

Put some wine on your Super Bowl party menu

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By **BILL AND KAREN GARLOUGH For GO**

One of our New Year's resolutions for 2009 is to find exciting new wines that offer exceptional value. In the column, I have always tried to present wines that offer good value and this approach is more appropriate than ever.

With all of the snow/sleet/ice/rain we experience this time of year, we tend to hang out at our homes and host or attend indoor parties. Super Bowl parties offer a good reason to invite your friends over and have some fun. In this column, Karen will provide a quick and easy Jalapeno Spread perfect for football parties, and Bill will pair some wines that work well with this food.

Wine Facts

Football parties are fun and offer a casual way to get together and socialize. Football party fare tends to be bold and spicy, with BBQ ribs, chili, pizza, sub sandwiches and a variety of dips and chips as common menu items. These dishes commonly call for beer. When hosting a party, it is a good idea to offer wine for the non-beer drinkers and a variety of non-alcoholic beverage options including soft drinks and water.

As wine is rapidly growing in popularity in the U.S., there is a wide variety of flavors and styles available. Slightly sweet and fruity wines tend to balance bold and spicy foods. I will focus on some red wines that your guests will enjoy at your football party.

I recently visited a couple of local wine merchants and challenged them to suggest wines that are fruity, reasonably priced and have a fun and whimsical name. Mark Dryden of Cabernet and Company in Naperville rose to this challenge with two interesting reds. Both wines are blends of merlot, cabernet and syrah. Merlot grapes offer fruity character to a wine. The first wine Mark suggested is called Fruit Bomb, from the Bergevin Winery in Washington. This wine offers big cherry notes. I can just envision your guests asking you to "go long" for another glass of Fruit Bomb. Mark's second recommendation is Sacred Stone Master's Red Blend from the Pietra Santa Winery, which contains more syrah grapes than Fruit Bomb, and has a slightly drier taste. Both wines are ideal football party beverages.



Bill and Karen Garlough,
owners and founders,
My Chef Catering of Naperville.

Bill's Wine Picks
(with suggested retail prices)
Pillar Box Red \$11
Sacred Stone Master's Red Blend \$10
Fruit Bomb \$14
Marquis Philips Shiraz \$14

Wine of the Month
Pillar Box Red: suggested retail price: \$11
While the label is whimsical as many Australian wines are, the content is serious stuff. This wine contains 50 percent Shiraz, 42 percent Cabernet and 8 percent Merlot. It has a dark, purple color and offers a fruity nose of black cherry, black raspberry and blueberry. This full bodied red offers a great value and received a 91 rating from Robert Parker, the famous wine critic.



Party Fare

When having guests over, recipes that are quick, easy and relatively inexpensive are ideal. At parties, people love to nibble on a variety of comfort foods that are bold and spicy. The recipe we have included online is reminiscent of the jalapeno poppers served at most taverns. It can also be made with low-fat cream cheese and mayo without sacrificing flavor. Add more jalapenos if you want an extra kick!

TAVERN POPPER SPREAD RECIPE

2 8 oz Pkg Cream Cheese, softened

1 Cup Mayonnaise

1 4 oz can Chopped Green Chilies

1/8 Cup (2 oz.) Jalapeno Slices (bottled, not fresh), chopped (add more to taste)

1 Cup Parmesan Cheese, shredded

½ Cup Bread Crumbs (Japanese Panko is suggested)

French Bread slices – toasted

Or

Tortilla Chips

In a large bowl, combine cream cheese and mayonnaise. Mix in green chilies and jalapeno peppers. Transfer cheese mixture into an oven safe serving dish. Combine the parmesan cheese and breadcrumbs. Sprinkle the breadcrumb mixture on top. Bake in a 400 degree oven for 15 – 20 minutes until the cheese is warm and the topping is golden brown. Garnish with a 3 - 5 sliced jalapenos and serve with toasted French bread slices or tortilla chips.

Bill and Karen Garlough are the owners and founders of My Chef Catering in Naperville, the 2007 winner of the U.S. Chamber's Small Business of the Year. Bill is a Level 1 Master Sommelier. They can be reached at info@mychef.com.