



KES | 101

KOBRAND Wine & Spirits EDUCATIONAL SERIES

FOOD & WINE

FOOD & WINE AFFINITY SEMINAR

Facilitator's Guide

Kobrand Taste Pyramid

Principles for Perfect Matches (optional handout)



FOOD & WINE AFFINITY SEMINAR

OVERVIEW: Talk about how different tastes, textures and flavors can be identified in food and wine. This seminar is primarily focused on taste and texture vs. flavors. Section One focuses on the basic measurable tastes in food. Section Two gives you an opportunity to talk about more elements to consider when matching food and wine, including a discussion on foods that are traditionally difficult to match with wine, and examples of classic wine pairings. Section Three is the actual food and wine tasting divided into 7 different modules. It is recommended to do 3 – 4 modules in one sitting.

HANDOUT: ▶ Tongue Diagram
▶ Kobrand Taste Pyramid
▶ Principles for Perfect Matches

INTRODUCTION:

- Why are we here? To talk about food and wine, but before we get started, what are the reasons people get married? What attracts you to your partner? Sex and Money? Nah, it's Similarities and Contrasts.
- Everyone has the tools they need to pair wine and food: a tongue, a nose and a brain to make it all work together.

SECTION ONE – Tastes, Textures, Flavors

- It's easier to pair wine and food if we talk about tastes not flavors, since there are only four tastes and everyone has them: sweet, sour, salt and bitter.
- The four taste areas on the tongue are the only tools you need for basic food and wine pairing. After this basic exercise you'll know why some foods match better than others with particular wines, for example:
 1. Sweet: sweet food cancels (or diminishes) the sweet taste of wine
 2. Sour: sweet food complements sour or acidic wines by masking the acidic character of the wine: sour or acidic foods are complemented by acidic wines
 3. Bitter: bitter tannin mitigates (covers up) bitter flavors in food; tannin also cuts through the fat of red meats
 4. Salt: uncommon in wines, but some salty foods match well with acidic wines, just like beer goes well with pretzels

There are two ways to pair food and wine: by contrasting them or making them taste similar (remember the two reasons people get married?...wine and food pairing is like a marriage).

1. A low-alcohol, slightly-sweet wine paired with spicy food is a contrast
2. A low-alcohol, slightly-sweet wine paired with fruit salad is a similarity



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There are three other main ways to pair food and wine: taste, texture and flavor. When we eat, we consider these main elements:

TASTE – ability to measure sweetness, bitterness, acidity (sour) and saltiness (there is no salt in wine)

TEXTURES – are the grace notes, consider the feel and weight of the wine on the palate

FLAVORS – more specific, more subjective

Today, we are going to focus on **TASTES**. **TASTE** can be measured, **FLAVORS** can not.

SECTION TWO – Matching Food & Wine

To get more advanced, discuss these other complicating factors.

The three things to consider when building your match made in heaven:

INGREDIENT (Chicken, beef, etc.)

Different levels of fat in the food may require a different wine partner

COOKING METHOD (Broiled, grilled over hickory, fried, etc.)

Grilling adds different flavors than poaching, requiring a different pairing

SAUCE/SEASONING (Rolled in pecans, BBQ sauce, etc.)

Is the sauce light or heavy? Is it sweet or spicy?

The cooking and seasoning play a major role in the intensity of flavors. Most successful food and wine pairings result when there is matching intensity levels between the wine and the food.

Remember: the rules of food and wine pairing came from a simpler time when we ate meat and potatoes every night, not Thai food, Italian and French all in the same week. Rules are outdated and (mostly) wrong.

Beware! If time allows, review some of the foods that are traditionally more difficult to pair with wine.

