



Chef Paul G. Suplee, CCC, PC II



PAIRING PLEASURES

STORY BY STEVE SHOCKLEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN CHERRY

The pursuit of the perfect food and wine combinations is an educational and euphoric journey

The Wine Rack's Steve Shockley coordinated a wine tasting dinner with chef Paul Suplee and Coastal Style Magazine at the beautiful West Ocean City home of Bonnie Dypsky.





The Wine Rack's Steve Shockley

An elegant atmosphere, an extravagant table setting by Phil Cropper, fine wine, a spectacular meal and great friends combined for a wonderful evening for Steve Shockley's wine pairing dinner.

When engaged in a discussion on food and wine pairing, I have found that thoughts and ideas can certainly vary. You might hear the popular expression, "anything goes as long as you like it." Then there's the old adage, "white wine with fish and red wine with meat." While it is true you can drink any wine with any meal, there are certain foods that have some specific effects on the taste of a wine — positive effects of harmony, even euphoria, or contrary effects that can spoil any enjoyment of the meal, wine or both.

The search for the euphoric pairing experience has been made even more challenging in recent years thanks to the popularity of new and different grape varieties. Additionally, creative winemakers continue to use new and old techniques that add to the challenge. A quote from winemaker, chateau owner and exporter Alexis Lichine defines this ultimate quest. He mused, "Once complimentary flavors are brought together, the two combine in a gastronomic treat infinitely more delicious than either could provide alone."

Are there any rules in this search? I am reminded of another quote that applies here. "Rules are only useful for those who know how to break them." Experience tells me there are definitive guidelines and recommendations scribed by wine experts and food gurus that should be observed.

Let's consider a few.

Match according to similarities or to contrasts. Foods high in acids, such as tomatoes, citrus fruit and seafood with lemon sauces, go better with wines of similar acidity, like Sauvignon Blancs, Pinot Grigios, Chiantis or Pinot Noirs. Richer, fattier foods, such as duck, lamb, beef and cheese should be paired with slightly oaked Chardonnays or Cabernets. Spicy, salty, or smoked dishes will taste wonderful with fruitier wines such as Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Beaujolais, and even Red Zinfandel.

If the dish about to be served is light and not complex, so too should be the wine. With a heartier and more complex meal, the wine should match the richness.

I invite you to use these ideas for wine and food pairing, experiment on your own, read and research to your heart's content. But most importantly, pop a cork, swirl, sip, and savor the vino on the road to food and wine pairing euphoria. **CS**



The Menu

BY PAUL G. SUPLEE CCC, PC II

When I designed this menu, I wanted to accomplish two things. First, I wanted to make everything on the menu identifiable to everyone, something that too many chefs tend to get away from when writing or presenting. Secondly, I wanted to play with some vintage Ocean City standards, and maybe tweak them out to make them more fun and interesting.

For the first course, I offered an amuse bouche (French for “awaken the mouth”) of: Shrimp wrapped in house-cured brown sugar and cinnamon bacon, with a tomato glaze and fresh lime. Sound familiar? It should, since it plays on the classic barbequed shrimp that we still see on a great number of menus in the area. An amuse bouche can be absolutely anything, and remember, the primary purpose of this in the meal is to ‘bring your mouth to life’ with just one or two bites of food.

Next, for a soup course, I created a fresh and crisp purée of classic Gazpacho with sweet crab and shrimp salad. Maybe not always a standard Ocean City soup, this still is perfect for an al fresco meal, with its fresh tomatoes and cucumbers, zingy herbs, a small amount of fresh crab salad in the middle (sans the mayonnaise of course, to keep it light) and a great ability to pair well with a crisp white wine.

Next, we have a small appetizer of Artic Char Tataki, served chilled on sesame-greens, horseradish and Sweet ginger whipped cream and ponzu reduction paired with the Verdelho, the sweet and tangy combination blends sweet and sour, citrus with classic Asian flavorings, and some New World twists on Old World flavors.

On to the salad, which was especially great for cleansing the palette when paired with the Rosé from Spain: Bitter mesclun and a sweet grape-balsamic reduction, grapeseed oil, candied nuts and extra sharp Tipperary County Cheddar Cheese. This course has all of



the classic components of a summertime salad, including the tartness of the reduction, the sweetness of the candied nuts, and richness of the cheddar.

For the entrée, I wanted to revisit another gold standard in the area with Surf & Turf. Fairly generic, but you will always see them around the area on menus as they still sell well. Just keep in mind that with the fish and meat available at local markets these days, you're not just restricted to lobster or crab cakes as an accompaniment to the land portion of the dish.

Centercut of New York Strip Steak with grilled Hawaiian Walu Pomodoro – Pairing this with a Pinot Noir is a no-brainer, as the typically lighter body will pair well with the Walu (aka Escolar), yet the wine traditionally offers quite a bit of complexity that will nicely stand up to the richness of the beef.

When all is said and done, and after you have taken two laps around the yard to catch your breath, I suggest finishing off the meal with poached five-spice pear with crème fraiche, Stilton Bleu and sweet berry Gastrique.



Editor's Note: Paul G. Suplee CCC, PC II is a chef, author and speaker from Ocean Pines, Md. He has lived in the area for nine years with his wife and four children. Educated at Johnson & Wales University, with some continuing education work at The Culinary Institute of

America, Suplee penned and published *The Heart of a Kitchen; Quips of a Rambling Chef* in 2006, which has received very respectable reviews from around the nation. His book is available at www.heartofakitchen.com, and also on www.amazon.com.

The Wine Rack's Steve Shockley suggests considering the individual grape variety, together with these food recommendations

CHARDONNAY

Chicken, cream sauces, tarragon or sage herbed meats

UN-OAKED CHARDONNAY

Fish and shellfish

SAUVIGNON BLANC

Fish, shellfish, chicken and salads

PINOT GRIGIO

Seafood, chicken, vinaigrette dressings

RIESLING AND GEWÜRZTRAMINER

Appetizers, baked ham, smoked fish, Asian and Thai

SWEET BLUSH AND ROSÉ

Desserts

DRY ROSÉ

Chicken, light meats and salad

CABERNET

Lamb, steaks and roasts

MERLOT

Veal, duck, grilled meats and pork

PINOT NOIR

Chicken, tuna, salmon, filet mignon

ZINFANDEL

Chicken, tuna, salmon, filet mignon pasta, pizza, Mediterranean stews and tuna

CHIANTI AND SANGIOVESE

Tomato sauces, poultry, salmon and tuna

SYRAH AND SHIRAZ

Steak, ribs, veal and beef stews

Editor's note: Steve Shockley, also known as the "Wine Wizard," is a noted wine expert who assists the customers at the Wine Rack in West Ocean City with their daily questions and selections. Steve shares his top 15 of the summer under \$15 only at CoastalStyleMag.com.

