

COURT OF MASTER  
SOMMELIERS EUROPE



FOOD AND WINE  
MATCHING



## GENERAL THOUGHTS

- There is no exact science to matching food and wine.
- Subjective taste of the guest is the most important aspect.
- Look to 'The Classics'
- But, there are basic principles to build upon.....

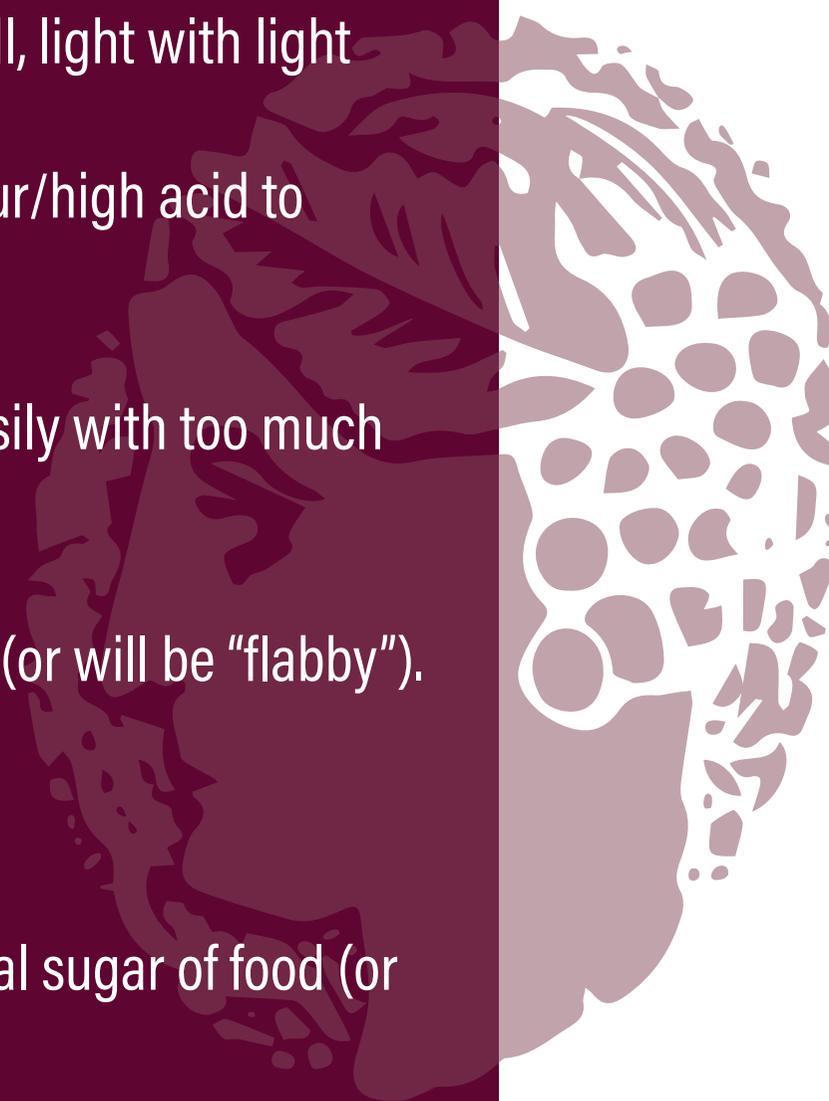
## KEY OVERALL COMPONENTS

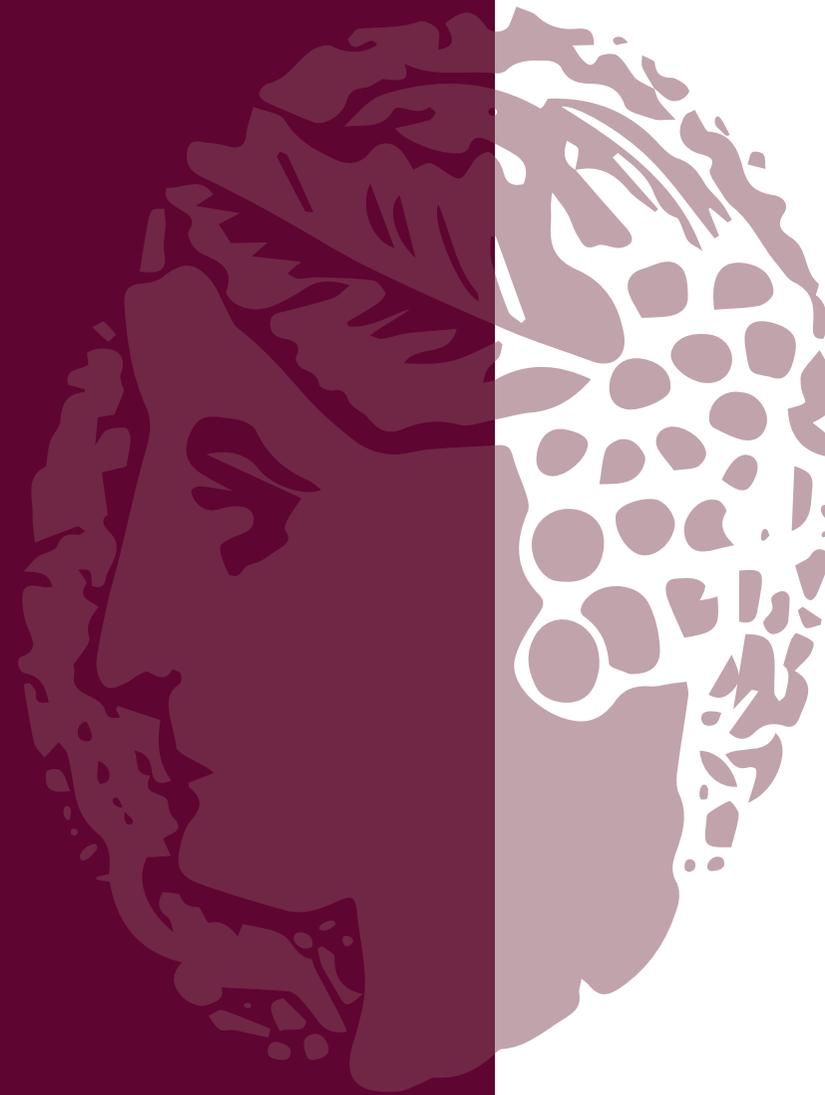
- Structure
  - Body/Weight, Acid and Sugar Levels.
- Flavours
  - Perhaps hundreds, if so, focus on the main ones.
  - Sweet, Sour, Salty and Bitter (also heat, though not a taste).
- Textures
  - Critically important in the play of modern food and wine.



# STRUCTURE OF WINE AND FOOD

- Body
  - Weight of wine and food should match: full with full, light with light (otherwise one may overwhelm the other).
  - If wine is lighter bodied, must be powerful in flavour/high acid to stand up to the food.
- Alcohol
  - Balances weight and body in food accentuated easily with too much spice heat or salt.
- Acidity
  - Acidity of wine must match/exceed acidity of food (or will be “flabby”).
  - Highlights the other core focal ingredients in food.
  - Great balancer of sugar.
- Residual sugar
  - Residual sugar of wine must match/exceed residual sugar of food (or will be bitter).
  - Counters physical or aromatic heat.
  - Is a great match for salty elements in foods.





## TEXTURE

- Tannin in wine
  - Protein and fat will soften tannins.
  - Certain fish + tannin = metallic.
- Oils/Fat/Butter in Food
  - Acid and tannin (in red) can balance.
  - Contrast of crisp wine often effective.

## FLAVOURS

- Salt
  - Great with sweet or fruity and softens tannins.
- Oak
  - Best in small doses and can easily overpower food.
  - Cooking techniques can offset.
- Fruits/Herbs/Vegetables/Spices/Nuts
  - No solid rules!
  - Mirroring flavours can work...
  - Contrasting flavours can work...
  - Avoid using too much green vegetables. Some of these have a high iron content which can create a metallic aftertaste.

