

# Alberta Liquor Store Association



## WINE AND FOOD PAIRING HANDOUT

This hand out should accompany the same titled video. Use this hand out as a reference. Please photocopy and put in a binder.

Objective: To understand the basic principles of food and wine pairing. Sharing this information will help market your wine and educate your customers.

Wine and food should not be too complicated, but there are some easy basics that make food and wine pairing fun and successful.

You can go as easy, or as complicated as you like when it comes to food pairing. Here are simple pairings to consider if you are putting on an in-store tasting event.

Salty – potato chips

Sweet – dried fruit or candy

Savoury – deli meat [with red tannic wines] or cheese

Spice – Thai chicken skewer

NOTE: The following information could be cut and pasted into a handout for a store wine and food pairing event. You could go through the information and have food samples to match each concept.

## Possible Handout for Customers

One of the more enjoyable dining experiences is when we try wine with food. Wine in Europe is made to pair with food. It would not be unusual to have a glass of wine with lunch and dinner. Our Canadian sensibilities and more conservative views could see this as overindulging. Nevertheless, our views are changing as people learn more about wine, its properties and how it enhances a meal.

When approaching a wine and food pairing, we need to understand that there are principles, but no hard and fast rules. It is up to the person to decide what kind of wine they would like to have with what dish. Trying different wines with foods can be interesting and fun.

Tricky pairings will include artichokes, which have a chemical called cynarin. This makes wines not taste as they should.

Garlic can overpower your food so go lightly and choose a California chardonnay. They tend to be oaked so they will hold up to the taste of garlic.

Having said that, there are principles that should be adhered to. Let us look at a few.

## **Meal Concept**

If the dish is complex with many ingredients and layered with flavours you want to keep the wine simple. There is only one superstar at the meal.

If the wine is the superstar, perhaps an expensive bottle, or an aged bottle, you will want to keep the dish simple and let the wine shine.

Examples of a simple dish would be a steak with very little salt and pepper seasoning. A merlot would work.

A complex dish would be a roast beef with garlic, rosemary, cumin, and black olive foam. An Australian oaked shiraz would work.

## **Weight**

Light food such as a salad, or poached fish would go better with a light white wine like sauvignon blanc. Fish fried in butter would love a chardonnay.

Heavy foods like meaty stews and casseroles need a cabernet sauvignon or zinfandel. These wines are big, powerful red wines.

## **Salty**

Since salt can dry up your mouth we need wine that can counter this. Acidity in wine creates saliva production on the sides of your mouth, therefore we need a crisp white wine to match the salt in food. A bubbly wine like Cava or Prosecco will work. pinot grigio and sauvignon blanc are good matches with salty food.

An exception to this is going with a sweet wine. The sweet and salty combination can be quite pleasing. Try a salty soup with a dessert wine.

## **Sweet**

The sweetness in the wine should be at least as sweet as the food. Choosing Ice Wine or Port with dessert is a good idea.

## **Tannin in Wine**

Tannin in wine comes from the skins and pips of the grape. That fuzzy, chalky feeling in your mouth is tannin. Your food should be protein based. Protein binds with tannin and smooths out the roughness; the combination works well. Here we are talking about red meat and cheeses. The fat in these foods also works in creating a great taste sensation.

## **Spice**

Spice can be a tricky pairing. Hot spicy dishes need a soft wine. Tannin will create a harsh flavour and mouth feel, so you do not want a tannic red wine. Beaujolais and zinfandel wines usually work. As they are low tannin red wines The best pairing is a French wine made with the gewurztraminer grape. This white wine is rich and fruity. The slight sweetness and big flavour work incredibly well with Thai, Indian and Chinese food.

## **Glossary of Cooking Terms From Larousse Gastronomique**

Poaching – cooking food by gently simmering it in liquid.

Steaming – cooking food by sending hot steam through the food using a quarter filled sauce pan and placing the food in a steaming basket [ has holes in it].

Stir fry - quick frying at high heat a combination of vegetables, meat and seasonings.

Braising – a moist cooking method using a little liquid that barely simmers on low temperature on top of the stove or in the oven.

Roasting – cooking meat by exposing it to the radiant heat in an oven.

Frying – cooking food in hot fat.

Marinating – a flavoured liquid that cooked or uncooked ingredients are soaked in. Purpose is to flavour the food and add moisture.

Reduction – or reduce. To concentrate or thicken a liquid such as a sauce or stock by boiling which evaporates and reduces the volume.

Sauce – a hot or cold seasoned liquid either served with or used in the cooking of a dish. Sauces add flavours to a dish.

Stewing – The term for long slow cooking in liquid. The ingredients will be covered in liquid and simmered. This tenderizes meats and intensifies flavours.

## **Food Pairing Exercise**

Fried chicken with mashed potatoes and carrots.

Barbequed steak with no seasoning. French fries and peas.

Green salad with a citrus dressing.

Turkey dinner with all the fixings!

Grilled whitefish in almonds and butter.

Cesar salad with garlicky dressing.

Dry pork nibbles.

Thai curry prawns.

Beef stew.

Chocolate truffles.

Roast beef, light salt and pepper.

Salmon with rice and asparagus.

Cheese plate.

Can you think of a food that would pair with a wine?