



# The American Institute of Wine & Food Capital Wine & Food

National Capital Area Chapter Newsletter

Spring 2006

[www.aiwf.org/dc](http://www.aiwf.org/dc)

## Drink Groovy Wine in the Springtime

By Kathy Morgan

Food pairing has always been the favorite part of my job. Wine is, of course, a serious passion, but wine and food together is what really drives me. I think wine is defined by its relationship to food and is never as enjoyable alone as it is with an appropriate partner. When the marriage of food and wine works well, each enhances the other, making the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Luckily, at 2941 Restaurant, Chefs Jonathan Krinn and Chef de Cuisine Jon Mathieson enjoy sharing this passion with the staff and our customers. Most afternoons I can be found at the kitchen table sampling several potential new wines with new

**Wines that mirror the freshness of spring flavors, enhance the true spirit of the season.**

dishes. It's a tough job, but someone has to make sure our guests have the best food and wine experience possible!

I like to think of food and wine matching as

finding a partnership of equals. It's about balance — the food and the wine should not overpower each other and, although opposites do attract, I find wines that

mirror the freshness of spring flavors, enhance the true spirit of the season. Here are a few of my favorite matches as well as some things to consider when matching your own menus.



### Verdicchio with Asparagus

Asparagus is one of the most difficult foods to pair with wine, as its strong flavor tends to make wines taste sour. Italian whites, in general, are a great choice because their natural acidity matches the pungent strength of this vegetable. Verdicchio (a varietal native to the Marche region on the Adriatic coast) takes the lead because it's inherent richness and its lemony-gingery quality compliment so well. Delicious also-rans include Tuscan Vernaccia, Soave Classico, and Tocai Friuliano.

Italian whites are also the best choice for spring salads. Vinegar is also considered to be a "wine enemy," but a similar principle applies: when high-acid foods combine with high-acid wines, they actually tame each other allowing the pure flavors of the rest of the ingredients to shine through.

### Rioja and Ribera del Duero with Lamb

There's no need to stay in the Cabernet-with-lamb rut when there are so many other great options! When it's time to let the heavy, super-extracted reds hibernate until fall, Rioja rides to the rescue. Tempranillo, the grape used as the base for wines of both the Rioja and Ribera del Duero regions of Spain, has a spicy, peppery palate presence that brings out lamb's succulent meatiness.

### Grüner Veltliner with Everything Green

This Austrian varietal has a delicious crushed white pepper quality that makes it a stunning match for all of the flavors of spring. I've tried it with peas, fiddleheads, fava beans, and artichokes, just to name a few things green and springy, and it never fails to amaze me. This is an incredibly versatile food-wine, so don't hesitate to pair "Gru Ve" (groovy) with seafood or chicken and, for a real experience, with white asparagus, which will delight you with a fantastic regional match-up.

### Dry Rosé with Everything

When you don't want white or red, try a refreshing dry rosé with anything you might eat this season. Rosés are often the victims of unfounded prejudices, which is unfortunate because these are some of the best food wines on earth! Try one with vegetables, mushrooms, meats, fish, spicy dishes, even cream sauces and fresh cheeses. The south of France is the most famous rosé produc-

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## Comfort Foods and Comforting Friends

By Francine Berkowitz

What does an AIWF foodie do to prepare for the aftermath of knee replacement surgery? Hit the monthly food magazines, of course.

When I scheduled my surgery, sister Judith signed up for hospital duty immediately, but just as quickly, great friend Helen called from San Francisco to say that she was flying out for two weeks of post-surgery care. She was going to cook for me! This was comfort food time.

February and March magazines soon began to arrive and I had new eyes with which to consider the bounty. As the cold weather hung on through February and March, I found myself tempted by meat, meat and more meat. Little bookmarks began poking up from newly arriving books and magazines.

Pizza delivery took care of the first night home. The next day, however, Helen reviewed my choices and we began what would become our daily pattern. Between bouts of exercise,

each day included an excursion to the Giant, Whole Foods, Balducci's, or Trader Joe's. Pushing a grocery cart was even more comfortable than the walker and twice I even got to drive the scooter cart.

