



Turn Over a New Leaf

In this October article I add a new ingredient to “The Judicial Palate” – a question and answer portion entitled “Susan Says, Mommom Muses.” I ask you, the reader, to email me with questions about cooking, entertaining, dining out, etc. Each month, I will select one question and provide a response along with my regular column. In addition to my answer, I will include a little something that my Italian Mommom Seda would have remarked relevant to your question. After all, we learn from each other’s inquiries and, most of all, from our ancestors who cooked before us. Below is an example of how this would work. Please note that I will not publish your name unless you specifically request that I do so. Here goes...

Question: “What should I do if I am dining in a restaurant and think the bottle of wine I ordered is bad?”

- Signed: Decanting in Delaware

Susan: Dear Decanting in Delaware, if you taste something funny, say something. Follow your instinct. Ask the server to taste the wine to confirm your impression. If the wine is truly bad, the server should not hesitate to bring you another bottle. If you lack confidence in your wine tasting abilities, just think, the worst thing that could happen is that the wine is fine, yet does not suit your palate. In that case, the server may ask if you would like to try another variety. There are several ways in which wine can go bad. It could become “corked” by being tainted with a bad cork; oxidized as a result of improper storage; or “cooked” if kept in too warm temperatures.

On one occasion, there was no question that the Cabernet Sauvignon I ordered was cooked, as it tasted like a sweet dessert wine, such as Port. More recently, I ordered a French Rhône that turned out to have a slight effervescence. It wasn’t a sparkling wine, but I understood from the server that the bubbles were likely the result of the wine undergoing another fermentation in the bottle. Both times, I told the servers I believed the wine was bad and requested that they taste it and let me know their thoughts. They tasted, agreed, and opened us another bottle. So, follow your taste buds.

Mommom: Dear Decanting in Delaware, why did you go out in the first place when you have a perfectly good kitchen and nice wine at home?!

Speaking of wine, I recently found a lovely cake that would complement a rich red. While looking for a light dessert to follow a paella dinner, I stumbled upon the website *La Tienda: The Best of Spain* (<https://www.tienda.com/>), which offers a myriad of Spanish products as well as recipes. La Tienda’s Marcona Almond Citrus Olive Oil Cake was a hit both times I made it – olive oil used in place of butter lightens this cake, and the Marcona almonds add a savory element. 🍴

La Tienda’s Marcona Almond Citrus Olive Oil Cake

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 2 teaspoons baking powder
 - 1/2 teaspoons salt
 - 1 cup sugar
 - 3 large eggs
 - 2 teaspoons orange zest
 - 2 teaspoons lemon zest
 - 1/4 cup whole milk
 - 3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
 - 2/3 cup Marcona almonds, toasted and finely chopped
 - Powdered sugar, for sifting
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees and lightly oil an 8-inch diameter cake pan.

Whisk flour, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl to blend. Using an electric mixer, beat sugar, eggs and zests in a large bowl until pale and fluffy. Beat in milk, then gradually beat in oil. Add the flour mixture and stir just until blended, then stir in almonds. Transfer batter to pan and place on baking sheet to collect any spills.

Bake until a tester inserted into center of cake comes out with moist crumbs attached, about 35 minutes. Transfer to rack and cool for 15 minutes. Remove cake and place on serving platter, top side up. Sift powdered sugar over the cake.

Look forward to hearing from you as the October leaves fall.



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