




FARM TO TABLE, VINE TO GLASS

This meal pairs
California ingredients
with unexpected wines
from nearby.

BY JIM GORDON

PHOTOS BY
PENNY DE LOS SANTOS

STYLING: FRANCES BOSWELL



Anyone who's ever enjoyed an alfresco lunch of grilled sardines and Provençal rosé at a seaside café in Nice understands the idea of local pairings.

Europe isn't the only place to enjoy them. California chefs, farmers and winemakers have 40 years of mutual respect and experimentation behind them to produce all sorts of natural pairings.

California cuisine emerged in the 1970s when chefs like Alice Waters of Chez Panisse in Berkeley and Jeremiah Tower of Stars in San Francisco rejected contrived, complex French haute cuisine. Instead they looked around them to nearby gardens, ranches and docks for fresh, local ingredients to fuel a pared-down style of cooking. A similar impulse inspired chefs to collaborate with the then-new wineries in Napa, Sonoma and beyond, pairing the produce and protein that thrive in California's Mediterranean climate with wine made from the same moderate, sunny environment.

This indulgent late-winter menu demonstrates several of these symbiotic combinations, using four approachable recipes that place California food specialties like farmstead cheese and pasture-grown lamb on the table with unconventional wines grown a stone's throw away.

Coconut and Almond Macaroons

It's not hard to love a macaroon dipped in chocolate, especially made with California almonds. As good as these are from your local bakery, they are much better when fresh and homemade. Terri Prosperi makes these classics at her ranch in Madera. It's where her family grew almonds for many years and continues to grow Muscat grapes for nearby Quady Winery's sweet wines.

Courtesy Terri Prosperi, Denis Prosperi Farms, Madera, CA

PAIR IT

As in most great dessert pairings, the deep purple **Quady 2014 Elysium Black Muscat** is sweeter than the macaroons. This sweet, rich wine, made from a dark-skinned variation of Muscat grapes, features a floral aroma and great concentration. It offers layers of dried fruit, honey and boysenberry flavors, and ample acidity for balance.

- 3½ cups sweetened flaked coconut (or unsweetened, for milder flavor), divided**
- 1 cup thinly sliced almonds**
- 7 ounces sweetened condensed milk**
- ½ teaspoon almond extract**
- 2 large egg whites**
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- Sea salt, to taste**
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips**
- 2 teaspoons vegetable shortening**

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Combine 1½ cups coconut and sliced almonds. Spread evenly on baking sheet. Toast, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 13 minutes. Transfer to bowl, and let cool.

In same bowl, add remaining coconut, condensed milk and almond extract. In separate bowl, using electric mixer on high speed, beat egg whites and kosher salt until soft peaks form. Using rubber spatula, gently fold egg whites into coconut mixture.

Using large spoon, place tall mounds of dough, about 2 inches in diameter, about 2 inches apart on baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Lightly sprinkle each mound with sea salt. Bake until golden brown, about 10 minutes. Transfer to wire rack. Let cool completely.

Line baking sheet again with parchment paper. In double boiler, melt chocolate and shortening together until smooth. Dip top of each cookie into chocolate coating. Transfer to prepared baking sheets. Refrigerate cookies until chocolate sets. Refrigerate in airtight container until ready to serve. *Makes about 18.*

