



Wine Wisdom from Feast & Vine

Feast & Vine founder, Donna McCormack, is delighted to share insights and recipes from her personal wine and food pairing files compiled from around the globe. Donna's resume includes extensive study at the Culinary Institute of America, plus hundreds of food and wine classes in Asia, Europe, and North America. Please visit our website feastandvine.com for more ideas and our program of events.

The YUM Factor

What are the secrets to great wine and food partnerships? Since Feast & Vine strives to promote successful wine and food pairings in a fun and creative way, let's explore what I call "the YUM factor."

Wine & Food Pairing - Rule #1: Blend / Contrast?

First things first. When planning your menu, it's important to decide: Do you want your food and wine flavours and textures to merge together or compliment one another?

A color analogy is useful here. When choosing paint for your home's interior, do you prefer colors that harmonize seamlessly ... or the dramatic impact of contrasting colors in artful juxtaposition? When it comes to wine and food pairing, as with color, this basic decision is your starting point.

Blend

- **Pinot Noir + Mushroom Gratin**

Both elements are characteristically earthy with silken textures.

- **Chardonnay + Apple Stuffed Pork Loin**

Subtle flavors of apple suffuse both the rich wine and food.

Contrast

- **Zinfandel + Prosciutto:** Fruity wine character contrasts with salty concentrated meat flavors.

- **Sauvignon Blanc + Scallops in Garlic Butter:** Crisp acidity of lean wine complements the inherent sweetness/richness of scallops.

To blend ... or contrast? Proponents on either side make a good case for their favourite pairing strategy. As for me, I'll continue to set aside philosophical prejudices, raise my glass, and propose a toast: Here's hoping that your next wine & food pairing may be more delicious than your last!



DONNA'S RECIPE FILE

Here's a refreshing frozen ice to serve between meals or courses as a palate pleaser. It's also delicious as a light dessert with cheese. Many fruits make lovely granitas but, with its ruby red color, my wine country version is a real crowd pleaser!

Wine & Grape Ice Granita (similar to sorbet but made without milk or creme)

- 1/2 kg seedless red grapes (equivalent to about 450 g or 1lb)
- 1/4 cup superfine sugar
- 1/4 cup cold water
- 1/2 - 2/3 cup white wine

Puree all ingredients - except wine - in a blender. Pour mixture into a rectangular cake pan and freeze for 2 hours, or until slushy. Add wine to the mixture, stir slightly, then return to freezer for 6 hours or overnight. To serve, scrape the ice crystals into a wine or martini glass and serve immediately.

Tips: Never use more than 1 part sugar for every 4 parts of liquid - too much sugar prevents freezing. Because alcohol also prevents freezing, it's important to wait for 2 hours before adding the wine. Important - Your granita will not freeze properly if you use more than 2/3 cup wine in this recipe!



To Oak or Not to Oak?

Sauvignon blancs, as well as chardonnays, from Australia and New Zealand have a knack for pure expression. Wonder of wonders, they actually taste like the original fresh off the vine character of the grape variety they're made from. Instead of smelling and tasting like oak barrels, Australian and New Zealand wines are remarkably crisp, fruitful, and loaded with characteristic "zing"! Unoaked wines taste distinctly different from most other New World wines which have historically relied on a lot of exposure to oak to give them their classic oaky/toasty flavour.



Experience the taste. Savour the sip. Celebrate.

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