

Tips and tales from Kohler Food & Wine Experience



Kohler Co.

Jack Bishop, Bridget Lancaster and Christopher Kimball answer questions about "America's Test Kitchen" at the Kohler Food & Wine Experience.

By Nancy Stohs and Anne Schamberg of the Journal Sentinel

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Kohler - Which beer or wine goes best with pizza? What are some healthy foods for breakfast? How can I make my own bacon?

The answers to these questions and so many more were dispensed Saturday at the 12th annual Kohler Food & Wine Experience, held Thursday through Sunday on the grounds of the American Club resort and nearby Shops at Woodlake.

Sponsored by Bon Appétit magazine, Stella Artois, Wirtz Beverage Wisconsin, The American Club and others, the four days of tastings, demonstrations, special meals and parties drew several thousand food lovers to sip, sample and learn from some of the area's and the nation's top chefs as well as wine, beer and spirits experts.

The typically one-hour daytime cooking demonstrations and tastings cost \$25 to \$45 each, with most around \$30; there were also plenty of complimentary offerings.

Sampling events from Saturday's lineup resulted in a broad array of take-away tips, insights and anecdotes. Here are just some:

Hold the whisk: When mixing ingredients for muffins, use a light touch, said pastry chef Richard Palm. "Moisture plus flour plus mechanical action equals gluten development," he said. And that means tunnels in your muffins.

Sweet fact: Palm used half sugar and half Splenda in one muffin recipe. Why not all Splenda? Because without sugar, you wouldn't get any browning. And don't try caramelizing Splenda (as for flan) - it won't work, and in fact it creates a toxic solution, he said.

Wine is food, too: Italian cooking authority and PBS personality Lidia Bastianich recalled that as a child growing up in Italy, the kids were served glasses of water for dinner with a little wine mixed in. "I grew up thinking of wine as food."

Just for drizzling: Stunned by the high price of traditional, authentic balsamic vinegar? The highly concentrated juice of the Trebbiano grape takes seven years to age, and it's not intended to be cooked with, Bastianich said. Use the commercial balsamic for that purpose, and reserve the good stuff for drizzling: in salads, over cheese, over a grilled filet.

Flavor tips: Salting each ingredient as you add it to a dish is better than dumping it all in at once, Bastianich said as she mixed a beet and goat cheese salad. A little lemon juice adds freshness to anything you cook. Fresh herbs are generally preferred, but oregano is an exception; the dried version has a more pronounced flavor.

Peppy pairings: Next time you serve Caesar salad, consider either a sparkling Sauvignon Blanc or an IPA; both have citrus notes that complement the tangy dressing. And for cheese

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pizza? Go with a Chardonnay or a wheat beer. The wheat flavor is a perfect match with the pizza crust, while the wine's acidity cuts the creamy cheese. (This from a pairing seminar with certified sommelier Jadlyn Stuart and Grant Pauly of Three Sheeps Brewing in Sheboygan.)

Makin' bacon: Yes, it can be done at home. But it takes space and time - room in your fridge for a 14-pound pork belly slab for the 8 to 10 days it takes to cure; and that's before the drying and cold-smoking stage, said Paul Funk of Hinterland in a class called Belly to Bacon.

Just say no to tradition: Sometimes old-fashioned methods aren't better. Unlike their counterparts in Italy, California olive oil producers plant trees close together, use irrigation and harvest the olives mechanically, said Jack Bishop of "America's Test Kitchen." This takes the fragile olives from tree to press much faster and has resulted in an oil that the ATK team found to be "better than 9 out of 10 European oils."

Turkey tips: With an eye to Thanksgiving cooks, the ATK threesome of Bishop, Christopher Kimball and Bridget Lancaster offered a few tips. As an alternative to brining, rub kosher salt all over the bird under the turkey skin. Start the turkey breast side down, then flip it for the last hour of roasting, to avoid overdone breast meat. Leave the stuffing out; to get the stuffing to a safe temperature, the bird will have to overcook.

Cook with it: Hard cider, like wine, can be used for cooking, said Mike Christensen of the Minneapolis-based Crispin Cider Co. Lighter-styled versions, such as Crispin Original, can be used to marinate chicken or fish. Heavier ciders such as Crispin's Lansdowne, which is made with Irish stout yeast and molasses, can be used "as a base for stew."

No gluten in your glass: Christensen said that Crispin hard ciders - all gluten-free - can provide an alternative for gluten-intolerant beer lovers. The company makes about 20 different lightly carbonated ciders that range from sweet to dry.

In the pink: Aussie winemaker Robert Heywood explained that the Taltarni Brut Taché gets its salmon color from the addition of a little red wine liqueur at the end of the winemaking process. Taché is the French word for "stained."

