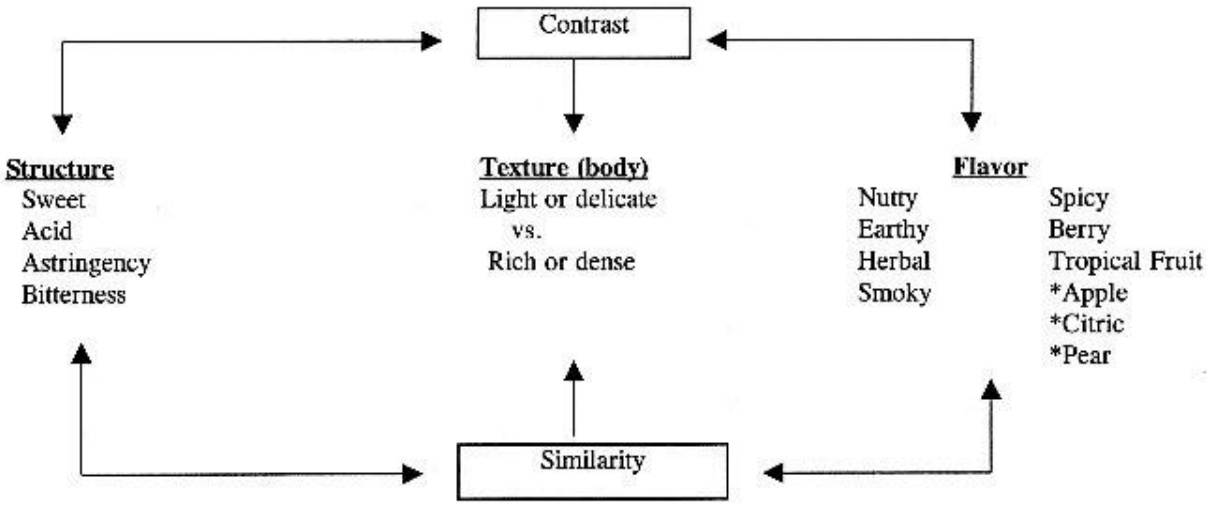
Matching Table Wines with Foods

Bruce Zoecklein
Department of Food Science and Technology
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Classic combinations of food and wine usually involve groupings such as: Caviar with Champagne; Filet of Sole with white Burgundy or Chardonnay; Rack of Lamb with red Bordeaux, Cabernet Sauvignon, or a Meritage; Salad with no wine; cheese courses with red Burgundy or Pinot noir; and desserts with Sauternes. Such pairings may make delightful matches, but without a greater understanding of the food preparation, seasonings, sauces, and the wine (including vintage, region, and style), food and wine matching is a matter of luck.

Food and wine pairing is almost entirely a matter of personal preference; however, there are a few guidelines which, if understood, may enhance the enjoyment of wine as a food complement. Food and wine components can be broken down into three general sensory categories - structure, texture, and flavor (Figure 1). Wine components can either be not present, similar to or in contrast to the structure, texture, and flavor features of the foods. The interactions between the structure, texture, and flavor of the food and wine are the basis for a rational understanding of food and wine pairings.

Figure 1



*found mainly in white wines

Adapted from Goldstein, 1991

Structural Components: We have the ability to differentiate four tastes: sweet, salty, sour (acidity) and bitter. Wines contain three of these tastes (usually not salty) plus the tactile response from grape and barrel-derived tannin phenols known as astringency. In

wine, the taste and tactile components are perceived according to the following relationship:

Figure 2
sweetness ≈ acidity + astringency and bitterness

The sweet elements in a wine are the result of residual sugars or alcohol and polysaccharides in dry wines. Acidity is the result mainly of the two dominate grape acids, tartaric and malic. Both astringency and bitterness are the result of phenolic compounds derived from the grape, oak barrels or both.

The perception of sweetness must be in relative balance with the sum of the perceptions of acidity plus astringency and bitterness. This balanced relationship, true for all wines, suggests that a reduction in the perception acidity, astringency or bitterness increases the perception of the sweetness. The reverse is also true: an increase in the sweetness decreases the perception of the acidity, bitterness and astringency. In food and wine pairing, the above palate balance relationship can be considered as two interrelating balance equations: Thus the sweetness, acidity, bitterness and astringency of the food influences those same features in a wine.

wine sweet ≈ acidity + astringency and bitterness

food sweet ≈ acidity + astringency and bitterness

The following help to illustrate the palate balance relationships:

Exercise 1 illustrates sugar and acid interaction.

