

HOW A 12TH-GENERATION FRENCH WINEMAKER PAIRS FOOD AND WINE FOR FALL

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Fall is coming in, and that means it's pairing season. There's hardly a better time of the year to unite food and wine. But some people have a little more experience and knowledge in that department than we do.

Eléonore Latour is the vice president of Louis Latour, the famed winery in Burgundy. She's part of the 12th generation of the Latour Family. Folks from far and wide laud the long-standing French label.

For some background, Louis Latour is one of the most famous names in French wine, a brand with more than two centuries of winemaking experience. The Burgundian label oversees the largest plot of Grand Cru Vineyards in the region. But that doesn't just mean quality, it also means relatively inexpensive wines that you can find stateside.

And the best way to explore them, of course, is with a proper pairing. We just so happen to be entering one of the best times of the year for that in early fall. It's a time full of fresh produce and wine-friendly transitions from lighter fare to more filling comfort food.

"At Louis Latour, we encourage people to enjoy wine in any way they prefer," says Latour. "But, we do have suggestions for the best tasting experience – it's not just about what you serve the wine with, but how you serve the wine, too. Decant a young Grand Cru Pinot Noir to allow it to breathe, and to preserve its freshness, always serve reds slightly cooler than room temperature. I recommend chilling a bottle of red in the refrigerator for about 30 minutes before serving, as it helps enhance its freshness and subtle flavors, making it more balanced and enjoyable. This is especially true for lighter reds like Pinot Noir."

Chardonnay

“Our Mâcon-Lugny Les Genièvres reveals elegant spice notes of cinnamon, clove, nutmeg, nutty flavors that beautifully echo the warm spices in favorite fall desserts like apple pie,” Latour says. “A medium-oaked Chardonnay, like our Meursault 1er Cru Château de Blagny, with notes of nutmeg and vanilla from the oak, adds depth and is another ideal match for apple pie.”



The latter wine also does well with dairy. “In France, pairing white wine with cheese is unexpected,” Latour says. What kind? Latour suggests soft and creamy Brie to tangy goat cheese. It’ll do well with the wine’s acidity, and the wine will cut into all that creaminess and fat.

“I would also like to recommend more surprising pairings that showcase the variety of ways you can enjoy French wines,” continues Latour. “For example, Louis Latour’s Pouilly-Fuissé is round, ample on the palate, and perfectly pairs with sushi.”

Pinot Noir

“A tarte tatin is sugar and cinnamon-forward, so it’s best to enjoy it with a wine that has a spice to match – like our Bourgogne Pinot Noir,” Latour says. She adds that when the weather starts to chill, a good Burgundy also does exceptionally well with hearty stews like Beef bourguignon.

“For those looking to replicate an authentic French dining experience at home, Coq au Vin, a rich braised chicken stew in red wine, pairs beautifully with a Santenay, whose bright cherry and berry notes complement the dish’s savory flavors,” Latour says.

The wines mentioned above can be found online at outlets like wine.com and a number of retailers stateside, by the way.



Hosting tips

Just because fall is coming doesn’t mean you have to retreat to your cave. Keep embracing the outdoors, if the weather allows, for at least some kind of al fresco dining experience. That could mean starting outside for aperitivo hour or that first pour of white wine with cheese. The cooler temperatures might be just right in terms of serving temperature. You can always retire inside later for the main meal.

Be sure to have glassware that really showcases the wines. Burgundy, in particular, is all about detail and nuance. Amplify all of those characteristics with bigger glasses,



and you can really bury your nose in.

They’ll also serve as mini decanters, introducing the wine to more oxygen and allowing it to open up a bit. And try not to have other fragrances interfere with those wines, like too much cologne or perfume. While we might be looking to light scented candles this time of year, they can get in the way of a good pairing.

Also, consider a second round of every pairing. You might find that the wine has changed a bit in terms of aroma and flavor after it’s been open for a while, and the pairing could improve even more as a result. If you have the numbers (and the wine supply), consider doing little verticals that showcase vintages and how the wine can age over time.

But do keep it casual and fun, as Latour would advise. Don’t be afraid of an unexpected pairing, as it may surprise you to no end. There are no bad pairings; it’s just that some work way better than others (like seafood and wine, when done right).