No loud pops, please: As Heywood describes it, when opening a bottle of bubbly, the first step is to loosen, but not remove, the wire cage that's over the cork. Then put one hand over the top of the bottle and with the other hand, grasp the bottom of the bottle and twist. The cork should gently "psst" out, keeping most of the effervescence in the bottle. "You don't want to let the cork really pop unless you're celebrating a wedding or your mate's birthday," he said.

The proper slant: In a demonstration about port wine and dessert, pastry chef Palm said that when making a dense cake, such as poundcake, put the cake tester in at an angle. That way you get a better sampling and are more likely to discover any undercooked batter.

Don't let it sink: When adding candied fruit peel to cake batter, dust the fruit lightly with flour first. "It creates resistance, so the fruit doesn't sink," Palm explained.

Nuttier with age: Robert M.S. Bower, whose family has been in the port business for eight generations, quipped that tawny ports, like his father, get nuttier with age. Bower is export and sales manager for The Fladgate Partnership that includes Taylor's, Croft, and Fonseca.

Try this or that: Ruby port, such as Fonseca Bin 27, pairs well with chocolate, but also goes nicely with fresh fruit and fruit desserts, opined Bower.

You get what you pay for: Jason Van Auken, mixologist at the American Club's Winery Bar, emphasized that the "the quality of the ingredients determines the outcome." A \$6 gin, for example is "completely different" than a \$35 gin.

Fresh is best: Van Auken advocates using the freshest ingredients for cocktails - so, for instance, it's fresh pineapple instead of canned, and fresh juice instead of bottled. As he sees it, mixologists "are going to the kitchen and to the garden" to find their ingredients.

Bacon in your booze: Van Auken will use just about anything for one of his infusions. And, yes, he has infused vodka with cooked bacon. "Do not eat the bacon," he warned. "It turns into a flavorless rubber band that punches you with vodka."

What next? Van Auken is working on a foie gras-infused cocktail. "I haven't perfected it yet," he admitted.

Chill out: Laurent Fresnet, Cellar Master for Champagne Henriot, said if you forget to chill the bottle of bubbly, put it in the freezer for one hour - no longer - lest it explode.



Homemade Croutons



Shrimp Fried Rice



Cilantro and Parsley Pesto



Roasted Beet Salad



Caprese Sandwich



FRESH BLOGS

Start with this: For about \$60 a bottle, you can get your hands on the Champagne Henriot Blanc de Blancs NV. Blanc de blancs indicates that it was made from Chardonnay. "Drink blanc de blancs as an aperitif, not with dinner," Fresnet said. "It's too complex to be enjoyed with dinner."

Easier than you think: Milwaukee-area cooking instructor and cookbook author Alamelu Vairavan knows that some people shy away from Indian cooking because they think there are too many ingredients. "But once you set up all the spices, it's really quite easy," she said.

About those spices: One of Vairavan's favorite spices is turmeric, which she called Indian gold, citing not only its flavor but also evidence that it helps to ward off Alzheimer's. Another is a blend of half black pepper and half cumin, which she recommends as a salt substitute. "Put it over fried eggs or scrambled eggs instead of salt, and it tastes so much better."

RECIPES

Richard Palm, head pastry chef at the American Club, prepared these and other healthy breakfast options in his early morning cooking demonstration. Palm lost 112 pounds over the last two years by changing how he ate and cooked and baked for himself.

LEMON POPPY SEED MUFFINS

MAKES 1 DOZEN

1¾ cups flour

3 tablespoons poppy seeds

½ teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

1/3 cup milk

½ cup agave syrup (may use sugar or maple syrup)

1/3 cup vegetable oil

½ cup low-fat yogurt (lemon, vanilla or plain)

1 egg (or egg substitute)

2 teaspoons lemon extract

1 tablespoon lemon zest, from 1 lemon (optional, but adds an extra delicious zing)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Coat muffin tins with vegetable oil spray.

In medium-size mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, poppy seeds, salt, baking powder and baking soda.

In separate bowl (I like to use an electric mixer), mix together the milk, agave, vegetable oil, yogurt, egg, lemon extract and lemon zest. When well-blended, add to the dry ingredients. Mix until just combined and scoop into muffin tins, filling each one about three-fourths full.

Bake in preheated oven 15 minutes or until done (and golden brown). Serve warm or cool.

This recipe from **America's Test Kitchen's** "The Science of Good Cooking" (Cook's Illustrated, Oct. 1, \$40), was demonstrated at the Kohler Food & Wine Experience.

For a slightly less rich dish, half-and-half can be substituted for the heavy cream. However, the amount of water for cooking the pasta is critical to the success of the recipe and should not be changed. Draining the pasta water into the serving bowl warms the bowl and helps keeps the dish hot until it is served.

