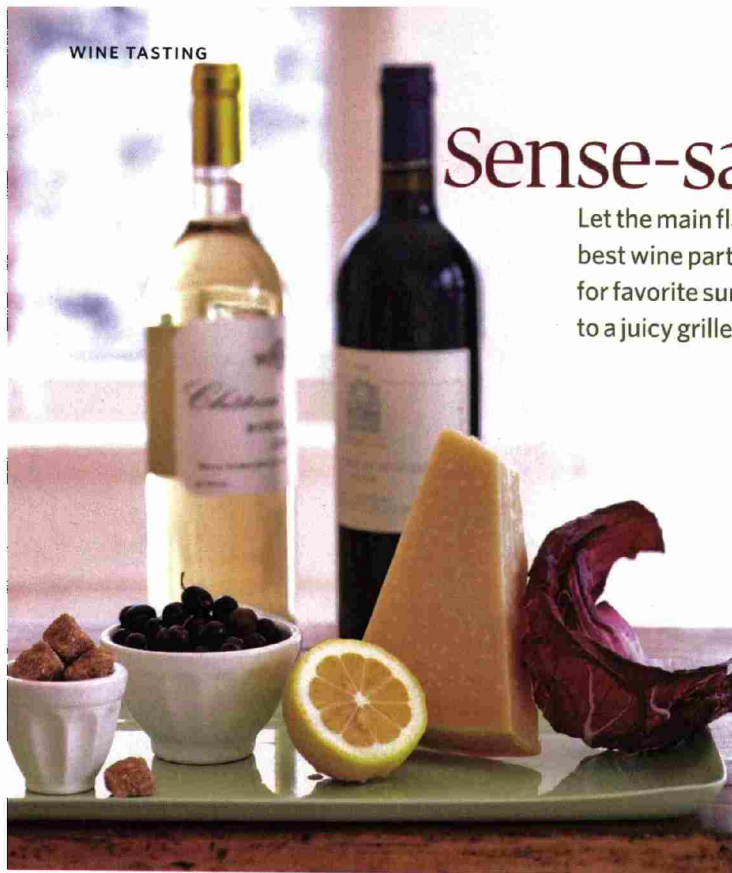


WINE TASTING

## Sense-sational wines

Let the main flavor element in a dish point you to its best wine partner. Here are five well-chosen matches for favorite summer foods, from a sweet peach crisp to a juicy grilled sirloin. By Karen MacNeil



### Sweet

 Sweet foods decrease the perception of sweetness or fruitiness in wine. For example, wedding cake makes most dry wines taste sour or bitter. Use the wine pros' rule of thumb: sweet, fruity wines for sweet foods. This rule also applies for dishes with sweet components, such as teriyaki or barbecue sauces. Roasted, grilled, and sautéed foods have a sweet taste from caramelization, so fruity wines make a nice match. For desserts, serve a wine that's sweeter than the dish

you're enjoying. **Must-try combination:** Pair a summer fruit dessert like peach crisp with the luscious dessert wine Quady Essensia Orange Muscat from California. The 2005 is \$14 for a 375-milliliter half bottle.

### Salty

 Briny or salty foods, such as feta cheese, olives, or even potato chips, cut through tannins, bitter flavors, and high acidity in wine. So pick a tart wine with high acidity to accompany entrées like salt-crusted shrimp, brined poultry or pork, and


other foods with a pronounced salty flavor. **Must-try combination:** Serve Greek salad with feta cheese and kalamata olives with Kunde Sauvignon Blanc from Sonoma, California. The 2007 is \$17.

### Sour

 Acidic foods dull the acidity of an accompanying wine, so choose tart wines like pinot grigio or sauvignon blanc. Chianti is an example of a tart red wine that pairs beautifully with many acidic tomato-based pasta dishes. **Must-try combination:** Match sautéed scallops

with a lemon-butter sauce with Mesh Riesling from the Eden Valley of Australia. The 2008 is \$20.

### Bitter

 Bitterness, such as that in radicchio, eggplant, or dark chocolate, amplifies the bitterness in wine. Sautéed bitter greens, for example, will make a bold, pleasantly bitter wine like cabernet sauvignon taste out of balance. It's best to serve fruity wines with bitter foods so that the impression of bitterness is not overwhelming. **Must-try combination:** Ratatouille with a chilled dry rosé such as El Coto from the Rioja region of Spain. The 2007 is \$11.

### Umami

 Discovered more than a century ago in Japan, umami has gained acceptance in the scientific community as the fifth taste. The word is Japa-

nese for "deliciousness" or "savoriness." Foods high in umami share a high concentration of glutamates, which tend to magnify the flavor of the food. Examples of foods high in umami include Parmesan cheese, most meats, most cheeses, shiitake mushrooms, shrimp, crab, lobster, and many concentrated sauces—from Worcestershire sauce to Chinese oyster sauce to Thai fish sauce. Umami has a subtle effect on wine but can make it taste metallic or bitter. These foods often taste best with wines that have a rich core of fruit. **Must-try combination:** Grilled sirloin with steak sauce and a lush zinfandel, such as the Lake Sonoma Zinfandel from Sonoma. The 2006 is \$22. ☺

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