

## Enhancing Wine Tastings

After visiting a few wineries where standing at tasting counter is the typical experience, it is delightful to visit a winery that has sit down tastings. A handful of wineries like Duplin Winery, North Carolina have bar stools at the tasting counters. Other sit-down tasting rooms may have cozy, small tables made from wine barrel heads or picnic tables covered with checkered oil cloth. Often tables are large enough for four visitors. There is a sense of slowing down as you sit to taste wines. Gone is the rush to the tasting counter as the wine assistant pours for several guests. At tables this process takes longer. One has time to taste and converse. The attentive tasting room staff comes to your table, pours the wine and takes time to discuss the wine and winery. The environment allows for more reflection on the wine and use of imagination, thinking about what foods will pair with each wine.

When sitting down to taste wine, there are the typical steps involved. The color, smell and taste can be aided by imagination. The wine may have certain qualities you like in a



*A light appetizer platter is an option at Duck Pond Cellars in Dundee, Oregon.*

wine. Tasting a wine in a tasting room is different than tasting at home. How will it perform when paired with food at home? Part of the tasting is your imagination. Often you are left thinking of how

you may use a wine when you get it home. What food would pair with the wine you are tasting?

Some wineries are taking wine tasting a step further by adding a food plate to sit-down tastings. This

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*Elaborate food platter accompanies wines at Vintage Ridge in Rectortown, Virginia.*

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[Wine Trail Traveler](#): a Winery and Vineyard Virtual Visitor Center

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isn't the same as a bowl of crackers set on the tasting bar. These food plates have several different food items on them. This not only aids your imagination but also affords the opportunity to experiment with wines and foods. How does a Merlot taste when paired with a food that is salty, bitter, sour, sweet or umami? What effect does a salty food have on a Cabernet Sauvignon and a Sauvignon Blanc?

Several wineries offer sit down wine tastings with a food plate. Check the wineries in your area to see if they offer this type of tasting. Duck Pond Cellars in Dundee, Oregon has the option of a light appetizer platter. Take the time to try different Pinot Noirs with chocolate, cookies, pickles, salami and cheese. Freshly baked items are also available. A pastry with mushrooms paired well with a Pinot Noir. The earthiness in the food and wine complemented each other.

A canapé platter is featured in a sit-down room after a tour at Quintessa in Rutherford, California. Several visitors sit at the table. This is an interesting social event. Some couples keep to themselves while others begin talking to strangers with the wine and food bridging the gap. Quintessa has a vertical wine tasting of their meritage wine. You can experiment with the Quintessa



*A verticle tasting with food at Quintessa in Rutherford, California*

wines by pairing with crackers, two cheeses and a jelly ball.

An elaborate food platter is offered at Vintage Ridge in Rectortown, Virginia. Visitors should plan on an hour or two for the tasting. Intimate table settings are enhanced with a platter of cheeses, olives, meats, cake, cookies and seasonal foods. There is no rushing your wine tasting. You have the time to experiment with the wines and the foods. The tasting room staff encourages experimentation, but will offer their suggestions of what

foods to pair with different wines.

Food enhances wines and your tasting experience. The most important rule to follow is to drink what you like with the food that you like. When experimenting with food and wine, discover how wines and foods with similar flavors mimic each other. See if you like wine and food flavors that contrast each other. What effect do certain taste sensations have on the alcohol, acid, sugar and tannin in a wine? Most important, enjoy your wine and food pairing time at a winery.

T.S.

## Ten Tips to Let Your Mother Know You Care

Mother's Day is more important to people than other holidays of the year. In the past, statistics have shown that there are more phone calls on Mother's Day than any other day of the year. Have you seen that recent commercial on television showing several mothers receiving a phone call and then going into shock? While it is comical, it does say something about our mobile and global society. So our favorite tip is give your mother a call on Mother's Day, Sunday May 11.

1. Call Mom on Mother's Day.
2. Send a card by mail. If it's too late, an online email card can be sent.
3. Cook dinner for Mom! Try a recipe from Wine Trail Traveler's

recipe section.

4. Treat Mom to dinner at a winery restaurant.
5. Enjoy a tasting at a winery with Mom. At some wineries, tastings are free; other tasting rooms charge a fee. Check [here](#) for a coupon to Barrel Oak Winery. They open for the first time on May 23, a little late for Mother's Day but why not extend Mother's Day beyond one day?
6. Buy a bottle of wine and a flower and wrap it with pink ribbon.
7. Consider creating a gift basket with your Mom's favorite wine and chocolate, gourmet or homemade cookies.
8. If the day promises good weather, consider packing a lunch and take the whole family for a

picnic at a winery. Many wineries offer this opportunity. The most important rule is to drink only alcohol from the winery. If you live in northern Virginia, check out Three Fox Vineyards. This vineyard has a delightful area for picnics.

9. Do you have an empty wine bottle at home? Why not decorate it and add a long stem rose for your Mom?
10. Do you have numerous corks at home? Be crafty and make hot dish mats, wine bottle trivet or a cork bulletin board.

K.S.

# Food and Wine

## Wine and Food Pairing

### Spring Food and Pairing Tips

Warm weather is beginning to spread throughout the country and as it does, eating habits begin to change. Cold weather brings the tendency to have steaks and heavy styles of food as well as wines. Full-bodied red wines work well with steaks and tomato-based pastas. Many people enjoy light-bodied wines as the weather becomes warmer. Numerous light, fruity white wines can be discovered as well as rosés. Sparkling wines provide a wonderful alternative and are good anytime.