Here's the rundown of the main dishes Helen prepared for me. **Balsamic-glazed pork chops and broccoli with toasted garlic crumbs** (*Gourmet* March 06) — the glaze assertive not at the expense of masking the delicious Niman pork chop. **Algerian lamb shanks** (*Best American Recipes* 2001–2) — we substituted dried cherries and pine nuts from my pantry, for raisins and almonds — fabulous with fresh fennel. **Chicken thighs with sweet potatoes, parsnips, and shallots** (*Fine Cooking* March 06) — mustard/balsamic marinade for both chicken and the vegetables baked side by side. Next time I'll double the vegetables. **Scallops with brussel sprouts and pancetta** (*Food & Wine* March 06) — the sliced brussel sprouts nicely flavored by the pancetta. Perhaps next time I will try a smoky bacon.

**Green pea soup with morel cream** (*Food & Wine* 2006 year book) — probably the most spectacular of the dishes. Chopped mint and flavoring and sprigs as garnish — a beautiful dish. And lastly, **Twice-baked Maytag blue cheese soufflé** (*Gourmet* March 06). A recipe from Bradley Ogden, we skipped the second baking in cream.

Other than the fresh meats and vegetables, my spice cabinet, dried fruit and nut drawer, and dried mushroom department provided all of the special ingredients. It was very satisfying to use many of the "exotic" spices on my shelves as well as to just take out as many morels as needed.

Does a knee replacement patient take advantage of the recuperation period to try those recipes that you usually put aside to make at the next available opportunity and forget about? This AIWF foodie did and loved every bite. ■

**Francine Berkowitz** is a long time member of the Program Committee. We wish her a complete and speedy recovery.

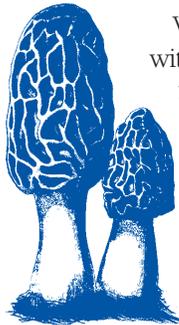
### Drink Groovy Wines

*Continued from page 1*

ing area of the world, but great examples are also made in other areas of France, as well as Spain, Italy, Greece, Australia, and the U.S.

### Pinot Noir with Morel Mushrooms

Pinot Noir with mushrooms is one of the great classic matches — and morels are one of the true gifts of the spring season. Any pinot will do, as long as it has a hint of earth in its flavor profile, but I believe Burgundy is best. Try a Village (not premier cru or grand cru) bottling from the warm 2003 vintage, for a plump and juicy example



that brilliantly flaunts this mushroom's delicate earthiness.

### Late Harvest Riesling with Rhubarb

Whether you serve it in a pie, or with foie gras, as we do at 2941, rhubarb is so delightfully tangy that it is best paired with a partner who will not back down. Riesling is blessed with a strong acid structure that allows its fruit flavors and minerality to work magic with everything else on the plate.

There's no need to stop here! Try other great choices for spring dishes.

The most important thing to remember is that there is always more than one

right answer. Don't worry if you're not a Rioja fan, or if you've been boycotting Pinot since *Sideways* came out. Here are plenty more wines to enjoy. Try Sauvignon Blanc (from New Zealand or Sancerre) or a Spanish Albarino with vibrant, fresh flavors. Cabernet Franc and Italian Sangiovese (Chianti Classico or Rosso di Montalcino) can take the place of Pinot Noir because of their own inherent earthiness. Most of all, experiment, talk to a sommelier or retailer that you trust and, through trial and error, come up with your own favorite matches. And don't forget to have fun! ■

**Kathy Morgan** is Wine Director/Sommelier at 2941 Restaurant, and a former member of our chapter's Board of Directors.

# Want to Know More About Us?

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**aiwf.org/dc**



# Want Information About Membership?



Visit our web site at  
**aiwf.org**

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Or call our chapter voice mail at

**202.333.0421**



Did you know that an individual who is 35 years old or younger can join AIWF through the "35 Years & Under" category for only \$25 per year? If you have a young friend, relative, or colleague interested in learning more about food and wine with a group of like-minded enthusiasts, let him or her know about AIWF.

We have classes on grilling at L'Academie de Cuisine and Stratford School of Culinary Arts coming up in early June and two more sets of classes on other topics in September and

November. The member discount of \$10 an event can pay back the \$25 dues after only three events. Please go to **www.aiwf.org**, click on **"Join Now"**, take a look at the membership categories available, and become a member today!



*Become a member today!*

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## The American Institute of Wine & Food Capital Wine & Food National Capital Area Chapter Newsletter

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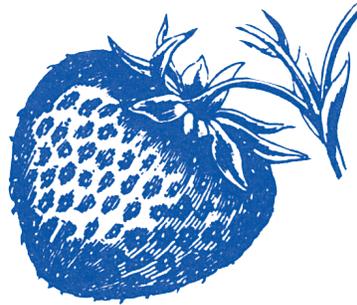
We welcome members' contributions on wine and food related topics.  
Contact Dana Sitnick at 703-237-2312 or [dlksitnick@mac.com](mailto:dlksitnick@mac.com) for more information.

