

3401 Mt Diablo Blvd  
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## Uvaggio Vermentino, Lodi 2008

Jim Moore has been making wine from Italian varietals for over 20 years. He was working for Robert Mondavi Winery in 1989 when they launched the La Famiglia line of “Cal-Ital” wines, designed to pair with a range of Italian cuisine. Long-time wine club members may recall Jim’s “Il Ponte” sangiovese, which we used for the Pickpocket Gang a couple of years ago.

Best known on the island of Sardegna, Vermentino was introduced to California by Tablas Creek winery in 1993, and this one is a direct descendant of their original Italian clonal selection. Lively, yet subtle lime, quince and pear aromas suggest a white of bright flavor and crisp acidity. Tropical flavors of melon and stone fruits are offset by a streak of cilantro and citrus. Expresses balanced minerality in the finish.

**\$14 value. *Thieves' price:* \$9.99**

## **Champagne Risotto (serves 2)**

### Ingredients:

4 thin slices prosciutto

3 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth

12 asparagus spears, cut diagonally into 1-inch pieces

2 tablespoons butter, divided

1 shallot, finely chopped

3/4 cup Arborio rice or medium-grain white rice

3/4 cup Champagne or dry sparkling wine

1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

### Directions

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F. Place the slices of prosciutto on a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake until the prosciutto slices are almost completely crisp, about 6 to 8 minutes. The slices will crisp up even more as they cool. Reserve for garnish.

In a medium saucepan, bring the chicken stock to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer.

Blanch the asparagus in the chicken stock for 2 minutes. Remove the asparagus with a slotted spoon. Set the asparagus aside and keep the chicken stock at a low simmer.

In another medium saucepan, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter. Add the shallot and cook until tender, about 3 minutes. Add the Arborio rice and stir to coat in the butter.

Continue toasting the rice, stirring constantly, for about 3 minutes more. Add the Champagne and simmer until the liquid has almost evaporated, about 3 minutes. Add

1/2 cup of the simmering broth and stir until almost completely absorbed, about 2 minutes. Continue cooking the rice, adding the broth 1/2 cup at a time, stirring

constantly and allowing each addition of broth to absorb before adding the next, until the rice is tender but still firm to the bite and the mixture is creamy, about 20 minutes total.

Remove from the heat. Gently stir in the asparagus, remaining butter, Parmesan, salt, and pepper. Spoon the risotto into serving dishes and garnish by breaking the crisp prosciutto into smaller pieces over the top of the risotto. Serve immediately.

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## Ogier “Heritages”, Côtes du Rhône 2007

Formerly known as Caves des Papes (“The Cellars of the Popes”), Ogier has remained a family winery since 1859. Today it is the oldest and largest wine cellar in the historic community of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, the summer residence of the Popes from 1309 to 1378. Today, this cuvée is a tribute to both the winery owners and to the extraordinary history of winemaking in the region. A traditional, deep ruby blend of 70% Grenache, 25% syrah, and 5% mourvedre, this delicious, albeit straightforward Côtes du Rhône makes for a terrific everyday red, loaded with flavor, yet balanced enough to complement any meal. It offers a complex bouquet of ripe strawberry and raspberry, spice and earthiness, and fine tannin structure. Notes of cocoa and coffee on the smooth finish.

***Thieves’ price: \$8.99***

## **Pomegranate-glazed Turkey w/ Roasted Fennel (serves 4)**

### Ingredients

4 medium fennel bulbs, cored and thickly sliced

5 teaspoons canola oil, divided

1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme, plus 1 sprig

1 teaspoon kosher salt, divided

3/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper, divided

4 turkey cutlets, 1/4 inch thick (1 pound)

1 cup pomegranate juice

1/4 cup reduced-sodium chicken broth or water

1 teaspoon cornstarch



### Directions

Toss fennel, 3 teaspoons oil, chopped thyme and 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Spread on a rimmed baking sheet. Roast, stirring twice, until tender and golden, about 25 minutes.

Meanwhile, sprinkle both sides of turkey with the remaining 3/4 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Heat the remaining 2 teaspoons oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the turkey and cook until browned, 1 to 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate. Add pomegranate juice and thyme sprig to the pan; bring to a boil. Boil, stirring often, until reduced to 1/4 cup, 6 to 10 minutes. Discard the thyme. Whisk together broth (or water) and cornstarch; add to the pan and cook, stirring constantly, until thickened, about 15 seconds. Reduce heat to medium, return the turkey and any accumulated juices to the pan, turning to coat with sauce, and cook for 1 minute. To serve, top roasted fennel with turkey and sauce.

