

Blood oranges are in their prime through April

WINE

FROM PAGE B1

we described. Cousino-Macul 2002 Merlot is red-fruit driven in color and taste. It has all the youthful characters of bright cherry and raspberries with gentle spice and tobacco characters, signatures of merlot from Chile's Maipo Valley. It's difficult to find more pleasing wines from Chile at this modest \$9 price tag.

The Healds are Troy residents who write about wine, spirits, food, and restaurants for the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. To leave them a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047, mailbox 1864H.

BY LANA MARI
STAFF WRITER

The juicy blood orange evokes pleasant childhood memories for Vince Sciarino. "They grew everywhere," Sciarino said about the fragrant blood orange trees found throughout Sicily, his birthplace. Today they also grow in warm climates like California. While good blood oranges can be found at Michigan markets nearly year round, the month of March is peak season for the fruit, said Sciarino, of Western Market in Berkeley. Named for their deep red-stained flesh, blood oranges are smaller than a typical Florida orange. They're rich in Vitamin C, with a 120 percent of the recommended minimum daily requirement in each serving. Also, a single blood orange contains eight percent of the daily requirement of calcium.



Blood oranges are in peak season — the sweet oranges have red flesh, hence their name.

Blood oranges are sweet and the skin is somewhat rough. Choose firm and heavy fruit. Sometimes the skin is a bit flushed with red color, but it may also be pure orange in color and the flesh will still be

sweet. Look for skin that's firm, but not leathery. Store at room temperature for one week or more than two weeks in a crisper. The most popular way to eat

a blood orange is just to peel and eat, Sciarino said. They can also be cooked in sauces. Add the juice of one orange to sautéed garlic and olive oil and use to top couscous for a Tunisian style meal.

BLOOD ORANGE SHERBET

2 cups of water
1 tablespoon of cold water
1 cup of raw sugar
Juice from 4 or 5 blood oranges
1/4 teaspoon of granulated gelatin
Juice of 1/2 lemon
2 blood oranges peeled, chopped into small pieces
Boil the sugar and water 20 minutes; add the gelatin soaked in the cold water, and when cold, add the fruit juice and flesh.
Freeze overnight until frozen. Sherbet will be firm, but not frozen solid.
Recipe courtesy of Roger Orals of Rochester.

SICILIAN FENNEL SALAD WITH ORANGE

2 large fennel bulbs, trimmed
Juice of 1 lemon
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
4 large blood oranges, peeled and segmented
1 cup fresh pomegranate seeds (optional)
Salt and pepper
6-ounce piece of hard pecorino cheese

Use a sharp knife to slice the fennel as thin as possible. Place the fennel slices in a bowl and toss with the lemon juice and olive oil. Add the blood orange segments and pomegranate seeds, season to taste with salt and pepper; and toss gently to mix. Arrange the fennel salad on four individual plates. Shave the pecorino in long shreds over the top of each plate and serve.
Recipe courtesy of *Simple Italian Food Recipes from My Two Villages*, Mario Batali (Clarkson Potter/Publishers \$30.00)

WINE PICKS

CHARDONNAY

Awesome: 2000 Robert Stemmler - Three Clones (\$20). Rich and lush: 2000 Fritz Chardonnay, Dutton Ranch (\$22).

Food friendly style: 2001 Franciscan (SF7); 2001 Simi (S17) and 2001 Clos du Val (S21).

Wallet friendly: 2002 Lindemans Bin 65 (\$8).

MERLOT

Rich and generous: 2000 Clos du Val, Napa Valley (\$25).

Soft and lush: 2000 Chateau Souverain, Alexander Valley (\$18).

Wallet friendly: 2001 Delas Freres, Vin de Pays d'Oc (\$8) and 2000 Bulletin Place, Australia (\$8).

All wines mentioned are available in the metro-Detroit area.

If a retailer does not stock a specific wine, ask that it be ordered from the distributor.