The deadline for the next issue is  
**July 1, 2006.**

By Dana Sitnick

Growing up near Boston, we didn't take off our knee-high boots until May. That's why I love spring in Washington. For one thing, it actually happens around March and April, and it does so with real pizzazz. Flowering trees, festivals, a parade — we know how to do it up right. Second, we never got decent strawberries until Mother's Day, so that's when we made our first strawberry pie of the season. Of course, local strawberries aren't available in Washington until June, but we have pretty good strawberries in our markets for most of the year. I don't know whether shipping strawberries across the country wasn't considered feasible in the 1950's and 60's, or whether the truck drivers from California just didn't want to bother with snow tires. Anyhow, strawberry

## Editorial Thyme



pie on Mother's Day became my family tradition. We use my Aunt Martha's recipe for Strawberry Glazé Pie and it is a winner. At some point we quit bothering with dainty slices and then asking who wanted seconds, and just cut the pie into as many slices as were people at the table. Saves time. It's that good. Although strawberries are available here almost year

round, I still honor family tradition and wait until Mother's Day to make my first strawberry pie. And although my mother is no longer with us, I still honor her memory by making a strawberry pie on Mother's Day.

You can tell from this issue that our writers are really enthusiastic about spring. We have an article about using edible flowers from **Laurie Bell**; **Dan Traster** writes about making lavender ice cream and offers a recipe so you can do so yourself; and **Larry Willett** tells how to select the best strawberries at the soon-to-open farmers markets. **Kathy Morgan**, our wine writer, has given us a detailed, wide-ranging list of great suggestions for wine to pair with those grassy, green spring foods. Thank you, Kathy. I can't wait to try the groovy wine. ■

## Postcard from Culpeper, Virginia

Looking for a close but seemingly "far from the maddening crowd" getaway? Believe it or not, Culpeper is the place. The quaint, historic old town district offers a satisfying blend of upscale shopping and gourmet dining with small town friendliness. Spend a night at the lovely and very hospitable Bed & Breakfast, **Fountain Hall**. Have dinner at **Foti's**, walking distance from the B&B, and experience first hand why there has been so much buzz about the place. Be sure to allow an afternoon to shop and enjoy lunch at any number of casual cafes or enjoy a spot of tea at the local tea house, **Tea, Lace & Roses**. Discover this hidden jewel soon, you'll be glad you did! — Laurie Bell

## Passover and Easter Foods at Stratford University



Clockwise, from upper left: Chef Chris Brown, Chef Daniel Traster, and we serve ourselves. Photos by Bob Sitnick.

# What's in the Market?

*Artichokes Asparagus Blood Oranges Fava Beans Fiddlehead Ferns*

*Green Garlic Herring Lamb Leeks Lettuce Morels New Potatoes Peas Radishes Ramps*

*Rhubarb Shad Soft-shell Crabs Sorrel Spinach Spring Onions Strawberries Asters Batchelor Buttons*

*Campanula Iris Liatris Lilies Lily of the Valley Lisianthus Peonies Sweet William Yarrow*

By Larry Willett

Have you ever caught yourself walking through a farmers' market or the produce section of a supermarket only to be drawn back by a pleasing aroma? Early springtime affords the first opportunity at the grocery store to inhale the pleasing fragrance of fresh strawberries. It will take another six weeks or so before local berries begin making an appearance at our farmers' markets. I'll know when they have arrived when I see the long line stretched out in front of Jim and Freda's table at the Rockville Farmer's Market. Consequently I'll have to hurry and join the queue before the berries are sold out.



deep red color with an attached green stem. Strawberries that are green and unripe will remain that way and should be avoided. Because strawberries are very perishable, they should be purchased only a day or so before you plan to consume them. Once home, put the ripe berries on a cookie sheet with a paper towel underneath. This prevents the weight of the berries from crushing each other. Keep their stems intact until you give them a gentle wash and pat them dry. This avoids soaking up excess water which would dilute their flavor.

