

Summer Wines

As spring breezes in and winter sidles out, it's time to replace those heavy, comforting red wines with some light, refreshing white wines. Here, I review my favorite wine, Sauvignon Blancs from New Zealand's Marlborough Valley. These tangy wines are great with exotic salads, grilled fish, and fresh, steamed vegetables. They all have that classical Marlborough grapefruit acidic taste, clear, pale yellow coloring, and fresh aroma.



Matua

Bold, citrus grapefruit flavors plunge from this tropical light-bodied wine. The palate is generous and fruit driven with light grapefruit acidity giving a fresh, clean taste and passion fruit finish that lingers on the tongue. At \$8 to \$12, this is the best buy. Invite friends over to sip it on the patio.



Whitehaven

Robust and pronounced, grapefruit is the most prevalent flavor here. This medium-bodied wine boasts hints of lemon and fresh, herbal undertones that linger on the palate. If you prefer the regaling punch of grapefruit, this is your wine. It's priced between \$18 and \$21 and is splendid for a romantic, candlelight evening.



Kim Crawford

Replete with an eccentric blend of pineapple, grapefruit, and melon flavors, this wine has a velvety texture and smooth, round aroma. The cleansing acidity and hint of gooseberry leaves your palate refreshed. Priced at \$12 to \$15, this wine is a hit at any Summer Soirée.



Cloudy Bay

Mineral and floral elements make this an appealing wine. With mango and tangerine flavors as its backbone, this is the subtlest of the Marlborough Valley wines; however, the hint of key lime pie makes up for the lack of acidity. Expect to pay anywhere from \$15 to \$19. It is a perfect picnic wine.

Revising Prose
by Richard Lanham
Macmillan Publishing
ISBN 978-0205309443

After I graduated from college with my English degree, I immediately got a job in the corporate world, where I encountered culture shock. My boss required a status report on my current project. I sent him a four-paragraph report. He later came to my desk, laid the report in front of me with three sentences circled, "this is all I need from now on," he told me. Likewise, my initial reports were full of extraneous words that made readers stumble, like "The subject of this scope document is to analyze the audience for the Oil module of Trusted Link Distributor." A simpler version of that sentence is, "This is the audience analysis for Trusted Link Distributor."



The corporate world is fast-paced, so no one has time to read an abundance of content. Gone are the days of elaborate exposition and heavy adjectives. I learned to renovate my academic, literary, essay style into a business style. It was not easy. I had four years of exposing Shakespeare's, Spenser's, and Chaucer's secrets in essays, research papers, and stories where I had to exhibit my knowledge, comprehension, and talent. This had to change for the corporate readers. Communication in the business world is nothing like academic communication. Richard Lanham's *Revising Business Prose* helped me to make a successful transition.

Business and professional writing should be concrete, clear, and uncluttered. It must lucidly convey the author's intention quickly and efficiently. Reports, e-mails, notes, schedules, status documents, and other business correspondence must make their point fluently and distinctly. In *Revising Business Prose*, world-renowned rhetoric scholar Richard Lanham discusses how to transform official, scholarly, and poetic writing into easy-to-read, straightforward prose that is vivid and meaningful. Lanham is a recognized expert in prose stylistics and Classical and Renaissance rhetoric. He advocates rewriting prose to improve style and clarity.

We are inundated with scholarly and academic writing that can be abstract, passive-voiced, long winded, and replete with words you find on an SAT test and need a dictionary to understand. This type of writing has its audience and location, but it has no place in business documents. Readers must not be forced to plow through excessive nouns, modifiers, and complex sentences to extract the information they require. Likewise, poetic diction laced with adjectives and gerund-formed verbs are too loquacious for business and professional documents.

In *Revising Business Prose*, Lanham introduces the Paramedic method, which is a method for writing verb-dominated and action-oriented prose that quickly lines up actor, action, and object and removes useless prepositions, helping verbs, and euphemisms that can obscure reading and hide meaning. For example, instead of writing “It has been determined that the individual’s continued presence in the present personnel configuration is a detriment to ongoing operational efficiency,” Lanham encourages a more direct approach, “I decided to fire him”. The Official Style is what Lanham calls writing that makes the simple sound complex and is laden with vague, general nouns, impersonal and passive action, and obscure meaning.