SPAGHETTI WITH PECORINO ROMANO AND BLACK PEPPER (CACIO E PEPE)

MAKES 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

6 ounces Pecorino Romano cheese, 4 ounces grated fine (2 cups) and 2 ounces grated coarse (1 cup)

1 pound spaghetti

Salt

2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream

2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

1½ teaspoons pepper

Place finely grated Pecorino in medium bowl. Set colander in large bowl.

Bring 2 quarts water to boil in large pot. Add pasta and 1 ½ teaspoons salt and cook, stirring often, until al dente. Drain pasta into prepared colander, reserving cooking water. Pour 1 ½ cups cooking water into liquid measuring cup and discard remainder. Return drained pasta to now-empty bowl.

Slowly whisk 1 cup reserved cooking water into finely grated Pecorino until smooth, then whisk in heavy cream, oil, and pepper. Gradually pour cheese mixture over pasta and toss to combine. Let pasta rest for 1 to 2 minutes, tossing frequently and adding remaining cooking water as needed to adjust consistency. Serve, passing coarsely grated Pecorino separately.

A cheesy bread crumb mixture is rolled up inside sole fillets in this Sicilian-style recipe demonstrated by **Lidia Bastianich**.

**BAKED ROLLATINI OF SOLE (INVOLTINI DI SOGLIOLA AL LIMONE)
MAKES 6 SERVINGS**

½ cup dry bread crumbs

½ cup Grana Padano or Parmigiano-Reggiano, grated

¼ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley

1 large lemon, grated, then half of the lemon juiced, the other half thinly sliced

2 teaspoons dried oregano

6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil (divided)

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature

1 cup dry white wine

6 skinless fillets of sole (about 1½ pounds)

2 tablespoons tiny capers in brine, drained

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a bowl, toss the bread crumbs, grated cheese, parsley, lemon zest and oregano. Drizzle with 4 tablespoons of the olive oil and toss until crumbs are evenly coated.

Coat bottom of a 13-by-9-inch Pyrex baking dish with the softened butter. Arrange lemon slices in one layer on bottom of dish. Pour in the lemon juice and white wine.

Lay fish on your work surface and press crumbs into top of fish. Starting with the short side, roll up each fillet with crumbs on the inside, and secure with toothpicks.

Arrange fish in the baking dish and scatter capers in the open spaces. Sprinkle any leftover crumbs over fish and drizzle with remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil. Place baking dish on bottom rack of preheated oven and bake until fish is just cooked through, about 20 minutes. Remove toothpicks and serve.

Whitefish Bay cookbook author and teacher **Alamelu Vairavan** made this recipe along with a lamb dish in her "Tantalizing Indian Flavors" cooking demonstration.

**CAULIFLOWER RICE WITH CASHEWS
MAKES 8 SERVINGS**

1 cup basmati rice

2 cups water

1 tablespoon butter

1 tablespoon canola oil

4 to 6 curry leaves (optional)

1 bay leaf, crumbled

2 to 4 small slivers of cinnamon sticks

1 teaspoon cumin seed

1 cup onion, chopped lengthwise

2 cups cauliflower florets

1 teaspoon ground black pepper and cumin (see note)

½ teaspoon salt

¼ cup roasted cashews

½ cup chopped fresh cilantro

Rinse and cook basmati rice in water according to package instructions (using a rice cooker, if desired). Let it cool a few minutes.

In a wok or wide-bottomed skillet, melt butter. Add oil and heat over medium heat. When oil is hot but not smoking, add curry leaves, if using, bay leaf and cinnamon sticks.

Add cumin seeds and cook over medium heat until seeds are golden brown. Add onion and cook a minute. Add cauliflower and stir-fry a few minutes. Add pepper and cumin, and salt. Continue cooking, covered, over medium heat until cauliflower is tender. About 1 tablespoon of water may be added to facilitate cooking of cauliflower.

Add cooked basmati rice. Stir well into cauliflower mixture. Cover and allow to steam over low heat until rice becomes softer and absorbs the flavor of the cauliflower, about 2 minutes.

Add cashews and cilantro. Fluff the rice gently.

Note: To make ground black pepper and cumin, combine both whole spices in equal portion (for example, ¼ cup to ¼ cup) and grind to a fine powder. Or, combine equal parts of ground pepper and ground cumin.

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Those tips sure are great! Tried one of those recipes yesterday, and glad i didn't regret skipping this page. However, you should try drinking wine with one of the eastern type of food, best mixture. Got recipe from a great site that i found not so long ago.
The site is www.settingmatrix.com you should check it out.

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