

3401 Mt Diablo Blvd
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Spinyback Pinot Gris, Nelson 2006

The Tuatara, or “Spinyback” of New Zealand is not a lizard, but a sphenodontida (dinosaur). Dating back 225 million years, it became extinct elsewhere in the world about 60 million years ago, and is now threatened in

New Zealand. By assisting Nelson’s local Maori tribe in its conservation efforts, the winery is helping protect this unique species. Some of you may recall their sauvignon blanc, which was a Thieves favorite for most of 2008. Similarly, their pinot gris is zesty and bright, more vibrant than those from the Northern hemisphere. Classic varietal aromas of pears and quince, with tangy grapefruit, lime and melon on the palate, and a mineral undercurrent. An all-occasion wine; enjoy it chilled on a summer afternoon, or paired with seafood (especially mussels). Spinyback donates a portion of all sales to its “Save the Tuatara” campaign.

\$ 15 value. *Thieves’ price: \$9.99*

Spicy Mussels with White Wine (serves 4-6)

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 Spanish onion, thinly sliced
4 large garlic cloves, chopped
2 teaspoons fennel seeds
1 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt, plus more for seasoning
1 cup dry white wine

Directions

Heat grill to high.

Heat oil in heavy large pot on the grates of the grill.

Add the onion and cook until soft. Add the garlic, fennel seeds, crushed red pepper and salt and cook for 1 minute.

Add wine, lemon slices, and 1/4 cup parsley; bring to boil. Add mussels. Cover pot and cook until mussel shells open, stirring once, about 6 minutes; discard any mussels that do not open. Using slotted spoon, transfer mussels to large shallow bowl. Boil broth in pot until reduced to 1 cup, about 3 minutes; season, to taste, with pepper. Pour broth over mussels. Sprinkle with tomatoes and remaining parsley.

Brush bread on both sides with oil and season with salt. Grill until golden brown on both sides. Serve mussels with bread for dipping.

2 (1/4-inch-thick) lemon slices
1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley leaves
2 1/2 pounds fresh mussels, scrubbed and debearded
1/2 cup chopped seeded tomatoes
8 slices crusty Italian bread, sliced 1/2-inch thick
Olive oil



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Tudal Family “Napa Valley Cuvee,” 2006

In 1997, Arnold Tudal’s son John dragged the family’s 1947 Massey-Harris tractor out of the weeds, and displayed it in front of the old dilapidated shed on the homestead in northern St Helena. Shortly thereafter, the shed got a facelift, and that old tractor inspired a new brand of wine. Fast-forward twelve years, and John’s decided it’s the *wine’s* turn to get a makeover this time. Entirely sourced in Napa Valley, this sangiovese (60%), merlot (20%) and zinfandel (20%) “field blend” is as unique and fun as the simpler life represented by days gone by. Lush, black fruits with a hint of oak sweetness, some herbal notes such as dried sage on the nose, and a lip-smacking finish of berry compote. Here’s a great one for anything you can throw on the ‘que!

\$12 value. *Thieves’ price:* \$9.99

Thai Chicken Satay (serves 4)

Ingredients

3 tablespoons lime juice
3 tablespoons canola oil
2 teaspoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
2 teaspoons fish sauce (see Ingredient note)
1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper
1 pound chicken tenders

Spicy Peanut Sauce:

2 tablespoons smooth natural peanut butter
2 tablespoons "lite" coconut milk
1 tablespoon lime juice

Directions

To marinate chicken: Whisk lime juice, oil, soy sauce, fish sauce and crushed red pepper in a shallow baking dish until combined; add chicken and turn to coat. Let marinate in the refrigerator for 15 minutes.

Preheat grill to high.

To grill chicken and serve: Thread each chicken tender onto a wooden skewer (see Tip). Grill the chicken skewers until cooked through and no longer pink in the middle, about 3 minutes per side. Serve warm or chilled with Spicy Peanut Sauce for dipping.

To prevent wooden skewers from burning on the grill, wrap the exposed portion in foil before grilling. (Contrary to popular wisdom, soaking them in water doesn't prevent them from burning.) Ingredient note: Fish sauce is a pungent Southeast Asian sauce made from salted, fermented fish. You can find it in the Asian section of large supermarkets and in Asian specialty markets.

