

Wine Recommendation for Listing

LIM HWEE PENG attempts to seek out suitable wines for the first quarter of 2008, during when a traditional celebration of Lunar New Year and Cupid's effort keep the on-premise segment abuzz.



Indeed, it would be incomplete when serving up delicate Chinese cuisine or even tending to the dining needs of those lovely couples without a glass of fine wine. Hence, the focus for this issue is to find suitable *vino* that could potentially suit F&B outlets

in adding value to its celebrative promotional menus. I have selected two reds (it would indeed be deemed as inauspicious for the biggest Chinese festival without that lucky-coloured wine), accompanied by a refreshing white and a lingering sweets to match

the cupid's hard work in mid-February.

If you have any feedback on the information shared in previous issue, please do send me an email and I will most certainly reply to your queries with the best of my ability.

Tips in managing wines:

Serving temperature is, undoubtedly, a critical aspect of wine service.

Serving wine in extreme temperature (too cold or too warm) will make a wine taste 'inadequate' and hamper the enjoyment of wine. More often than not, many operators assume that the 'white wines served chilled, red wines served at room temperature' rule applies, simply because it is the easiest way to impart to their associates and operation crew.

Such practices have led to many disastrous scenarios (i.e. complaints about wine flavours being different from previous experience; 'spoilt' wine, etc, leading to unnecessary service recovery).

The appropriate way to determine correct serving temperature is by understanding the taste of wine. For example, a dry and delicate-flavoured Alsace white (Pinot Gris, Riesling or Gewurztraminer) would show its best if served at 15-16 degree C; if such beautiful and pure white wines is being plunged into an ice bucket flooded with ice cube and water, it will not be offering any trace of its fruit purity.

Such 'cold' treatment, however, can be tolerated by some of the new world whites (Chardonnay or Sauvignon Blanc) with fuller-flavoured and much intense fruit taste. Nevertheless, it should be

cautioned that even with their strong tolerance, submerging them for a long period of time in the ice bucket may not lead to a better enjoyment, too.

On the other hand, Champagnes/ Sparkling wines and dessert wines do have a much higher tolerance for lower serving-temperature, and rightfully so, as that is the best way to enjoy them.

As a guide (I do mean it as a general, and not the 'biblical' guide), the following serving temperature for white wines, 'bubbles' and 'stickies' would help serious-minded F&B operators to avoid any needless grievances.

Champagne

Cava, Cremant, Non-Vintage Champagne: 4 – 7 °C
Vintage champagne, Special Cuvee: 6-8°C

Dry White

Crisp, Dry Wines (e.g. Muscadet, Sancerre, Alsace, Italian): 15-16 °C
Complex Dry Wines (e.g. Burgundy, Graves): 15 -16 °C
Modern Dry Wines (e.g. New World Chardonnays, Sauvignon Blanc): 12 – 14 °C

Sweet White

Sweet White Wines (e.g. Loupiac, Muscats): 6-8°C
Medium-Sweet (e.g. German Spatlese and Auslese, Alsace VT, New World late-pick dessert): 10-12°C
Finest Sweet Wines (e.g. Sauternes, Alsace SGN): 11-13°C

(Next issue, we will further discuss on the appropriate serving temperature for red wines.)

Does this information benefit you in your operation?

Or you have other practical operation tips that you would like to share? Please contact me at hweepeng@winecraftmktg.com



RED

Alexander Valley Vineyard Estate Cabernet Sauvignon 2005

Though the wine label indicates this wine as a Cabernet Sauvignon, it is, in fact, a blend of 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, and less than 1% each of Petit Verdot and Malbec, making it an almost classic Bordeaux blend. What should one expect from such meticulously balance wine? Lots of juicy fruit flavours that is well-balanced by freshness. A finesse wine this may be, but one has to bear in mind the trying condition when this wine was made; 2005 vintage proves to be a challenging harvest for many California wineries. Nevertheless, those shrewd vintners have made wines that reflected not only its site uniqueness; it also offers the distinctive climatic condition of 2005. One of the best-value wines coming out of California.

This wine needs time to evolve, hence, decant it prior to serving will lead to better enjoyment. It is an excellent promotional wine for modern Chinese cuisine and also for premium catering.

