

# Wine Wisdom from Feast & Vine

This monthly column of wine and food tips comes to you from Wellington's premier wine event company. Feast & Vine's fun "class by the glass" wine events unveil the secrets of wine appreciation and food-wine pairing as you sip New Zealand's finest vintages.

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](http://feastandvine.com) for more ideas and our program of events.

## Reds for the Summer Season!

Now that barbie time is almost here, it seems especially appropriate to explore red wines since they make such great matches with almost all grilled foods. Here are some helpful red wine tips and food match ideas for the season. I hope you feel inspired to match a few reds with your summer grilled foods! Cheers!

### Red Wine Questions:

#### Q: Why are red wines red?

**A:** During the process of fermentation when yeasts consume grape sugars and create alcohol, heat is generated. In the emerging wine process both the alcohol and the heat act as solvents, leeching the colour pigments out of the red grape skins. Therefore, red wine colours come from the process of fermentation as well as from the colour of the grape skins.

#### Q: How can the same red wine be both drinkable now as well as ten years from now?

**A:** Powerful full-bodied red wines, such as Cabernet Sauvignon, from warm climates especially, have this ability. The grapes get lusciously full of sugar, resulting in a ripe fruity wine ready to be drunk almost immediately. At the same time, Cabernet Sauvignon grapes are high in tannins and alcohol which act as a preservation allowing the wine to age over long periods developing an even greater complexity.



### Red Wine Words

**Full-Bodied** – Concentrated & intensely flavoured. Generally a high alcohol content with high residual sugars such as a Cabernet Sauvignon or a Merlot.

**Massive, Big or Robust** – Words which refer to a richness with depth of nose and flavour, generally these are magnificently flavoured much sought after red wines with big mouthfuls of flavours!

**Chewy** – Red wines that are so rich and dense with full bodied intensity, that they produce a mouth filling impression that makes them seem almost chewy, as a deep rich brownie! Also referred to as fleshy or meaty.

**Brick Red** – The colour of some red wines, a signal of maturity. The brick-red hue is detectable at the edge of the wine in the glass.

### Chocolate Match

Some red wine lovers don't know when to quit! They even pair their favourite red wines with their favourite chocolates! Try your selected Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot or Zinfandel with the darkest and richest chocolate bar you can find to end your very decadent evening meal!



### Aerating or Decanting Red Wines

Young, tannic reds as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot or Petite Syrah will particularly benefit from aerating. These wines will soften and open up after exposure to air which will help emphasize their inherent aromatics and flavours. To effectively aerate a wine, simply pour it into a glass decanter, carafe or pitcher approximately 30 – 45 minutes before consumption. Aeration is used with young red wines which do not have sediment.

Since most older red wines (older meaning 8 – 10 years of age) do have sediment, the purpose of decanting is two fold: One is to aerate encouraging the wine to taste richer and more complex as it is exposed to air and secondly to remove sediment. Proper decanting requires the bottle to stand upright one or two days before serving to allow the sediment to settle at the bottom of the bottle. Once the sediment has settled, slowly pour the wine into a glass decanter. When about 5-6 centimetres of wine is left in the bottle, stop. Allow your wine to breathe for approximately 45 min. to 1 hour before consumption.

#### \*Special Note:

- Do not decant Burgundy wines as they are too delicate. Pouring a Burgundy through air into a decanter will cause the wine to "collapse" losing all of its flavour and structure.
- Prolonged contact with air will eventually ruin a wine's flavours, so it's important to save leftover wine in a smaller bottle minimizing airspace and sealing tightly to prevent more air from getting in.

### Quick Reference Guide For Food and Red Wine Pairings

Wine	Aroma & Flavour	Pairs Well With
Pinot Noir	Raspberries, red cherries Plum & mineral	Duck and other game birds, lamb, mushroom dishes, rich fatty fish such as salmon
Syrah	Blackberries, white & black Pepper	Hearty stews, spicy foods
Zinfandel	Black Pepper, raspberries Blackberries	Sausages, burgers, grilled meats
Merlot	Plums, black cherries Bold w/ licorice & cinnamon	Roast chicken, pastas with tomato sauce, pork dishes
Cabernet Sauvignon	Red & black currants Robust & bold	Grilled steaks, lamb, rib roasts, meats with strong herb & salty seasonings.

**\*Note:** Remember your red wines are high in tannins and when paired with high fatty foods the fats coat your palate and the tannins cut through the fat –balancing each other out perfectly for an optimum flavour experience.



### Red Wine-Shallot Butter

Here is the perfect accompaniment to all grilled foods: meat, poultry, fish and vegetables alike! Great on grilled breads as well! Enjoy!

- 1 large shallot, coarsely chopped and sautéed in 2 Tblspns olive oil until opaque & softened, about 3 – 5 minutes.
- Add to the shallot pan 2 cups of your favourite red wine and raise the heat to high, bring to a boil and reduce to 1 cup.
- Remove from the heat and add 1 Tblspn coarsely chopped fresh thyme and any other favourite herb of your choice.
- Once cooled, place the wine/thyme mixture in a food processor with 2 sticks slightly chilled but softened unsalted butter and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Pulse thoroughly.
- Remove the mixture and form on waxed paper into a round roll 2.54cm (or 1") in diameter. Wrap securely in a roll and place in refrigerator for at least 3 hours or overnight.
- Immediately top any grilled food hot off the barbie with a slice of red wine-shallot butter for additional delicious flavour.



### Red Wine Facts

- One 5oz. Glass of typical red wine contains 110 calories.
- Opened red wines do not need to be refrigerated if the room temperature is cool (no higher than 18.3C /65F)
- Pinot Noir got its name from the shapes of the Pinot Noir grape clusters since they look like tiny black pine cones (Pinot=pine, Noir = Black)
- The four potential sources of tannin in red wines come from: stems, seeds, skins & the barrel. Tannins provide the structure or backbone of red wines and can also create a bitter puckery taste.

Experience the taste. Savour the sip. Celebrate.

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