The Paramedic Method is a short but powerful eight-step process:

1. Circle the prepositions.
2. Circle the “is” forms.
3. Ask, “Where’s the action?” “Who’s kicking who?”
4. Put this “kicking” action in a simple (not compound) action verb.
5. Start fast—no slow windups.
6. Write out each sentence on a blank sheet of paper and mark off its basic rhythmic units with a “/”.
7. Read the passage aloud with emphasis and feeling.
8. Mark off sentence lengths in the passage with a “/”.

Lanham thoroughly explains each step in this process, and clear examples and explanations accompany each step. You can easily teach yourself Lanham’s method and style.

When business prose is clear, brief, and straightforward, time and money are saved. Yes, businesses save money with distinct prose by decreasing print and translation communication costs. Clear prose cuts down on misunderstandings, confusion, and the need to re-explain obscure text.

Employing a humorous voice and conversational style, Lanham explains why some types of prose do not work for business writing. He situates examples of the Official Style and the Paramedic Method side-by-side so that you can clearly see the difference the Paramedic Method makes in sentence length, style, clarity, and meaning. He illustrates how to vary sentences, discard bland nouns, and dominate your prose with strong verbs. This book is my writing bible. I refer to it every time I write. It is my favorite book about strong writing. I recommend it to anyone who wants to write clear, concise prose.

Essay Review with Paul and Cynthia
An Herbivore's Heaven: Lunacy Black Market

Dining at Lunacy Black Market is like sitting in the owners' living room as they deliver fresh, succulent cuisines that are healthy, pure, and unmolested. The wine flows like water on asphalt after a thunderstorm. The walls are full of art. Paintings and photography highlight local artists, encouraging you to purchase their art. Kimonos, Asian robes, hang high on the walls like ancient Knights in bold, brilliant colors. You can dine on one of the many sofas, sit at a table for two that's laden with antique Coke literature, perch near the pillow-lined window at a designer's table with plastic stools that remind you of a French art gallery gathering, or stand. It's your choice. It's your experience. But you must be willing to relax, stay a while, enjoy the cuisine, and partake of the wine.

Paper orbs dip from the ceiling to deliver dim lighting. A sturdy, wooden table sits in the center of the restaurant, holding vases of exotic flowers, unopened bottles of wine, lemons, and empty wine bottles that have become candleholders in their second life. Several antique hutches hug the walls housing wine glasses, silverware, water glasses, and other guest necessities. The atmosphere reeks of creative energy and unique grace, which was Paul and Cynthia's goal when they created the stylishly eclectic décor. "I wanted to create a place where people can come, relax, exchange ideas, and change the world" says Cynthia. And they did. When I enter Lunacy Black Market, a contagious creative energy greets me. It's where I go to think, create...oh, and to eat.

Paul Luna and Cynthia Thomet are the energetic, inspiring owners of Lunacy Black Market, an affordable, yet elegant Tapas restaurant in Atlanta, Georgia. It is located on Mitchell Street, amongst an obscure patch of urban storefronts that serve as the base for metropolitan lofts. Paul Luna is no stranger to the Atlanta restaurant circuit; in fact, he's lauded as a culinary legend here. He previously owned Eclipse de Luna and Loco Luna, two successful Latin Tapas restaurants in Midtown Atlanta. He sold those restaurants years ago, and between then and opening Lunacy Black Market traveled to Washington DC, Hawaii, and Southern California among other places, as a culinary consultant. He returned to Atlanta with a new vision and a calmer mind.

Cynthia Thomet is a scholar and writer from Switzerland by way of Washington DC where the couple met. In the bits of spare time she can parcel, Cynthia writes articles about food and health for various online publications. She is the consummate hostess, wandering about doing everything from seating and conversing with guests to delivering meals from the kitchen. Her eagle eye catches everything and ensures that each patron is deftly cared for. She remembers patron's special diets and needs and ensures that the restaurant runs smoothly. She's affable and personable, often sitting with guests to chat about life.

