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FOCUS ON WINE



RAY & ELEANOR HEALD

Zinfandel: A red wine that's quite American

Zinfandel is uniquely American and one of the great red wines of the world. Although its origins are undoubtedly European, its genealogy was lost more than 150 years ago when the vine cuttings were first brought to California. With no comparable European model, Americans have made zinfandel their own.

Wine Picks
With Thanksgiving upcoming on Nov. 22, we recommend celebrating with American wines. You can't get more American than zinfandel. We've suggested several from Mazzocco in the column. Here are other zinfandels we rated highly: 1999 Limerick Lane \$37; 1999 Robert Mondavi Napa Valley \$24; 1999 Dry Creek Vineyard Old Vines \$21; 1997 Haywood Los Chamizal Vineyard \$21; and 1999 Sebastiani "Old Vines" \$20. For dessert: 1999 Dry Creek Vineyard Late Harvest Zinfandel \$13/\$7.50. It is a full-bodied dessert-style that pleases with a yummy berry bouquet and flavors of black currant, chocolate, and clove.

Zin, as it is frequently called, is a versatile grape and from it wine-makers have made claret-style wine, late-harvest dessert-style wine, and of course, white zin. Thanks go to the Trinchero family of Sutter Home Winery in Napa Valley for creating white zinfandel several decades ago when red zinfandel was out of favor with American consumers. Without white zin, hundreds of acres of old-vine zinfandel grapes may have been ripped out in favor of chardonnay or cabernet.

In Sonoma County's Dry Creek Valley, zinfandel was first planted by Italian immigrants more than 100 years ago. These marvelous heritage vineyards are still growing healthy grapes and the wineries lucky enough to get the fruit are making stunningly intense and concentrated zinfandels.

Juicy and 'jammy'

Phyllis Zouzounis, winemaker at Mazzocco Vineyards, is one of those talented people who has learned how to deal with this most finicky grape. She explained, "Zinfandel is so site-specific, vintage-variable, and difficult to get completely ripe, that the wine is rarely easy to make. Yet the rewards are well worth the effort. 'Juicy, jammy, raspberry, and blackberry fruit flavors with hints of pepper and spice are zinfandel's typical signature. Fruit from old vines adds complexity and intensity." One of Mazzocco's flagship wines is the Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel, a blend of fruit from top vineyards in the best region on earth for this grape. But Zouzounis' passion for zinfandel is demonstrated in a number of vineyard-designated Mazzocco zins that reveal the variety's multiple personalities and give credit to the dedicated growers who nurture the fruit. Mazzocco honors these growers by adding their name (and sometimes their picture) to the label.

Aged and spiced

The 1997 Mazzocco Zinfandel, Cuneo and Saini Vineyard, Dry Creek Valley \$22 is big, rich, and full-bodied with raspberry and blackberry fruit, a character sometimes referred to as bramble bush. The wine was aged 18 months in French oak barrels and two years in the bottle before release. It finishes with a touch of black pepper and spice.

The Cuneo and Saini Vineyard was

Please see WINE, D2

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Turkey time
- Culinary Adventures



BY PEGGY MARTINELLI-EVERTS
SPECIAL WRITER

Nuts are a natural, whole food, and a powerhouse of nutrients. They are a delicious addition to just about any recipe — as a part of the main dish, salad, sandwich, dessert or snack. Nuts are nature's convenience food and are easy to carry, along for a quick energy-rich snack.

Susan McHale of Farmington frequently uses nuts in cooking. "I love the flavor and texture of nuts," McHale said. "I give a pile of pistachios to each of my kids to crack open. Then, I chop them and stir them into cooked pasta with some broccoli and tomatoes, and season with a little olive oil."

Yes, there's fat, but...

Nuts are quite high in fat for such a small amount of food. They contain mostly unsaturated fats, which tend to have a neutral effect on blood cholesterol. The good news is that nuts contain phytochemicals, which are plant chemicals that may protect against heart disease and stroke. Cheryl Levitt, who works in Farmington Hills, mixes toasted nuts with precooked rice for a satisfying "center-of-the-plate" meal. Her family does not have big meat eaters, she says, "but I don't like to see them eating only pasta or rice."

