

Seafood, chardonnay – match made for summer

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By Bill Garlough

In the summertime, grilling and barbecue rule. With our warmer weather, grilling fish is popular as it offers lighter cuisine. In selecting a wine with fish, the old adage of white wine with fish and red wine with meat has been updated. Lighter styles of both red and white wine work well with seafood.

This column will focus on pairing seafood with chardonnay, as this represents an ideal pairing.

Chardonnay also pairs well with corn on the cob with lots of butter. Unfortunately, some winemakers were a little over the top with barrel aging, resulting in overpowering oakiness which did not appeal to many consumers.



Bill Garlough grills up some fish and corn on the cob to accompany his selected chardonnay.

But chardonnay is a terrific, versatile wine when produced with a lighter hand. Look for a chardonnay aged in stainless steel vats for a more crisp, clean wine experience.

Chardonnay has appealing flavors of butter, butterscotch, vanilla and tropical fruit. This varietal is heavily influenced by the climate and wine making process. In the cooler climates (France), the grape juice is lighter and leaner in style and is aged either in stainless steel vats or in oak barrels that impart a lightly oak flavor. In the warmer climates (California, Australia), chardonnay juice is more hearty and full bodied and can benefit from oak barrel aging. Barrel aging transforms chardonnay into a richer, creamier and more complex beverage.

Recently, California winemakers have been adopting the French style of white wine making, by aging its wine in stainless steel vats. This creates a lighter style that does not overpower the delicate flavors of foods.

Food pairings

In general, chardonnay pairs well with seafood, as it is a low acid wine and seafood is slightly acidic. Chardonnay, with its buttery character, is complex, which compliments the straightforward flavors of seafood. A chardonnay aged in stainless steel pairs better with delicate white fish. The chardonnays produced from warmer wine regions tend to be bigger in style and pair well with rich seafood such as lobster or seafood in cream sauces.

Grilled Trout Amandine Chardonnay

This quick and easy recipe is a wonderful blend of flavors and works well with a lighter style of chardonnay. Best of all, it is a snap to clean up! Serves 4

4 Whole Trout - cleaned and head removed (found at Costco)

1 tablespoon Olive Oil

2 teaspoon Minced Garlic
½ cup Chardonnay
(From the bottle you will be drinking)
2 tablespoons Fresh Lemon Juice
½ teaspoon Black Pepper - Ground
½ teaspoon Garlic Salt
¼ cup Fresh Parsley
½ cup Sliced Almonds
¼ cup Butter
2 teaspoons Minced Garlic (optional)
Fresh Chopped Parsley, Lemon Slices

Bill's picks

All my picks are of a lighter style of chardonnay with minimal or no oak aging - with suggested retail prices.

Toad Hollow Chardonnay (Mendocino, Calif.) \$11.50

Four Vines Naked Chardonnay (Santa Barbara, Calif.) \$12.50

Sanford Chardonnay (Santa Barbara, Calif.) \$14.50

Verget Chablis (French Chardonnay) \$16.

Rinse the trout and pat dry.

Lay out four pieces of heavy duty foil -- enough to make a loose, tented packet for each individual fish.

Lay fish in center of foil.

Heat olive oil in a sauté pan.

Sauté the garlic until lightly browned.

Remove from heat and carefully add the chardonnay, lemon juice, garlic salt and pepper.

Spoon ¼ of the wine mixture on each fish.

Sprinkle with fresh parsley.

Fold the foil up loosely around the fish and seal the seams.

Place the packet on preheated grill and cook for 15 to 18 minutes.

While fish is grilling, using the same sauté pan, melt the butter.

Add the sliced almonds and sauté until lightly brown, stirring often.

Add the optional garlic and sauté with the almonds.

Remove fish from the grill and place on dinner plates or platter.

Spoon almond mixture over fish and garnish with chopped fresh parsley and lemon slices.

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