What to do next? When at their freshest, strawberries need minimal help. A simple squeeze of lemon juice and a sprinkling of sugar over sliced or quartered berries will be fine. They also don't

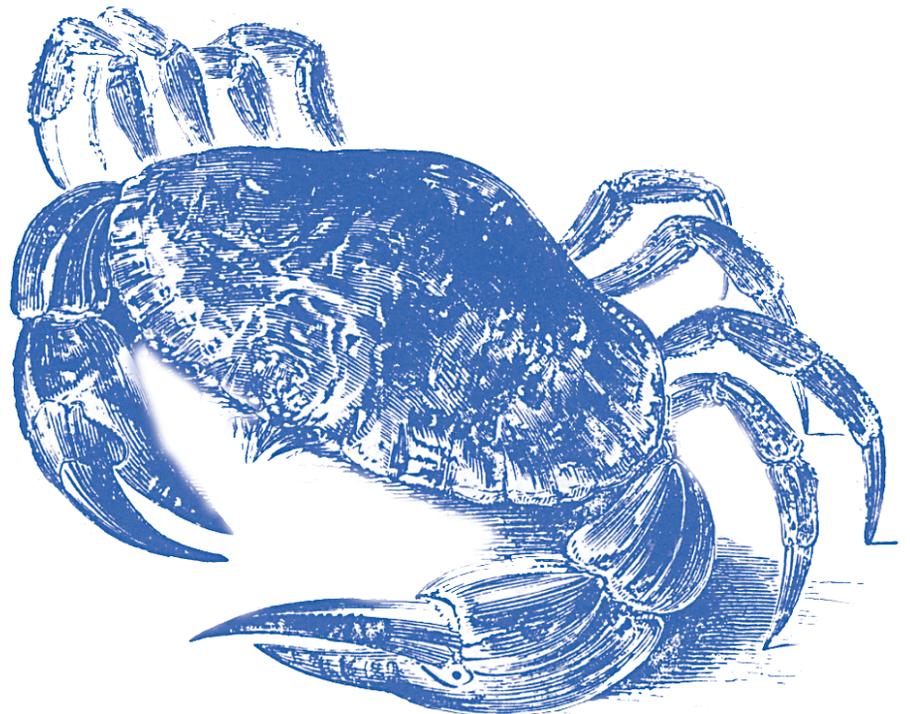
mind a quick shower with Grand Marnier, that delicious French orange liquor. Whipping up some Chantilly Cream (heavy cream, a dash of vanilla, and confectioner's sugar to taste) will also do no harm. If you have a top grade balsamic vinegar, a drizzle of that will add an interesting twist. On the savory side, strawberries love paring up with blue cheese, pecans, and fresh greens. Toss this with some good olive oil and balsamic and raspberry vinegar. Don't skimp on the pepper. ■

**Larry Willett** is chapter membership chair, a member of the Board, the program committee, and the newsletter planning committee. In his spare time he writes the *What's in the Market?* column for *Capital Wine and Food*.

Strawberries have been around for quite a while. A reference to the strawberry in ancient writings indicates the Romans may have been cultivating them sometime before the Christian era. But it wasn't until the 18th century, owing to some happy accident of natural cross-breeding, that the strawberry we have come to know and love emerged.

Besides being delicious to eat, strawberries are also good for us. Famous in the world of phytonutrients (the nutrients concentrated in the skin of vegetables and fruits responsible for color, hue, scent, and flavor), strawberries are a rich source of phenols, making them a heart-protective, anti-cancer, and anti-inflammatory fruit whose consumption may lead to better health. All that, and they taste great too.

Look for berries that are firm, plump looking, free of mold, and have a shiny,



## Kitchen Aide

# Purple Passion

By Daniel Traster

Spring brings color to an otherwise gray world. Flowers burst open in rosy pink, bright white, yellow, purple, and blue. This palette of colors tantalizes the eyes much in the same way that the flavors and aromas tempt the palate of the mouth. (Pardon the word play. I've been caught up in it ever since one of my co-workers asked for money to go out and buy some "rose" for class; instead of returning with flowers, he came back with caviars – "roes").

Each year, spring engenders within me a giddiness over the many flavors to come. Every chef, whether she knows it or not, has a secret ingredient or several that she returns to over and over again to provide her signature. Mine is lavender.

The purple lavender flowers pop up again and again in my cooking at home: strawberries with lavender, apple pie with lavender, spring lamb with lavender demi-glace. (I'd save a fortune if I could figure out how to keep the darn thing from dying within a week after I plant it each year). My favorite use for the flower, however, is a recipe I learned my first month in DC — lavender ice cream.

For my first job in Washington I signed on to be a line cook at a now defunct provincial French restaurant. True to the chef's reputation for professional, consistent, well-thought-out management practices, my orientation to my first day of work was "Congratulations! You're the new pastry chef."

