

Pairing: Fettuccine with Sonoma County chardonnay

by Michele Anna Jordan

For The Press Democrat | December 9, 2015



Our Wine of the Week, DeLoach Vineyards 2014 California Chardonnay (\$11.99), is a bit of a show off. On first sip, your mouth is filled with what seems like the essence of fresh lemon, all brightness and pretty acidity, a quality that may be followed by a little shiver of pleasure.

It's a bold start that softens as other flavors — baked apple, Bartlett pear, white nectarine, a bit of honey — unfold, only to repeat with each new sip.

On the delicate finish, there is just a tiny hint of something resembling toast or smoke that, when combined with the wine's richness on the palate, may have you thinking of browned butter and hazelnuts.

The wine is sophisticated yet approachable, even for novice drinkers, and will hold its own alongside wines triple its price.

When it comes to pairings, chicken is a natural companion. To keep it simple but delicious, cut a lemon in half, pop it inside a chicken, season the bird all over with salt and pepper, roast it in a hot (425 degrees) oven and serve it over a bed of wilted spinach.

The wine also is an excellent companion to seared scallops, shrimp, creamy pastas, game hens with polenta stuffing and roasted root vegetables with lemon vinaigrette.

For today's recipe, I'm focusing on that burst of lemon with a hint of butter in a recipe so quick and easy you can enjoy it on a week night.

I like to serve this with wilted spinach alongside or as a bed for the dish. Just add a spritz of lemon juice and a bit of garlic to the spinach before setting the pasta on top.

Chanterelle and Chicken Fettuccine

Serves 3 to 4

3 cups, approximately, cooked chicken or 4 boned chicken thighs (see Note below)

— Juice of ½ lemon

— Kosher salt

— Black pepper in a mill

8 ounces dried fettuccine or other broad noodle, such as pappardelle

3 tablespoons butter

4 ounces fresh golden chanterelle mushrooms, brushed clean and broken into bite-sized pieces

¾ cup dry white wine

1/3 cup creme fraiche or heavy cream

2 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley

If using cooked chicken, put it into a medium bowl, squeeze the lemon juice over it, season with salt and pepper, toss and set aside. (If using chicken thighs, consult the Note.).

Fill a large saucepan half full with water, set over high heat and bring to a rolling boil. Add the pasta, stir until the water returns to a boil and cook according to package directions until just done.

Drain but do not rinse the pasta; tip it into a wide, shallow bowl, cover with a tea towel and keep warm.

Meanwhile, put the butter into a medium sauté pan set over medium high heat.

After the butter has melted and is beginning to take on a bit of color, reduce the heat to medium, add the chanterelles, toss and cook until they begin to soften, about 7 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Add the chicken, sauté 2 minutes, add the wine, cover and cook for 5 minutes. Uncover and continue to cook until the pan juices thicken a bit. (If using chicken thighs, be sure to cook the chicken thoroughly; test by cutting into a strip.)

Stir in the creme fraiche or heavy cream, heat through and remove from the heat. Taste, correct for salt and pepper, stir in the parsley and spoon over the hot pasta.

Enjoy right away.

Note: To use chicken thighs, cut the thighs into strips about ½ inch wide, leaving the skin in place. Transfer to a bowl, season with lemon juice, salt and pepper, toss and set aside.