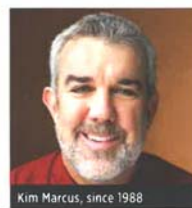
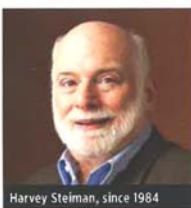
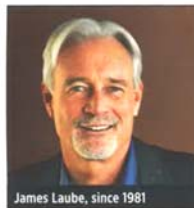


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A PERFECT MATCH

Warm Butternut Squash Salad With Grenache Blanc

Chef Pam Mazzola, Prospect, San Francisco

“If you’re eating butternut squash, I want you to know you’re eating butternut squash,” says Pam Mazzola, co-chef at San Francisco’s Prospect, on her approach to designing a dish. “I really believe in not changing the food too much.”

Mazzola, a Denver native, has been cooking professionally for 35 years—25 of those alongside Nancy Oakes in San Francisco, first at L’Avenue, then in 1993 at Boulevard, which holds a Best of Award of Excellence from *Wine Spectator*. In 2009, the pair unveiled Prospect, a more casual, modern space.

Mazzola says there are significant culinary distinctions between the two restaurants. Both specialize in market-driven menus, but Boulevard skewers more white-tablecloth, while Prospect has a bar scene and focuses on whole-animal butchery.

But that doesn’t mean the food is simple. Mazzola creates unexpected flavors by layering textures and preparation methods. Take this butternut squash salad, for example. The idea was to use an ingredient—squash—that people wouldn’t normally think of in a salad.

To make it multidimensional, Mazzola added pomegranate seeds for color, goat cheese for tanginess, and pistachio nuts, prepared two ways, for texture: ground (as a coating for the cheese), and whole.

For pairings, Mazzola relies on her wine director, Amy Currens, who built Prospect’s 300-selection, globally focused list. “She’s a real inspiration to me because she thinks out of the box,” she says of Currens’ pairings.

“France is an easy go-to, especially with goat cheese [in the dish] where you could choose Sancerre,” says Currens, on why she sidestepped a classic pairing. “I wanted to try something different.”

Her pick, a Grenache Blanc with 15 percent Picpoul, hails instead from Paso Robles. She chose the wine not only for its heavier weight and ripe stone fruit qualities—textbook characteristics of a good match for squash—but also because it has a unique note of brininess. “That really complements the sweetness in the salad,” she says.

—Jennifer Fiedler



CHEF’S PICK: Broc Cellars Vine Starr California White 2010

WINE SPECTATOR ALTERNATES:

Michel Gassier Costières de Nîmes Nostre Pais White 2010 (90, \$20)
Tablas Creek Patelin de Tablas Blanc Paso Robles 2011 (89, \$20)

HOW TO MAKE WARM BUTTERNUT SQUASH SALAD

2 tablespoons minced fresh thyme leaves
3 tablespoons blue agave syrup
or brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon red chile flakes
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/4 cup white balsamic vinegar
1/2 cup olive oil
1 large butternut squash, approximately
3 to 4 pounds
1/4 cup finely chopped pistachios
6 ounces fresh goat cheese
4 ounces pancetta, sliced into thin strips
1/2 cup pomegranate seeds
1/2 cup whole shelled pistachios, preferably
Sicilian
2 cups baby arugula

1/2 cup red mustard greens, destemmed
(optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 475 °F. Combine the first 7 ingredients in a medium bowl and whisk until emulsified. Reserve.

2. Using a vegetable peeler or sharp knife, peel the squash. Cut the squash in half, top to bottom. Remove the seeds and the membrane. Place each half cut-side down, then slice width-wise into half-moon shapes. Place the squash in a large bowl and toss with half of the vinaigrette mixture until coated. Place the squash pieces on a nonstick sheet pan and cook in the oven for 10 minutes. Using tongs or a spatula, turn the pieces over and continue to cook until tender, about 10 to 15 minutes.

3. Spread the chopped pistachios on a small plate and place small spoonfuls of the goat cheese (3 per person) on the chopped pistachios. Reserve.

4. In a medium sauté pan, heat the pancetta strips over medium-high heat and cook until crisp, around 4 minutes. Remove the pancetta to a paper towel-covered plate, and reserve.

5. To serve, arrange the squash on 6 to 8 salad plates. Divide the pomegranate seeds, whole pistachios and pancetta among the plates. Spoon 1 teaspoon of vinaigrette over the ingredients. Place 3 pistachio-covered goat cheese mounds over the squash on each plate, pistachio-side up. In a large bowl, dress the greens with the remaining vinaigrette and evenly scatter the greens over each plate. Serves 6 to 8. □