



Exploring Wine: Completely Revised 3rd Edition

By Steven Kolpan, Brian H. Smith, Michael A. Weiss, The Culinary Institute of America (CIA)

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The essential wine reference for food and wine aficionados, students, and professionals

Written by the experts who train today's leading chefs and sommeliers, this invaluable guide thoroughly demystifies wine, from the basics of wine production to the nuances of wine lists, wine marketing, and wine service.

Completely revised and updated, this new edition of the critically acclaimed guide features more comprehensive coverage of the wine regions of the world, grape varietals, winemaking, purchasing, tasting, service, and pairing. The expanded food and wine pairing section doesn't just list good pairings, but explains why particular wines and foods pair well with each other. In addition, the book includes easy-to-use and informative charts, tables, and maps, as well as beautiful full-color photographs..

- Packed with the most comprehensive, up-to-date information on wines of the world from the top professionals in the field
- Includes more tasting notes for each region, updated information on the health effects of wine, and an expanded food and wine pairing section
- Features excellent study resources for food and wine students

Expanded, revised, and better than ever, *Exploring Wine* is a comprehensive resource and ideal companion for wine lovers and students alike.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Exclusive: Q&A with Author Steven Kolpan



What makes a wine a great “fall wine”?

Much like the season itself, a great “fall wine” should be both bracing and fresh; not as light as a summer sipper, but not as full-bodied and complex as a winter warmer. To me a great “fall wine” could be a full-bodied white – think Chardonnay right off the bat - or a medium-bodied red – think Pinot Noir. These, of course, are familiar, even “safe choices” for the season.

What are your favorite wines for the fall season, and why?

Wines that come to mind are dry whites from Alsace, France – especially Gewürztraminer and Pinot Gris – because they are substantial wines with lots of floral and spice notes, which reminds me of falling leaves on a windy day. I also love dry Sherry – especially Fino or Manzanilla – in the fall, as it is a wonderful, if under-appreciated, wine with cheeses, soups, fish and seafood, and a terrific match with dishes such as eggplant with garlic sauce, mu shu pork, and other Chinese take-out favorites.

There are so many red wines that provide a warm glow on a chilly evening, and some of my favorites include:

- From the United States: Perhaps my #1 choice for an awesome autumn wine is Zinfandel from California, especially from the Dry Creek Valley in Sonoma County. Good Zin is hearty, but with loads of black fruit and spices on the palate. Seek out those wines with less than 14% alcohol, and save the big-alcohol Zins for the winter months. I also like Pinot Noir from the Willamette Valley of Oregon and the Central Coast appellations of California; wines of balance and finesse.
- From Italy: Dolcetto and Barbera from Piedmont; Chianti and Morellino di Scansano from Tuscany; Valpolicella Ripasso from Veneto; Cannonau from Sardinia.
- From Spain: Rioja , especially the lighter Crianza bottlings, as well as wines from Bierzo (made from the

Mencia grape), and Navarra (which, like Rioja, focuses on the Tempranillo grape). These wines are tremendously food-friendly with white meats, lighter red meats, and cheeses.

- From France: Fall is a great time for Beaujolais-Villages, or the under-appreciated Cru Beaujolais (such as Moulin-À-Vent or Brouilly). These wines are great with grilled fish as well as white meats and lean red meats, and will certainly enhance the flavors of seasonal root vegetables. Of course, the Pinot Noir wines of Burgundy are great during this time, but focus on the more accessible, simpler, less expensive wines (Bourgogne, Côte de Beaune-Villages, Mercurey, for example), which are excellent matches for a wide range of foods, from roasted vegetables to beef. Also, try the red wines of the Loire Valley that fly under the radar – Chinon, Bourgueil, or Saumur-Champigny; all of them made from the Cabernet Franc grape, and all of them will work beautifully with roasted white meats.

What new trends are you seeing in wines this year?

A welcome trend is balanced wines with lower alcohol levels, which in a time of climate change/global warming and the resulting super-ripe fruit is a tough trick to pull off. It is important to achieve balance in the wine if it is to play its part at the table as an accompaniment to food, not as a tool to make you drunk.

Another trend that I like is less emphasis on oak to carry the aromatics and flavor profile of the wine, especially white wines, and specifically Chardonnay. We see a lot more unoaked Chardonnay, or when oak is used, the winemakers seem to be exhibiting a lighter touch.

Perhaps the most welcomed trend I've observed has to do with the price point of wines. Although hard economic times has led to too much suffering by far too many people, when it comes to wine pricing, we are seeing a "new normal." That is, good wines are more affordable than ever before, and wine drinkers are discovering that they don't have to spend a lot of money to enjoy wine. This is a trend that even after our nation returns to good economic health – whenever that is – will, I believe, remain in place. The United States is already the largest consumer of wine in the world (based on dollars spent), and reasonably priced wine as a daily beverage with meals, or even as an "affordable luxury," will only enhance that standing.

Any recommendations for dishes to pair with this fall's top wines?

In the fall, thoughts turn to Thanksgiving, and the traditional holiday feast is a blessing for both white and red wines. I love Gewürztraminer with turkey and all the accompaniments – sweet potatoes, stuffing (that's "dressing" down South), cranberries, etc. Chardonnay will work well, too, but with less of a wow factor. For reds, I love Zinfandel, especially if there's sausage and sage in the stuffing/dressing, and plenty of dark meat from the turkey. For subtlety and balance, go with Pinot Noir or Gamay (the grape of Beaujolais).

What can people learn about other seasonal wines and trends in *Exploring Wine*?

The completely revised new edition of *Exploring Wine* goes into great depth about current trends in the international wine market, from California to China, from Italy to India, from Germany to Greece, from Canada to Cyprus. We consider the wines of all of these countries, and many more (France, Spain, Portugal, etc), complete with beautiful maps indicating the wine regions of each nation.

In *Exploring Wine*'s chapter on wine and food pairing, we emphasize the "how" and "why" of matching food and wine, and that, of course, includes notes on enjoying foods and wines "in season." While wine may not technically be a "seasonal" beverage, clearly our enjoyment is enhanced when we think of it that way; lighter wine with lighter foods in warm weather, more complex and full-bodied wines to accompany heartier foods when the weather gets colder and the snow begins to fall.

Tips from *Exploring Wine*



Understanding Wine Color



Understanding Wine Barrels



Understanding Food and Wine Pairings

From Library Journal

Why another wine book? First, this one is by wine educators from the Culinary Institute of America, whose other fine works (*The New Professional Chef*, LJ 8/91) and outstanding reputation lend it gastronomic authority. Second, *Exploring Wine* has an unfettered clarity, whether explaining formulas to calculate a reasonable price range or steps to produce the most beneficial wine-tasting experience or ways to select from the deluge of international choices. Third, there is a superb chapter on matching food and wine, full of tables and menus, which simultaneously honors classical principles of experimentation and personal preference. If these reasons aren't sufficient, there's the concise background information on wine-making, the world tour of producers, the coffee-table-book photographs, the section devoted to collecting, appendixes of American appellations and official classifications of Bordeaux, and a 12-page glossary. Definitely not just "another wine book." Highly recommended.

Wendy Miller, *Lexington P.L., Ky.*

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Review

"...lively guide..." (New Yorker, 10 December 2001)

Users Review

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