Lunacy Black Market has an outstanding atmosphere eclipsed only by the mouthwatering small plates they serve. The chef's culinary expertise is a sagacious mixture of his Latin and Italian heritage. Preferring to adopt the Italian method of dining, Luna would rather not have a menu, just cook what he wants, and bring it out to you. Nevertheless, the menus are simple, made of cardboard from used wine boxes, written with a black sharpie. For lunch, there is always a soul-shine soup, healthy and filling. It is usually tomato based and full of leafy vegetables, mushrooms, lentils, and rice. The collard greens are my favorite; crunchy and tasty, Luna sautés them on the stove with fresh herbs, olive oil, and his secret tomato sauce. Another tasty dish is the Garbanzo beans in a lip-smacking curry sauce that bonds with your taste buds like long lost friends. Flash Fried Green Beans bathed in a tangy Asian sauce are a guest favorite. The chef's ability to assemble vegetables into swarthy dishes is astounding, for instance, The Laurel. It's a supper dish that doesn't appear on the menu, but if the chef knows you are a vegetarian, he'll make it for you. He layers Sweet Potatoes and Spinach and mixes in ricotta cheese and tomato sauce as its base. You might also want to taste the Green & Purple Cabbage salad adorned with Gorgonzola cheese, and toasted walnuts or the Homemade Mozzarella with tomato Pico de Gallo, green olives, and button mushrooms.

Just in case you have omnivores with you, there are Asian Style Pork Ribs, Chicken Legs Mediterranean style, and sometimes a whole baked fish. There is something for everybody at Lunacy Black Market...from the meticulous vegetarian to the ubiquitous meat eater. Take your pick. None of the dishes exceeds \$4. It's the best deal in the city. After he prepares your meal, don't be surprised if the chef sits down at your table to see how your day is going.

The wine list is divine, Reds and Whites from Argentina, Spain, Italy, and France, pair well with all of the light dishes (Torontes, Cotes du Rhone, Malbec, Prugnolo Gentile, and Sangiovese di Romagna). You can order by the bottle or a quart-ino. No wine by the glass; instead, the menu as well as the wine list are designed for friends and family to share.

The pleasant wait staff is accommodating and knowledgeable, all of them are undergraduates in college, mostly from Georgia State University, always smiling and attentive. When your palate is satiated, they bring you the check inside of a classic novel, colorful travel guide, or a comic book.

Not a kid-friendly establishment, Lunacy Black Market is open for lunch Wednesday through Friday from 11-2:30pm. They take a siesta until opening for dinner from 6-10pm Wednesday through Saturday. They are open on Sundays for late lunch, 2-10pm, where you can get all you can eat pasta and risotto for \$12 unless your party exceeds 6 people, and then the price escalates to \$27.

So drop into Lunacy Black Market for lunch or dinner, and tell them that Trina sent you.

Question and Answer Interview

Thank you for joining me for an interview with Cynthia Thomet (the Cy in Lunacy), part-owner of Lunacy Black Market, a Tapas Restaurant on Mitchell Street in Atlanta, Georgia. Cynthia shares her husband's (Paul Luna) dream, but also has some dreams of her own. She's a writer and plans to use her experiences at Lunacy Black Market to write colorful food and travel tales. The husband and wife team appear to work well together, but we are going to get the real scoop.

It's about 10pm on a Wednesday night. Vince (my husband) and I arrived at Lunacy around 9pm and had dinner while Luna and Cynthia joined us in between cooking and serving other customers. As our husbands convene outside to smoke after-dinner cigars, Cynthia and I settle onto a plush sofa like old friends. As the Gypsy Kings croon from the stereo on one of the hutches, a bottle of Zestos red wine sits on the coffee table in front of us, and we both sip and gaze at a lit candle as we talk.

Trina: Tell me about your vision for Lunacy. When you started it, did you have a vision?

Cynthia: We wanted something like a salon. Somewhere that people who live nearby could feel comfortable coming several times a week, hence the pricing. We wanted people to come and have conversations amongst themselves and with the other patrons and find like-minded people. We envisioned a place where people can feel free to create whether in conversation or in other media, which is why I also reached out to local artist to show their work here.