- Taste any wine and focus on the perception of acidity.
- Taste a strongly acidic food, such as lemon juice.
- Allow your palate to adjust for a moment, then retaste the wine.
- After the lemon juice, the wine tastes much sweeter which is the same as saying less acidic. The composition of the wine didn't change, but the perception did.
- Taste the wine again, noting the perception of sweetness.
- Taste some sugar and retaste the wine. After the sugar, the wine tastes much less sweet or more acidic.

Exercise 2 helps to demonstrate how foods can influence astringency and bitterness features.

- Taste a red wine or heavily oaked white and note the astringency and bitterness, if present.
- Taste a source of protein or fat such as butter and retaste the wine.
- The wine will taste less astringent and/or bitter, perhaps even a little sweet, although the change is not as dramatic as noted with sugar and acid. Proteins

and fats have the ability to bind with tannins, thus muting the sense of astringency and bitterness.
- The perception of sweetness is enhanced proportionally to the reduction in astringency and bitterness as the balance equation (Figure 2) would indicate.

Exercise 3 illustrates there is a relationship between high salt content in foods and the perception of acidity and astringency in wines.

- Select two wines, a young astringent red and a high-acid white wine.
- Taste the red wine and focus on the perception of astringency.
- Taste some salt and retaste the red.
- Rough tannins in reds can be magnified by salt, although minor salt concentrations in foods are not usually a problem.
- Taste the high acid white wine and note the perception of acidity.
- Taste the salt and retaste the wine. The salt frequently magnifies the perception of acidity.

These exercises demonstrate several important rules of thumb regarding structural components:

1. Sweetness and sourness (acidity) may be the most important structural components when it comes to food and wine matching. If the sugar or acid content of a food is increased, the perception of the sugar or acid of the wine is decreased;
2. The intensity of this inverse relationship is dependent upon the difference in perception between the sugar and acid in the food and that of the wine;
3. Changes in sugar are more dramatic than structural changes of astringency and bitterness;
4. Salt can modify the perception of acidity and astringency.

Some structural, texture and flavor components in foods are listed in Table 1. (Adapted from an excellent publication - Red Wine with Fish, Rosengarten and Wessen, 1989).

Table 1 - Examples of basic food elements

Structural Components

Salty	Acidic	Sweet	Bitter
ham (proscuitto)	lemon	bbq sauce	broccoli
bacon	limes	raisins	Endive

Flavors

Fruity	Nutty	Smoky	Herbal
peach	almonds	ham	coriander

jam	praline	bbq ribs	Pasta

Spicy	Cheesy	Earthy	Meaty
clove	parmigiano	truffles	filet mignon
curry	pizza	organ meats	prime rib

Textures

Light	Rich	Coarse	Fatty
souffle	cream fraiche	cracked wheat	Lamb
Salmon mousse	lamb chops	blood sausage	Rillettes

Foods with the following characteristics are somewhat difficult to match: salty foods, extremely sweet foods, high acid and spicy foods (adapted from Baldy, 1993).

Salty Foods. Some foods like ham, anchovies, bacon, or oysters can have a fairly high level of salt which can make wine pairing difficult. The reason is high levels of salt can magnify the influence of tannins in red wines and acidity in high acid white wines. The result is to influence the balance equation making the wine taste slightly more astringent, more acidic and therefore, less sweet (Figure 1). Some high acid white wines can actually take on a metallic taste if the salt concentration in the food is too high.

Using a Virginia semi-dry or off-dry Riesling to offset the influence of salt from a Virginia ham is an example of component contrasting. The sweetness in the wine offsets the effect of the salt. There is room for a great deal of subjectivity. Some actually prefer component similarity - a high acid white such as a Virginia Pinot Grigio with oysters. Here, the high acid from the wine is actually magnified by the salt.

Sweet Foods. Sweet foods can have a sugar content greater than 20% while sweet wines are seldom greater than 10%. Very sweet foods often over-balance the perception of sweetness, making the wine taste thin and somewhat acidic or sour. This is the same sensory response suggested in exercise 1: if you taste sugar and then wine, the wine will taste considerably less sweet.

