

{ pairings }

Three Dishes with Many More Wines

A LOOK AT TRADITIONAL DISHES FROM UNUSUAL PLACES AND THE WINES THAT **DO THEM JUSTICE**

by Liza B. Zimmerman, D.W.S.

PHOTO: KRYSZTOF KACZKA, COURTESY OF LA MAR



For the ceviche classico at La Mar in San Francisco, Manager Oscar Davila suggests highly acidic wines such as the Rías Baixas Albariño from Do Ferreiro.

THERE IS ALWAYS A WINE THAT IS GOING TO MAKE A dish sing. And it does not always follow the rule of “What grows together goes together.”

Here are three of my favorite cuisines and a handful of wines that work with them. Italy is my adoptive home and I have always loved the food of Friuli because of its crazy-quilt of Austro-Hungarian influences. Days in Peru are usually passed enjoying Pisco Sours with ceviche, but there are wines that do it justice. Innovative French seafood dishes can be a challenge to pair with wine when the fish is raw, but New York’s Le Bernardin was ready with a few solutions.

Alps Italian

At Frasca Food and Wine in Boulder, Colorado, blecs—a traditional homemade buckwheat pasta—are made with mountains of wild mushrooms. It is an elegant dish that, according to Sommelier Bobby Stuckey, MS, works well with the Borgo del Tiglio 2010 Collio Ronco della Chiesa from Nicola Manfredari. The wine, which is made from 100 percent Friulano grapes, has a powerful and highly acidic style. He adds that wines from the Collio region of Friuli are naturally high in richness without being out of balance and look to Austria for style and inspiration.

His second pairing with the blecs would be the Edi Keber 2012 Collio Bianco, a typical blend of Friulano, Ribolla and Malvasia grapes. The wine has a bitter almond note that is typical for grapes from the region and is produced from old vines on white marl.

His third pick for the blecs is the Moric 2010 Blaufränkisch from Austria. The generally cool-climate varietal drinks like a Burgundy according to Stuckey. It is bright, fruit-forward and aromatic and gives the blecs a little zing and lift.





Traditional buckwheat pasta blecs are matched with wines from Collio at Frasca Food and Wine in Boulder, CO.



A trio of selections from Spain and Argentina complement La Mar's ceviche.

Peruvian Style

La Mar has raised the bar on Peruvian cuisine around the world. At the restaurant's San Francisco location, Manager Oscar Davila recommends paring the ceviche classico, a mix of fish and shellfish in a citrus-based aromatic marinade, with highly acidic wines. His first choice would be a Do Ferreiro 2012 Rías Baixas Albariño because it has bold citrus, salinity and minerality on the palate. "The pink grapefruit and lime notes match the creaminess of the halibut," he says.

His second choice would be the Argentine Siete Fincas 2012 Torrontés. The wine is more full-bodied on the palate with floral tones and notes of nectarines and apricots. The finish is longer, softer and more neutral than that of the Albariño.

His last wildcard combination with the classic ceviche dish would be a Patagonian Pinot Noir, from the Argentine side of the region. The Bodegas Chacra 2012 Barda Pinot Noir, according to Davila, is bright, light and complex with an acid structure similar to some New Zealand Pinot Noirs. Its light tannins, according to Davila, balance out the acidity from the ceviche and bring out its zing factor.

Not So Classic French Pairings

Sommelier Aldo Sohm says he seeks out wines with clean fruit to pair with the restaurant's signature dish of pounded tuna with foie gras. The Romain-Papilloud 2012 Amigne de Vétroz is a white indigenous Swiss varietal that has an aroma of orange peel that is reminiscent of a Gewürztraminer without being heavy or chunky. "The wine is aromatic so it gives you that hint of sweetness that connects the aromatics to the foie gras."

His second choice is the 2012 Fass 6 "Senior" Ayler Kupp Riesling, produced in the Saar region of Germany by Peter Lauer. The region is cool, according to Sohm, so the fruit is very clean and the wine has a high mineral component. The Riesling's high acid level makes it seem drier than it is and yet allows a little fruit to come forward and connect with the foie gras. He adds that the aromatic notes of stone fruit and pineapple help the wine interface with the lemon juice in the dish.

The last wine would be a Chasselas from Oregon, the Teutonic Wine Company 2012 Chasselas made in the Willamette Valley. The Swiss grape variety used in this wine is aromatic, clean and fruity with a couple of grams of residual sugar in it. These six grams of sugar, buffer up the notes of lemon juice and unify the dish. SJ

Liza Zimmerman has been writing and consulting about wine and food for two decades. She has worked for magazines such as Wine Enthusiast, La Cucina Italiana, Where SF and The Examiner. She focuses on demystifying wine and transforming it into a tool for networking, with a focus on Silicon Valley companies such as Genentech, Roche and IBM. She has visited all the major wine regions and holds the Diploma of Wine & Spirits (D.W.S.), the three-year precursor to the Master of Wine.

The pounded tuna at Le Bernardin in Manhattan.

