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APRIL 2022

## The Chardonn(yay) Issue

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# Three CHARD MONTE

BY  
NILS  
BERNSTEIN

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We asked three chefs to develop seafood dishes for three classic styles of Chardonnay.

With its diverse range of styles, there exists a Chardonnay to pair perfectly with almost any dish. These very different seafood dishes—pungent and earthy, rich and nutty, buttery and bright—are beautiful showcases for classic Chardonnays from Sonoma, Meursault and Chablis.



## PAIRING:

### Freeman 2019 Ryo-Fu Chardonnay (Green Valley)

"California Chardonnay shows richness and beautiful fruit, with a spine of acidity and minerality that keeps them light on their feet and refreshing on the palate—an ideal match for this dish," says Douglas Faraco, wine director at Montage Healdsburg. "When pairing with a meatier fish such as halibut, its acidity cuts the fish and supports the creamy quality of the cannellini beans. As California winemaking and grape growing evolves and develops a deeper heritage, vintners see the opportunity to refine the California 'style' of Chardonnay to reflect California terroir, while maintaining the winemaker's thumbprint. This bottle is a perfect example."



## Roasted Halibut with Braised Cannellini Beans

Hazel Hill is the flagship restaurant at Sonoma's luxe 258-acre retreat Montage Healdsburg. In this recipe, Chef Dubinsky's unusual technique for cooking the halibut—a cross between roasting, braising and poaching—ensures moist and flavorful fish.

Recipe courtesy Jaron Dubinsky, executive chef at Montage Healdsburg, Healdsburg, CA

- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 teaspoon red chili flakes
- 1 red bell pepper, julienned
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 1½ cups Chardonnay
- 3 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 2 15-ounce cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup baby kale, packed
- 6 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves picked and minced
- 3 tablespoons pitted olives (Castelvetrano if possible), sliced
- 2 tablespoons capers, drained
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 lemon
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 4 skinless halibut fillets, about 6 ounces each

To make beans, heat ½ cup olive oil in a medium stockpot over medium heat. Add garlic, shallot and chili flakes and sauté until translucent, about 3 minutes. Add bell pepper and cook for another 2 minutes. Add vinegar and turn heat to high. Reduce vinegar by half, then add 1 cup Chardonnay, again reducing by half. Add stock and simmer uncovered for 15 minutes.

Turn heat to medium and add beans. Simmer for 10–15 minutes until cooking liquid thickens slightly, then mix in kale, thyme, olives, capers, butter and juice of the lemon. The beans should have a fair amount of liquid, like a thick stew; if necessary, add a little stock to loosen, or cook further to thicken. Add salt, if needed. Keep warm over low heat until ready to serve.

To cook halibut, heat oven to 300°F. Add remaining olive oil and wine to a large nonstick sauté pan (almost all are oven-safe up to at least 350°F) and place in oven for 10 minutes. Pat halibut dry and season generously with salt and pepper on both sides. Add to pan and cook for at least 10 minutes, until it flakes easily with a fork (cooking time will depend on thickness of fillet).

Place halibut atop the bean stew in shallow bowls. Serves 4.