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## Familia Zuccardi “Q” Chardonnay, Mendoza 2007

Founded in 1963 by Alberto Zuccardi and directed today by his son, José, this prestigious Argentine winery owns vineyards in the Uco Valley, Maipú and Santa Rosa districts of Mendoza. With a clear commitment to quality and innovation, this modern company displays a passion for wine normally reserved for only the most traditional of producers. Their “Q” chardonnay is meant to compete with some of the best the wine world has to offer. Barrel-fermented and aged six months in French oak, “it is medium straw-colored with an attractive bouquet of vanilla, white peach, poached pear, and a hint of tropical fruits... smooth-textured, concentrated wine with excellent balance and a medium-long finish. Drink this excellent value over the next two years.” ~ *Wine Advocate* #180, December 2008 Rating: **89**

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

## **Moroccan Stew (serves 6-8)**

### Ingredients

1 tablespoon unsalted butter  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 medium yellow onion, small dice  
4 medium cloves garlic, thinly sliced  
2 teaspoons ground cumin  
1 (3-inch) cinnamon stick  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1 pound butternut squash, large dice  
3/4 pound red potatoes, large dice  
2 cups low-sodium chicken or veggie broth  
2 cups cooked chickpeas, drained  
1 (14-ounce) can diced tomatoes

### Directions

Heat butter and olive oil in a 3- to 4-quart Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed saucepan with a tight fitting lid over medium heat. When oil shimmers, add onion, garlic, cumin, and cinnamon, and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until spices are aromatic and onions are soft and translucent, about 5 minutes.

Add squash and potatoes, season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, stir to coat, and cook until just tender, about 3 minutes. Add broth, chickpeas, tomatoes and their juices, and saffron, if using. Bring mixture to a boil then reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer until squash is fork tender, about 10 minutes.

Remove from heat and stir in preserved lemon and olives. Serve over couscous garnished with cilantro, almonds, and yogurt.

Pinch saffron threads, optional  
1/2 preserved lemon, finely chopped  
1 cup brined green olives (recommend: Cerignola)

Steamed couscous, for serving  
Fresh cilantro leaves, roughly chopped,  
toasted slivered almonds, and  
plain yogurt - all for garnish



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## Trinitas Zinfandel, Contra Costa County 2006

Founded in 2000 by Tim and Steph Busch, Trinitas Cellars celebrates the connection among sun, soil and humanity by working closely with its grower network throughout Northern California. Three different blocks of ancient vines, 85-90 years old, from the sandy soil (Delhi sandy loam) surrounding the little town of Oakley in eastern Contra Costa County provide the fruit for this zinfandel blend. 8% petite sirah, 4% mataro (aka mourvedre), and 1% alicante bouschet add color and complexity. These “old vines” produce a measly 1.5 to 2.5 tons of fruit per acre, but the flavors they exhibit showcase the Delta region’s classic “dusty” characteristics:

“Zesty and briary, with smoky wild berry aromas and huckleberry, cracked pepper and medium-bodied sage flavors that finish with slightly rustic tannins. Drink now through 2014.” ~ *Wine Spectator*, 2/28/09 Score: 87

**\$18 value. Thieves' price: \$14.99**

## **Wild Mushroom & Venison Stroganoff (serves 2)**

### Ingredients

7 ounces white rice  
Extra-virgin olive oil  
1 medium red onion, peeled and finely chopped  
1 clove garlic, peeled and finely sliced  
11 ounces venison loin, fat and sinews removed,  
trimmed and sliced into finger-sized pieces  
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon paprika  
9 ounces mixed exciting, robust mushrooms,  
wiped clean, torn into bite-sized pieces  
Small bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves picked  
and roughly chopped, stalks finely chopped  
Knob of butter  
Good splash brandy  
1 lemon, zested  
2/3 cup creme fraiche or sour cream  
Few little gherkins, sliced

### Directions

Cook the rice according to the package instructions until it's just undercooked and drain in a colander. Put the rice back in the pan, cover with aluminum foil and set aside to steam - this will give you incredibly light and fluffy rice. Heat a large frying pan on a medium heat and pour in a glug of extra-virgin olive oil. Add the onions and garlic and cook for about 10 minutes until softened and golden. Remove from the heat and spoon the onions and garlic out of the pan onto a plate. Set aside. Season the meat well with salt, pepper and the paprika. Rub and massage these flavorings into the meat. Place the frying pan back on a high heat and pour in some more olive oil. Add the mushrooms and fry for a few minutes until they start to brown. Then add the meat and fry for a minute or 2 before adding the parsley stalks (you can do this in 2 pans or in batches if your pan is not big enough) and the cooked onion and garlic. Toss and add the butter and brandy.

You don't have to light the hot brandy, but flaming does give an interesting flavor so I always like to do this. Once the flames die down, or after a couple of minutes of simmering, stir in the lemon zest and all but 1 tablespoon of the creme fraiche and season, to taste. Continue simmering for a few minutes. Any longer than this and the meat will toughen up - it doesn't need long, as it's been cut up so small. Serve your fluffy rice on 1 big plate and your stroganoff on another. Simply spoon the remaining creme fraiche over the stroganoff, then sprinkle over the sliced gherkins and the parsley leaves. Eat at once!