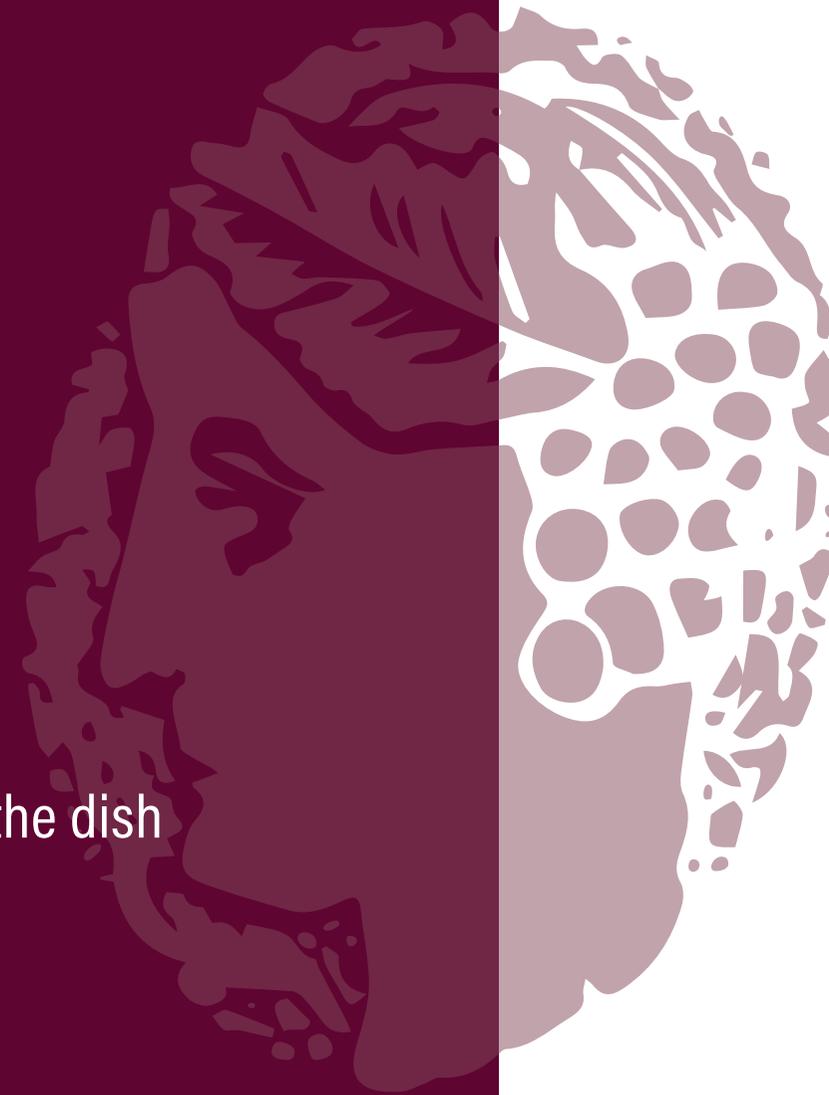


### 3 IMPORTANT KEYS TO FOOD PAIRING

- Ingredients
- Method of Production
  - Low vs. Medium vs. High Impact.
- Sauces, Condiments and side dishes
  - Can be the dominant factors in a food/wine match.

### SETTING UP A MATCH

- Determine the primary/most dominant component of the dish and how to work with it.
- Determine the supporting/minor players.
- Don't forget the sauce or condiment!





## DESIGNING A WINE FLIGHT

- If a tasting menu need to be complemented, think about the “arc” of wines.
- Generally lighter to fuller body.
- Drier to sweeter.
- Serving a red wine follow by a white wine is perfectly acceptable, as long as the following wine is richer.
- If a slightly sweeter style needs to be served at the beginning of the meal, have a look for a very refreshing wine.

