

## HOW TO PAIR WINE

# Pasta dish with cheese, ham and peas

By **MICHAEL AUSTIN** | Tribune Newspapers

A rich cheese sauce, studded with classic partners ham and peas, coats pasta in a way that's sure to please. A wine with a refreshing profile is what you'll want to wash it down.

## THE FOOD

**Cheese tortellini with ham and peas:** Cook 3 packages (9 ounces each) cheese tortellini in plenty of well-salted boiling water. Meanwhile, melt 2 tablespoons butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Add 2 chopped shallots; cook 1 minute. Stir in 1½ tablespoons flour; cook, stirring, 1 minute. Add 2 cups warm milk; cook, stirring, until mixture is slightly reduced and thickened, 10 minutes. Add 10 ounces frozen peas, ¾ pound cubed cooked ham, ¾ cup grated Parmesan, ½ cup chopped parsley, and salt and red pepper flakes, to taste. Drain pasta; stir into the sauce.

**Makes:** 6 servings

**THE WINES** *By sommelier Ryan Arnold, as told to Michael Austin:*

**2014 Bisci Verdicchio di Matelica, Marche, Italy:** Verdicchio one of the most underrated white grapes in Italy, makes up this dry, crisp and medium-bodied wine, which exhibits aromas of spring flowers, green apple and quince. It delivers the freshness and balance needed for the rich, cheesy pasta.

**2014 Massican Annia, Napa Valley, California:** A blend of the three grapes notable in Italy's Friuli region — tocai friulano, chardonnay and ribolla gialla — Annia carries aromas of lemon peel, dried herbs and green almond, which will match the peas and chopped parsley in the dish. The chardonnay brings weight, which will match the texture of the dairy, and the tocai friulano brings acidity, which adds freshness.

**2012 Vietti Barbera d'Alba, Tre Vigne, Piedmont, Italy:** Barbera from Piedmont has an abundance of bright red fruits, cherry and strawberry, which are all balanced with refreshingly high acidity. This light-to-medium-bodied version is bright and lively, which will help balance the richness of the cheese sauce.