Now as the weather becomes warmer, we begin to vacillate between cool and warm dishes. On those still cool evenings a Merlot or Sangiovese will pair well with tomato-based dishes such as spaghetti, lasagna or ravioli. Perhaps lamb chops would be another entrée to consider. Lamb chops pair with Pinot Noir or if using spices consider Merlot or Cabernet Sauvignon. However, when serving cool entrées consider alternatives. Perhaps a light seafood dish with a Riesling or an unoaked Chardonnay. A pasta salad may pair well with Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc or a sparkling wine. For a main dish green salad, consider a Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc and a sparkling wine.

### Mother's Day Sweet Wines

For a special wine, treat your Mom to an ice wine or iced wine. These are very sweet wines produced with special procedures. Winemakers produce a traditional ice wine with grapes that have been harvested while frozen on the vine. The vineyard workers rush the grapes to the winery where the grapes are pressed while frozen. This creates a very sweet wine with a high residual sugar level. An iced wine is wine produced with grapes that are harvested and frozen at the winery before pressing. There is a difference of opinion in whether an iced wine is as good as an ice wine. However, for wineries where the weather doesn't cooperate for a true ice wine, this method works allowing them to create a wine similar to an ice wine.

A Late harvest wine is another very sweet wine. Late harvest wines are produced from grapes that are allowed to hang on the vine as late as possible. This allows the sugar to build up in the grape and produces a very sweet wine.

Any of these may be just the wine for your mother. Sweet wine for a sweet Mom. If you would like more definitive pairing information go to the [Food and Wine Charts](#) on the website.

## Recipes with Wine

### Cornish Hens with Merlot Glaze

#### Ingredients:

4 Cornish hens  
Salt and Pepper to taste  
8 whole cloves garlic  
8 rosemary sprigs  
8 thyme sprigs

#### Glaze:

2 T butter  
½ c raspberry jam  
2 T fresh lemon juice  
¼ c Goosecross Merlot

#### Directions

1. Wash Cornish hens thoroughly and pat dry. Season the chickens all over and in the cavity with salt and pepper.
2. Stuff each chicken with 2 garlic cloves, and 2 sprigs each of rosemary and thyme. Set the chickens in a large roasting pan.
3. In a medium saucepan, bring the glaze ingredients to a boil and reduce.
4. Baste the chickens with the glaze.
5. Roast the chicken for about 1¼ hours, basting twice while cooking, until an instant-read thermometer reaches 165° when inserted into the thigh.
6. Let the chickens rest 10 minutes before carving.

Serves 4

Recipe provided by Colleen Topper at Goosecross Cellars, Yountville, California

Have a recipe that uses wine as an ingredient? If you'd like it published on Wine Trail Traveler send it to [kathy@winetrailtraveler.com](mailto:kathy@winetrailtraveler.com).

When you try a recipe, we hope you will take a moment to email us at [kathy@winetrailtraveler.com](mailto:kathy@winetrailtraveler.com) and let us know your experience with the recipe. If you would rather, join the Wine Trail Traveler forum and comment.

## Wine Trail Traveler Partners

### Our Winery Partners

Stop by these wineries that advertise with Wine Trail Traveler.

#### Maryland



#### Basignani Winery

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Sparks, MD 21152



#### Dove Valley Vineyards and Winery

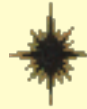
645 Harrington Road  
Rising Sun, MD 21911



#### Fiore Winery

3026 Whiteford Road  
Pylesville, MD 21132

#### Michigan



#### Black Star Farms

10844 E. Revold Rd.  
Suttons Bay, Michigan 49682



#### Chateau Chantal

15900 Rue de Vin  
Traverse City, MI 49686

#### New York



#### King Ferry Winery

658 Lake Road  
King Ferry, New York 13081

#### North Carolina



#### Grove Winery and Vineyard

7360 Brooks Bridge Road  
Gibsonville, NC 27249

#### Oregon



#### Kramer Vineyards

26830 NW Olson Road  
Gaston, OR 97119-8039



#### Redhawk Winery

2995 Michigan City Lane NW  
Salem, Oregon 97304

#### Pennsylvania



#### Pickering Winery

Rt. 187 Between Wysox and Rome  
Wysox, PA 18854

#### Virginia



#### Barrel Oak Winery

3623 Grove Lane  
Delaplane, Virginia 20144



#### Chateau O'Brien at Northpoint

3238 Rail Stop Road  
Markham, VA 22643



#### Kluge Estate Winery & Vineyards

100 Grand Cru Drive  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902



#### Pearmund Cellars

6190 Georgetown Road  
Broad Run, VA 20137



#### Prince Michel Vineyard and Winery

154 Winery Lane  
Leon, Virginia 22725



#### Veritas Vineyard & Winery

145 Saddleback Farm  
Afton, Virginia 22920



#### The Winery at La Grange

4970 Antioch Road  
Haymarket, Virginia 20169

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# Wine Trail Traveler Partners

## Our Lodging Partners



### **The Inn at Black Star Farms**

10844 E. Revold Rd.  
Suttons Bay, Michigan 49682



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Leesburg, Virginia 20176  
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Breinigsville, Pennsylvania 18031  
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Kennett Square, Pennsylvania 19348  
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