

A Visit to AmRhein's Wine Cellars

If you want to learn more about how to pair wines with soups, then a visit to AmRhein's Wine Cellars, is recommended. AmRhein's Wine Cellars is a Virginia family owned and operated, estate-grown winery, which specializes in wines with a German influence. According to Russ and Paula Amrhein, owners and operators of the vineyard, their vineyards were first planted in 1995 and their first crush occurred in 1999. Starting out with only a three acre vineyard, they now have three vineyards (Bent Mountain, Franklin County and Botetourt) boasting 45 acres and yielding 20 varieties of grapes.

The location of the vineyards is very important for grape growing because of the elevation. "Elevations have different weather patterns and degree days," stated Russ. "Bent Mountain is at 2,500 feet, Botetourt is at 1,300 feet and Franklin is at 1,900 feet.

Each elevation has a certain number of degree days above 55 and below 90 degrees. Each grape requires a different amount of degree days. Whites are grown at 2,500 feet while reds are grown between 1,200 and 1,900 feet in elevation. Whites require fewer degree days."

According to Amrhein, red wines are created by removing the stem from the grape and fermenting the grape in large vats with the skin of the grape still on. White wines are created by removing the stem and fermenting the extract from the grape (removing the skin). The fermentation process takes anywhere from three days to three months depending on the style of wine you are looking for.

Their grapes are harvested on weekends, starting the first of September and working through most of October. "Our pickers have other jobs, so picking is generally done on the weekends," says Russ.

Russ and Paula Amrhein are passionate about their business. "It's a wonderful business. Every year, every crop, every customer is different. It's a wonderful lifestyle," Russ added.

AmRhein's Wine Cellars offers tours of the vineyard, wine tasting opportunities, including three major wine tasting events, and has a full catering service to host family events, weddings and other events. During the fall, AmRhein's hosted a Harvest Soup and Wine Tasting event, which featured a selection of five gourmet soups paired with five AmRhein wines. Attendees could pick their favorite, and relax with a bowl and a glass. Winery Events Coordinator and Chef Brian Burton, who has over 15 years experience as a chef, was more than happy to share a sample of soup and wine with us. Brian's Sausage Tortellini Soup is a real winner!



AmRhein is a German name meaning "on the Rhein" (Rhine) River.



Writer Beverly Boehm enjoys harvest soup and wine

Sausage Tortellini Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ lbs linked sweet Italian Sausage
- 1 medium chopped onion
- 3 minced garlic cloves
- 6 cups beef broth
- 1 ½ cups AmRhein Aglianico Wine
- 3 cups carrots sliced
- 3 large peeled chopped tomatoes
- ¾ teaspoon basil
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- 1 8 oz. can tomato sauce

Directions:

Remove casings from linked sausage and crumble in frying pan until golden brown. Add all of the above ingredients. Simmer 45 minutes

Add:

- 1 cup small chopped green cabbage
- 7 cheese tortellini
- 1 ½ cup sliced mushrooms
- 1 large sliced zucchini
- 1 tablespoon worcestershire sauce



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As a foodie, former owner of Inn at Riverbend, owner of The Bank Food and Drink, and proud mother of Pastry Chef Michael Behmoiras, reading about food is an important daily activity to me, second only to making great food!

I subscribe to lots of magazines and especially enjoy a food industry publication entitled PLATE. As I thumbed through a summer issue, an ad placed by Idaho Potato jumped out, causing me to rip out the page and post it in the kitchen.

When my son Michael, told me he was coming home, it was time to gather friends and have some fun and prepare the image hanging in the kitchen. I love making recognizable dishes in a different way, hence, our winning the 2008 Inn-Credible Breakfast Cook-off for Breakfast Sushi. So taking meatloaf, of course not your ordinary meat loaf, placing it in a muffin/cupcake pan to bake, and topping it with piped mashed potatoes yielded a fun dinner!

