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Robledo Pinot Blanc, Lake County 2008

In 1996, thirty years after pruning his first vine, Reynaldo Robledo formed his own vineyard management business. As his skills in the vineyards continued to evolve, so did his affection for the product he was cultivating.

Over the next decade, his family purchased fourteen vineyards, totaling approximately 200 acres, in Napa, Sonoma, and Lake County. Although they still sell most of the fruit from these three ranches to other wineries, they now produce their own estate wines. This pinot blanc, from the Lake County property, displays a beautiful pale golden hue. Infused with aromas of ripe melon and sweet honey, its palate boasts lush melon flavors with hints of citrus and vanilla. The lengthy finish is dry, and balanced by generous minerality, a trademark characteristic of the varietal. This one's becoming our "go-to" white wine for Thanksgiving!!

\$22 value! *Thieves' price: \$10.99*

Roasted Butternut Squash Soup (serves 4-6)

Ingredients:

1 (1 1/2 pound) butternut squash, peeled seeded and rough chopped
3 tablespoons olive oil
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup Italian sausage, removed from the casing
1 cup small dice onion
1/2 cup small dice carrot

1/2 cup small dice celery
1/2 cup small dice leeks
2 tablespoons minced shallots
1 tablespoon minced garlic
2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar
11/2 quarts chicken stock
2 teaspoons maple syrup
1 teaspoon freshly chopped sage leaves



Directions

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Place the chopped squash in a medium-size mixing bowl. Drizzle the squash with 2 tablespoons of olive oil and season with 1/4 teaspoon of salt and 1/8 teaspoon black pepper. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper or aluminum foil and place the squash on top of the sheet pan. Set the sheet pan into the oven and roast for 30 minutes, or until the squash is lightly caramelized and tender.

Remove the squash from the oven and set aside. Place a 1-gallon saucepan over medium high heat and add the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil to the pan and render the Italian sausage. Cook, stirring often until the meat is caramelized and has released most of its fat, about 3 minutes. Add the onions, carrots, celery and leeks in the pan and sweat, stirring often for 5 to 7 minutes. Add the shallots and garlic to the pan and sweat for 1 minute stirring continuously. Deglaze the pan with the vinegar and add the chicken stock to the pan. Place the squash in the pan with the maple syrup and sage.

Bring the pan to a boil and reduce to a simmer. Continue to cook the soup for 30 minutes, or until the vegetables are all tender. Use an immersion blender to puree the soup to a smooth consistency and velvety texture. Alternately, you can puree the soup in batches using a blender. Taste the soup and re-season if necessary with 1/2 teaspoon of salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper. Keep warm.

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Bodega Quo Grenache, Campo de Borja 2008

Campo de Borja is a transitional area among the mountains of the Sistema Ibérico, in the Ebro Valley of Spain. The setting is unique, with Moncayo (its highest peak) National Park in the background. The Romans built the actual hydrological system almost two thousand years ago, and were the first to plant vines. Quo's vineyards extend to the slopes of the nearby mountains, influenced by the Atlantic in winter, and by the Mediterranean in summer. Rainfall is rare, with annual averages between 13 - 17 inches. Most of the grapes are hand-picked, with native yeast fermentation and maturation occurring in glass-lined cement tanks. Bold, yet medium-bodied, this spicy grenache smells of red cherry and strawberries, and its fresh, exotic flavors invite sip after sip. Try this one with a nice, savory stuffing.

Thieves' price: \$9.99

Ciabatta Stuffing (serves 8-10)

Ingredients

6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) butter
8 ounces pancetta, cut into 1/4-inch dice
2 large onions, finely chopped
2 carrots, peeled and finely chopped
3 celery stalks, finely chopped
2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary
3 garlic cloves, chopped
2 (7.4-ounce) jars roasted peeled whole chestnuts, coarsely broken
1/4 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley leaves

1 pound day-old ciabatta bread, cut into 3/4-inch cubes
2/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan
1 cup (or more) low-salt chicken broth
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 large eggs, beaten to blend



Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Butter a 15 x 10 x 2 inch glass baking dish. Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in a heavy large skillet over medium heat. Add the pancetta and saute until crisp and golden, about 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the pancetta to a large bowl. Melt the remaining butter in the same skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onions, carrots, celery, rosemary, and garlic. Saute until the onions are very tender, about 12 minutes. Gently stir in the chestnuts and parsley. Transfer the onion mixture to the large bowl with the pancetta. Add the bread and Parmesan and toss to coat. Add enough broth to the stuffing mixture to moisten. Season the stuffing, to taste, with salt and pepper. Mix in the eggs. Transfer the stuffing to the prepared dish. Cover with buttered foil, buttered side down, and bake until the stuffing is heated through, about 30 minutes. Uncover and continue baking until the top is crisp and golden, about 15 minutes longer.

