

Food and Wine matching - Memories of Mijanou

When Sonia and I had our restaurant, Mijanou, in the 1980s and 1990s, I listed my wines by style. This was divided into 18 sections thus:

1. Bubbly

e.g – any wine with bubbles!

2. Light, dry white wines

e.g. Petit Chablis – Domaine du Chardonnay

3. Dry and pungent white wines

e.g. Marsanne – Cline Cellars, Sonoma

4. Off dry to medium white wines

e.g. Malvasia Adriana Vallania – Vigneto delle Terre Rosse – Bologna

5. Fruity, Fragrant and Aromatic white wines

e.g. Blockhedia Ringnosii Sauvignon Blanc – Napa Valley

6. Fruity or Spicy Full Bodied Wines

e.g. Gewürztraminer Grand Cru Steinert – Domaine Rieflé, Alsace

7. Fine Rich Dry to Medium Dry White Wines

e.g. Pouilly Fuissé Vieilles Vignes – Domaine des Gerbeaux, Solutré, Burgundy

8. Full-bodied Dry to Medium Dry White Wines

e.g. Kistler Chardonnay “Les Noisetières” – Sonoma Valley

9. Sweet White Wines

e.g. Eschendorfer Lump Riesling Auslese – Horst Sauer, Franken

10. Light, Dry Red Wines

e.g. Sancerre Rouge – Domaine Pierre Morin, Loire

11. Light, Fruity Red Wines

e.g. Hyland Shiraz – Penley Estate, Coonawarra

12. Medium-Bodied Dry Red Wines

e.g. Clos du Jauguyreon Haut-Médoc, Bordeaux

13. Medium-Bodied Fruity Red Wines

e.g. Le Mistral – Joseph Phelps Vineyards, Napa Valley

14. Big Scale dry Red Wines

e.g. Barolo “La Serra” – Roberto Voerzio, Piedmont

15. Big Scale Fruity Red Wines

e.g. Hillside Select Cabernet Sauvignon – Shafer Vineyards, Napa

16. Smooth and Mature Wines

e.g. any Bordeaux wine more than 15 years old

17. Sweet Red and Rosé Wines

e.g. Brachetto Passito – Contero, Piedmont

18. Dry Rosé Wines

e.g. Sangiovese Rosato – Castello di Ama, Tuscany

What we are going to do in this series, is to re-create some of Sonia’s **iconic dishes** of that era and I will discuss what kind of wines would be suitable with these dishes to create a memorable experience of food and wine matching.

Food and wine matching is not a science and there are not really any hard and fast rules for matching food and wine. Therefore there is plenty of scope for matching food and wine without being too narrow minded or pedantic about it. I had what I called a “Winematch” on the menu which pointed out which section wines would go with a particular dish. So for instance, we had a starter “sushi” of smoked salmon and oysters, marinated in Guinness with horseradish and ginger. The “Winematch” for this dish were sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6. These are all white wines but section 5 deemed unsuitable because the marinade would be too strong for fragrant and aromatic wines. Similarly sections 7 & 8 would be too rich and full bodied for the dish.

It’s not rocket science but it did allow the customer to concentrate on fewer sections to narrow down the choice. Some dishes will be compatible with many sections and some with few, or even only one. The ultimate joy was for the customer to find the section that goes with ALL the dishes that the party has chosen.

To help you to experiment with this, Sonia has written out the **recipe** for this dish and I will suggest a few wines from producers in Wine behind the label. Do make it, taste it and then choose your wines to go with this dish. Let us know how you got on – your feedback is invaluable.