

Wine from Previous Page

was bottled on the 12th day of 1995. This is old stock bottled last January. You want to try a much later day in 1995 and drink it within eight months of bottling.

Oysters or crab are delicious with 1994 Morgadio Albarino \$18. Albarino is a rare grape variety, and the Spanish contemporary of Viognier, the "hot" white from California.

■ 1994 Carchelo Monastrell \$7 is a light, fruity, dry red that is great with spicier food. Monastrell is the French grape mourvedre. You'll be pleasantly surprised by the Spanish style at a popular price.

■ 1992 Guelbennu EVO \$8 is one of Spain's most acclaimed wines. It's 70 percent cabernet sauvignon, 15 percent merlot and 15 percent tempranillo aged one year in 100 percent new French oak. If it were French, it might be called the producer's grand vin.

■ And then there's Rioja. The 1990 Lorinon Tinto Crianza \$9 is

an estate-bottled classic Rioja Alita with plummy fruit and spice. By law, a Rioja labeled Crianza has been aged 12 months in oak, but this wine was aged 18 months, approaching the minimum for a Gran Reserva.

Those who know Spanish wines know Pesquera from Bodega's Alejandro Fernandez. They are 100 percent tempranillo from the hands of a master. Tinto Pesquera is aged a minimum of 18 months in oak, but Reservas and Grandes Reservas from great vintages are aged in barrel 24 months and longer. The 1991 Pesquera Reserva \$16 is a wine unique in the world. Delicious now, it will age into the next millennium.

In addition to Spanish estate-grown wines, look for a fabulous Spanish olive oil, Almazara Luis Herra Unpressed Extra-Virgin \$11 for a half-liter. Herra has the smooth fruity character of French olive oil from Provence and the pepperness of great Tuscan olive oils. It's unbeatable at the price.

To leave a message on the Herald's voice mail — dial 853-2047, mailbox 1864.

Try mild farm-raised catfish

See related Taste Buds column on Taste front.

CATFISH ANTIPASTO

- 2 cups water
- 8 ounces catfish fillets
- 4 ounces Cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese, cut into cubes
- 4 ounces Calamata pitted ripe olives, drained
- 1 small zucchini, sliced ¼-inch thick
- 1 cup canned artichoke hearts, drained, halved
- ¾ cup white wine vinegar
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 3 green onions, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon dried basil, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

In a skillet bring the water to a boil. Add catfish fillets. Return to a boil, reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from water. Cool slightly. Cut into bit sized pieces.

In a large plastic bag or non-metallic bowl, combine cheese, olives, zucchini and artichoke hearts. Add catfish. In a small bowl stir together vinegar, oil, catfish, garlic, sugar, basil and pepper. Pour over catfish mixture. Seal bag tightly. Cover and chill for 6 hours or overnight, turning bag occasionally.

To serve, allow mixture to stand at room temperature for about 15 minutes. Drain mixture and arrange on lettuce covered plates. Makes 4 servings.

CLASSIC PAN-FRIED CATFISH

- ¼ cup yellow cornmeal
- ¼ cup flour
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- 4 catfish fillets, about 1½ pounds

Vegetable oil for pan-frying. Combine cornmeal, flour, salt, cayenne pepper and garlic powder. Coat catfish with mixture, shaking

off the excess.

Cover the bottom of a 12-inch skillet with vegetable oil. Heat to 350 degrees F. or medium heat. Add coated catfish fillets in a single layer and pan-fry until golden brown, about 5-6 minutes, depending on size. Remove and drain on paper towels. Makes 4 servings.

CATFISH FANTAS

- 2 pounds catfish fillets
- 1 cup lime juice (about 5-6 fresh limes)
- 3 cups mesquite or hickory wood chips
- 1 large onion, sliced and separated into rings
- 1 large sweet red pepper, cut into strips
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 8 flour or corn tortillas, warmed
- Salsa, sour cream or guac.

camole and lime wedges, optional

Place fish in a large plastic bag. Pour lime juice over the fish. Seal and marinate in the refrigerator for 1 hour.

Soak wood chips in enough water to cover for 30-60 minutes. Drain wood chips. In a covered grill, toast coals for a medium-hot heat. Sprinkle wood chips over preheated coals. Lightly brush grill rack with cooking oil.

Place catfish fillets on grill rack. Cover and grill directly over medium hot coals for 5 minutes on each side.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet, cook onion, pepper strips and garlic in butter or margarine until just tender. Stir in salt and pepper. Cut grilled catfish into chunks. Toss with onion mixture. Fill tortillas with catfish mixture. Serve with salsa, sour cream, guacamole and lime wedges. Makes 4 servings.

Recipes from: The Catfish Institute.

Pasta isn't just spaghetti

See related pasta story on Taste front.

Recipes from "Rose Reisman Brings Home Light Pasta," (Robert Rose, Inc, September 1995)

SWEET POTATO, WHITE BEAN AND ORZO SOUP

- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon crushed garlic
- 1 cup chopped onions
- ½ cup chopped celery
- 3 cups diced sweet potatoes
- ½ cup diced carrots
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup canned white kidney beans, drained
- ½ cup orzo or small shell pasta
- 1 cup 2 percent milk
- Chopped parsley

In large nonstick saucepan, heat oil; sauté garlic, onions and celery until tender, approximately 4 minutes.

Add potatoes, carrots and stock. Cover and simmer on medium heat for 20 to 30 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Puree in food pro-

cessor until smooth. Pour back into saucepan; add kidney beans and pasta. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes or until pasta is tender. Add milk. Heat, then sprinkle with chopped parsley. Serves 6.

Prepare in early in day, up to point of adding orzo. Add orzo 10 minutes before serving.

RIGATONI WITH THICK CREAMY BEEF TOMATO SAUCE

- 1 pound rigatoni
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons crushed garlic
- 1 cup diced onions
- ½ cup finely diced celery
- ½ cup finely diced carrots
- 12 ounces ground beef
- ½ cup dry red wine
- ½ cup 2 percent milk
- 1 can (28 ounces) tomatoes, crushed
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1½ teaspoons dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano

1½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Cook pasta in boiling water according to package instructions or until firm to the bite. Drain and place in serving bowl.

In large nonstick saucepan, heat oil; sauté garlic, onions, celery and carrots until tender, approximately 5 minutes. Add beef and sauté until no longer pink, approximately 4 minutes.

Add wine and cook on high for 2 minutes. Add milk and cook for 2 minutes. Add tomatoes, tomato paste, basil and oregano; cover and simmer on low-heat for 20 minutes or until sauce becomes thickened, stirring occasionally.

Place in food processor and puree in batches just until still slightly chunky. Pour over pasta; sprinkle with cheese; toss and serve. Serves 6-8.

To make ahead: Refrigerate sauce up to 2 days ahead and reheat gently, adding more milk if too thick.

Sara Lee

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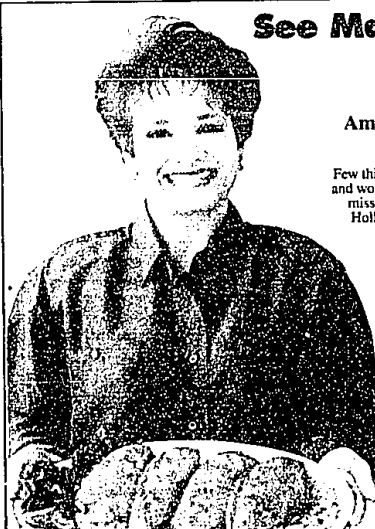
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