

3401 Mt Diablo Blvd
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Agustinos Chardonnay, Rapel Valley 2009

Running from the foothills of the Andes in the east, about 60 miles west to the Pacific, the Rapel Valley lies at 33 degrees latitude. It's diurnal temperature fluctuations are dramatic, and help the region's winegrapes to ripen fully, and provide fruit-forward, varietally specific flavors. Agustinos harvests this chardonnay at the end of February and early March. Produced from only estate-owned vineyards that are managed in a sustainable manner, employing practices such as solar energy, biomass, waste water treatment, it is a clean, fresh style. Brilliant yellow gold in color, it expresses tropical aromas of pineapple, apricot and banana, as well as lightly roasted nuts. On the palate, the tropical notes are accompanied by bright, tart apple and citrus flavors, finishing with a rounded melon and an integrated oak sweetness.

\$10 value. *Thieves' price: \$7.99*

Grilled Whole Rainbow Trout w/bean salad (4 svgs)

Ingredients

1/4 cup chopped fresh tarragon, plus 4 whole sprigs
3 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon chopped shallot
1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
1/4 teaspoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper, divided

Directions

You can buy trout with the bones and heads removed (easier than cleaning them yourself); for this recipe, each cleaned trout should weigh about 5 ounces.

Whisk chopped tarragon, lemon juice, oil, shallot, 1/4 tsp salt, sugar and 1/8 tsp pepper in a medium bowl until combined. Reserve 2 tbsp of the dressing; add beans and peppers to the rest and toss to combine.

Preheat grill to medium-high. Coat a large fish-grilling basket with cooking spray. Stuff each trout with 3 slices lemon and 1 tarragon sprig. Sprinkle inside and out with the remaining 3/4 tsp salt and 1/8 tsp pepper. Place in the basket. Oil the preheated grill with a paper towel soaked with canola oil, rubbing it on clean grates, using tongs, immediately before grilling fish.

Grill the fish until the skin is golden and crispy, 4 to 5 minutes per side. Carefully remove the lemon and tarragon, drizzle the fish with the reserved dressing and serve with the bean salad.

1 15-ounce can small white beans, rinsed
1/3 cup chopped roasted red peppers
4 cleaned whole rainbow trout (about 5 ounces each; see shopping tip below)
12 thin slices of lemon (1-2 lemons)



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Umani Ronchi “San Lorenzo,” Rosso Conero 2003

On the east coast of Italy, in the growing region known as the Marche, the Bernetti family have cared for the winery established by Gino Umani Ronchi for almost five decades. Best known for the small inland village of Jesi and its famous DOC white wine, Verdicchio, the Marche also includes the coastal area near the port town of Ancona. Monte Conero, which rises some 1700 ft above sea level and sticks out like an elbow into the Adriatic, gives the region's red wine DOC its name. Made from 100% Montepulciano (the grape, not the Tuscan city), this delightful varietal pairs well with a multitude of dishes we associate with the area, specifically fresh meats and salumi. This perfectly aged red is a brilliant garnet color, with a sweet nose of morello cherry. Rich and medium-bodied, it boasts a long, smooth finish.

\$18 Value. Thieves' price: \$9.99!!

Duck Scaloppine with Dried Cherries (serves 4)

Ingredients

1 whole magret duck breast (about 1 1/2 pounds), split
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 cup dried cherries
1/2 cup grappa
1/2 cup dry red wine

Directions

Leaving the fat on, slice each duck breast across the grain into 6 equal pieces. Using a meat mallet, pound the pieces into "scaloppini", 1/8-inch thick and about 4 inches long. Season the flour with salt and pepper, and dredge the scaloppini in the seasoned flour. In a 10 to 12-inch saute pan, heat the olive oil over high heat until smoking. Add the duck pieces and cook, without turning, until deep golden brown on the first side. Add the cherries, grappa, wine, stock, and butter and bring to a boil. Cook until the liquid is reduced by half, 6 to 7 minutes, then turn the duck pieces over and cook for 30 more seconds.

Transfer the duck to warmed serving plates, sprinkle with scallions, and serve immediately.