"I sautéed toasted cashews, walnuts or sunflower seeds with cooked rice and a little garlic and onion for a meal in a snap," Levitt said. The apparent increase in food allergies in children now plays an important role in food selection. About 5 percent of young children are diagnosed with food allergies, most within the first few years of life. Misunderstanding food allergies can result in life-threatening reactions. Children with nut allergies must avoid them in all forms. In some cases even minimal exposure to nuts can cause an allergic reaction.

"My granddaughter can't even smell peanut butter without a reaction," said Patricia Wendel of Livonia. "We pay careful attention to everything she eats and leave strict instructions to all caregivers."

Parents have to be sure to plan in advance for parties, inform the school of the child's allergy, take measures in case of an accidental exposure, and help the child enjoy a normal and safe childhood. Many food labels now state if there may have been exposure to nuts during processing.

Peanuts are versatile

Some nuts grow on trees and some grow underground. Farmers have peanuts to sell today largely because of the work of the famous botanist George Washington Carver. At the turn of the century, cotton crops were being destroyed by the boll weevil, and the land had been stripped of nutrients by continuous planting of cotton. Carver proposed that farmers turn to other crops, especially peanuts. He set about inventing new ways to use the crops. He is credited with inventing more than 300 uses for peanuts.

Jeff Calcott of Birmingham adds nuts to his lunch a few times a week. "I find it so easy to just put a few peanuts or cashews into my lunch and

go," Calcott said.

Nuts can be enjoyed as a part of a balanced and varied diet. In setting dietary recommendations, the World Health Organization recommends a daily consumption of fruits and vegetables including a one-ounce serving of nuts or seeds. One ounce of nuts is usually about one quarter cup, 15 to 25 nuts, or one small handful.

Start your day with nuts by adding them into your breakfast cereal or yogurt, or by sprinkling them into your favorite muffin mix.

Pistachios are versatile and perfect for your favorite pancake recipe while almonds are full of alpha-tocopherol, the plant form of vitamin E and a powerful antioxidant. Hazelnuts, also known as filberts, are a favorite of bakers because they don't discolor yeast-leavened breads.

When lunchtime rolls around make sure to consider the old favorite, peanut butter and jelly. Peanut butter is a good source of protein and contains some B vitamins and iron. Some commercial brands have saturated fat added to help the product maintain its creamy consistency.

Check the facts

Check the Nutrition Facts chart and ingredient labels. Avoid those with "partially hydrogenated" or "hardened" vegetable oils, which show the presence of saturated fats.

Pine nuts have become a recent favorite because of their mellow, sweet flavor, but are more expensive than other nuts because of the labor-intensive

harvesting process. A mixture of bread crumbs and finely chopped, toasted nuts is a wonderful coating for meat, poultry or fish. Bake it, broil or grill it for a delicious dinner.

Another option is to go meatless and toss nuts into stir-fried vegetables, soups, salads or pasta. Ground pistachios are also a great coating on a cheese ball for entertaining. For a tasty change of pace, try Chicken Pecan with Orange Sauce. (See related recipe.)

A small serving daily of a variety of nuts can contribute vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytochemicals. As part of a low fat, high fiber diet, nuts can help reduce the risk of certain types of cancer and heart disease.

Nuts have nourished human beings throughout time and around the world. To keep nuts as fresh as possible, store them in the refrigerator in an airtight container for up to six months, or up to a year in the freezer.

Enjoy the flavor and nutrition of nuts the next time you are looking for a great meal or snack.

Peggy Martinelli-Everts, a Clarkston resident, is a registered dietitian and director of clinical operations for HDS Services, a 35-year-old Farmington Hills-based food service and hospital management and consulting company, specializing in food and nutrition service management for hospitals, long-term care facilities, businesses, private clubs and private schools. HDS Services has 250 management accounts throughout the United States.

