Delicious drinks for summer parties

By Laura Longero, Reno Gazette-Journal

Fireworks aren't the only thing that should be wowing guests at your Fourth of July party. Try some new fun cocktails this year in red, white and blue. Swap out tropical fruit juices, strong spirits and lively garnishes for the standard beer and wine to treat your guests to something special.



The authors of "Slurp" offer drinks for morning, daytime and evening, as well as party tips and instructions for making syrups, garnishes, shots and sugared and salted rims. Unsure of which glass to use for which cocktail? There are hints for that, too: A highball glass is "tall and skinny to keep the drink cold," and a rocks glass is "short and heavy with straight sides."

And don't neglect the nonboozers. Following are 10 drink recipes — six cocktails and four "mocktails" — for your summer barbecue.

Read the whole story

American beers help celebrate the 4th of July

By Greg Kitsock, Washington Post

Craft brewing is a melting pot; the best beers borrow from German, English and Belgian traditions while managing to be American originals. These five brews, listed in order from lighter to more assertive, would be a welcome addition to any Fourth of July picnic.

Samuel Adams Porch Rocker. An American take on a German "radler" (a blend of lager and lemonade), this summer release combines the tartness of pureed lemon with the crisp maltiness of a Bavarian-type helles beer. Alcohol: 4.5 percent by volume.

Flying Dog Underdog Atlantic Lager. Brewed with a little wheat and rye, this bready lager with a light citrusy-grassy hop character comes in easy-to-tote cans as well as bottles. Pair with summer salads or seafood. Alcohol: 4.7 percent.

Read the whole story

K's Kitchen: Kahlua milkshakes – a summer favorite

By Kathryn Reed

Until we saw billboards for Kahlua, we just thought it was a coffee liqueur. The ads taught us the beverage from Mexico is a rum and coffee liqueur.



According to the beverage's website, it is the top selling rum and coffee liqueur in the world. Of course, I can't even name another one.

It hails from Veracruz, Mexico; having first been made in 1936.

Sometime in college I had my first Kahlua milkshake. For whatever reason it didn't feel like underage drinking. It was like a coffee flavored shake. It wasn't going to get me tipsy any more than the cheesecake brownies I make with Kahlua.

The shake is a perfect summer dessert or reward for doing yard work or just because Sue says it's time to have one.

I would suggest not making milkshakes for a big group. It's just too time consuming and everyone won't be enjoying them at the same time.

Use less liquid for a thicker shake. Some people like their shakes to be eaten with a spoon, others want to suck it down with a straw. So, keep that in mind. It's best to go easy on the liquids to get to the consistency you like. Of course, you can always add more ice cream to make it thicker.

I think Kahlua is one of those beverages best mixed with something else. Kahlua and cream is one of the most popular combos. No wonder ice cream works so well.

Kahlua Milkshake (serves 4)

1½ quarts vanilla ice cream

½ C Kahlua

¼-½ C milk

1/8 C chocolate syrup

Place all ingredients in blender. Blend. Pour into glasses. Bottoms up.

Pancake breakfast benefits Meeks Bay firefighters

The Meeks Bay Volunteer Firefighters Association's 44th annual Pancake Breakfast is July 7-8.

This popular fundraising event has been called "the best of its kind" in the area, and draws repeat visitors year after year. Proceeds from the breakfast benefit the Volunteer Firefighters Association, which donates much needed equipment to the Meeks Bay Fire Protection District.

Breakfast will be served from 8am to noon and will include pancakes, famous Meeks Bay Fire jumbo sausages, applesauce, milk, coffee, orange juice, and plenty of butter and maple syrup.

Meeks Bay T-shirts, sweats, aprons, and other logo items will be available for purchase as well as the best selling Meeks Bay Fire Ladies Auxiliary Cookbook. "Fire Chief" helmets will be available for the "little chiefs" visiting the station.

Breakfast is $9 for adults (over 12 years), $6 for children (6–11), and free for little ones under 5 years. Meet the Firefighters, get information on Defensible Space and home safety, and see the fire engines and apparatus. All will be on display for inspection by "children" of all ages..

Gene mutation to blame for the tasteless tomato

By Gina Kolata, New York Times

Plant geneticists say they have discovered an answer to a near-universal question: Why are tomatoes usually so tasteless?