Sweet foods and sweet wines can go well together if the sweetness is not too excessive and if the wine is slightly sweeter than the food. Often, tropical or dried fruits, for example, add too much sweetness in a food, but apricots, peaches, pears and berries have their sweetness modified by their native acid content making them desirable matches.

Acidic Foods. Wines are acidic, therefore, it can be hard to combine them successfully with some acidic foods. The stronger the acid in the food, the more difficult the pairing. Vegetables such as spinach, asparagus, sorrel and artichokes are rather acidic but can

be modified by adding a source of sweetness or fat, which helps to mute the acidity. This is an example of component contrasting - modifying the acidic nature of the food and contrasting that with the acid of the wine (Figure 1).

An example of structural component similarity would be a high acid food such as a salad with a high acid wine such as a Beaujolais style red wine. Foods with strong flavors including vinegar, raw onions, sauerkraut, pickles, or garlic overwhelm a fine wine's more subtle flavor.

Spicy Foods. Alcohol provides a warm or hot tactile response which magnifies the hotness in spicy foods. When eating spicy foods, it may be better to opt for ice water. If you do have wine, have a low alcohol wine that is simple or non-complex. Some enjoy a simple sparkling wine with mildly spicy foods which, if the hotness is not too extreme, can refresh the palate.

Wines with the following structural characteristics generally increase the odds of successful food and wine combinations: crisp acidity, dry or slightly off dry, low to moderate alcohol and smooth to slightly rough tannins. White wine acidity and red wine tannins are the most important structural features for palate cleansing and food matching. Note that the perception of the structural components in a wine is affected by age. Older wines are generally less acidic (therefore taste sweeter) and have smoother tannins. The following is adopted from Baldy, 1993.

Crisp Acidity. Virginia 96 Chardonnays, for example, have a higher acid than the 97's due to the cool nature of the 96 growing season. Additionally, the perception of acidity is higher in younger 97's. This is important in matching. Foods that are either high in protein, fat or both, match better with wines with a high perceptible acidity. Such foods require more acid in the wine to refresh the palate. Foods which are less rich can be enjoyed with a wine having a lower apparent acidity such as an older wine. Apparent acidity decreases as sweetness increases (Figure 2). Therefore, off-dry (slightly sweet) wines can match up better with foods low in fat.

Dry Wines. Dry wines are the most versatile with foods and are usually better with foods that are not sweet. Sweet foods can make dry wines taste thin, sour, more astringent, and oaky. Foods with some sweetness are best paired with wines of similar sweetness. Sweetness can come from fruits, honey, almonds, and some herbs and matches up better with slightly sweet wines. Also, wines that are slightly sweet may be a good choice to tone down the perception of astringency, bitterness, tartness (from acidic vegetables), and/or saltiness in foods. Extremely sweet dessert style wines are perhaps best matched with less sweet foods that can refresh the palate between sips of wine. Temperature can also be used to enhance food and wine combinations. The colder the wine temperature the lower the perception of sweetness and therefore the greater the perception of acidity (Figure 2).

Moderate Alcohol. Low to moderate levels of alcohol help to cleanse the food palate as do tannins and acids. High alcohol wines can impart a hot tactile response which

makes pairing them with food difficult. This hotness can not only overwhelm and transform flavors, but can reinforce the hotness from peppers and spices. The tactile response from alcohol can be reduced by lowering the serving temperature of wine.

Supple Tannins. Tannins, which are responsible for astringency and bitterness, are derived from the grape, and possibly from barrel fermentation and storage. Tannins are vital to the complexity and longevity of red wines, but constitute a defect if their levels are too high. It used to be common to have extremely astringent tannins in young wines. We have been working extensively in the last several years to produce Virginia red wines which are both complex and supple with smooth tannins upon release; in other words, wines that are good food complements. Other structural components can mitigate or enhance the effect of tannins. For example, residual sugar masks wine tannins, while increased levels of acidity increase the perception of both bitterness and astringency as the palate balance equation would suggest (Figure 2).

Sweetness, fats and proteins in the foods can reduce the perception of tannins. Having a wine with smooth to only slightly rough tannins helps to avoid the potential pitfall when matching foods with acidity, salt and tannins. Remember when selecting red wines that the perception of astringency from tannins decreases with time. The older the wine the smoother the tannins.