I have to give full credit to the ad, the Idaho potato website and this recipe created by Chef Cynthia Kallile, the owner of The Meatloaf Bakery in Chicago, Illinois for her No Buns About It Idaho Burger Loaf®. Please note that this makes 22 servings so cut down the recipe as you wish. I drizzled a balsamic glaze reduction on the plate before I placed the meatloaf and added fresh chives, and finely chopped peppers to the top.



Meatloaf Cupcakes

Ingredients for the Meatloaf:

- 1 pound bacon, chopped
- 12 ounces onion, finely chopped
- 6 pounds ground beef
- 3 ½ cups Italian bread crumbs
- 10 ounces yellow cheddar cheese
- 10 ounces white cheddar cheese
- 8 ounces dill pickles, chopped
- 4 eggs
- 6 ounces milk
- 7 ounces ketchup
- 1 ounce yellow mustard
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 ½ teaspoons black pepper

Ingredients for Cheesy Taters:

- 5 pounds Idaho® Russets, peeled and 1-inch cubed
- 5 ½ ounces butter, unsalted
- 1 ¼ ounces sour cream
- 1 ¼ ounces milk
- 10 ounces yellow cheddar cheese, grated
- 2 ½ ounces Asiago cheese, grated
- 2 ½ ounces Parmesan cheese, grated
- salt and pepper, to taste
- fresh chives, snipped into ¼ inch pieces
- red or orange pepper, finely chopped

Directions for Meatloaf:

1. Cook bacon in sauté pan until crisp. Remove with slotted spoon to eliminate grease. Combine all ingredients in large mixing bowl.
2. Mix until well-combined and proper consistency.
3. Portion into greased muffin tins.
4. Bake at 350° until internal temperature reaches 165°F.

Directions for Cheesy Taters:

1. Boil potatoes till tender. Drain.
2. Add remaining ingredients and whip until mixed.
3. Fill pastry bag with warm cheese taters (tip of your choice).
4. Pipe taters onto tops of cooled burger loaf.
5. Sprinkle with cheddar cheese.
6. Heat cupcake until internal temperature reaches 165°. Cheesy taters should be a nice golden brown.
7. Remove from oven and cool.
8. Drizzle a few lines of Balsamic Glaze on the serving plate. Place the cupcake, top with snipped chives and orange or red peppers.



Basil Mousse



Chef Linda



Chef Michael

Ingredients for Basil Mousse:

- 3 Stems with leaves of basil
- 2 1/2 sheets unflavored gelatin
- 6 large egg yolks
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup chilled whipping cream, divided
- Fresh Strawberries
- Balsamic reduction

Directions for Basil Mousse:

1. Bring 2 stems with leaves and 1/2 cup water to boil in a small saucepan.
2. Remove from heat. Cover and let it steep for about 10 minutes.
3. Strain water into a small bowl and discard basil. Allow basil water to cool. (This can be done about a week ahead. Cover and chill until ready to use.)
4. Put the sheets of gelatin in ice warm to bloom them.
5. Fill a medium saucepan with about 2 inches of water and bring it to a boil.
6. Meanwhile whisk egg yolks and 1/2 cup sugar in a large metal mixing bowl.
7. Gradually whisk in basil water.
8. Set the mixing bowl on top of the saucepan, ensuring that the water doesn't touch the bottom of the mixing bowl.
9. Add the 3rd basil stem with leaves.
10. Whisk mixture until a candy thermometer inserted into the mixture reads 180 degrees F, 5-8 minutes.
11. Remove mixing bowl from heat.
12. Add 1 Tbs of gelatin mixture (discard remaining gelatin), and stir to dissolve.
13. Using an electric mixer, beat basil mixture until thick and cool, about 5 minutes.
14. Clean and dry beaters, then whip 1/2 cup of the whipping cream in a separate bowl until peaks form; fold gently into the basil mixture.
15. Cut strawberries in to pieces and layer with the mousse in desired dishes or shooter glasses,
16. Garnish with a cut strawberry and a drizzle of balsamic reduction .

This makes 12 servings in a smaller shooter glass.