

Perfect Pairings

Adapted from *Perfect Pairings* by Master Sommelier Evan Goldstein published 2006 © University of California Press.

5 KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING WINE

Acidity

Alcohol

Oak

Sweetness

Tannin

3 KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING FOOD

Ingredients

Cooking
MethodsSauces
& Sides

When the wine is... **...try this with the food.**

Tart

- Select dishes that are rich, creamy, high in fat or salty to counterbalance the wine.
- Match the wine with tart food.
- Use the wine to cut the heat in mildly spicy dishes.
- Try skipping the lemon wedge you might otherwise serve with the dish.

Sweet

- If you're serving the wine with dessert, choose a dessert that is less sweet than the wine, or else the wine will taste sour.
- If the wine is not too sweet, try serving it with foods that are slightly sweet to complement it, or dishes that are a bit spicy as a foil.
- Try playing against dishes that are a little salty and find some fun combinations (E.g. with cheeses and many Asian, Nueva Latina and others)

Alcoholic (Hot)

- Ensure that the dish being served is ample in personality and weight, or it will be overwhelmed.
- Don't serve spicy-hot food or you'll be sorry! Heat + Alcohol = Fire!
- Avoid excessive salt, which will exaggerate your perception of the wine's heat (alcohol).

Tannic

- Counterbalance the tannins by serving foods that are high in protein, fat, or both.
- Remember that an entrée relatively low in protein or fat may make the wine come off as even more tannic
- Remember that tannin and spicy heat clash brutally.
- Use pepper (cracked black or white) to counterbalance tannins, as it's somewhat bitter by nature.
- Serve foods that are bitter (eggplant, zucchini, chard, endive, broccoli rabe, and so on) or prepare ingredients in a way that accentuates bitterness (blackening, cooking over a wood fire or grilling) to achieve taste symmetry.

Oaky

- Remember really oaky wines will always seem "oakier" with food, accompany them with bold recipes.
- Play up the oak through the choice of ingredients (include nuts or sweet spices) or cooking methods (lightly grilling or smoking).
- Remember that oak aging adds rich texture that can be nice with rich and textured sauces and dishes.

Aged and Red

- Serve rare preparations of meats to fill in 'juiceiness' gaps left by the drying out of the youthful fruit that occurs as the wine develops in the bottle.
- Remember that because tannins soften over time, an aged red gives you a broader range of food options than a tannic young wine does.
- Bear in mind that wines become more delicate as they age; choose simpler preparations to show them off rather than compete for attention with complex recipes.

Aged and White

- Serve the wine with dishes that feature similar flavors (nuts, sherry, dried fruits) to mirror its flavor profile.
- Compensate for the lost acidity in the mature wine with acidity in the dish: a squeeze of lemon, a spoonful of verjus, or a splash of vinegar.