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*Chefs at Home / Douglas Keane*

## When Vineyard Meets Kitchen

A chef from California's grape country makes asparagus with white wine and risotto with red

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Andy Katz

**THE CHEF:** Douglas Keane, whose two-year-old restaurant, Cyrus, in Healdsburg, Calif., serves Asian- and French-accented food. The restaurant and its chef have received several awards, including two Michelin stars, a James Beard nomination this year and a Food & Wine Best New Chefs nod for the 35-year-old Mr. Keane.

**KNOWN FOR:** For at least a decade, the California wine-country scene could be described as Thomas Keller's French Laundry and everything else. Now Cyrus is closing that gap-- it's known as the go-to restaurant if you can't get into or afford the French Laundry.

**THE MEAL:** These two dishes showcase cooking with wine to endow food with flavorful acidity. "Acid wakes up your mouth," Mr. Keane says, and wine provides the perk in a smooth, complex package. Mr. Keane opts to cook with Pinot Noir over Cabernet or Syrah, both of which have tannins that can concentrate in food, and Sauvignon Blanc over Chardonnay, to avoid an oak taste.

**KITCHEN TIP:** Make garlic cloves into a paste using this trick: Smash a peeled garlic clove with the flat side of a large knife and sprinkle it with salt. Pressing your fore and middle fingers onto the flat side of the knife, drag the knife over the garlic clove. The salt will act as an abrasive and help turn the clove to paste, which distributes well in food and doesn't burn as easily as chopped garlic, Mr. Keane says.

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### Pan-Roasted Asparagus With Shaved Fennel, Feta and Wilted Arugula

**Yields:** 6 servings

**Active prep time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 15 minutes

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 shallot, minced

1 garlic clove, minced

1½ pounds medium-thick asparagus, trimmed of bottom half and peeled

½ cup white wine, such as Sauvignon Blanc

1 small fennel head, cored and sliced paper thin



2 cups arugula leaves, well washed  
Generous pinch crushed red-pepper flakes  
Juice of ½ lemon

1 cup crumbled feta cheese

- In a large sauté pan over medium-low heat, heat the oil. Add the shallot and garlic and cook until soft, about 2 minutes.

- Add asparagus and continue to cook for 2 minutes more.

- Add white wine and allow to reduce until almost completely dry, about 5 minutes.

- Add fennel and cook until soft and the asparagus is just tender, about 4 minutes more.

- Add the arugula and pepper flakes and cook until the arugula is just wilted, no more than 1 minute.

- Transfer to a serving dish and top with the lemon juice and feta cheese. Serve immediately.

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## Truffled Red-Wine Risotto

**Yields:** 6 servings

**Active prep time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

2 parsley stems

4 sprigs thyme

2 bay leaves

1 teaspoon black peppercorns

1 teaspoon fennel seeds

4 cups chicken broth

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 cups Carnaroli or other risotto rice

½ small onion, minced fine

1 clove garlic, mashed into a paste

2 cups Pinot Noir

Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper

3 ounces white truffle butter

2 tablespoons finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

1 tablespoon finely minced chives

- Make a bouquet garni: In a piece of cheesecloth, tightly wrap the parsley stems, thyme, bay leaves, peppercorns and fennel seeds.

- In a medium saucepan, heat the broth and bouquet garni over medium-high heat. Keep hot while preparing the risotto.

- In a large, nonreactive saucepan over medium-low heat, melt the butter. Add the onion and garlic, and cook until soft, but with no color, about 2 minutes.

- Add the rice and stir (use a heat-resistant rubber spatula or a strong wooden spoon) to coat evenly with butter. Add the wine, season with a little salt, and let reduce until almost completely absorbed into the rice.

- Add the hot broth, several ladles at a time, cooking until the rice has just absorbed the broth before adding the next ladlefuls. Continue to add the broth until the rice is tender but still al dente, about 20 minutes.

- Add the truffle butter, parsley and chives and stir vigorously until well blended. Season with salt and pepper and place in warm bowls. Serve immediately.