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Wine: The Perfect Pairing For Carb-Aware Cuisine *Carb-Conscious Chef Shares Surefire Tips for Today's Lifestyles*

CHICAGO (Aug. 4, 2004) – There's no doubt about it – today's new carbohydrate consciousness is changing the way America eats. In just over a year, *The South Beach Diet* has sold more than five million copies and *Dr. Atkins' New Diet Revolution* is fast approaching four hundred weeks on *The New York Times* Best-Seller List. With the number of carb-conscious eaters growing every day, the latest ACNielsen Homescan Panel Dietary Awareness Survey indicates that as many as 17 percent of Americans currently are following some type of carb-aware eating plan.

“This new generation of carb watching is full of good news and delicious choices, especially for wine drinkers,” says chef George Stella, host of *Low Carb and Lovin' It* on the Food Network. “People who enjoy drinking wine can continue to do so on a low-carb eating plan.”

While exact carb counts differ slightly from wine to wine, “Nearly all dry wines fit well below the established ‘low-carb’ level of less than 7 carbs per 5 ounce serving,” explains Wine Market Council President, John Gillespie. Not only is there room to incorporate wine into these eating plans, but the new carb-aware lifestyle is based on celebrating great foods – foods that are naturals for pairing with wine every day.

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So whether you're looking for low carb, smart carb, or just delicious new recipe ideas, Chef Stella has simple tips for incorporating wine with today's carb-aware cuisine. Stella advises starting with the sauce when planning for delicious meals, adjusting the acids for the most flavorful food-wine pairings, firing up the flavor with grilled meals and going global with naturally low-carb ethnic entrees.

Start With The Sauce

“Like any sophisticated cuisine, there are plenty of flavorful, carb-smart sauces that add high-impact punch to any course of your meal – and they're a great place to start when thinking about wine pairings,” explains Stella.

For example, red wines like Syrah or Shiraz have just enough acidity and peppery character to handle mustard well, making them a delicious match for a dish like Chef Stella's *Low Carb Key West Crab Cakes and Mustard Sauce* (recipe enclosed).

Chardonnay has the backbone and the body to stand up to the rich flavors of creamy sauces. For tomato-based sauces, do as the Italians do and reach for a classic Italian wine like Chianti, or a Sangiovese. The herbaceous character of Sauvignon Blanc offers the perfect balancing act for assertive fresh-tasting herb sauces. And sweeter sauces, such as Teriyaki, are complemented by a well-chilled rosé.

Adjust The Acids

Vinaigrettes and vinegar-based marinades are a super low-carb flavor booster, but can pose a challenge for wine pairings because of vinegar's tangy acidity. “Luckily, there are a few easy fixes to make these marinades more wine-friendly,” says Stella.

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To help adjust the acids, try substituting lemon juice or wine for all or part of the vinegar. A little balsamic vinegar will also balance the acidity with its mild sweetness. Adding a salty ingredient (such as olives or capers), a few chopped nuts, or a little bit of a flavorful cheese like feta or blue cheese also will do the trick.

Or, if you prefer to stick with a mild vinegar, Sauvignon Blancs are crisp and acidic enough to balance the acid and will also complement spices commonly found in vinaigrettes.

Fire Up The Flavor

Grilling has become such an indispensable method of cooking that carb watchers are keeping their grills – both inside and outside – fired up year-round. “Not only is it a healthy way to cook, but everyone loves the great smoky taste that grilling imparts to vegetables, seafood, and meat,” explains Stella.

Top wines to pair with grilled fare such as Chef Stella’s *Teriyaki Ginger Tuna Skewers* (recipe attached) are versatile Pinot Noirs; medium to full-bodied Chardonnays; or fruity Merlots.

Go Global

Savvy, carb-conscious chefs have taken inspiration from cuisines around the world that already feature naturally low-carb delicacies. Whether it’s a spicy South American ceviche or a hearty Tuscan T-bone, follow their lead and take the opportunity to sample an unfamiliar wine from a corresponding country.

Or, if you prefer to stay closer to home, try cooling down zesty global flavors like Stella’s *Jamaican Jerk Sea Scallop and Shrimp Brochettes with Fresh Melon Salsa* (recipes attached) with a crisp, dry sparkling wine or a soothing rosé.