TASTE CALENDAR

Country French Cooking
Nancy's Kitchen, 304 East Street in Rochester offers Country French Cooking with French cook Elondie Henderson, 7-9 p.m., Wednesday, March 19. Cost is \$45. For more information, call or email Nancy at (248) 651-1622 or nancy@nancyskitchen.com

Flavors of Jewish Life
Mariane Sosnosky, author of *Fast & Festive Meals for the Jewish Holidays*, will headline *The Flavors of Jewish Life*, a cooking program to take place Sunday, March 16 at Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills. Other chefs expected to teach classes during the three-hour program include Matt Prentice, president and chief executive officer of Unique Restaurant Corp.; Annabel Cohen, food writer, cookbook author and former caterer; Joan Kekal, Cleveland-based food writer and cookbook author; Paul Wetzl, owner of Excellence To Catering; and Eric Novak, editor/founder of Jim Hiller's wine club newsletter and a wine buyer for Hiller's Markets.

The program instructs how to prepare the traditional Jewish foods to individuals who may never have experienced them; converts to Judaism, interfaith couples and born Jews who were raised with little tradition or Jewish education. Beginning at 1 p.m., Flavors of Jewish Life will feature two class

periods, each 45 minutes in length. Through advance registration, participants will be able to choose classes such as "Cooking for the High Holidays," "Don't Pass-over...Passover Cooking," "Fabulous Finishes," "Sharing Shabbat," and "Mazel Tov! It's a Simcha!" For a ticket price of \$18, participants will be able to register for two of the five classes and will receive a cookbook of all of the recipes presented that day. For more information or to register for the program, please call Karl Altelman at (248) 223-1470 or Lisa Sobie Siegmund at (248) 205-2534.

Winterfest Beer Tasting
Schoolcraft College's Gourmet Club and Merchant's Fine Wine of Grosse Pointe Woods, Dearborn and Royal Oak present the eighth annual *Winterfest Beer Tasting* 7 p.m., Wednesday, March 12, at the Schoolcraft College VistaTech Center, 18600 Haggerty in Livonia, one block west of I-275 between Six Mile and Seven Mile roads. Fine culinary cuisine, and 80 to 100 beers will be among the choices, with tastings limited to 50 beers.

Tickets are \$38 per person. Patrons must be 21 years of age and prove it to attend this event. Tickets can be purchased at the Student Activities Office, lower Waterman Center, or at Merchant's Fine Wine locations. Call for tickets at (734) 462-4422.

IRISH

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"hearty, stick to your ribs" food, whether it is lamb stew, shepherd's pie or boxty.

Now content that with Julie Demery's thoughts on Irish cuisine. Fresh foods and Ireland go hand and hand, said Demery, a member of the United Irish Society in Detroit and a Beverly Hills resident. "They go to the market everyday," Demery said. "They use a little lemon, but they like the butter, free-range eggs and cream. They use cabbage in colcannon."

"With herbs, they like a lot of the ones we like - bay leaves, thyme, rosemary and they use a lot of parsley. It brings out a pretty shades of spring green."

It is apparent that the reputation of Irish cooking isn't what it used to be. Demery says that is evident in the popularity of the Ballymaloe School in Cork.

"They have chefs, young and old, come from all over the world, from Japan and Germany to learn about Irish cooking," Demery said. "The plus is that they have so many fresh ingredients like fresh milk

and cream. They're making foods much fancier now with the root vegetables, potatoes, parsnips and turnips."

"Irish cuisine and techniques have improved mightily their reputation for food," Connors said.

Beef became part of the Irish diet in the 18th century when new eating habits were introduced from the United States. Corned beef was introduced to use secondary cuts of beef. Spiced beef is an Irish specialty, generally served cold the day after Christmas (St. Stephens Day), but now can be found all year round.

It is basically corned beef with a mixture of allspice, cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg rubbed into it. Ireland actually produces seven times more beef than it consumes.