Wine Texture

In addition to structural components we can also look at food and wine in terms of textural components (Figure 1). Texture is the quality in food and wine that we feel in the mouth as softness, smoothness, richness, creaminess, chewiness, oiliness, harshness, etc. We generally speak of food or wine structure as being lightweight, medium or heavy. A wine's weight is also known as its body and refers to how heavy the wine feels in the mouth and how long the flavors last. Body increases with increased concentrations of tannin and alcohol. As a gross generalization, red wines have more palate weight or body than whites (Table 2). It is this match between body or weight of the wine and weight or richness of the food that constitutes a large part of the rationale for the familiar rule - red wine with meat and white wine with fish.

Match the palate weight of the wine to the weight of the food. Light bodied wines should be paired with food of delicate texture, while heavy bodied wines are best with chewier, richer foods that have sturdier texture and/or higher fat or oil content. Richer foods include lamb, duck, salmon, cheeses, and foods prepared with butter and creams (Table 2). The strategy of selecting wine of light to medium body reflects the fact that such wines will combine best with the majority of foods. Some features regarding contrasting and comparing texture include:

- Light wine goes well with light food.
- Rich or heavily bodied wines and rich foods can go well, but avoid excessive richness.

- In contrasting rich foods with light wine or the opposite, avoid excessive extremes.
- Temperature is a texture factor (example of contrast - warm food-cold wine).

The sense of body is a function of temperature. The colder the temperature, the lower the body. This can be used to aid your matchings. Cold temperatures tend to mask the sweetness (and therefore increase the sense of acidity - Figure 2) and mute flavors. Cold temperatures magnify the effect of tannins in red wines. The following is the recommended serving temperature range for wines:

- Sparkling wines and sweet wines: 40 - 45°F
- Dry white wines, Roses and Blushes: 50 - 60°F
- Light bodied (low tannin) Red Wines: 50 - 65°F
- Medium to full bodies Red Wines: 65 - 68°F

The alcohol and tannins, two elements found mainly in red wines, can influence food and wine pairing. Alcohol provides a texture sensation - e.g., hotness or warmth. Alcohol also provides component changes - high alcohol wines provide the impression of sweetness. Full bodied wines tend to be high in alcohol, light-bodied wines low in alcohol. When the alcohol content is high it imparts a sweet taste which can match nicely with slightly sweet foods.

Tannins provide a multi-dimensional change. They provide a textural change, an astringent or dry mouth sensation and can also provide a component change, bitterness. Fats and oils in food tend to neutralize the astringency and harshness of red wines, particularly young red wines. Tannic red wines match best with creamy, rich foods.

Some reminders regarding contrasts or similarity of structure and texture components:

- Acid wines and foods can go well - similarity reduces sourness (Ex. Beaujolais style and salad).
- Acid wines can go well with salty foods (Ex. Muscada and oysters).
- High alcohol wines (have a certain sweetness) and salty foods generally taste bitter together (Ex. Alsatian Gew�rztraminer and potato chips).
- Sweet wines and sweet foods can go well together. It is best if wine is slightly sweeter than the food (Ex. demi-sec Champagne and a light fruit tart).
- Bitter food and bitter wines do not cancel out each other. (Ex. the meat and skin of walnuts and overoaked Chardonnay).
- Alcohol and tannin have a powerful influence on food and wine matching. (Ex. Chardonnay from a warm region, in a warm year, may have 14% alcohol (v/v). Avoid matching with salty foods and with light foods - they will be washed out by the richness of the wine).
- High tannin wine matches better with rich, fatty foods. (Ex. young red Virginia Cabernet Sauvignon with prime rib-wine's tannin perception will be reduced by the fat and protein).

Table 2

Wine Body*

	Lighter			Heavier	
White	Riesling	Gew?rztraminer	Chablis		
	Pinot Grigio	Sauvignon Blanc	Viognier		
	Chenin Blanc	Chardonnay-no oak	Chardonay barrel-fermented or aged		
	Sparkling Wines				
Red		Beaujolais style	Mournedre	Merlot	Cabernet
		Sangiovese	Pinot Noir	Cabernet	Sauvignon
				Franc	Syrah
				Bordeaux style	

* This is a relative list which depends upon vintage, region and production style.

Adapted from Baldy, 1993.

