



WINNING WINE AND FOOD PAIRINGS

Marrying diverse flavours on the menu with vast choice on the wine list is an art and a science. Susan Reynard chats to the experts.

Food and wine pairings extend the pleasure of the dining experience. Fine-dining restaurants have sommeliers on hand, and restaurants passionate about wine but who do not have sommeliers often provide tasting notes on the winelist and waiters trained in wine pairing. There are also various wine pairing apps (such as Vivino, Wine23, wine.co.za) giving guests a virtual sommelier on their mobile phone.

Haute Cabrière

Nic van Wyk, Chef at Haute Cabrière wine estate in Franschhoek says, "We are lucky

on the farm to have our own wine to work with and do most of our food and wine pairing with the Haute Cabrière and Pierre Jordan wines. Two dishes on our current menu which are really stand-out food and wine matches are:

- Ash-rolled goats' cheese with horseradish, pickled beetroot, and the slightly toasted seeds: Paired with 2018 Haute Cabrière Pinot Noir Unwooded, a great summer combination. The chilled Pinot Noir works so well with the earthy beetroot and the slight sweetness from the horseradish brings it all together.
- Chicken liver parfait with toasted brioche and saffron pear chutney: Paired with, depending on your mood, the Pierre Jourdan Brut MCC or the Ratafia, a fortified sweet wine. This is a beautiful, light but elegant summer dish with two great, versatile wines to match."

Nic says that while they don't have a sommelier at Haute Cabrière, they do have Cellar Master, Winemaker, Head Chef Takuan von Arnim and winemaker Tim Hoek on hand, both of whom love food and wine and work closely with Nic and head chef Westley Muller.



CHEF NIC VAN WYK AND HEAD CHEF WESTLEY MULLER OF HAUTE CABIÈRE WINE ESTATE

“As chefs, I feel we first design a dish and then look for similar characteristics in the wine. It is also important to understand that a good food and wine match is something where the food and wine can stand on their own and, together, do not conflict or negatively affect each other. It is rather rare to find a match that is made in heaven, where the two elements lift each other up and create a new taste sensation altogether,” Nic maintains.

“As far as getting wine into restaurants and ensuring they are understood, this comes with good relationships with restaurant owners or decision-makers, and our sales team as well our cellar master, who is very hands-on, share our wine passion. We also believe in waiter training, and work closely with our distributor to ensure we do this for any restaurant that stocks our wine,” he adds.

BOCCA

BOCCA restaurant in Cape Town has new owners, Guido and Adhana Brambilla, and has undergone a revamp of menu and décor. Guido says, “When it comes to selecting

the references for the winelist, at BOCCA the seasonal factor plays a major role. The menu includes many preparations which are low in saturated fat, and are fresh and suitable for the summer months. Because of this, it is important to suggest grape varietals like Pinot Noir or Cinsault for reds, and Chenin or Sauvignon Blanc for whites. In particular, newer products and hidden gems like Gamay Noir represent a very good option when consumed chilled during a summer lunch or afternoon *merenda* (Italian for “snack”). Apart from wine

BOCCA’S MISTO © HEIN VAN TONDER



estates’ agents, the game changer for us is the personal relationship with smaller distributors, who can really recommend unusual, peculiar wines which add a novelty element.”

Restaurant Mosaic

The team at Restaurant Mosaic at The Orient, outside of Pretoria, headed up by Chef Patron Chantel Dartnall and Co-Owner Marie Dartnall, has won numerous prestigious awards in South Africa and around the world for its exceptional food, wine and accommodation offering. Its famous wine cellar stocks more than 75 000 bottles of wine under 6 000 different local and international labels. Sommelier Moses Magwaza won the Eat Out 2018 Award for Best Wine Service, an award the establishment also won in 2017, and they won the US-based 2018 Wine Spectator Grand Award for the winelist.

DINER’S CLUB WINELIST AWARDS 2018

The Diner’s Club Winelist Awards 2018 were announced in September in the Diamond (41), Platinum (157), Gold (43) and Silver (one) categories, plus a new category, the ICON Award (two), made to Diamond winelists that carry an extensive international selection, excellent wines in multiple categories, impressive reserve or vintage selection, deep interest in wine curation, and a sommelier on the floor by default. Winners of the inaugural ICON Award are Restaurant Mosaic in Pretoria and The Saxon Hotel Villas & Spa in Johannesburg. Awards for Best Diamond went to Epicure Restaurant in Johannesburg, Best Gold to Rissington Inn in Hazyview and Best Platinum to Mink & Trout in Cape Town.

