



TWO GUYS  
EXPLORING  
VANCOUVER  
ISLAND'S  
CULINARY  
EXTREMITIES

# The Commandments of Food & Wine Pairing

## FROM CONFUSED TO CONFIDENT

Food and wine pairing is tough. It's mysterious and its complicated, not to mention overwhelming. As a result most people either give up and make a blind guess or, get someone else to pick. Sound familiar? Well get on your knees and say hallelujah to the Commandments of Food and Wine Pairing. Our simple no nonsense approach to making your selections.

*James* – The most common method of food and wine pairing is trial and error, but talk about picking a long shot for desired results. Especially since there are millions of different wines, and billions of different cooks, each of them combining unique ingredients to create all that glorious food. *Barlow* – That's a lot of combinations, not to mention all the palette abuse. *James* – Consequently we created a way to look at things so it doesn't have to be difficult or complicated, in fact there is no mystery if you follow a few simple rules.

*Barlow* – Okay, the first step is to realize there are really only “five styles of wine”. Sure we are simplifying things to the extreme, but stop and think about it. If you group wines according to common flavour characteristics then it doesn't matter where in the world you are shopping if you are looking for a certain style. By grouping wines into these basic categories the process for selecting a wine for pairing with food, or simply to drink on its own is made simple. The five styles are:

PHOTO BY HELENE CYR



**SWEET WHITES:** Generally fruity wines with some residual sugar and no oak.

**LIGHT DRY WHITES:** The defining element would be high acidity and little or no oak.

**RICH WHITES:** Usually barrel fermented and aged in oak.

**LIGHT FRUITY REDS:** More fruit and less tannin is the motto here and generally high in acid, especially in cooler growing years.

**BIG RICH REDS (INTENSE):** These wines are strong in flavour, and this bold taste can come from either a high level of tannin, a high percentage of alcohol, or from very intense fruit, or hopefully, all three at the same time.

*James* – To complement or contrast the five styles of wine, it is important you consider the seven laws of taste. Since the wines are grouped by flavour similarities, such as sweetness, acidity, and intensity of taste, it logically follows that each style category should react generally the same way with food. With this in mind we have put together a breakdown of how the basic components of taste interact with wine.

Acid cancels acid. Sweet food will cause the wine to taste less sweet (more dry) and highlight the sour, bitter and astringent elements of a wine. Bitterness likes bitter. Salty foods tend to make wines taste fruitier, and salt tones down the perception of both bitterness and astringency in some wines. Spicy foods sensitize our mouth. This makes us more sensitive to the wines bitter and astringent elements. Keep in mind spice is accumulative. Fat loves astringency, a.k.a. tannin. Foods high in Unami show off the bitterness in wine.

*Barlow* – Knowing which style of wine you like to drink and how each category “generally” reacts with food, will take you from confused to confident. So explore the potential results in your own seminar with friends. *James* – Or join us during the Victoria Festival of Wine, Music & Food for our live presentation on Saturday, February 22nd at the Delta Ocean Pointe Resort. *Barlow* – It's like a party in your mouth. ■