Food Body

Light-bodied	Medium-bodied	Full-bodied
sole	*snapper*	*salmon*
flounder	*bass*	*tuna*
clams	*shrimp*	*swordfish*
oysters	*scallops*	*lobster*
	veal paillard	*duck*

Matching Foods with Red Wines

Light-bodied	Medium-bodied	Full-bodied
salmon	*game birds*	*lamb chops*
tuna	*veal chops*	*leg of lamb*
swordfish	*pork chops*	*beefsteak (sirloin)*
duck		*game meats*
roast chicken		

Adapted from the Wine Spectator, 1997.

Flavor. Flavor is the third major component of interest in food and wine matching (Figure 1). All wines share many common flavors: reds, whites and roses can be spicy, buttery, leathery, earthy, floral. However, the apple, pear and citrus flavors in many

whites seldom show up in red wines. The current, cherry, and stone fruit flavors of red wines usually are not present in whites.

Flavors in food and wine pairing also involve contrast and similarity. Avoid generalities, since terms loosely applied do not always fit (such as A spicy ?? for Gew�rztraminer) and may have little to do with food. Flavor contrasting is very personal: for example will fruity and flowery go together? Some foods can only take contrasts (example, there are no fishy wines, garlicky wines, etc.).

Examples of pleasant contrasts of flavor:

- Fishy/herbal - shad with Pouilly-Fum�.
- Smoky/flowery - ham with Virginia Riesling.
- Cheesey/cherry - parmesan-reggiano with light Chambourcin.
- Meaty/earthy - prime rib with aged Pinot noir, Mourvedre.
- Fruity/honeyed - strawberries with late harvest Vidal.
- Example of flavor similarity:
- Zinfandel/Duck in raspberry sauce - raspberry and raspberry.
- Fino sherry and almonds - nutty and nutty.
- Blanc de Noirs Sparkling wine and strawberries - strawberry and strawberry.

To enhance your chances of success, select a wine with flavors which are not too assertive. This strategy helps to avoid flavor clashes. Even with a relatively neutral wine, however, you still need to consider whether the overall strength of the wine's flavor matches that of the food and/or seasoning. The intensity of a wine's flavor depends upon the grape or grapes used, the region and certainly the age of the wine. Younger wines are usually coarser in structure and stronger in flavor and combine well with more strongly flavored foods. Older wines are more delicate in structure and flavor and are best served with milder flavored foods.

In similar flavor matching, the flavor in the food frequently tends to mute the same flavor in the wine. This principle can be used to help customize a match-up. A Cabernet Sauvignon with slightly too much olive flavor may be improved by a few sliced olives in the sauce or by using a sauce with olive oil rather than butter. The key to making a food and wine flavor bridge is to identify the dominant flavor in the food. The dominant flavor is not necessarily the main ingredient. For example, a menu title with the word 'with' often depicts the flavor(s). Flavor synergism is when the wine and food can combine to create a totally different effect from that noted individually, usually by creating a third flavor. For example:

- Port and Roquefort together create a butterscotch or vanilla impression.
- Tannic and low fruity red with oily fish creates a third, unpleasant flavor.

Additional examples of pleasant flavor similarity and contrast, in part, adapted from Keehn, 1988:

- Chardonnay and mustard - contrast - apple flavors in the wine work against the distinctive flavors of the mustard.
- Sauvignon Blanc and goat cheese - contrast - herbal-vegetable flavors in the wine against earthy flavors of the cheese.
- Champagne (brut) and blue cheese - similarity - earthy flavors in the wine with the earthiness and gaminess of the cheese.
- White Rhone and nutmeg - similarity - spicy flavors of the wine against the aromatic spices. Custard-based first course such as poultry or vegetable mousse which are often flavored with nutmeg.
- Red Rhone and beef - contrast and similarity - Black pepper flavor in the wine complements the meaty flavors and complements any peppery seasoning.
- Cabernet Sauvignon and lamb - contrast - currant, berry and herbal flavors of the wine against the gaminess of the meat.
- Pinot Noir and mushrooms - similarity and contrast - earthy flavors of the mushroom can complement berrylike flavors in the wine or echo earthy flavors in an older, wine.
- Riesling and almonds - similarity - slight, nutty flavor in the wine balances almond flavor, emphasizing wine's fruit. Ex. Trout almandine (for drier wines), almond tart (for sweet dessert wines).
- Sauternes and caramel - contrast - honey flavor in wine becomes more complex with caramel overtones. Ex. Baked apples, caramelized fruit.
- Cream Sherry and mocha - similarity - coffee-like flavors in the wine against coffee - chocolate flavors of mocha. Ex. Mocha mousse, mocha souffle.