For a full list of awards recipients go to www.dinersclub.co.za. >



2018 DINERS CLUB ICON AWARD:
RESTAURANT MOSAIC

The perfect food and wine match is the goal at Restaurant Mosaic with its degustation menu. Every component in Chantel's dishes is taken into consideration when choosing a wine. "We strive to take our patrons on a journey of food and wine that is memorable and enjoyable. We take time to ensure that we find the 'perfect pairing' with each and every dish on our menu and set aside every Tuesday as our experimental cooking and tasting days, where we deconstruct each dish on the menu and taste each component with a selection of different wines to find the wine that best compliments all the components of the dish." The Connoisseur's Wine Pairing focuses mostly on specially imported international wines and the Enthusiast Wine Pairing focuses on selected local wines.

Moses shares, "You must take the food first and work out its profile – is it sweet, acidic or salty? Then find a wine that balances the



food. For example, curries don't go with dry wines, you have to look for something sweeter. Don't be varietal specific when it comes to wine – you need to explore. People often say that they don't like chardonnays but perhaps they just have not tasted the right one."

Education and experience are key for the Restaurant Mosaic team. In June 2018, the entire team – including Chantel, Moses and Sommeliers Taryn Nortje and Eric Welile Botha – toured France to visit some of the country's finest estates to expand their knowledge. Focusing on the Champagne region, they brought back some of the rarest champagnes from Krug, Salon, Egly-Ouriet and Diebolt-Vallois, among others.

Chantel says, "After tasting the Domaine Henry Bourgeois

Jardis Sauvignon Blanc 2010 from Sancerre we started to experiment with St Nectaire cheese and came up with a creamy risotto drizzled with a light honey and orange glaze which we called Honeycomb."

Van der Linde

Van der Linde, a new restaurant in Linden, Johannesburg headed up by Chef Amori Burger, says, "The menu is simple yet well executed. We have some daring and interesting flavours and then we have classics with a twist. We want to give diners an all-round great experience, and that includes the wine, rather than just serving a plate of food." She adds, "We are proud of our offerings by the glass as well as our wine menu which features some lesser known wines. We recommend certain wine styles that match

some of our dishes, for example the Fable Mountain Jackal Bird white blend with our chicken scaloppini." The restaurant also hosts monthly wine and food pairing dinners.

Gåte at Quoin Rock

Executive Chef Rikku Ò'Donnchú heads up new Gåte, the 50-seater fine-dining restaurant on Quoin Rock wine estate outside Stellenbosch. Gåte is the Norwegian word for "riddle". "I don't want this to be just a meal. It should be a complete experience for all of your senses," says Rikku, who promises everything from hands-on dining and tableside preparation to interactive experiences. A drinks pairing with each course, using both estate wines and Rikku's own creations, is also offered. "I'm excited about our Quoin Rock range of wine this summer. The white

blend is so crispy and refreshing, the Black series MCC is an amazing compliment to any seafood dish - especially oysters. Our own wines lead the way and I design courses based on the particular flavours of the wine each season," he adds.

Majeka House

Executive Chef Lucas Carstens and Restaurant Manager Brenda Karambe from Majeka House, a five-star boutique hotel in Stellenbosch, share their thoughts on food and wine pairing: "People always think red wine must be consumed at room temperature but we have come across some beautiful red wines that can be chilled down in an ice bucket and consumed cold, such as Radford Dale The Antidote Gamay Noir and Moveable Feast Estate Blend by The Drift wine estate, a unique

blend and a truly summer wine."

"Food and wine pairing is always an exciting moment in the chef and sommelier's life. The chef does his magic with the food and then the battle lies with the sommelier to find a suitable wine that will complement the dish without overpowering the flavours. There are times when a sommelier will plead with the chef to change one component of the dish, especially horse radish or celeriac, as these elements bring out the tannin in wines."

"We work with the most amazing wine consultants, agents and wine farmers. They update us on new vintages and new and exciting wines being released throughout the year. As this is a small boutique hotel, we look at small boutique wineries to showcase those unique and well-made wines." 🍷