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Peter Lehmann “Layers”, Adelaide 2009

Crafted to illustrate the old adage that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Semillon, Muscat, Gewürztraminer, Pinot Gris and Chardonnay, picked from different vineyards throughout Adelaide Hills and Barossa Valley, add their own character to the final blend. With Layers, this venerable Australian producer has created a white that is perfectly suited to a broad range of modern, international cuisine. Don't be fooled by its easy drinking and approachable nature, each taste reveals another *layer* of subtle complexity. An attractive pale yellow with green tints, it has aromas of citrus, peach and hints of baking spices. With modest structure and a soft creamy mouth-feel, it fills out in the mid palate, then finishes crisp and fresh, with the lingering tanginess of bright acidity.

\$20 value. *Thieves' price:* \$15.99

Green Beans with Carmelized Onions and Almonds (serves 6-8)

Ingredients

Kosher salt

3 pounds green beans with ends trimmed

1/2 cup raw, sliced almonds

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

2 large onions, sliced thin

2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme leaves
Freshly ground black pepper



Directions

Fill a large high sided skillet with some water, adding enough to be just shy of the rim of the pan by about 1 inch. Place over high heat and bring up to boil; add a big pinch of salt and the green beans. Cook for about 5 minutes, the beans should still be crisp. Drain the beans and then run them under some cold water to stop them from cooking. Reserve the beans while you start the onions.

Return the skillet you cooked the beans in to the cook top over medium heat. Add the almonds and toast stirring every now and then until golden, about 3 to 5 minutes. Remove the almonds from the skillet and reserve. Return the skillet to the heat and add the butter and olive oil and heat until the butter has melted. Add the onions, season with salt and pepper, and cook stirring frequently until the onions caramelize, 20 to 25 minutes. Add the thyme, and cook for another 5 minutes. Add the cooked cooled green beans and almonds, and stir well to combine. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

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Yabby Lake “Cooralook” Pinot Noir, Victoria 2008

For November, we bring Thieves Gang members two delightful Australian wines perfectly suited to pair with Thanksgiving-style meals. This young pinot noir was grown in Yabby Lake’s own vineyards in the Strathbogie Ranges and Mornington Peninsula. Harvested over 30 days from late February to late March of last year, they resulted in an intense, fruit-driven, but well-balanced wine. It displays a vibrant, purple-tinged red color, and the bouquet is of overtly sweet blackberry fruit, with nuances of dark chocolate and subtle plum aromas. Well-structured and balanced, it’s a pinot noir that offers a gentle mouthfeel, with flavors of fresh black and red berries, strawberry, and a delicate tannin structure to support it with. Finishes clean, with a mild earthiness. Perfectly matched with your holiday turkey!

Thieves’ price: \$14.99

Roasted Turkey w/ Fennel Rub

Ingredients

2 small (8 to 10 pound) whole turkeys
2 small whole onions, peeled
2 carrots, halved
2 celery stalks, halved
1 quart chicken stock
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
1/2 cup Fennel Spice Rub (at right)
8 sprigs fresh rosemary
2 lemons, halved
4 large carrots, halved lengthwise
8 celery stalks

Directions

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Remove necks and giblets and put into a large saucepan. Add onions, 2 carrots, 2 celery stalks, and the chicken stock. Bring to a boil over high heat and then reduce the heat and let simmer until reduced to about 2 cups. Strain and reserve; this is the turkey stock that you will use for the gravy. Wash the turkeys, inside and out, and dry well. Coat inside and out with half of the olive oil. Season each turkey on the outside generously with the spice rub, pressing it in to adhere. Place 4 rosemary sprigs and 2 lemon halves inside the cavity of each turkey. Arrange 4 of the halved carrots and 4 celery stalks on each of 2 half-sheet pans or baking sheets. Position each turkey on top of the carrots and celery so that the turkey does not rest directly on the bottom of the pan. Drizzle turkeys with remaining olive oil. Roast until an instant-read thermometer (inserted deep into the thigh but away from the bone) reads 165 degrees F and juices in the thigh run clear when pierced with a fork, about 2 to 2 1/2 hours; begin checking at 2 hours. Remove from the pans and let rest for 15 minutes before carving. Reserve pan juices for **Gravy**: In a medium-heavy saucepan, cook flour and butter over medium heat for 3 to 4 minutes, or until a blond roux is formed. Add pan juices and then reserved turkey stock and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat and let simmer until thickened and ready to serve. Carve turkey and serve with gravy.

3/4 cup all-purpose flour
3/4 cup butter

Fennel Spice Rub

1 cup fennel seeds
3 tablespoons coriander seeds
2 tablespoons white peppercorns
3 tablespoons kosher salt
Toast seeds and peppercorns in a heavy pan over medium heat, tossing frequently so the seeds toast evenly. When light brown and fragrant, pour on a plate to cool. Pour the seeds into a blender and add the salt. Blend to a fine powder, shaking the blender occasionally to redistribute the seeds. Store in a sealed glass jar in a cool, dry place.