Examples of flavor contrasts for different wine varietals are:

- Chardonnay: Orange, Tarragon, Pistachios
- Sauvignon Blanc: Red Bell Pepper, Marjoram, Mustard
- Dry Riesling: Capers, Dill, Almonds
- Grenache: Curry, Orange, Mint, Cinnamon
- Cabernet: Nutmeg, Thyme, Wild Rice, Pecans
- Syrah: Rosemary, Cinnamon, Tomatoes

Exercise 4 (adapted from Howie, 1998) involves a comparison of fine wines with the following foods: apple slices, jack cheese, Italian prosciutto, a thin slice of medium rare roast beef, a wedge of triple-cream cheese, a slice of lemon and a cookie. The apple provides both sugar and acidity, the lemon pure acidity. The dry cheese is high in fat and salt while the cream cheese is mainly fat. The prosciutto provides salt and protein fat, the beef mainly fat and protein and the cookie a source of sweetness. The wines we use in the exercises are from various Virginia regions and include Riesling, Sauvignon blanc, Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon.

- The Riesling is tasted first and the wine structure, textural and flavor components are noted. The Riesling is tasted again followed by the apple. The apple conceals the fruit in the wine leaving a perception of sugar and acid only.

- The lemon is tasted next, followed by a sip of Riesling. The strong acid of the lemon depresses the sense of acidity in the wine making it appear flat and lifeless.
- The next pairing is with the jack cheese. The high fat and salt completely overwhelm the light Riesling making it seem muted in flavor and character. A preferred suggested match with a high fat-salty food would be a sparkling wine (CO_2 helps clean the palate and adds to the sense of acidity) which has more body and flavor consistency.
- The Sauvignon Blanc is then tasted and the structure, texture, and flavor noted. With the Sauvignon blanc, the apple makes the wine seem less fruity.
- The Chardonney is renewed next. The Chardonnay fruit character is also muted by the apple so that more oak and acid are perceived. It may be a better choice to pair a fruitier wine such as a Virginia Gew�rztramine or perhaps a Viognier if you are having fish with a fruit sauce.
- Pairing the Chardonnay with the cream cheese is an example of the importance of matching the weight (body) of the wine with the weight (texture) of the food. In an extreme mismatch where the food is rich and the wine less so, the wine character will seem too pale.
- With the prosciutto, the high salt content destroys most dry white wines. A slight degree of salt can be offset by some residual sweetness in the wine.
- The structure, texture, and flavor of the Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon are noted.

With the rare beef more acid and particularly tannins are needed in the wine to balance the fat in the food. Both the Cabernet Franc and the Cabernet Sauvignon match adequately, although most would prefer the Cabernet Sauvignon. The Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon are each tasted with the apple. Both the fruit and the wine are less interesting when tasted together. The apple with either the Cabernet Franc or Cabernet Sauvignon makes the tannins seem more evident as a result of the sugar content of the fruit. The jack cheese is hard on the Cabernet Franc with the tannins muted by the fat and the salts helping to magnify the tannins. The result is that the wine tastes much thinner.The following are some suggestions adapted from McDowell Valley Foods - K. Keehn:

1. The more delicate the wine flavors, the more delicate the seasoning. For example, use a delicate White Zinfandel with the more subtle flavors of dill, chervil or parsley.
2. The stronger the wine flavors, the stronger the herb, spice or flavoring. For example, a rich Chardonnay with sage or clove; a Syrah with rosemary or caraway.
3. Some wines have an inherent spiciness and can be combined with seasonings having spicy or hot properties. For example, a spicy Fum�Blanc with mustard or curry; Zinfandel, or Syrah with peppers or allspice.
4. If a wine is made in a sweeter style, it usually complements seasonings that are sweet, tart or salty. For example, a slightly sweet Riesling with the sweet licorice flavor of tarragon; a sweet White Zinfandel with tart serviche; a slightly sweet Rose of Grenache with salty ham or prosciutto.