"Chef, you must have me confused with someone else. I'm the new line cook you hired. I'm not a pastry chef."

Sharp as ever, he replied, "You are today. My pastry chef quit this morning. Here are the recipes. You work downstairs."

Not wishing to join the ranks of the unemployed after just twenty-four hours in DC, I dutifully headed downstairs and began preparing the desserts for the evening's service. Plum tart,

crème brûlée, chocolate gateau all seemed simple enough. Then I noticed the accompaniment for the lemon torte...lavender ice cream with a lavender sauce.

"Isn't that the stuff they put in shampoo?" I thought. "Surely the chef must have had one too many pinot noirs when he put together this dish."

**It was years before  
I came to learn that  
lavender is used  
commonly in ice cream  
in southern France.**

Like Dr. Frankenstein, I diligently followed the written instructions hoping to bring life to a bizarre concoction but fully expecting that a monstrosity was just as likely to result. As the custard flowed from the ice cream freezer, I could not help but grab a spoon to taste this most unusual creation.

The sheer delight that overcame my senses as the sweet, smooth, floral

custard enveloped my taste buds is difficult to describe. I suspect it is the same sensation that a toddler experiences the first time she tastes candy. My eyes danced. My grin would have surely stretched to both ears had my lips not feared losing a single drop of that silky nectar.

"Surely this chef is a genius," I thought. Of course, it was years before I came to learn that lavender is used commonly in ice cream in southern France. It only took weeks though for me to reassess my opinion of the chef. (I was young. Who knew?).

Now when the cherry blossoms splash pink and white across the tidal basin, I bite my lip in anticipation of the purple bloom I most miss over winter. I just wish I could get them to bloom in front of my house long enough that my neighbors wouldn't have to chase me away from their plantings. ■

**Dan Traster** is the Dean of Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management at Stratford University, located in Falls Church, Virginia. He writes the *Kitchen Aide* column for *Capital Wine and Food*.

## Honey-Lavender Ice Cream

### Ingredients:

Half and Half	1 qt
Honey	8 oz
Sugar	8 oz
Egg Yolks	16
Lavender, chopped (ideally flowers)	2 Tbsp

### Procedure:

- Bring the half and half and the honey to a boil.
- Combine the sugar and egg yolks in a bowl.
- While whisking constantly, pour the boiling half and half mixture into the yolks in a slow, steady stream to gently warm the eggs.
- Quickly strain to remove any coagulated bits of egg.
- Add the lavender and let steep 15 minutes.
- Cover and cool thoroughly in the refrigerator.
- Churn the ice cream mixture in an ice cream freezer.
- Indulge.

—Daniel Traster 4.06

# Please Eat the Daisies!

By Laurie Bell

**N**eed some fresh ideas for your spring and summer menus? Certainly, using seasonal, locally grown produce will lend superb flavor to your meals and help support the endangered local farmers. But an often overlooked accent to warm weather dining is the use of edible flowers. The epitome of spring and summer, flowers add a brightness and uplifting of spirit wherever they are. So why not carry that feeling of blooming freshness to your mealtimes? You can purchase edible flowers at some farmers markets and upscale grocery stores. (Do not use flowers that are sold for decorative use even if they are of an edible variety. They may have been grown with pesticides. Your greengrocer can tell you if they are for consumption.) But with just a bit of time and little effort throughout the season, you can grow your own garnishes. There are so many to choose from, you can even grow them in patio pots.

Herbs provide not only their typical leaves for flavor, but their flowers, too. Blossoms from chives, garlic chives, basil, dill, oregano, thyme, lemon balm, lavender, mint, mustard and rosemary are all flavorful, fragrant and colorful accents to many dishes. The essence of the herb comes through in the flavor of the flower. One of my favorite herb blossoms that is not commonly found locally, but is easy to grow from seed, is borage. For me, the edible, but fuzzy stalk and leaves are merely a vehicle to get to the blue toned flower, a whimsical shape with a slight cucumber/melon flavor note. Anise hyssop, with its purple flower buds and anise/mint flavored leaves, is another lesser known, but equally fascinating choice. And pineapple sage produces the most vivid red flowers in the fall with a sweet taste and aroma like — you guessed it! Pineapple.

