



Decoding a Wine Dinner Menu

Description

A “Wine Dinner”, especially the formal, sit down kind, often falls in the realm of “fine dining” where although the wines take the center stage, but the accompanied food also commands equal attention – both of the Chef as well as of the guests.

The Menu for such an event often includes gourmet dishes, (curated at times by Michelin star Chefs). Besides being a gastronomical delight (especially when paired well with wines), these dishes are also Instagram friendly (an integral part of any fine-dining experience these days, I dare say).

As delightful as that seems, it is also true that such a Menu can, at times, be a complex document to decipher. A list of dishes with lengthy (and often difficult to pronounce) names are often intimidating, both to the connoisseur and the commoner. So, this time around I decided to face this challenge and took upon myself to “**Decode the Wine-Dinner Menu**” which I must confess turned to be quite an informative and a delightful exercise.

I share my experience about the same in this post around the wonderful “Cakebread Cellars Wine Dinner” by [La Cave India](#) held at The Lodhi Hotel, New Delhi some time ago.

Kimchi & Pierogi with Sauvignon Blanc

Pierogi is a dish of Central European origin and is made of dough wrapped dumplings cooked in boiling water (that’s right – not in oil). Chef Brian Streeter – who is the culinary director at the Cakebread Cellars Winery, revealed that a large population in Napa Valley neighborhood (where he grew up) has settlers from eastern Europe countries like Poland etc.

These people traditionally consume a lot of Pierogi (with a Potato filling) in their meals. And thus, being exposed to Pierogi since childhood, the Chef said that he decided to include it in the menu (this also highlights the ingenuity and innovation on part of the Chef).

He went on to add “Kimchi” as a filling in the Pierogi (instead of the traditional potato). Kimchi, which is a staple Korean cuisine, is made from salted and fermented vegetables.

To make the dish pair well with the wine, the Chef used the common Napa Valley cabbage, which he had specially carried along with him from California, where the wine is produced (another thoughtful initiative by the Chef).

So quite subtly and intelligently, the Chef adhered to the first principle of food and wine pairing and which is that **“If it grows together, then it goes together”**. Simply put, it means that if the wine and food come from the same region, they will pair well.

Elaborating more on the food wine pairing, the Chef brought out the unique quality of Sauvignon Blanc (the paired wine) as being one which cleanses the palate and makes one drink more and eat more. Served here with the bespoke dish of Kimchi & Pierogi, the wine paired perfectly and greatly enhanced the flavors of the dish on the palate.

(PS: In this post I have restricted myself to only the first course of the wine dinner. More later).

Cover pic ?? Mr Brian Streeter, Culinary Director, [Cakebread Cellars](#), explaining his thoughts on food and wine pairing (Pic permission & courtesy [Ruma Singh](#))