Winery : www.avvwine.com
 In Singapore : Quality Wines Pte Ltd
 Retail Price : SGD\$45.00 per bottle
 Email : jindak@singnet.com.sg
 Tel : (65) 9295 2722

In Thailand : The California Wine Company Ltd (Thailand)
 Email : tkcaw@ca-wine.net
 Tel : (66) 2-682 3838

WHITE

Fire Gully Sauvignon Blanc Semillon 2006

Fire Gully is interesting in many ways. Firstly, it has Chinese characters inscribed on its label, depicting the mandarin version of its name. Secondly, this wine is owned by Dr Michael



Peterkin, winemaker for the world-renowned Pierro wines at Margaret River, Western Australia. Most importantly, I like the personable Dr Peterkin, who in its humble and charming way, exudes much personality into its wines, including the Fire Gully range.

I was kindly hosted at his winery years ago, and was enchanted by the allure of its surrounding; unassuming set-up but full of character. This is one of those wineries that you would like to visit time and again for its originality. And that uniqueness can also be found in its wines.

Fire Gully Sauvignon Blanc Semillon is a Bordeaux-inspired blend of dry white wine, oozing freshness and aromatic bouquet, and further impresses with its flavours. Great choice for aperitif that needs to double up as a talking point.

Strongly recommended for Chinese cuisine restaurant, for simple reason, patrons will be able to order it by speaking mandarin!

Winery : www.pierro.com
 In Singapore : Hai Choo Wines
 Retail Price : SGD\$35.00 to \$38.00 per bottle
 Email : sales@hchwines.com

DESSERT

Alvear Pedro Ximénez Anada 2002



I am confident this wine will fit in nicely with the romantic occasion in mid-February. Pedro Ximénez (PX) is the name of the grape variety that is commonly used in the making of Sherry. More often than not, it is used in the making of sweet sherry as PX, naturally, offers better fruit ripeness, thus, its key role in being harvested for the purpose of crafting sweet wines.

However, in serving this wine, it must be reminded that it should be done in small portion (125ml), due to its intense sweetness. This 'sweet young thing' is obtained through drying the grape on mats so as to extract the essence of its fruit sweetness.

This dessert wine is intense in colour, with an almost pure raisin, nectars and pleasant fruitiness on the palate. Texture-wise, it is silky smooth.

This rich sweet wine is perfectly suited for the romantic occasion, and an excellent choice to conclude any Valentine's Day offering in F&B outlets.

In Singapore : ewineasia
 Retail Price : SGD\$35.70 per bottle
 Contact : Bruno Valiant
 Email : bruno@ewineasia.com

ABOUT LIM HWEI PENG

– Wine Writer. Wine Educator. Wine Consultant

Lim is an established and award-winning wine journalist, passionate in sharing his wine journey in various publications related to food and wine, lifestyle as well as business magazine. Hwei Peng (as he is fondly known in the circle) also immersed himself in the industry to have a first-hand encounter with wine and hospitality trade professionals. As a wine educator and consultant, Lim also works closely with trade boards (*SOPEXA, AUSTRADE, California Wine Institute*), established corporate companies (*Singapore Airlines Sommelier Group, Gaggenau, Liebherr, Arc International*) and hospitality sector (*Creative Eateries, Shangri-la Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Tanjung Arul & Rasa Ria in Sabah*)

Visit WineCraft Marketing & Services website (www.winecraftmktg.com) to have a clearer understanding of Hwei Peng's services and read some of his clients' feedback. ■ **BBA**



RED

Joseph Phelps Le Mistral

Joseph Phelps is one of my favourite California wine, and this is where many will make an assumption thinking that it is the winery's signature wine – Insignia that capture my attention. On the contrary, it is Le Mistral that has occupied a special place in my heart. Le Mistral has a unique flavour, it straddles between a sunny Mediterranean and serious-minded Southern Rhone wine, impressing with its well-balance ripe fruit flavours and soft tannin. More importantly, whenever I need a

fail-me-not wine, I can confidently count on Le Mistral to fulfil that requirement.

Do not underestimate this wine's ageing potential, I still have some back-vintages Le Mistral sitting in my cellar, and I am fully confident that it will evolve to be a beauty in the years ahead.

This is an excellent wine for Fine Steak Restaurants, Fine-dining Outlets, and Personal Chef Services.

Winery : www.jpwines.com
 In Singapore : Culina Pte Ltd
 Retail Price : SGD\$71 per bottle
 Tel : (65) 6753 6966