SOUPS – hard to match liquid to liquid

SALADS WITH VINEGAR – acidity of vinegar, salad dressing is destructive to the wine

ASPARAGUS – pungent flavors, consider the cooking method and seasoning, fortunately not typically a stand alone course

ARTICHOKES – after tasting an artichoke, wine will taste sweeter

CHOCOLATE – intense sweetness and flavors can overpower the wine



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MATCHES MADE IN HEAVEN

Oysters	Muscadet or Chablis
Caviar	Blanc de Blancs Champagne
Foie Gras	Sauternes
White Truffles	Barolo
Prime Steak	Great Cabernet Sauvignon
Grilled Baby Lamb	Rioja Red
Crème Brûlée	Aged Tawny Port

Wine and Cheese:

Fresh Goat Cheese	Sancerre or Pouilly-Fumé
Parmigiano-Reggiano	Amarone
Fontina Val d'Aosta	Barolo
Manchego	Ribera del Duero Red
Dry Monterey Jack	Old Vines Zinfandel
Explorateur	French Red Burgundy
Aged Cheddar	Late Bottled Vintage Port
Mascarpone	Moscato d'Asti
English Stilton	Reserve or Vintage Port
Roquefort	Sauternes



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SECTION THREE – Taste and Believe

When matching food and wine you can work with similarities or contrasts. Here are seven different modules developed to point out nature's own food and wine affinities.

MODULE 1: Wines with salty, oily or spicy food

Sparkling wine, Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Grigio with salty, fried food

MODULE 2: Wines with acidic foods

Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio or Gavi with goat cheese and/or a green salad with vinaigrette

MODULE 3: Wines with strong flavored fish

Sparkling wine or Sauvignon Blanc (optional: big barrel-fermented Chardonnay) with smoked salmon; side of lemon

MODULE 4: Wines with mild fish

Pinot Grigio, unoaked Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Beaujolais Villages with grilled ahi or mahi-mahi; side of honey-mustard or dill dressing

MODULE 5: Wines with red meat

Cabernet Sauvignon and Beaujolais Villages with rare roast beef; side of ketchup

MODULE 6: Wines with sweet foods

Moscato d'Asti with plain sugar cookie and a side of jam or Port with chocolate cookie and a side of chocolate sauce or dense brownie or chocolate cake with icing

MODULE 7: The right wine can make food better

Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay with a piece of plain chicken; side of lemon

SUMMARY

Use the modules that make sense for the wines you want to promote. Be specific with the chef to make sure the food is prepared the way you request.

*“An acquired taste is a rendezvous your mind has made
with your palate behind your back.”*

—JOSH WESSON



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TASTING MODULES (5-10 Minutes per module)

Module 1 – Wines with salty, oily or spicy foods

Module 2 – Wines with acidic foods

Module 3 – Wines with strong flavored fish

Module 4 – Wines with mild fish

Module 5 – Wines with red meat

Module 6 – Wines with sweet foods

Module 7 – The right wine can make food better



FOOD & WINE AFFINITY SEMINAR Continued

MODULE 1

GOAL: To learn how to pair wines with foods that are either salty, oily or spicy

SUGGESTED FOODS: Parmesan cheese straws, deep-fried calamari or cheese, egg rolls or spring rolls, buttered and salted popcorn, French fries

SUGGESTED WINES: Sparkling wine or Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Grigio. Bouvet Signature Brut, Domaine Carneros Brut, Benziger Sauvignon Blanc, Cakebread Cellars Sauvignon Blanc, Pighin Pinot Grigio, Caposaldo Pinot Grigio

TEACHING TECHNIQUE: Begin by talking about foods - both on and off their menu – point out items that are salty, oily or spicy. What’s the best way to cleanse the palate of such strong tastes? With a beverage that’s refreshing...consider beer. Beer is light, bitter and effervescent. It strips the palate clean of the salty-oily-spicy food. Think of beer with potato chips (salty & oily); pretzels (salty); fried zucchini (oily) Mexican food (spicy)

What’s the closest thing to beer in the wine world? Sparkling wine. It’s light, acidic and effervescent – a great palate cleanser for any food that comes on strong. A “non-sparkling” wine that would work with these foods is one that is light, acidic and fruity, preferably lower in alcohol – because high-alcohol wines make salty and spicy foods saltier and spicier. Consider a Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Grigio.

REVIEW OF THE MAIN POINTS COVERED:

1. Salty, oily, spicy foods go best with beverages that refresh and cleanse the palate.
2. Best wine bets for such foods are sparkling wines and light, low alcohol still wines.
3. The saltier, oilier or spicier the food, the more refreshing the wine needs to be.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/REQUIREMENTS: For maximum refreshment, make sure the wine is served well chilled (45-50°F). If spicy food is served, take care not to use food that is overly spicy (such food would overwhelm any wine).



