



Winedog Speaks

The Properly Cooked Werewolf

Bats are interesting. Eye of newt gets stuck between my teeth. I've actually enjoyed blood pudding a time or two in the past but ooooooh what I'd do for a properly seasoned, slow cooked shank of fresh werewolf.

The general consensus is that no matter how you do it, werewolf is going to taste gamy and is almost impossible to make tender. That simply isn't so. Let me tell you, if you can find yourself a young one, braise it to a golden brown, and stew it for hours with lots and lots of garlic, you're in for a very fine feast, indeed.

If you will be feeding lots of young goblins this year for your Halloween celebration, remember that a good sound recipe combined with a healthy dose of creative imagination will do the job for you almost every time. You know you've hit the mark when they say "gross" as you serve them but finish everything on their plates.

Here's my recipe for:

Eyeballs and Worms (Italian Meatballs with Cellentani Pasta) (Serves 10 to 12 hungry monsters.)

Fire up your food processor and add:

- 1 clove garlic, peeled
- ½ cup packed fresh parsley leaves
- 4 ounces Parmesan or Asiago cheese, cut into course chunks

Process until the cheese is finely grated. Add:

- 1 medium onion, halved

Process until finely grated. Remove all to a large mixing bowl and add:

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- ½ cup fresh breadcrumbs
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 3 tablespoons dry red wine
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper.



Blend everything together well and then shape into ¾-inch to 1-inch meatballs. Heat 3 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil to medium high in a large skillet and add meatballs. Turning the meatballs frequently continue to cook until all sides are browned. Add one medium onion finely chopped to the meatballs while cooking.

Transfer all to a medium stockpot at medium high heat and add;

1 clove garlic, minced

¼ teaspoon dried oregano

Then stir in:

1 (28-ounce) can of whole tomatoes, with juice, crushed between your fingers as you add them to the pan

Bring all to a simmer and cover pan. Reduce heat to low and gently simmer until the meatballs are cooked and the sauce is thickened, about 30 minutes.

Serve over Barilla Cellentani pasta (1 pound package) prepared according to package instructions. These are corkscrew shaped pasta noodles that look exactly like curled up worms according to a panel of impartial 4 and 5-year-old Halloween fanatics.

If you are now starting to select your wines for all of the fine entertainment opportunities between now and New Year's eve, it is important to keep in mind that your guests are sure to have diverse tastes and stocking an assortment of styles is essential to satisfying a wide range of preferences. Here are some suggestions to help you be the host with the most this season.

First, start out with a quality base of fruity wines in both red and white styles. Your white selections will be well served in the form of great German Rieslings and I'd make sure to cellar an assortment of fruity reds to include German Dornfelder, Romanian Vollreiflese Merlot, Hungarian Kadarka and the great late harvest Merlot from Pelee Island in Canada.

My top Riesling selections would come from Gernot Gysler, Jacoby-Mathy and some of the older estates that still do it better such as Scharzhofberger and Schloss Vollrads. The quality levels that are best used for dining and casual entertaining are Qualitätswein, which is the general selection of grapes from the main harvest, and Kabinett, a richer wine produced when the best bunches of grapes from that same harvest are pulled aside and used to make a finer, more complex wine.

I would urge you to focus your dry red wine selection around two general categories I call soft reds and hearty reds. On the soft side you would include French Vin de Pays (country wines), Italian Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, French and domestic wines produced from Gamay and Grenache and nicely styled California Merlots.

My recommended choices for the hearty side include "Old Vine" Spanish Grenache, Oregon Pinot Noir such as those produced by Chehalem or Rex Hill, there are also great Pinot Noir coming out of the Carneros section of Sonoma County along the Russian River. Look for names like Husch and Navarro.

The craze over Syrah and Shiraz keeps marching on and there are fine selections coming out of Australia (Rosemount "Hill of Gold", Wolf Blass Presidential Selection), and France (Visan Cote du Rhone, Provence's Domaine de St-Antoine Syrah).

Dry white wines include Banfi's San Angelo Pinot Grigio, Elena Walch Pinot Grigio, Louis Latour Grande Ardeche Chardonnay, Latour's Pouilly Vinzelles, Cakebread Cellar's Sauvignon Blanc and most of the French Entré de Mer whites.

We are always happy to help you source wines if you are not sure where to go. Just drop us a note and we'll do all we can to assist you.

I hope all of you have a frightful Halloween and I urge everyone behind the wheel to keep your eyes peeled for children out and about. A measure of extra care is a great idea, don't you think? See you next time! Cheers.

Jerry Allison, a native of Warren County in Southwestern Ohio, has been in the fine wine and fine dining field for 30 years in the South Florida, Chicago and Southwestern Ohio markets. He writes a weekly syndicated column, manages a fine wine business and is the executive chef for Winedog Fine Wines and Catering Services. You can visit his column archive at www.winedog.com and take your comments and questions directly to him at 888-288-0668 or email him at winedog@winedog.com . He has resided with his wife and two sons since 1999 in the country outside of Morrow, Ohio

