

## End your heavy meal with something sweet

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By **BILL AND KAREN GARLOUGH Special to GO**

With the holidays approaching, we begin to think of gatherings with family and friends and special meals to celebrate the occasion. While the Thanksgiving dinner is special, it also can be an overindulgent occasion. We decided to focus on a light, sweet ending to this classic meal.

As pumpkin pie is dense, we kicked around other options, including pumpkin cheesecake and pumpkin creme brulee. We liked the idea of pumpkin creme brulee paired with a French Sauterne dessert wine, but thought it is complicated to make and a little heavy to finish off a big meal. So, we settled on a pear fruit tart and an Italian Moscato dessert wine, to offer a light, sweet ending to this holiday feast.



This week's wine choices match up well with our recipe for tasty Upside-Down Pear Tart.

*Submitted photo*

### WINE OF THE MONTH

7 Deadly Zins,

Michael and David Phillips Wines

Retail Price: \$15

The traditional Thanksgiving dinner calls for a wine with an American heritage. Zinfandel is a great choice for those who enjoy hearty, bold and spicy reds with their meal. This robust wine's fruity and spicy character works well with many traditional Thanksgiving side dishes. Seven Deadly Zins offers raspberry, pepper and earthy notes. This whimsical name references the winemakers' Catholic background and the fact that this Lodi Zinfandel is a blend of grapes from seven different old vine vineyards.

Selected by master sommelier Bill Garlough of My Chef Catering.

### Wine facts

Dessert wines are prized as they are produced in smaller quantities and are more expensive to make. They are served chilled and sipped in smaller glasses containing 2 ounces of indulgent heaven (six 2 oz. portions per 375 ml bottle). They are produced throughout the world, including wines from Sauternes, Barsac, Alsace and Anjou-Saumur in France, the Auslese and Eiswein (ice) wines of Germany and Austria, late harvest wines from California and New York state, ice wines of Canada, Australia's "Stickies" dessert wines and Hungary's great dessert wine Tokay Aszu. Dessert wines can vary in weight and sweetness level from light to ultra sweet wines that coat your taste buds like liquid honey.

Throughout the world, there are a variety of ways to produce sweet dessert wines, from picking the grapes late (late harvest wines) to allowing a fungal rot to form (botrytis) to allowing the grapes to be frozen (ice wines) to adding scoops of raisins to increase sugar levels (Tokays).

The Asti region of northwest Italy is home to Moscato D'Asti. This Italian dessert wine is generally a limited, small production wine made from premium grapes. It is a low alcohol wine that is slightly fizzy, lightly sweet and fruity. They are meant to be consumed after each harvest, so watch for the dates on the bottles. As they are not as sweet as Sauternes, Ausleses and ice wines, they can be sipped from a regular-size wine glass. Moscatos offer apricot, peach and pear notes. A quality, fresh Moscato actually bursts with the smell of apricots when it is first opened. These wines work well as an afternoon beverage or for a light dessert pairing.

### Food and wine pairing

A key rule to remember in a successful pairing is that the dessert wine should always be sweeter than the dessert. If not, the dessert will actually overpower the dessert wine. With our goal of finishing a big

Thanksgiving meal with a light dessert, it is important to pair this dish with a lighter, slightly sweeter dessert wine.

**Bill's Wine Picks**

Lighter, sweet Italian Moscato D'Astis:

Saracco \$13

Michelle Chiarlo's Nivole \$14

Stefano Ceretto \$19

Medium sweet dessert wines:

Brillo Riella Moscato D'Asti \$9

Santa Julia Tardio - Argentina \$12

Very sweet dessert wines:

Chateau Doisy-Vedrines French Sauterne \$17

Kracher Auslese - German Late Harvest \$22

Chateau Suduirant - French Sauterne \$30

*Bill and Karen Garlough are the owners and founders of My Chef Catering in Naperville, the winner of the U.S. Chamber's 2007 Small Business of the Year award. Bill Garlough is a Level 1 master sommelier and can be reached at [info@mychef.com](mailto:info@mychef.com).*