Trina: What's it like working side-by-side with your husband every day?

Cynthia: It's Lunacy! (Laughing and throwing her hands into the air)

Trina: Is there a distribution of tasks?

Cynthia: There is. And we have overlap, but being committed to our vision, Luna is the restaurateur having been in this business for so long. He is the boss. I head the day-to-day stuff, deadlines, administrative activities, license renewals, customers. I supervise the front staff. Luna supervises the back staff, the cooks. He trains the cooks, which is usually one intern and a part-timer assisting him in the kitchen.

Trina: How do you work with your significant other all day, every day?

Cynthia: We have a mutual respect. I respect what he cooks, and I don't comment. If he says that he's making a toe and arm soup, I trust him to make the best toe and arm soup. At the same time, when I come up with marketing ideas, he has no say so. He lets me do my thing and vice versa. It works. He moves fast. I move slowly and analyze, and I think we complement one another in that aspect.

Trina: Do you cook or is that solely Luna's domain?

Cynthia: No. I let Luna deal with the cooking.

Trina: Do you like to cook? Do you know how to cook?

Cynthia: (Laughing) I thought I knew how to cook at one time. Now he pretty much has that on lock down and I'm fine with it.

Trina: This is the best food in the city. When you and Luna go out to eat, where do you go?

Cynthia: That's a hard question. We keep going back to LaGrotta in Buckhead on Peachtree Street. Their food is consistent, traditional Italian with subtle American touches. It's pricey. Taqueria del Sol is another restaurant we frequent. Their prices are like ours. Recently we discovered LaTavola in Virginia Highlands, which isn't good for you Trina. We do their all you can eat Pasta on Mondays. The Elliot Street Pub is a great place to socialize...not so much to eat, but we love to go there and socialize. It's in walking distance from here. The vibe they have there is kind of the same vibe we have here. You [Trina] wouldn't be able to eat there. They don't have anything you could eat.

Trina: Three to five years ago, did you think you'd be running a restaurant?

Cynthia: Never! I thought I'd just help set it up and hand it over like a good consultant would do. Don't break it. But here I am. I didn't see myself doing this. This is a wonderful way to meet people though. I'll take everything I've learned here and use it as a stepping stone for the next phase of my life, which will be in a more literary direction.

Trina: So what is the next step...this literary direction?

Cynthia: Well, I think it would be freelance writing. That's what I'm looking into right now.

Trina: What type of freelance writing?

Cynthia: I've been getting more and more requests from folks to write about food and food allergies. So, I've been reading up on those types of issues. I see food taking me in the direction that I really want to write, which is travel. Going to exotic places and sort of writing about my experiences there, the native cuisines, and how those places affect me.

Trina: Tell me about some of the places you've already visited and long to write about.

Cynthia: My top three are Rome, Italy—Quito, Ecuador—Montreal, Canada. I think Canadians are really wonderful people, and their culture is lovely. As Americans we don't think of Canadian culture as different from ours, but they have a culture all their own.

Trina: Give me two more places you've traveled to and want to write about.

Cynthia: Well...this is interesting. I waited to give you these. I'd say Zurich, Switzerland and Washington DC. Washington DC is where I grew up. I love the accessibility of that town. It's a big little city. It's easy to get around in. I also spent the other half of my life in Zurich [her birthplace], which is where I discovered my independence as a young woman.

Trina: When you are not doing Lunacy, what do you do?

Cynthia: I steal moments to write in a small novel I'm toying with. But I took a break for the holiday season and never got back into the swing. In fact, I'm about to embark on a new novel project. I want to get it done before the next break hits.

It is now 12am. Luna and Vince are finished with their cigars and are standing over Cynthia and I. They are on their way into the kitchen, but want to know if I need to ask Luna anything else. Cynthia and I have depleted our bottle of wine and the candle has burned out. No more patrons remain and the wait staff has assembled at a set of sofas in the front of the facility to eat. So, I ask Cynthia and Luna to wrap the interview up in any way they want.