1/2 cup chicken stock
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 bunch scallions, thinly sliced on the diagonal



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Terlano Pinot Bianco, Alto Adige 2008

Italy's northernmost appellation, Alto Adige is walled in by the Rhaetian Alps and the Dolomites, so that only 15% of the land is available for cultivation. Bordered by Austria and Switzerland, it is known as Südtirol (formerly Austrian) to the prominent German-speaking population, and is officially bilingual. Terlano's southfacing slopes at the foot of Mount Tschöggel are ideal for grape growing. The porphyry rocks accumulate warmth and the porous soil allows the water to drain, keeping the soil dry around the roots of the vines, which then have to reach deep into the quartz for water. As a result, this ripe yet balanced Pinot Bianco expresses classic alpine minerality in its finish. Lush flavors of golden apple and pear are subtly offset by a healthy dose of refreshing acidity, ideal for food pairing.

\$20 Value. Thieves' price: \$16.99

Fresh Seafood Pasta (serves 4-6)

Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 cup minced shallots
2 teaspoons chopped garlic
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 cups chopped tomatoes, peeled and seeded
1 pound fresh mussels, scrubbed
1 pound rock shrimp, peeled
2 cups dry white wine
1 pound lump crabmeat, picked over for cartridge

Directions

In a large saute pan, over medium heat, add the oil. When the oil is hot, add the shallots and garlic. Season with salt and pepper. Saute for 1 minute. Add the tomatoes, and saute for 1 minute. Add the mussels and shrimp. Season with salt and pepper. Saute for 2 minutes. Add the wine, bring to a simmer and cover, cook until the shells open, about 4 to 6 minutes. Add the crabmeat and green onions. Season with salt and pepper. Saute for 1 minute. Add the pasta, toss and continue cooking until the pasta is heated through, about 1 minute. Toss the pasta with the cheese and basil. Spoon into the serving dish. Garnish with a drizzle of truffle oil.

1/2 cup chopped green onions, green part only
1 pound penne pasta, cooked until tender
4 ounces freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
1/4 cup chiffonade fresh basil leaves



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Maison Bouachon, Chateauneuf du Pape 2006

Just outside the city of Avignon, in the southern Rhône Valley, lies the village where Pope Clement V relocated the papacy in 1309, since Rome had become politically unstable and dangerous to the Catholic ministry. In doing so, he created a 70-year legacy of popes who, while advancing the reputation of Burgundy wines, promoted viticulture in the immediate area, and ultimately inspired the name “Vin du Pape.” His successor, John XXII, erected the famous castle associated with the region, and changed the name. Chateauneuf is allowed to carry as many as 13 varietals in its red wines, with Grenache typically leading the pack. The “La Tiare du Pape” (pope’s crown) contains 60%, along with 30% syrah, 7% mourvedre, and a 3% blend of a few others. Fresh and dried black fruits permeate, with hints of roasted almond.

\$30 value. Thieves’ price: \$14.99!

Garam Masala-Crusted Chicken (serves 4)

Ingredients

1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon [garam masala](#)

(click for recipe)

3 tablespoons vegetable oil

Two 3 1/2-pound chickens

Salt

2 cups chicken stock or low-sodium broth

8 garlic cloves

1 teaspoon tamarind paste

Directions

Preheat the oven to 450°. In a small bowl, mix the garam masala with the oil. In a roasting pan, rub the chickens all over with the garam masala oil and season with salt. Roast the chickens for 15 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 350° and continue roasting for 1 hour and 15 minutes, basting twice. Return the oven temperature to 450° and crisp. Transfer the chickens to a carving board and let them rest for about 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan, combine the chicken stock with the garlic and tamarind paste and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until the garlic is very soft, about 40 minutes. Strain the stock through a coarse sieve and press the garlic through. Stir in the figs and honey, cover and let steep until the figs are tender, about 10 minutes.

Carve the chicken. Reheat the fig jus, season with salt and pepper and serve with the chicken.

4 dried Black Mission figs, stemmed and quartered

1/4 cup honey

Freshly ground pepper

