



Rashmi Uday Singh's
Good Food Guide

WINE TIME

It gives me a great high! Hearing from you, reading your mails bristling with suggestions and queries is indeed a heady feeling. And so over the past few months when I get a whole lot of questions about wine (some disarmingly frank and basic) I look for answers which are equally honest, to the point and (here's the best part) which are from internationally respected authorities. Poh Tiong Ch'ng is the publisher of South-East Asia's oldest wine magazine 'The Wine Review', the regional Chairman of UK Decanter magazine's World Wine Awards, a judge of wine around the world and an international speaker on the subject.

Rajiv Singhal is passionate about training and knowledge dissemination of wine. Not only is he a founding member and former Honorary Secretary of The Wine Society in Delhi, but also represents Sopexa (the Marketing and Promotion Board for Food & Beverage from France) in India. Apart from running his independent consulting "Ritu Overseas" he has also been organising French wine training series and several wine and cheese promotions across the country.

At the French wine and food pairing session conducted by them, the mystery and intimidation is clearly taken out of wine-drinking. Over to Poh Tiong Ch'ng ...

Question: *What's all the hype about mystique and mystery of wine - can't you do it simply?*

Answer: I have never come across a snobbish bottle of wine. Only wine snobs who masquerade as wine lovers. It's a con job because these people do not take wine seriously. On the contrary, it's only themselves that they take seriously. Sure wine is special and interesting. But it is never excluding. Wine has always been made for family and friends to gather around to have a good time.

Question: *How one should begin with wine?*

Answer: In the very first place, don't drink it if you don't like the taste but because it's the "in" thing to do.

Unless, of course, you are a masochist. If, on the other hand, you enjoy wine and want to learn more, there's no substitute to investing in a good, reliable book (Hugh Johnson, Jancis Robinson and Steven Spurrier) or subscribing to a magazine (it's too presumptuous to suggest my own "The Wine Review", "Decanter" from the UK is great)

Question: *Are there any rough and ready guidelines for food pairing?*

Answer: When and if you are thirsty and I were to offer you mango or lime juice, which would you choose? Lime juice would be the drink of choice because lime juice is refreshing, dry and acidic. Mango juice, on the other hand, is sweet, flabby, rich and thick. My analogy here is to suggest to you that a dry, acidic, crisp white wine is more refreshing than a full-bodied, overly-oaked white Chardonnay. And that refreshing white wine will better pair with deep-fried foods such as pakoras and dim sum. While the oaky white Chardonnay pairs well with Salmon and Japanese food.

Question: *What about storing wine?*

Answer: It's a big problem in a hot climate. Store all your wines in the domestic fridge. Enjoy them straight out of the fridge, warm up the red to room temperature.

Question: *Some don't's?*

Answer: **I** Don't tell a guest how much the wine costs unless you want to show off how crass you are.

I Don't "Bottoms Up" with wine.

I Do not add ice or water to any wine.

I have answers to several other questions like type of grape, type of glass, serving temperatures etc, but no space, so will be replying these individually. Cheers! **I**



FOODLINE

Love to hear from you. Do keep calling and writing with your suggestions and queries and hey! do keep smiling.

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