Yes, they are often picked green and shipped long distances. Often they are refrigerated, which destroys their flavor and texture. But now researchers have discovered a genetic reason that diminishes a tomato's flavor even if the fruit is picked ripe and coddled.

The unexpected culprit is a gene mutation that occurred by chance and that was discovered by tomato breeders. It was deliberately bred into almost all tomatoes because it conferred an advantage: It made them a uniform luscious scarlet when ripe.

Now, in a paper published in the journal Science, researchers report that the very gene that was inactivated by that mutation plays an important role in producing the sugar and aromas that are the essence of a fragrant, flavorful tomato. And these findings provide a road map for plant breeders to make better-tasting, evenly red tomatoes.

Read the whole story

Taste of Home looking for cooks to be magazine spokeswoman

Taste of Home magazine is looking for an official holiday ambassador.

The woman selected as “Mrs. Holiday” will receive $50,000 and a spokesperson role with *Taste of Home*. Once crowned, Mrs. Holiday will have the opportunity to conduct interviews, participate in cooking segments and blog, as well as make appearances across the country at retailers and some of the more than 300 *Taste of Home* cooking schools.

Between now and Sept. 7, women age 18 and older are invited to log on to Facebook.com/TasteofHome to upload a short video and signature recipe that demonstrates how they bring the holidays to life for their family and friends. The winner will be selected from the top 100 entries that receive the most votes from the public.

Mrs. Holiday candidates can submit videos for Independence Day, New Year’s, Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Easter, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

El Dorado County winery offering weekend food-wine lunch pairings

Miraflores Winery in El Dorado County is offering “PAIRINGS” – four-course lunches, prepared by regional chefs and paired with award-winning Miraflores wines. Lunches are served on the terrace overlooking estate vineyards on weekends through Oct. 14.

This is an opportunity for guests to visit with chefs and wine specialists to learn more about why these pairings work.

Each chef creates a menu using the fresh, local ingredients.

PAIRINGS reservations are available from 11am-3:30pm Saturday and Sunday. The prix fixe menu is $30 for Miraflores wine club members, $40 for non-club members.

Call Miraflores Winery at (530) 647.8505 for reservations. A limited number of seats are available for winery visitors on a drop-in basis.

A schedule of the chefs who will be cooking is online.

German eatery with 21st century flair opening in

South Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Bringing a different food profile with a high level of service at an economical price to South Lake Tahoe are the goals of Himmel Haus owners and employees.

German food with American and Californian twists will be coming out of the kitchen of the old Christiana Inn starting July 6.



The correct glass is used for each beer at Himmel Haus. Photos/LTN

While schnitzel is on the menu, the breading is pretzels.

Truckee Sourdough Bread Company is creating a pretzel bun specifically for Himmel Haus.

The signature dish is a hamburger of sorts, but it's made with pork instead of beef. It is made with three types of pork – ground bratwurst patty, grilled Black Forest ham and bacon.

"Each pork has a different flavor profile," chef Josh Bushnick said. "We didn't want to just do a hamburger."

Besides interesting twists on traditional German food, the bar is stocked with imported beer from Germany – including from

the world’s first brewery that opened in 1032. The nuns are still crafting this brew in the old style with just four ingredients.

Most of the beer vendors also supply a special glass for their particular beer to be poured into.

“Our goal is to be one of the top three restaurants,” owner Matt Eastling told *Lake Tahoe News* while sitting at one of the communal tables last week. (Zak Latzka is the other owner of the restaurant.)

In large part that will be Bushnick’s responsibility because he is the chef. He has more than 25 years of experience in the service industry. Using the freshest, most organic ingredients is the plan.



Local wood was used to build aspects of the bar area.

It’s the tables, though, that will also set this eatery apart from others in the area. Much like a Basque restaurant where strangers sit together, the same will be at Himmel Haus.

While work still needed to be done last week on the interior – like installing the 12-foot television screen in the bar and tweaking a few other things, the historic restaurant at the foot of the Heavenly’s base lodge is ready to throw its doors open. Expect plenty of Olympic coverage to be shown on that

TV.

About 15 people will be employed at the restaurant. The ratio of full time vs. part time will depend on how busy the establishment is. Everyone on the front end of the house is local.

This location has had its ups and downs. When it was the original Christiana Inn it was hopping – one of those dining establishments that had to be visited on any trip to Tahoe. Plus, it was popular with locals. But it eventually closed.