Cynthia: Lunacy is intentional—to attract a certain group of people who are drawn to things that are different. Being able to blend those elements in one space, allowing comfortable breathing room for being creative and different. I don't decide the art that hangs in here. The artists do. The atmosphere breeds the clientele, and they in turn creatively build it into the Lunacy atmosphere where you [she points to me] can feel comfortable coming to eat, drink wine, write, create, think, and talk.

Luna: People come here to change the world. No matter how small, we have an atmosphere for healthy eating and abundant creativity.

Luna & Cynthia: It's Lunacy!

Cultural Review: What Does America Do for Its Soldiers' Injured Souls

18 American military war veterans commit suicide each day. A mental health epidemic among our nation's veterans is going unnoticed. They leave their homes, wives, children, parents, and life behind to make a foreign country their dwelling under hostile conditions. They are consistently gone from home and loved ones, and while away fighting, witness haunting massacres and the deaths of their comrades, sometimes right before their eyes, as death just misses them. There is a point where the human mind hides. The soul runs from what the mind processes but cannot handle. So when these men come home, they are depressed, traumatized, and sometimes broke and homeless. What does America do for these injured souls?

Since the war in Iraq began, 4447 American troops died. The total wounded is estimated at 100,000, but officially, it is 33,003. These statistics chronicle the fatalities of the soldiers who are abroad; however, the soldiers who make it through the battles and return home also have fatality rates. 18 per day commit suicide. That makes 6570 veterans per year taking their own lives after they survived tours in Iraq or Afghanistan. These men and women survive war and civilian life kills them.

Freedom costs. The United States Military and the members' families pay the price for our liberty; our military stays poised on the front lines to protect thousands of Americans, yet they receive minimal compensation. Americans pay more for entertainment than we do for freedom. Think about it. Professional athletes make millions of dollars a year to play sports. Actresses, actors, directors, and producers make hundreds of thousands per year to fabricate stories and visualize them on the big screen, television, or Broadway. The NFL owners and players are arguing over money, seemingly at a standoff, threatening no football for 2011-2012. These are millionaires brawling over billions, while military personnel return to America with no place to call home, shattered minds, and weakened souls. Many veterans return home and have trouble getting a job, assimilating back into society, coping with what they saw or did, yet we offer them sparse compensation and help to re-assimilate. What does America do for these injured souls?

Veterans return to America with injuries that we can see, missing limbs and mutilated body parts. But what about the invisible injuries? What about the injuries to their souls and minds that require more probing to ascertain, time more than money to fix? A great number of veterans are diagnosed with brain injuries, depression, traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They don't understand why they cannot deal with traffic, noise, or the qualms of day-to-day life. They only know that they can't. Performing daily routines, such as grooming and feeding themselves, shopping for groceries and clothes, and driving in traffic causes psychosis episodes that paralyze these veterans or return them to a mental virtual war. What does America do for these injured souls?

The war in Afghanistan is in its ninth year. It began in October 2001 and is the longest war the United States ever fought. The war in Iraq began March 19, 2003. Some of our soldiers participated in both wars, cycling through double tours, unable to retire or prevented from leaving, enduring for the safety of our country. More than one million veterans already returned home from these wars, in good physical condition, but psychologically scarred and forever altered. Some suffer in silence, eventually turning to drugs or alcohol as coping mechanisms, while others seek help from The Department of Veteran affairs (VA), only to hit a wall of bureaucratic red tape or insolence. And many of these war heroes were diagnosed with brain and mental traumas while at war but refused to be sent away to get help because they didn't want to leave their units and fellow soldiers in a quandary. What does America do for these injured souls?

15,000 troops are set to return home by August 2011 after seven years of being at war. I don't think America is prepared to handle the needs of these veterans. The nation was unprepared for the severity and length of the war, so I cringe to imagine how these veterans will be treated. Of course they return home as heroes whom we applaud and appreciate, but these veterans need more than a thank you. They need help, especially the veterans suffering from psychological traumas. The last time America dealt with this many veterans returning from war was 40 years ago after the Vietnam War. Today, the VA is behind a record 1 million benefit claims with veterans complaining about slow, antiquated, and compassionless services.

