

Wine Advice: Perfect Harmony



The food is fabulous, the wine divine, together you can create perfect harmony.

An individual who appreciates wine usually always enjoys eating well. Together wine and food bring out the best in each other elevating a meal.

Ben from Benny's Restaurant in Brandon created a menu featuring the local favorites Black and Blue Salad, Classic Carbonara Pasta, and Vanilla Crème Brûlée. Sounds delicious! How do you improve this menu? Just add wine.

Pair each dish with wine and in thoughtfully and consciously doing so, compliment and enhance the flavours of each dish. The goal of food and wine pairing is to make both the food and wine taste better together than they would apart.

Consider the ingredients in a dish and determine which flavours or components to compliment or contrast. Which flavours and textures play a minor versus major

role? Consider preparation and cooking method and the effect it has on the ingredients flavour profile.

A further consideration is the order each wine is served. Although this does not dictate wine selection it is something to consider as wine is affected by the flavour profile of the food and wine that precedes it.

The black and blue salad features top sirloin, mixed greens, blue cheese, cucumbers tomatoes and roasted artichoke hearts with a Dijon vinaigrette. A flavourful textured dish served at room temperature. The savory flavours of the steak, blue cheese, tomatoes, roasted artichoke and vinaigrette are complimented by red wines such as a Reserva or Gran Reserva Rioja from Spain, made from the tempranillo grape. With balanced fruit, natural acidity and structure, subtle aged flavour, Reserva and Gran Reserva Rioja wines have the right amount of backbone to compliment the various flavours and textures in this dish. Although famous for its wine Rioja is also known for artichokes. Proving once again, the tried-and- true wine pairing advice of if it grows together, it goes together.



Carbonara pasta is created from a combination of penne noodles, back bacon, portabella mushroom and asiago cheese, coated in a rich smooth garlic sauce. Creamy in texture with subtle earthy mushroom, bacon, and garlic flavours. Carbonara originated in Italy so consider what wines this dish would be paired with if consumed where the dish was created. Red wine made from the sangiovese grape would often be the wine of choice. A Chianti Classico has the acidity needed to cut through the richness of this dish while the herbal, earthy, red berry flavours compliment the saltiness of the bacon and earthy mushroom flavour.

To complete the meal Ben chose Vanilla Crème Brulé, a personal favorite, with rich vanilla custard and a crunchy chewy caramelized sugar topping. Desserts often pair best with sweet dessert style wines. Here I chose Tawny Port known for its decadent flavours of vanilla, date, raisin, fig, and brown sugar. Consider how the Tawny Ports flavours both mirror and compliment the flavours of Crème Brulé.

The rule of thumb for pairing wine with dessert is to select a wine that is as sweet or sweeter than the dessert. Food and wine pairing can be as simple or complex as you choose to make it. The most important tip to remember is to experiment, have fun and enjoy!

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