon tang. Wonderfully balanced, with herbaceous gooseberry aromas, this dry white was bottled shortly after fermenting to dryness. It sees no oak at all, so that it retains its fresh, bright character. Like its peers in Bordeaux, this is serious semillon, with lots of flavor, bracing acidity and a clean, dry finish.

***Thieves' price: \$15.99***

## **Mock Ceviche (serves 4)**

### Ingredients

1 pound tilapia fillets, cut into 2-inch pieces  
1-2 jalapeño peppers, minced  
1/2 cup lime juice  
1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro, divided  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh oregano  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 large green bell pepper, halved crosswise  
and thinly sliced  
1 large tomato, chopped  
1/2 cup very thinly sliced white onion  
1/4 cup quartered green olives  
1 avocado, chopped



### Directions

Place tilapia in a medium skillet. Cover with water. Bring to a boil over high heat, remove from the heat, cover and let stand for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, place jalapeño to taste in a small bowl and whisk in lime juice, 2 tablespoons cilantro, oregano and salt. Transfer the tilapia to a large, shallow, nonreactive dish with a slotted spoon and pour the lime juice mixture over the top. Add bell pepper, tomato, onion and olives; gently mix to combine. (It's OK if the tilapia breaks apart.) Cover and chill for at least 20 minutes.

Sprinkle with the remaining cilantro and avocado just before serving.

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## **Torres “Gran Sangre de Toro”, Catalunya 2004**

The Torres family traces its roots in Penedes, Spain back to 1870, and Miguel Torres represents the fourth generation of winemakers. The original Sangre de Toro (no “Gran”) was one of the first Spanish wines to be distributed worldwide. The garnacha, cariñena and syrah for this reserve are grown in region famous since the times of the Roman Emperor Augustus for producing the finest Mediterranean wines. It exhibits all the exuberant aroma traditionally found in an intense, ripe European red, with a savory background of fine spices, balanced by perfumed notes of blackberries and dried cherries. An earthy mid-palate followed by a pleasant, lingering finish. Aged for 12 months in 20% new French oak from the Nevers forest.

**\$19 value. *Thieves’ price:* \$15.99**

## **Sausage-stuffed Bell Peppers (serves 4)**

### Ingredients

1/2 pound ground pork sausage  
1 cup chopped onions  
1/2 cup chopped green bell peppers  
1/2 cup chopped celery  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1 1/2 cups cook long-grain rice  
1/4 cup chopped green onions (green tops)  
4 medium bell peppers, sliced in half  
lengthwise, seeds removed  
4 tablespoons dried fine bread crumbs  
4 tablespoons grated Parmesan Reggiano  
Essence, recipe follows

### Directions

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. In a large skillet, over medium heat, brown the sausage, about 3 minutes. Add the onions, peppers, and celery. Season with salt and pepper. Saute for 4 to 5 minutes, or until the vegetables are soft. Add the rice and mix well. Season with salt and pepper. Cook for about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the green onions and parsley. Season the bell peppers with salt and pepper. Spoon the mixture into the bell peppers. In a mixing bowl, combine the bread crumbs and cheese. Season with Essence and mix well. Sprinkle the crust over each pepper. Place the peppers in a shallow pan and add just enough water to cover the bottom. Bake for 30 minutes, or until the tops are crusty and brown. Serve hot

### Emeril's ESSENCE Creole Seasoning

2 1/2 tablespoons paprika  
2 tablespoons salt  
2 tablespoons garlic powder  
1 tablespoon black pepper  
1 tablespoon onion powder  
1 tablespoon cayenne pepper  
1 tablespoon dried oregano  
1 tablespoon dried thyme  
Combine all ingredients thoroughly and store in an airtight jar or container.  
Yield: about 2/3 cup