For More Information

For more great wine pairing suggestions and carb-aware cuisine recipes from Chef George Stella, log onto www.wineanswers.com.

The Wine Market Council is an independent, non-profit trade association of grape growers, wine producers, importers, wholesalers, retailers and other organizations affiliated with the wine industry.

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LOW CARB KEY WEST CRAB CAKES AND MUSTARD SAUCE

Crab Cakes:

- 1 pound blue crab meat
- 1 tablespoon red bell pepper, small dice
- 1 tablespoon green bell pepper, small dice
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 2 eggs
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1½ teaspoons Maryland style crab seasoning (such as Old Bay)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil (such as canola)

Mustard Sauce:

- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup Dijon mustard
- ¼ teaspoon fresh lemon juice

Mix mustard sauce ingredients in a bowl until blended and refrigerate.

Mix all crab cake ingredients except vegetable oil in a bowl just until blended.

Heat oil in a pan over medium-high heat. With a tablespoon, carefully spoon mini cakes into the pan. (NOTE: The batter will be very loose since there are no breadcrumbs, but as the egg mixture cooks, their structure will set.)

Cook on one side until firm, about 2 minutes, then flip and cook another minute or until done. Serve hot with mustard sauce. Yield: 18 servings.

CALORIES 81; FAT 6g (sat 2g); CARB 0g (net carb 0g); FIBER 0g

TERIYAKI GINGER TUNA SKEWERS

- 2 pounds fresh tuna steak, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted

Marinade:

- 15 ounces teriyaki sauce (average 2 grams sugar per serving)
- 3 ounces sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, minced
- ¼ teaspoon fresh garlic, minced
- 1 fresh lemon, juiced
- 1 tablespoon sugar substitute (such as Splenda)

Soak 25-30 bamboo skewers in water for at least 30 minutes.

Mix all marinade ingredients together in a bowl. Submerge cubed tuna in marinade, cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

Preheat indoor grill top or barbecue grill to high.

Thread 3 pieces of tuna per skewer, about 1 inch from the end.

Place skewers on the edges of the grill with the longest part of the stick hanging off the edge away from the fire. Stay close and turn the sticks by hand to keep from burning. Skewers are done in just 3 to 4 minutes.

Sprinkle with sesame seeds before serving. Yield: 8 servings

CALORIES 168; FAT 5g (sat <1g); CARB 4g (net carb 4g); FIBER 0g

JAMAICAN JERK SEA SCALLOP AND SHRIMP BROCHETTES

- 1 pound medium sea scallops
- 1 pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined, tails intact
- 2 tablespoons Jamaican jerk seasoning in a jar (pick a brand with low carbs and sugars)
- ¼ cup vegetable oil (such as canola)

Soak 25-30 bamboo skewers in water for at least 30 minutes. Preheat grill to medium-high or use an indoor grill top or grill pan over high heat.

In medium bowl, mix jerk seasoning and vegetable oil. Lightly toss shrimp and scallops in jerk seasoning, lightly coating all pieces.

Thread one shrimp or scallop per skewer to about 1 inch from the end.

Place brochettes along the edges of the grill with the longest part of the stick hanging off the edge, away from the fire. Stay close and turn the sticks by hand to keep from burning. Grill 4 to 5 minutes until done.

Serve by sticking skewers straight out of the side of a cantaloupe half filled with *Fresh Melon Salsa*. Yield: 24 servings

CALORIES 65; FAT 2g (sat 1g); CARB 1g (net carb 1g); FIBER 0g

FRESH MELON SALSA

- ¼ cup cantaloupe, small dice
- ¼ cup honeydew melon, small dice
- 1 cup zucchini, small dice
- 1 cup yellow squash, small dice
- ½ cup yellow bell pepper, small dice
- ¼ cup red bell pepper, small dice
- 1 tablespoon cilantro, chopped (optional)
- ¼ cup sugar substitute (such as Splenda)
- 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil (such as canola)

Place oil in a pan and preheat over high heat. Add all ingredients except cantaloupe and honeydew and cook until tender, about 2 minutes.

Remove from heat, drain and spread out on a plate. Immediately refrigerate, uncovered. When cooled, mix in cantaloupe and honeydew; cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving. Yield: 24 servings.

CALORIES 17; FAT 1g (sat 0g); CARB 1g (net carb 1g); FIBER 0g