

A Family Thanksgiving

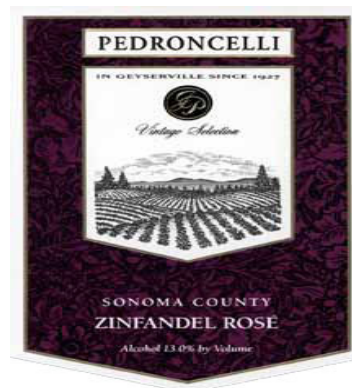
Wine & Dine with Dave Preston...

The Guru of the Goodlife®

Without a doubt, the fall in the mountains is when *Mother Nature* really shows her stuff. The colors are remarkable, the weather a treat with warm days, cool nights and yes, a little frost on the pumpkin, if you will. And the one holiday I truly look forward to, Thanksgiving. To me it has always been the one holiday where families get together just because they are families! And it's the one holiday I insist on cooking everything!

We all know the story of the first Thanksgiving and the fact that Ben Franklin wanted the turkey to be the official bird of America. And it is the one day I can see all the faces of my relative, both those who are here and those who are in a better place. I came from a large family, my dad one of 13, and that meant lots of cousins, and dinner at Aunt Bea's house always. There were four turkeys and two geese (some of my relatives didn't like turkey, go figure). And talk about pies....at least a dozen and a half...Mince Meat would permeate the house...I'm still a pumpkin kind of guy but one Aunt always did a couple of apple cobblers and that got my attention too!

One thing I can say about my generation as I look back on my parent's generation is that we today have turned to wine as the drink of preference with the turkey dinner; back then it was beer and cider. There are two truly good wines I've found that fit with all the flavors of a Thanksgiving feast. I first discovered *Green Hungarian*, a light white wine in the early 1970's. It was the perfect fit, not too heavy, not too dry with a lot of flavor to enhance the turkey and the vegetables and the cranberry sauce. Fruity, with a lightly floral and a sweet flavor -- Yellow and Honeygold apples, pear, and honeydew melon. Reminiscent of a *Pinot Chardonnay Vino Spumante* (without the bubbles), but not as crisp. Lightly floral finish featuring pear-and-vanilla flavors. This is a tad sweet wine, probably containing between 3-5% residual sugar. Weibel first bottle this in the early 1950's and it's priced under \$10...how can you go wrong?



But if you're like me, there has to be a red somewhere in the mix. One the most tasty wines I have found that is perfect with turkey is *Pedroncelli's Zinfandel Rose*. It is not, I repeat, it is not a white zinfandel. Ruby red in color with the aroma of freshly

picked strawberries. Ripe raspberry, green apple and peach blossom flavors are highlighted in this crisp, enjoyable wine, it's not sweet. This potpourri of fruit, with time, will take on a jammy element but don't wait too long - Rosés are made to be consumed early. And, it's something that does well a little chilled. Again, under \$10 and you can find these wines at **Whispering Vine** and **Ben's Fine Wines** here in Reno.

Now since I do like to cook, I've had the chance to create some of my own Thanksgiving specialties over the years that have become requested by my kids as a "must have" on the table. I've always enjoyed candied yams but they were always "tasted", but never "all gone" until I created *Jack Daniel's Candied Yam Casserole*. It's gone by the first passing around the table. You need:

- 4 -6 yams peeled (quartered, easier to mash)
- ½ cup Jack Daniel (or your favorite whiskey)
- 7oz. jar Kraft whipped marshmallow (in the baking section of the super market)
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ¼ lb. unsalted butter (soften)

Into a mixing bowl, mash the yams with the soften butter, and brown sugar. Add the whiskey and beat at medium-low speed until the consistency is like a thick batter. Stop the mixer and fold in the marshmallow by hand (turning the bowl, using a rolling motion with a mixing spoon, don't whip or stir rapidly, it will break the mixture down). Do not add the marshmallow while the mixer is running, it breaks down the marshmallow. Pour the combined mixture into a Pyrex loaf dish (8 1/2 X 4 1/2 X 2 1/2) and cover with foil and bake at 350° for 30-40 minutes (until set). Serves 6 to 8.

We have so much to be thankful for living in America. I hope you and yours will celebrate this great American Holiday with all the love and friendship it represents. And while you're at it, pause to give thanks and say a little prayer for all our men and women in uniform around the world, who keep the Bell of Freedom ringing for all of us here at home. Bon appetite! Carpe Diem my friends and make it a point to go out and live the goodlife!