2 teaspoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
1 teaspoon brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper, or to taste
Whisk together peanut butter, coconut milk, lime juice, soy sauce, sugar and crushed red pepper in a small bowl until smooth.



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Tangent “Ecclestone”, San Luis Obispo County 2007

Each Tangent wine is made to highlight its individual variety, and Ecclestone represents characteristics of the gamut. This wine is the epitome of synergy – the entire portfolio rolled into one, and then some. The blending process provides winemaker Christian Roguenant an opportunity to harken back to his French roots, and to spread his California winemaker wings at the same time. The envy of many, he is provided the opportunity to be extremely creative with each vintage of this wine. An extraordinary blend of 7 varietals, the 2007 was entirely fermented in stainless steel for just over two months at 55 degrees, intentionally avoiding any barrel contact or secondary fermentation. While it does carry a hint of residual sugar, the bright acidity and low alcohol let the fresh fruit and floral aromas shine.

\$20 Value. Thieves' price: \$14.99

Greek Grain Salad (serves 6)

Ingredients

1 pound barley
Salt
1/2 pound rye berries
1/2 pound wheat berries
1 cup pitted, halved kalamata olives
1 cup crumbled feta cheese
1 cup 1/4-inch diced cucumber
1 cup 1/4-inch diced tomato
1/2 cup 1/4-inch diced red onion
1/2 cup chopped parsley leaves
1/2 cup chopped dill

Dressing:

1/4 cup cider vinegar
1/4 cup minced dill
4 cloves garlic, minced
3/4 cup olive oil
Salt and peppertender-crisp. Season with salt and black pepper, to taste.



Hints

Make the salad: Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the barley and cook for 15 minutes. Using a sieve, remove barley from the water and transfer to a bowl. Bring the water back to a boil and salt, to taste. Add the barley and rye and wheat berries and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 30 to 40 minutes. Drain, transfer to a bowl, and cool.

When cool, combine with the remaining ingredients.

Meanwhile, make the Dressing: Whisk together the vinegar, dill, and garlic. While whisking, drizzle in the oil to make a smooth dressing. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Toss the salad with the dressing and serve.

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d'Ameillaud Cairanne, Cotes du Rhone 2006

Cairanne, a little village situated in the east of the Rhône river between Orange and Vaison-la-Romaine, has developed reputation for quality wine production since the Middle-Ages. Planted on chalk, sand- and limestone soils, the 1250 hectare Ameillaud vineyard has produced one of the best “villages” wines north of Avignon since the 18th century. When fermenting the grapes destined for their blend of the same name, Domaine d’Ameillaud strives for natural maturity, macerating the fruit for between two and three weeks, at relatively high initial temperatures. They rely on tasting to gauge the intensity of its extraction, thus preserving the fresh fruit flavors. Typical grenache, syrah and carignane blend, with the medium-full flavors of blackberry, cherry and baked earth that reflect the region’s minerality.

\$20 Value. *Thieves’ price: \$15.99*

Mediterranean Lamb Burgers **(serves 4)**

Yogurt Sauce

1 12-ounce container plain yogurt
1 garlic clove, minced and mashed to a paste with 1/4 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons shredded fresh mint leaves, or to taste

For burgers:

1 1/2 pounds fresh ground lamb shoulder
1 garlic clove, minced
1 tablespoon each: minced fresh rosemary and fresh parsley or thyme leaves
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions

Make yogurt sauce: Drain yogurt in a sieve lined with a dampened paper towel set over a bowl 30 minutes. Transfer drained yogurt to a small bowl and stir in garlic paste and mint.

Make burgers: Prepare grill. In a bowl gently but thoroughly combine the lamb, garlic, rosemary, parsley, salt and pepper. Grill on an oiled rack set 5 to 6 inches over glowing coals 7 minutes on each side for medium-rare.

In a bowl combine olives, tomatoes, parsley, olive oil and red wine vinegar. Season with salt and pepper.

Transfer burgers to pita pockets and sprinkle with goat cheese. Top with chopped salad. Serve burgers with yogurt sauce.

Chopped salad:

1/3 cup coarsely chopped pitted Kalamata olives
2 ripe medium tomatoes, seeded and coarsely chopped
3 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons red wine vinegar
1/2 cup crumbled or spreadable goat cheese
6 pita, each split halfway around edge to form a pocket