



Soft-Shell Crabs

The exact species eaten as soft-shell crab varies regionally around the globe, so here on the East coast, the blue crab (*Callinectes sapidus*) from the Chesapeake Bay area is most commonly found on our dinner plates, breaded and deep fried, wedged into a soft roll of sorts, served with tartar sauce and a chunk of lemon. The way we like to do it here at the Club is sautéed with garlic, butter and white wine. This method allows the sweet crab flavor to blossom in all its succulent glory!

There are species native to Asian coasts, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Gulf of Mexico, all of which have warmer waters and a more constant supply of molting crabs. Oh, yes, we should go back a step here, since it hasn't been mentioned yet, but most of you know that soft-shelled crabs are hard-shelled crabs molting their shells. In cold Atlantic waters, this season is rather short, so we enjoy soft-shells now, between May and July. If you are having soft-shells any other time, then they have either been frozen or have come from warmer waters where molting continues longer. However, many agree that the best, sweetest meat is a hard-shelled blue crab that just molted. Since the crab must be eaten within four days of molting, and must be kept alive until immediately before cooking, this is one fresh crustacean. Even with overnight delivery, that may be pushing it for a crab whose native waters are half way around the globe.

Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay 2007

This 2007 Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay is styled to highlight the vivid aromas and flavors of our cool climate fruit. This wine is 100% barrel fermented with 100% malolactic fermentation. Additional layers of complexity were achieved through sur lie aging and weekly hand stirring of the barrels, known as batonage. Native yeasts, which contribute silkiness and depth to the wine, were used on selected lots to round out the final blend.



The 2007 Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay displays fruit-forward citrus aromas, accented by hints of mineral and toasty oak. On the palate, it is richly textured with cream, toast, lime and minerals: perfect for those sautéed soft-shell crabs!

Francis Ford Coppola Claret 2007



The 2007 vintage got underway earlier than most years as a result of premature bud break. This occurred because of an unseasonably warm winter. The season lasted longer than normal as well because of prolonged moderate temperatures. These conditions were ideal for creating physiologically perfect fruit, which is why winemakers have declared this one of the best vintages of the decade. The Claret is always elegant, but this year it's a true show stopper; lush with a beautiful tapestry of smooth tannins, intense flavor, and seductive aromas. With a deep crimson color, this wine gives way to aromas of blackberries, plums and vanilla cream while flavors of wild berries, cherries, spice and mocha dance on the palate.

When paired with classic dishes such as beef stroganoff, leg of lamb or potato gratin, you can create a sublime dining experience.

AND REMEMBER: YOU CAN TAKE A PARTIAL BOTTLE HOME NOW!