Linda Catron remodeled the building, bringing everything up to code. She reopened it in 2007 under the same name. The renaissance didn't last long.

Then came Jens Dressler who had been the chef at Blue Angel Café. He bought that restaurant and renamed the Saddle Road eatery Fallen Angel, opening in December 2010. He skipped town a few months later owing several people money and to this day has not had charges filed against him.

But Eastling isn't concerned about the most recent history of the building, as the newest tenant he is confident the area is ready for something new.

Besides good food and unique beers, the owners want education to be part of the experience. Eastling said he wants to connect people to the food and beer. On a monthly basis vendors will be brought in to discuss the finer points of beer, or there could be a cooking class or some other lesson to be taught.

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Notes:

• Address – 3819 Saddle Road, South Lake Tahoe

• Phone – (530) 721.7230

• Opening – July 6

• Hours – Tuesday-Wednesday 4:30pm-midnight; Thursday-Saturday 4:30pm-2am.

K’s Kitchen: Summer means it’s sandwich time

By Kathryn Reed

Summer always seems like sandwich season to me. But that doesn’t mean it has to be a cold sandwich.



One of my favorite hot sandwiches is grilled cheese. While we don’t have a panini maker, we do have an indoor grill of sorts that Sue uses for grilled cheese when she isn’t making them on the barbecue.

The thing that can make them different is trying various cheeses, add a layer of pesto, fresh basil, tomatoes, avocado slices – the possibilities are endless.

Truckee River Winery just started offering food this year. Tasting wine with a panini equals perfection. Chef Willy Carroll, who usually works at the Tahoe Mountain Club, helps out at the winery on bocce night. We happened to be there on such a Monday night.

Plenty of sandwich shops abound. Where do you recommend going or what do you make at home?

I just tried something new for me, but it’s an oldie.

On occasion I can tell I have not had enough protein. Last week was one of those occasions. Instead of my usual veggie burger or scrambled eggs I decided to make an egg salad sandwich.

At my age, I probably should have made one of these before. Well, I hadn’t – so I winged it. And what came out was pretty darn good.

I just remember loving the egg salad sandwiches my mom would make for my school lunches. So often they were served on homemade hamburger buns. I am still a bit fearful of making breads, but maybe when mom comes up this summer I will get another lesson. She is the expert.

Of course the mixture could just be a salad and not made into a sandwich. Skipping the bread would make it healthier. And adding more horseradish would give it more kick.

Sierra Egg Salad

5 hard boiled eggs

2 tsp lemon juice

1 tsp horseradish

4 T light mayonnaise

1 small tomato, chopped

Chop the eggs and place into a bowl big enough to mix all ingredients. Add the next three ingredients. Taste; adjust until the flavor is to your liking. Add tomato.

Serve on toasted multigrain bread.

This makes two-plus sandwiches – depends how hungry you are.

California vintners court fast-growing Asia market

By Chris Macias, Sacramento Bee

LODI – With bottles ready for tasting, a group of Lodi wine producers waited anxiously last week for a delegation of monied business people they hoped to impress. The vintners burst into applause when the group finally arrived, over an hour late.

These honored guests weren't Hollywood moguls or Silicon Valley venture capitalists. They were potential customers and investors from the city of Shenyang in northern China, coming to check out Lodi as a potential source of affordable wine to supply China's rapidly growing market.

The rising middle class in China and other Asian-Pacific countries is fueling one of the wine world's fastest growing markets. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, China is expected to add 235 million consumers by 2020 and will account for 20 percent of the global luxury market by 2015.

U.S wineries exported $62 million of wine to China in 2011, a 42 percent increase from 2010, according to the Wine Institute, an advocacy group for California's $61.5 billion wine industry. Exports to Hong Kong jumped by 39 percent in the same period, to $163 million.

Those numbers – while small compared to the total market –

have grabbed the attention of wineries looking for alternatives to the cutthroat competition of U.S. wine sales. California wine comprises 90 percent of U.S. exports.

“If you structure the deal correctly, it’s both safer and more profitable to sell to China than it is to sell domestically,” said Frank Gayaldo, director of international development for the Lodi District Chamber of Commerce, and organizer of last week’s tasting.

“Imports are eating up roughly 20 percent of our domestic (wine) market, and it’s difficult for small wineries to get good distribution contracts.”

Read the whole story