



COURT OF MASTER SOMMELIERS EUROPE

FOOD AND WINE MATCHING

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- ◆ There is no exact science to matching food and wine.
- ◆ Subjective taste of the guest is the most important aspect.
- ◆ Look to 'The Classics'.
- ◆ But, there are basic principles to build upon.....

KEY OVERALL COMPONENTS

- ◆ Structure
 - Body/Weight, Acid and Sugar Levels.
- ◆ Flavours
 - Perhaps hundreds, if so, focus on the main ones.
 - Sweet, Sour, Salty and Bitter (also heat, though not a taste).
- ◆ Textures
 - Critically important in the play of modern food and wine.



◆ Body

- Weight of wine and food should match: full with full, light with light (otherwise one may overwhelm the other).
- If wine is lighter bodied, must be powerful in flavour/high acid to stand up to the food.

◆ Alcohol

- Balances weight and body in food accentuated easily with too much spice heat or salt.

◆ Acidity

- Acidity of wine must match/exceed acidity of food (or will be “flabby”).
- Highlights the other core focal ingredients in food.
- Great balancer of sugar.

◆ Residual sugar

- Residual sugar of wine must match/exceed residual sugar of food (or will be bitter).
- Counters physical or aromatic heat.
- Is a great match for salty elements in foods.



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◆ Tannin in wine

- Protein and fat will soften tannins.
- Certain fish + tannin = metallic.

◆ Oils/Fat/Butter in Food

- Acid and tannin (in red) can balance.
- Contrast of crisp wine often effective.

FLAVOURS

◆ Salt

- Great with sweet or fruity and softens tannins.

◆ Oak

- Best in small doses and can easily overpower food.
- Cooking techniques can offset.

◆ Fruits/Herbs/Vegetables/Spices/Nuts

- No solid rules!
- Mirroring flavours can work...
- Contrasting flavours can work...
- Avoid using too much green vegetables. Some of these have a high iron content which can create a metallic aftertaste.



- ◆ Ingredients
- ◆ Method of Production
 - Low vs. Medium vs. High Impact.
- ◆ Sauces, Condiments and side dishes
 - Can be the dominant factors in a food/wine match.

SETTING UP A MATCH

- Determine the primary/most dominant component of the dish and how to work with it.
- Determine the supporting/minor players.
- Don't forget the sauce or condiment!



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- ◆ If a tasting menu need to be complemented, think about the “arc” of wines.
- ◆ Generally lighter to fuller body.
- ◆ Drier to sweeter.
- ◆ Serving a red wine follow by a white wine is perfectly acceptable, as long as the following wine is richer.
- ◆ If a slightly sweeter style needs to be served at the beginning of the meal, have a look for a very refreshing wine.



- Matching weight with weight.
- Acidity needs acidity.
- Fish oils love acidity but hate tannins.
- Tannins love fat but hate fish oils.
- Acidity cuts saltiness.
- Sweets need sweets.
- Alcohol + spicy = fire.
- Spicy + sugar = no fire.
- Vegetable soups can be challenging.

OTHER THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- ◆ Provenance of the ingredients used.
- ◆ Wines produced in a specific wine region usually compliment the local food.
- ◆ Creating a complement is safer than designing a contrast.



DISH OR MAIN INGREDIENT	WINE	REASONING
Foie Gras (Duck liver)	Sauternes or Late Harvest Riesling	Rich, oily wine meets creamy, rich fat
Fresh Goat Cheese	Sauvignon Blanc	High acid cheese meets high acid wine
Steak (Beef, Lamb, Venison)	Cabernet Sauvignon	Tannin meets protein and fat
Sardine	Fino Sherry	Salt & fish oil meet high acid wine
Stilton	Port	Salty cheese meets sweet wine
Truffle dish	Nebbiolo	Earthy elements (mushroom/truffle) in wine meet the same flavours
Curry dish	Alsace Pinot Gris/Gewürztraminer	Aromatic profile and sweetness cut down the spiciness



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