The shepherd's pie at Dick O'Dowd's varies from traditional preparation, Connors said. "We use top round cubed beef, they use ground beef," Connors said. Vegetables and meats are layered up with mashed potatoes and cheddar cheese on top. The cottage pie is a vegetarian version of shepherd's pie.

The bangers and mash (a spicy sausage and potatoes

dish) are another popular item. The bar also serves four varieties of boxty, an herbed potato pancake.

Robert Gainer, a chef at Dick O'Dowd's, uses a blend of thyme, marjoram and rosemary in his Irish stew, braising it slowly in a beef-tomato base.

Then of course, is the potato, which forms the basis of many Irish dishes including the boxty, which are potato pancakes. Champ or brunnin is a mashed-potato dish made with milk, seasonings and scallions, topped with butter.

Garlic was cultivated by monks during the Golden Age, and garlic butter remains a popular accompaniment to steaks and fish. Side dishes of honey were served with food.

Smoked salmon is huge in Ireland. "Traditionally, it is something you find in every pub and restaurant," Connors said. "Salmon, both fresh and smoked, is a staple of the Irish diet."

Demery said she's never had better salmon than she did in Ireland. "One of my nephews caught the salmon," Demery said. "It was so fresh and wonderful!"

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TRADITIONAL IRISH RECIPES

TRADITIONAL IRISH LAMB STEW

3 pounds deboned, lean lamb shoulders
1 1/2 cups onions, sliced
1 cup leeks, sliced
1 cup celery, sliced
2 tablespoons parsley, chopped
3 sprigs thyme
salt and pepper, to taste
16 small potatoes, peeled
1 1/2 cups carrots, cut into 2-inch long batons
2 1/2 quarts chicken stock

Trim lamb of excess fat and bone. Cut into 2-inch chunks. In a pot large enough to hold lamb, cover chunks with cold water. Bring to a boil. Boil 10 minutes. Drain and cool under cold water.

In a 4-quart pot, layer the meat, onions, leeks, celery and herbs. Cover with stock. Simmer one hour.

Add potatoes and carrots after 30 minutes time. When cooked, sprinkle with chopped parsley. Serves eight.

Recipe from *Elegant Irish Cooking* by Noel Cullen.

ROAST PORK - A LA MAYO

1 rolled boneless pork loin roast (around five pounds)
1 garlic clove, minced
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup orange marmalade
1/2 cup bottled horseradish

Combine first five ingredients and rub into the roast.

Place roast in a shallow pan, fat side up, and roast at 350 degrees for 2 hours.

Combine the marmalade and horseradish and spread on top of the roast and continue cooking until an instant meat thermometer reads 160 degrees - about 45 minutes more, basting occasionally with pan juices.

Let stand 10 minutes before carving, 10-12 servings.

Recipe courtesy of Julie Demery of Beverly Hills.

COLCANNON

1 1/2 pounds potatoes
1 1/2 cups milk, scalded
6 scallions, chopped and scalded in the milk
1 1/2 cups gently boiled green cabbage
1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
Salt and pepper

Boil potatoes and mash, adding the boiled milk and scallions, and beat until fluffy.

Toss the cooked cabbage gently in the melted butter and add to the potatoes, together with the parsley.

Season to taste. Makes 6-8 servings.

(Cooking tip: When cooking cabbage, put a peeled onion in with it and it will help to counteract the pungent smell.)

Recipe courtesy of Julie Demery of Beverly Hills.

LINENHALL BOXTY

4 medium potatoes
1 medium onion, sliced fine
1 egg
2 tablespoons flour
salt and pepper
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
Peel and grate potatoes. In a bowl, mix with onion.

Whisk the egg. Add to potatoes, along with flour, salt and pepper. Mix well.

Heat oil in a heavy-bottomed skillet.

Over medium heat, drop 2 tablespoons of the mixture into the oil.

Flatten slightly to form a round.

Fry until golden brown, turning once 3-4 minutes per side. Serves four.

Recipe from *Elegant Irish Cooking* by Noel Cullen.

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