BORDEAUX.COM · JANUARY 2016

Eating Healthy with Bordeaux

By Jeff Harding, Sommelier, The Waverly Inn

Well, new year, new resolve to eat right, huh? If we learned anything in 2015 it's that a glass of wine is good for your memory, cholesterol and blood pressure. So don't skip the wine with those healthier meals you're (for sure!) going to start eating now. My new direction (I'm not calling it a resolution) is more beans, seeds, nuts, and greens. That's generally my go-to when cooking at home, leaving meat and fish for when I'm eating out.

A quick lunch (and lazy) lunch at my house is cannellini beans tossed with canned salmon or tuna, and olive oil. Throw in a diced apple, celery and fresh herbs if you have them around. Serve over a bed of greens or on toast, although I admit I generally eat out of the mixing bowl standing in the kitchen. Make it a special lunch by adding a glass of Chateau Graville-Lacoste, Graves Blanc. This juicy, super-fresh wine of Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc, and Muscadelle balances the healthy fats in the olive oil and fish (or even mayonnaise if you go that route), while the beans mellow any fishy flavors.

My favorite salad is hearty greens tossed with a balsamic/olive oil/Dijon dressing. Add some dried cranberries, toasted pumpkin seeds and/or almonds and depending on how many, you might even have a full meal right there. The bright red fruit of the cranberries are the connecting agent here, and I love a red wine that has some herbal, green hints of slight bitterness which actually refresh your palate, providing tension and balance. This is exactly what you find in Petit-Figeac from Chateau Figeac in St. Emilion. The Merlot and Cabernet Franc keep the wine fresh and full-bodied, but full of elegance and poise. Just like you after eating salad all January.

When I cook at home I generally make a lot and freeze half of it and beans freeze really well. Ask your mom. I learned to make a Tunisian chickpea stew from an NPR interview with Chef Jose Andres in 2008. Basically you make a roux of fried garlic, bread cubes, paprika and balsamic; add to your cooked chickpeas and voila, it's soup. I make variations by using a more (or less) smoky paprika, heartier bread, tossing with fresh spinach, or serving it "royale" with a fried egg on top. I love Chateau Capbern-Gasqueton from Saint-Estephe as an accompaniment here. Spoon and glass are filled with rich but not dense layers of earth, spice and chewy, textural, medium/dark red fruit.

My colleague at the Waverly Inn, Chef Jeff Teller, recently blew my mind with coffee-roasted carrots. Literally as easy as that: roast your carrots over a bed of coffee

beans. The exotic spice and bitter notes of the coffee linger above the comfort-food warmth of the sweet carrots. This is a side dish and will go any of the wines mentioned so far, but a nice stand-alone pairing would be Chateau Bel-Air from Puisseguin-Saint-Emilion. Savory herbal notes, hints of dates and rich dark red fruit from the Merlot and Cabernet Franc keep this dish in balance, enhancing the earthy underground root-y flavors that roasted carrots often lack.

Do not deny yourself dessert! You just end up cheating later. ALWAYS keep a bottle of Sauternes in the fridge, because a craving for sweet can be satisfied with a spoonful of raw honey, but why not sip on a glass of sweet wine? Less calories than most desserts, and you will want to drink slowly because it's so damn good! By the time the wine is gone you'll have digested your meal and realized you are full (although a second glass wouldn't be that bad, would it?). I actually love a vibrant, fresh Sauternes like Le Petit Vedrines from Chateau Doisy-Vedrines as an aperitif—fewer calories than most mixed drinks and definitely better quality ingredients! After dinner I want rich and opulent, maybe a knob of blue cheese, but Castelnau de Suduiraut is wonderful by itself. Lush fruit with hints of warm spices, it's like a tarte tatin from grandma, and SO much easier to make for yourself.