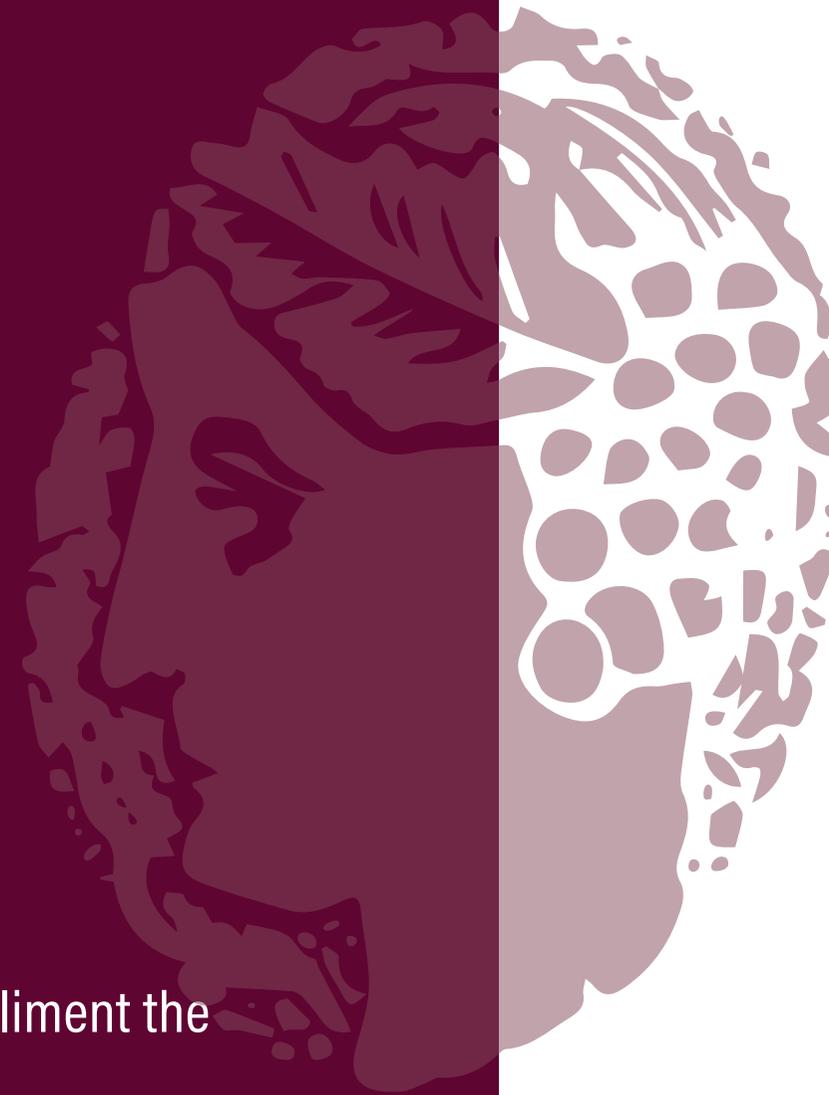


## QUICK OVERVIEW

- Matching weight with weight.
- Acidity needs acidity.
- Fish oils love acidity but hate tannins.
- Tannins love fat but hate fish oils.
- Acidity cuts saltiness.
- Sweets need sweets.
- Alcohol + spicy = fire.
- Spicy + sugar = no fire.
- Vegetable soups can be challenging.

## OTHER THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Provenance of the ingredients used.
- Wines produced in a specific wine region usually compliment the local food.
- Creating a complement is safer than designing a contrast.



## SOME CLASSIC PAIRINGS...

Dish or main ingredient	Wine	Reasoning
<b>Foie Gras (Duck liver)</b>	Sauternes or Late Harvest Riesling	Rich, oily wine meets creamy, rich fat
<b>Fresh Goat Cheese</b>	Sauvignon Blanc	High acid cheese meets high acid wine
<b>Steak (Beef, Lamb, Venison)</b>	Cabernet Sauvignon	Tannin meets protein and fat
<b>Sardine</b>	Fino Sherry	Salt & fish oil meet high acid wine
<b>Stilton</b>	Port	Salty cheese meets sweet wine
<b>Truffle dish</b>	Nebbiolo	Earthy elements (mushroom/truffe) in wine meet the same flavours
<b>Curry dish</b>	Alsace Pinot Gris/Gewürztraminer	Aromatic profile and sweetness cut down the spiciness



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