Typical garden flowers that are edible are pansies, violas (violets and Johnny-jump-ups), dianthus (pinks and carnations), nasturtiums, bachelor's buttons, bee balm (also known as monarda or sweet bergamot) and scented geraniums. Roses are edible, but most easily when the petals are pulled out and sprinkled like confetti. (Save those rose hips for your rose hips jam!) The petals from flowers in the composite family such as English daisies, chrysanthemums and calendulas (pot marigolds) are edible, but do not eat the centers. Sprinkle these petals like confetti, too.

My favorite edible in the garden flower category is the nasturtium. It is easy to grow as it loves poor soil (in rich soil you'll get more leaves and fewer flowers, although the leaves are quite tasty, too), there are many color varieties and the taste is quite refreshing. I love garnishing all kinds of seasonal dishes with this flower. I always use at least one per guest — and then gently insist they try it. As you can imagine, many people are used to admiring flowers and not actually consum-



ing them, so with some people, it takes a bit more prodding. But they are always pleasantly surprised. The texture of the nasturtium starts out a bit like a very soft butter type lettuce, without a great deal of taste, then comes forth with a peppery flavor reminiscent of a mild radish. Food should be fun. And to me — this is fun! Yes, I know, I amuse easily.

Flowers make an elegant garnish to soups — both hot and cold varieties. Be sure to add flowers to any hot dish just before serving to prevent wilting. Sprinkle them over your salad or suspend your choice of edible flower in a cruet or decorative bottle of vinegar to display on the counter or bring to the table with your salad oil. And for those cool summer-time drinks — float some fresh flowers in the beverage, or freeze small flowers or single petals in ice cubes to add a festive touch of whimsy.

So don't just take time to smell the flowers, take time to eat them, too! ■

**Laurie Bell** is a freelance writer, cooking instructor, and volunteer for Meals on Wheels. She is a member of the newsletter planning committee.

## Some other, fun ideas for enlivening your spring and summer meals

- \* The colorful stems of rainbow chard add a festive touch to any savory course.
- \* Add sliced strawberries to your salad with some ribbons of parmesan tossed in. It's a great flavor combination.
- \* Strawberries pair quite well with basil. Chiffonade some basil leaves and sprinkle them on a bowl of sliced strawberries. Garnish with whole leaves and flowers from either the basil, strawberries, or other edible flower choice.
- \* If you make your own sorbets, steep fresh basil leaves in the sugar syrup after it has come to a boil and the sugar has dissolved, then steep until it has cooled. Strain and use this infused basil flavored sugar syrup with the pureed strawberries for a delectable sorbet. Again, garnish with those fresh flowers!
- \* Sprinkle a big platter of fresh, juicy local tomatoes with fresh minced mint and a light touch of salt and fresh ground pepper. That's right — mint on tomatoes — it's an unexpected taste treat worth trying. Flowers are optional but recommended!

## Upcoming Events

Updates are posted as soon as they are available to our voice mail box at (202) 333-0421 and our website at [www.aiwf.org/dc](http://www.aiwf.org/dc). Events begin at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

The following events are being developed. Final dates and prices may not have been determined.

### May 2006

- 15– The Great Crab Cake Cook-off at Phillips Seafood
- 21– Chocolate Making and Tasting at CACAO (Belletini), Olney, MD

### June 2006

- 6 – BBQ and Grilling, Demo and Eating at Stratford University
- 10 – BBQ and Grilling, Demo and Eating at L'Academie de Cuisine
- 26 – Curry Club

## Support Those Who Support Us

We could not exist without the help and support of the following people and companies:



Tom Reidy/Long & Foster Realtors for event flyers

### Oyster Tasting at Hank's Oyster Bar

Chef/owner Jamie Leeds and staff, Hank's Oyster Bar; Ryan, Ravis and Tyler Croxton, Rappahannock Oysters.  
AIWF Board Member and Program Committee Member: Carolyn Margolis

### Dinner at Willow Restaurant

Chef/owner Tracy O'Grady, pastry chef Kate Jansen, and Charlie Dunn, Willow Restaurant; Gary Gondelman, Kobrand Corp. for the sparkling wine.  
AIWF Program Committee: Christine Corcoran

### Easter and Passover Foods at Stratford University

Chefs Daniel Traster and Chris Brown, Stratford University.  
AIWF Board Member: Daniel Traster.  
AIWF Program Committee: Dana Sitnick



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6271 Park Road  
McLean, VA 22101

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Founded on the premise that gastronomy is essential to the quality of human existence, **The American Institute of Wine & Food** is a non-profit educational organization with membership open to all. The Institute is devoted to improving the understanding, appreciation and accessibility of food and drink through a lively exchange of information and ideas in its conferences, publications and chapter programs.