What would freedom mean to America without the brave men and women who create a barrier between the United States and danger? Imagine bombs igniting daily overhead, running for shelter every hour, unable to walk down the street for fear that a suicide bomber will ignite himself in front of your child. Many nations live this way. To some of their citizens, this is the only way of life they know. The biggest reason we roam freely across our country is that our military keeps us safe. Imagine life without the United States' military presence to protect us. Imagine.

Saroki Catering

Review

Christiane Reaux-Grant hails from France, is passionate about cooking, and brings a sophisticated, tasty French flair to her exotic cuisines. She owns Saroki Catering in Douglasville, Georgia, where she makes savory dishes that are a healthy and unique fusion of French and African culinary expertise. She prepares customized meals for her customers using fresh herbs and vegetables, lean meat, and tender poultry. For me, she makes delectable, exotic vegetarian and seafood dishes blanketed in velvety sauces that make my taste buds dance and my stomach sigh with relief. Christiane produces refreshing bursts of flavors in her homemade sauces using fresh ginger, cilantro, lemon grass, and garlic, just to name a few. The sauces are scrumptious by themselves, but spread them over sautéed fish or steamed vegetables and the flavors explode in your mouth.

My love affair with Saroki Catering came about because I have a delicate, ambivalent digestive system. I have a difficult time digesting most foods, I'm a vegetarian, *and* I'm allergic to gluten. So, I have all these restrictions for my diet. And did I mention that I abhor cooking? Deciding what to eat used to be a chore before discovering Saroki Catering.

Christiane's motivation for Saroki Catering and her passion for healthy cooking stems from the wide divide between American and French culinary methods, "...many American foods are unhealthy. They are full of butter and other grease. The stuff is not fresh. American diets are full of processed, overcooked dishes with too much salt and not enough fresh ingredients. My customers are busy corporate people, and I enjoy cooking for them. I know what they like. I know what they can and cannot eat, and I cook healthy meals for them. I love what I do." A stay at home mom, Christiane says she gets comfort and pleasure from cooking for her customers.

The specific combination of ingredients that Christiane uses in her dishes contributes to their uniqueness. "Fresh ingredients are the key. I grow my own herbs, so I don't pick them until I'm ready to use them. I purchase the vegetables and produce from the farmer's market on the day that I plan to cook them. It's no need for them to sit in the refrigerator." The ingredients that she puts in my dishes are lemon grass, ginger, garlic, and cilantro, which gives my food a tangy, citrus taste that makes me smack my lips. She uses fresh lemon grass because it has a calming effect that relieves insomnia and stress, lowers blood pressure, and is a natural diuretic. Ginger calms upset stomachs, induces successful digestion, and reduces circulatory problems. It fights against colds and allergies too. Modern science shows that Garlic is a powerful, natural antibiotic and has antioxidant effects. The last ingredient that Christiane always uses in the dishes that she cooks for me is Cilantro, which helps to control blood sugar and cholesterol. These items are easy on my digestive tract, yet add taste to the food.

An amalgamation of tangy herbs and exotic vegetables make up my favorite Saroki dishes. As I mentioned, I cannot have gluten, and dearly miss my potatoes. Christiane creates a dish for me using a root vegetable called Yucca. It looks and tastes just like a potato except it is gluten free. The Yucca root also helps to reduce inflammation. She cooks a succulent sweet potato dish brushed slightly with salt and pepper, mixed with baby carrots, yucca, and tamarind, which is glazed with a peanut butter sauce. Sweet potatoes are a great source of protein and fiber. My favorite spicy dish is the Thai Salad, which is a medium, hot dish made with fresh onions, carrots, tomatoes, garlic, ginger, lemon grass, cilantro, and lime juice. It is tangy and refreshing. Her special curry sauce is probably my favorite sauce, which she pours over shrimp or fish.

Saroki Catering is a godsend. Christiane cooks me several dishes for each week that I keep frozen and refrigerated, so when its time to eat, I just warm them up. My husband eats meats, so she makes several dishes with lamb and chicken just for him. Thanks to Saroki Catering, I get healthy, tasty food that does not upset my stomach.

Pricing varies so call 404-285-4920 for a free consultation. Ask for Christiane, owner and operator of Saroki Catering.