

German wine a w

GRAPE STUFF

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The most food-friendly wines on the planet come from the Riesling grape. Put that grape in the hands of a German winemaker and you have the perfect recipe for a profound culinary-wine experience.

I was reminded of this recently at a German winemak-

ers dinner. Four wine producers matched their wines with an eclectic array of dishes.

The key to German wine success is in the acidity of the grapes. There appears to be a style of German wine for nearly every dish imaginable.

The only match I can think of that doesn't work with Riesling is grilled red meats, especially game and beef. With most everything else, there is a Riesling that will work - whether dry or up the sweetness ladder.

Note: Winemakers in Germany produce very small amounts of wine. If you're looking for the wines below and can't find them, ask your wine store for those similar in style. And seek out wines from the incredible 2003 vintage - these are powerful wines from a hot vintage that concentrated the grapes to perfection.

The evening started with seared Angus beef carpaccio smothered in olive oil. This was matched by two very different German wines.

The first was a **Lingfelder Ganymed Pinot Noir 2002 (\$35)** which was chock full of roasted cherries, herbs and smoky violets. But it was the second wine that won the pairing, a **Balthasar Röss Hattenheimer Nussbrunnen Riesling 2003**. This was all about lime, grapefruit and minerals with crisp acidity and a note of sweet petrol. It worked beautifully with the carpaccio.

Next up was a compression of duck foie gras with rhubarb

confit paired with a Riesling spat

The **Schloss Schonborn Erbacher Spatlese (\$30)** was one of my favorites. It is a German category of wine that is of superior quality and harvested late (it has a touch viscous), sweetness (semi), with apricot and apple flavours were a part of the super-sweet wines of Sauternes.

That was followed by a pair a d

The first was ginger cured salmon. The **Hare Label Gewurztraminer 2004 (\$25)** Gewurz (compared to Alsace) is from vineyards over 400 years old. It's got lychee and sweet musk aromas.

The better match was the **Gundel Kabinett 2003 (\$15)**. The crispness of the wine was a perfect match for the salmon.

Next was a seared striped bass. Both the **Balthasar Röss Hattenheimer Spatlese 2003** and the **Zilliken Saarlouis Riesling 1993** were fantastic choices for my vote for best pairing.

The finishing touch to the evening was a beerenauslese.

Schloss Schonborn Hattenheimer Beerenauslese 2003 didn't seem overly acidic. Plenty of grapefruit and apricot in this delicate wine.

Here's a Riesling you'll have no trouble finding in Germany's most exciting producer.

St.-Urbans-Hof Estate Riesling is a point into quality German Riesling. It has a sweet-smelling citrus. This has a slight acidity but the zesty citrus is perfectly balanced. A joy to drink.