



FOOD AND WINE PAIRING

LDV Winery's wines are memorable when savored on their own, but are a spectacular complement to food. Red wine, white wine...savory or exotic, LDV Winery's wines offer boundless opportunity for enjoyment.

Our secret about food and wine pairing is simple – there are no rules. The day of having white wine only with fish or chicken and red wine with meats is gone like the rule of not wearing white after Labor Day.

Wine and food has always been an integral part of our life together well before starting LDV Winery. We love to cook and are frequently hosting large and small dinner parties sharing new recipes and wines with friends and family. Here are some things to think about when pairing food with wine.



Things to Think About

Don't Put Off Any Chance to Have Fun!

First, enjoying wine should be a part of every day and not just when you are planning a special event or celebration. Each time you are lucky enough to share some great food and a quiet moment with someone you care about, it is grounds for celebration.

Enjoy Today and Cap It Off

Invest in a good wine preserving system (a capping system that eliminates air from the bottle). Many people forego a glass of wine because they don't want the whole bottle and can't justify opening one for just a glass or two. So they go without – so sad. Or, you may want to have one wine while you are cooking and another to match the food you have just prepared. This will leave you with two open bottles that if properly stored and refrigerated can be enjoyed over the next several days. Or invite a friend to dinner and enjoy the wine today.

Balance Flavors

Eating and drinking wine requires all of your senses. Think about the good aromas and flavors of the food and balance or match those with the food you are serving. For example, the aromas and flavor intensity of a mesquite-grilled New York steak needs to be paired with a wine that will not disappear under this intensity. A full-bodied, red wine like a Syrah or Zinfandel would pair beautifully.

Food Texture

The texture and weight of your food might dictate the type of wine you serve. The delicateness of certain dishes should not be overpowered by the wine. The goal is to complement and enhance the flavors of the dish. A poached halibut with a beurre blanc sauce should be paired with a light-bodied white wine such as a Sauvignon Blanc or a wine with strong acidity to cut through the butter sauce.

Sparkling Wines with Dinner

Most people reserve consumption of sparkling wines (only those wines from the Champagne region of France can technically be called Champagne) for New Year's Eve or Aunt Roxie's fifth wedding anniversary. Get over that! Sparklers not only add a festive element to any meal, they are perfect with food. Why does a soda go so well with a burger and fries? It's the bubbles! The carbon dioxide released from your Diet Coke or a glass of bubbly cleanses the palate and opens up your senses for the next bite.

There are also so many neat food and sparkling wine combinations that you should try. There is the traditional brut typically made with Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes, great with light seafood, shellfish, and Thai food. Here are some others you should consider.

Blanc de Noir brings more of the Pinot Noir influence and will usually have a pink tone. The red fruit (strawberries and cherries) brings a little bit more richness and allows for pairing with more hearty foods like grilled chicken and roast pork.

Brut Rosé is a brut sparkler that has been injected with a touch of Pinot Noir still wine. This gorgeous combination is the ultimate for Thanksgiving dinner or grilled tuna or salmon. Brut Rosé even goes great with charcoal grilled burgers.

Our newest favorite is sparkling Shiraz. A Shiraz is a Syrah from Australia. They just gave it a different name (think branding like Vidalia onions). This fantastic red wine is not your grandmother's Cold Duck. It is a dry, fruity wine that is dynamite with a steak, prime rib, or pizza. Once again, it's the bubbles at work that cut the fat that coats your mouth and allows the flavors to emerge. Our guess is that you will see domestic production of this wine more; maybe some day at LDV Winery. Look for it and you will be rewarded with a real good time.

Go With Grenache (particularly a LDV Winery Grenache)

We have found that one of the most versatile wines is a Grenache. It goes with just about everything. The style bridges between the foods you typically serve a red or white wine. It can complement fish, poultry, pork, turkey as well as beef. Think about the way you plan to cook your dish (e.g. grilling, sauté, or roasting) and your "wid-its" (Jamaican for side dishes) to select the right style of Grenache.

Eat Your Vegetables

Wine is not just for meat lovers. You should take into consideration the type of vegetables and how you plan to cook them when choosing the perfect wine. The most difficult vegetables to pair wine with are artichokes and asparagus because of the interesting flavors. However, mushrooms love a full-bodied wine as well as roasted potatoes. The same tips apply for pairing wine with vegetables.

Think about the texture, balance, and cooking approach. If you are putting a cream sauce on your spinach you need a wine that can cut through the sauce's richness. If you are caramelizing your carrots you might want to choose a full-bodied Zinfandel because it will have enough spice to complement the sugar. In any case, experiment and have fun.

Don't Fear the Screw Cap

Just because a wine has a traditional cork it doesn't mean what is inside is good. Many of the best producers are going to the screw cap system. It will be difficult at first to get over the "Boones Farm Syndrome" when you plopped down \$50 for a screw cap wine but you will get over it. If you don't, you may pass up some of the best Sauvignon Blancs and Pinot Noirs in the world coming out of New Zealand.

Take Two or Don't Call Me for Dinner

If there is the slightest chance you may go through more than one bottle during dinner, always purchase at least two of the same bottles. Having two different wines on the table is confusing and distracting unless you are purposely doing a side-by-side tasting with separate glasses. And if mixing occurs, you had better be using plastic knives and forks if we are there.

Get to Know a Wine Expert

The best advice is to ask for a recommendation at your local wine shop or grocery store (or send us a note for a recommendation). There are so many great wines available today, so don't get stuck in a rut. Try something new, particularly a new LDV Winery release.

Don't Be Intimidated

While there are some basics that should be followed, the "expert" is you not the guy on TV. Whatever you like is the best match.

Capping it Off

Eating is one of the very few things we have to do to survive that is really fun! Take the time to enjoy some wine with your food. It is an attitude adjustment we can all use during these crazy times. Above our wine cellar door is the inscription in Italian, "Vive Bene, Spesso L'amore, Di Risata Molta" which translates to "Live Well, Love Much, and Laugh Often." We say just go for it and enjoy!