

BOOK AND FILM REVIEW

Dana Frank and Andrea Slonecker: *Wine Food: New Adventures in Drinking and Cooking*

Lorena Jones Books, New York, 2018, 256 pp.,
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Bronwyn H. Hall

University of California, Berkeley
Email: bhhall@berkeley.edu

Piemontese Barbera with Borscht Risotto, Carignan from Southern France with Ratatouille Gratin, and Cava with Jamon and Peas. These are just three of the delicious combinations in this innovative book. If, like me, your enjoyment of wine is enhanced by pairing it with interesting menus, this book may be for you. The book itself is the outcome of the pairing of an experienced sommelier (Frank) with a chef and cookbook writer (Slonecker).

The idea is simple: catalog 75 different types of wine worldwide (including sherries and sparkling wines), and accompany each with an appropriate recipe. The recipes are generally variations on familiar dishes and are intended for those with some cooking experience and a well-filled larder. These requirements will probably not pose a problem for anyone who finds the concept of the book attractive, but they may be daunting for an inexperienced cook.

The book is divided into seven sections (appetizers, brunch, salads, vegetables, picnics, and two main course sections), plus a page of suggested wine pairings for desserts. It is richly illustrated with photos of many of the suggested dishes. Each section contains about ten different wines and the recipes that are suggested for each. The text for each wine-recipe pairing discusses the wine itself and why it goes with the respective dish.

Each section ends with a menu intended for a particular region's wines collectively, including a discussion of the wines and why they suit the region's food. For example, Alpine whites with a raclette dinner, Spanish wines with a paella menu, and Provençal wines with an Aoili menu. The sections conclude with a pairing cheat sheet listing about ten recommended wine pairings with different items in each section: cheese, takeout food, no-cook food, soup, pasta, meatballs, and desserts.

The coverage of wines is impressive, from Bugey-Cerdon (pink sparkling wine from Eastern France) to Furmint (dry white Hungarian wine). Of course, the book also includes such well-known wines as Barolo, Vermentino, Pinot Noir, Amontillado Sherry, and Champagne. If I had a complaint about coverage, it would be that Sauvignon Blanc is represented by only one recipe for a green salad,

and the great French Sauvignon Blancs are either not mentioned (Pouilly Fumé) or consigned to the pairing list only (Sancerre). But that may be my bias.

The most interesting way to use this book would be to work your way through it one dish and wine at a time. This would be a fantastic way to explore some new wines and learn about pairings. Having made a few recipes, I can testify that some will take time (e.g., the chicken pot pie) and may not be for every day. They are best served as the centerpiece of a meal.

Summing up, this book is highly recommended for those who love wine, food, and cooking interesting new recipes; and also for those who like to entertain, as the wine-food combinations would provide a good starting point for making an interesting menu.