

PAIR UP

with Maria Terry



February 2011 – Chocolate and Wine Controversy

Every Valentine's Day folks ask me if wine and chocolate go together. In my opinion, chocolate is just too sweet for dry wine. But test this yourself; set up an experiment and ask the question, "Does the wine really taste better after eating the chocolate?"

Saving the chocolate for last, here is a menu for a complete Valentine's Day celebration. Start with a creamy yet tart Marinated Artichoke Dip. To pair, splurge on a Meursault from the Burgundy region of France. Meursault is buttery with toasty oak and will go well with the rich dip. Additionally, like most French wines, it has medium plus acidity to stand up to the marinated artichoke. Meursault is made from 100% chardonnay grapes so if you would prefer a local wine, choose a California chardonnay with plenty of acidity.

You can follow-up the white wine starter with a classic red wine entree, prime rib. Many butcher shops like Kinder's Meats offer pre-seasoned, bone-in and boneless roasts cut to serve just the right number. They will even give you cooking instructions. Accompany the meat with Sautéed Green Beans and Potatoes. You will have both starch and vegetable represented and add red, white and green to the plate. A red wine blend from Bordeaux, France will slice through fat of the meat and the tannins in the wine will be tamed by the salt of the dish. If Bordeaux is not available any Cabernet-based wine will be delicious.

Finally, we have reached the chocolate course. Scharffenberger makes chocolate tasting squares perfect for your experiment. Choose one milk, one semi-sweet and one dark chocolate selection. Taste each

chocolate first and then have a sip of wine. Does the dry red wine that you had at dinner taste better with the chocolate or was it better with the meat? Now try the chocolate with a port or late-harvest red wine. Again, is the wine better or worse after the chocolate? When you have reached your conclusion, send me an email and tell me which pairing you liked best. I would love to hear from you (maria_terry@comcast.net).

So, go on. Pair Up!

Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in the San Francisco Bay Area. www.LaSommeliere.com

Marinated Artichoke Dip

INGREDIENTS

½ c. French bread crumbs
1 tbsp. butter, melted
2 (6 ½ oz.) jars marinated artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
6 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 c. freshly shredded Parmesan cheese
¼ c. mayonnaise
2 large garlic cloves, pressed
2 tbsp. lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

Mix together bread crumbs and butter for the topping. Combine remaining ingredients. Spoon into a lightly greased baking dish. Sprinkle with bread crumbs. Bake uncovered, at 375°F for 25 minutes. Serve with crackers or bread.

Yield: 2 cups

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Sautéed Green Beans and Potatoes

INGREDIENTS

½ cup onion, ½” dice

½ tsp. olive oil

1 tsp butter

1 cup white rose potatoes, cooked to tender

1 cup fresh green beans, cut into 2 “pieces,
cooked to your liking

1 Roma tomato, ½” dice

1 tsp. fresh parsley, chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

Paprika to garnish

DIRECTIONS

In a pan large enough to hold all ingredients, sauté onion in olive oil. Add butter to pan and melt. Add cooked potatoes and beans to pan and coat with onion mixture. When all vegetables are heated through, gently incorporate tomato and parsley. Season to taste and garnish with paprika.

Yield: 2 one-cup servings