Chicken Pecan with Orange Sauce

1 cup orange marmalade
3/4 cup Dijon mustard
1/2 cup honey
4 teaspoons butter or margarine, melted
1/8 teaspoon cloves, ground
1 cup half & half
6 5-ounce chicken breasts, boneless
1 1/4 cups toasted bread crumbs
1 cup pecans, toasted, chopped fine
1 teaspoon dried parsley
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup margarine

Combine orange marmalade, mustard, honey, butter or margarine, cloves and half & half in a saucepan. Heat on low for 5 minutes, stirring constantly until well blended. Keep warm and set aside.

In a long pan, combine the toasted bread crumbs, chopped pecans, parsley and salt. Separate the sauce in half. Use half of the sauce to dip the chicken, then roll in breadcrumb mixture. Shake off excess.

In a large frying pan, melt the margarine and sauté the chicken breast fillets until golden and cooked to an internal temperature of 165° F. Serve each breast with about 2 tablespoons warm orange sauce on top. Makes 6 servings.

Nutritional information per serving: Calories, 829; protein, 48 g; fat, 21 g; and sodium, 1121 mg.

Recipes courtesy of HDS Services of Farmington Hills. See another recipe inside Taste.

Nut Quiz

1. Americans eat enough peanut butter to cover:

- a. The state of Texas
- b. The Atlantic Ocean
- c. The floor of the Grand Canyon

2. By the time the average student graduates from high school, he or she will have eaten approximately how many peanut butter and jelly sandwiches?

- a. 2,500
- b. 2,000
- c. 1,500

3. Approximately how many peanuts are there in a 12-ounce jar of peanut butter?

- a. 480
- b. 540
- c. 625

Answers: 1.c., 2.c., 3.b.

Nuts	Calories	Protein (g)	Monounsaturated Fat (g)	Polysaturated Fat (g)	Magnesium (% DV)	Fiber (g)
Almonds	160	6	9	4	20	3
Cashews	160	4	8	2	18	1
Pecans	190	3	11.5	6.5	8	3
Pine Nuts	160	7	6	6	16	1
Pistachios	160	6	7	4	8	3
Walnuts	180	4	2.5	13	10	2

Nutrients in one ounce of nuts.

Stuffing brings a taste of home to the table

2 UNIQUE



KELLI LEWTON

I see the signs of the ever-famous eating holiday approaching rather quickly. Just last week in my neighborhood grocery store, I noticed a monument of the box bread stuffing mixes, some even totting designer flavors.

It's home cookin'

Stuffing is truly the epitome of good home cooking. Our memories of stuffing are seldom associated with fancy-schmancy restaurants or famous chefs, but rather with dinners prepared by love, by Grandma or Mom shared with family and friends.

Like other home kitchen favorites, stuffing, also known as dressing in the South, is quite easy to make. Even when many food personalities try to dress it up and give it cultural names like "bread tort" or "bake," it still is stuffing to me!

While there are many versions of this savory dish, the most popular ones are, without a doubt, bread-based.

When combined with the basic essentials of melted butter, celery, onions, seasoning and herbs, plain bread is transformed into a heart- and tummy-warming family favorite. As stuffing is normally baked inside turkeys or chickens, it gains even more richness from the tasty roasted juices that seep and bake their way to flavorful richness. Stuffing was not a part of the Pilgrims' feast. It was originally developed as an economical way to stretch meat.

A highlighted dish

For many food lovers, stuffing has now become a highlight of many roasted chicken or turkey meals. In fact, a Thanksgiving meal without it is almost unthinkable. Throughout the year, it is also a great side dish even when baked in a separate dish as an accompaniment to any roasted or grilled meat or fish. In the fall, it can also prove festive to bake stuffing inside of hollowed out squashes and gourds.

Because bread is such a neutral base in cooking that marries well with almost any food, stuffing lends itself to

Stuffing tips

A general rule of thumb is to measure 1/2 cup stuffing per pound of poultry to sufficiently fill the cavity.

Do not stuff the bird until you are ready to roast so the bread does not soak up juice from the raw turkey. Be careful not to overstuff. Fill the cavity loosely as the mixture will expand during baking.

To bake stuffing separately from meat, spoon into a buttered dish. Dot with some additional butter and splash a little extra stock or bouillon on top. Cover and bake in 325° F oven, uncovering for the last 15 minutes of its baking time.

Remove any extra stuffing after serving and store in proper container and refrigerator.

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