5. Excessive use of strong seasonings can overpower the taste and pleasure of wine. These strong seasonings include salt, garlic, vinegar, ginger, sugar, hot peppers and cilantro. We are not suggesting they be avoided altogether, just use with some restraint or combine with milder ingredients, dairy products, or oils to diminish their impact.
6. Many vegetables have acids that compete with the pleasures of wine; in particular, artichokes, asparagus, spinach and sorrel. We suggest diminishing the competitive effect of their oxalic and fumaric acids by using sweet spices or sauces containing oils, cheese, cream, mayonnaise or other dairy products.
7. Use the beverage wine as a seasoning ingredient in sauces, etc. It really doesn't take much wine and it reinforces the same flavors in the food that are in the wine. If this sounds too inconvenient or expensive, use a wine of similar flavor, structure or style. Its flavors are at their best when added ten minutes or so prior to serving so as not to distort the original flavor components.
8. Serve more simply prepared foods with restrained seasoning when serving older wine vintages because the subtle, complex flavors so valued in older wines can be destroyed by strong food flavors or seasonings.
9. Try pairing a wine with an herb and a hot spice; the combination can often enhance the wine's flavors more than if only one of the seasonings is used. For example, squash with sage and cracked pepper for Chardonnay; meats with mint and green pepper for Cabernet Sauvignon.
10. Most importantly, the quality of the result is directly proportional to the quality of the food, seasoning and wine selected.

The following suggestions are adapted from Rosengarten and Wesson, 1989.

<u>Red or white wine with fish:</u>

1. If red choose a young, fruity red
2. Use high acid red or white wine
3. Avoid oaky whites and tannic reds
4. Avoid red wines with oily fish

<u>Red or white wine with meat:</u>

1. White meats in cream sauces are usually best with white wines.
2. White meats with browned treatments are good with red wines.
3. Red meats grilled or broiled work well with red wines.
4. Red meats cooked rare, but with certain spices or techniques (e.g., deep frying) can go with white wines.
5. Red meats cooked for a long time, like stews, go well with red or white wines.

<u>Salad and wine</u>

1. Use high acid wine.
2. If something sweet is in the salad, use a wine with some sweetness.

3. Light wines are best, complex subtle wines do not go well.

Chocolate and wine

1. Serve a sweet wine with chocolate desserts.
2. Avoid complex, aged, sweet wines.
3. Alcohol in a wine helps to provide sweetness, use fortified wines like Ports and Madeiras.
4. Have something acidic in the chocolate such as fresh berries or other acidic fruit.

Steak with Cabernet

1. For simple steak preparations, most Cabernets including elegant Bordeauxs will match well.
2. For steak preparations involving additional strong flavors, richer Cabernets are preferable.

Red wine with cheese

1. Firm, dry cheeses go best with reds.
2. Soft, fatty or creamy cheeses make most red wines taste dull.
3. Strong, smelly cheeses overwhelm red wines.
4. Salty, particularly blue vein type cheeses, overwhelm red wines.
5. Best match-up - dry, mild cheeses and rich, fruity, young reds.

Whites before Reds?

1. Choice has little to do with color.
2. If white is light and red heavy, red will show better served second - opposite is also true. If white is complex, red light, serve red first.
3. Most roses are light, therefore, usually best served first.

Drys before sweets?

1. Order of dry wine then sweet wine usually works the best.
2. If a dry wine is served after a sweet wine, make sure it's not extremely dry, tart and thin.

Successful keys to food and wine matching

1. Drink wines that you enjoy.
2. Match the weight of the wine with the richness and intensity of the food. The wine should be at least as full bodied as the food it accompanies.

An understanding of the characteristics of foods and wines and how they interact can greatly enhance the pleasures of find dining. Always remember the one essential rule -

have what you enjoy. Successful food and wine pairing is highly subjective and individualistic, more like an experimental art form than a science.

REFERENCES

Baldy, M. 1993. The University Wine Course. The Wine Appreciation Guild. 426 pp.

Goldstein, S. 1991. Ketzers TFT approach. Practical Winery and Vineyard. Sept/Oct p. 3.

Howie, M. 1998. Elements of taste. Practical Winery and Vineyard. May/June p. 72-74.

Keeln, K. 1998. Matching seasonings and wines. Practical Winery and Vineyard. p. 41-43.

Rosengarten, D. and J. Wesson. 1989. Red Wine with fish. The art of marching wine with food. Simon and Schuster, New York, N. Y. pp. 298.

Wine Spectator. 1997. Light wines, delicate dishes, richer whites medium weight dishes, light reds richer dishes, rich reds heavy weight dishes. April 30. p. 46-53.