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MODULE 2

GOAL: To learn how to pair wines with acidic foods

SUGGESTED FOODS: Simple green salad with vinaigrette on the side, goat cheese (with or without salad) or fresh tomato salad

SUGGESTED WINES: Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio or Gavi. Benziger Sauvignon Blanc, Michel Redde Sancerre, Cakebread Cellars Sauvignon Blanc, Pighin Pinot Grigio, Michele Chiarlo Gavi

TEACHING TECHNIQUE: Begin by talking about acidic foods (name as many as you/they can). Mention how acid in a food can undo a wine, if the acidity in the food is greater than the acidity in the wine. Talk about tomato-based foods – like pastas with red sauce – and a natural connection that many Italian wines (which tend to be high in acid) make with such foods. Use the no-wine-with-salad rule to illustrate this point. Talk about how at formal, multi-coursed dinners, salad is traditionally served at the end of the meal (as a palate cleanser) after the meat and cheeses, but before dessert.

Taste the green salad without the dressing and taste the wine. The wine can act like a vinaigrette. Then taste the salad with dressing and the wine. Do the same with goat cheese or tomato salad. Substituting fresh lemon juice for vinegar in the dressing will improve the pairing with wine.

Wines that are made from grapes grown in cooler climates tend to be more acidic. Because the temperature is cooler, the grapes do not become as ripe, they have less sugar and hence contribute to more acidity to the final product (the Champagne region is a good example).

Then demonstrate how easy it is to match wines with salad (and other acidic foods), as long as you know the secret – finding a wine that is as acidic as the food.

REVIEW OF THE MAIN POINTS COVERED:

1. Acidic foods need equally acidic wines to go with them – think of pasta with red sauce and Chianti.
2. Look for cool-climate wines when seeking out high acid wines.
3. Forget the old rule of no-wine-with salad; you can find good matches as long as you balance acid with acid.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/REQUIREMENTS: When using a vinaigrette, take care not to make the dressing too sharp and substitute fresh lemon juice for vinegar. When using goat cheese, it's best to serve a fairly fresh, mild cheese.



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MODULE 3

GOAL: To learn how to pair wines with strong-flavored fish

SUGGESTED FOODS: Smoked salmon or smoked trout; side of lemon

SUGGESTED WINES: Sparkling wine or higher acidity still white wines. Poema Cava Brut, Domaine Carneros Brut, Cakebread Cellars Sauvignon Blanc, Benziger Sauvignon Blanc

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL WINES: Any big, barrel-fermented Chardonnay, St. Francis Chardonnay, Sequoia Grove Carneros Chardonnay, Louis Jadot Meursault

TEACHING TECHNIQUE: Begin by talking about strong-flavored fish. Name a few (including a fish or two from their menu or regularly featured “specials”) and ask what you squeeze on fish to make them taste less strong. The answer, of course, is lemon. What does lemon have in abundance? Acid. The acid in the lemon cuts through the fish’s strong flavors, rendering it more palatable. When looking for wine to pair with strong fish, seek out examples that have enough acidity to stand in for the lemon and cut through the strong fishy flavors.

Mention the white-wine-with-fish rule and talk about the logic behind such a rule (white grapes tend to grow in cooler climates than red grapes and consequently tend to have more acid than red grapes). Talk about why such rules as WWWF aren’t always correct – red grapes grown in a cool climate would have similar levels of acid to white grapes grown in such a climate.

If the optional additional wine is used, then talk about low-acid white wine with fish matches – it’s not the color coding that makes the match work or not work, but the fish oil/wine acid contrast. The fish flavors may emphasize the wood flavors in the barrel fermented Chardonnay.

REVIEW OF THE MAIN POINTS COVERED:

1. Strong flavored fish needs a shot of acid (think lemons) to be more palatable.
2. Best wine bets for such foods are light, acidic wines (still or sparkling).
3. Forget color-coding wine with fish – not all white wines go with strong-flavored fish.
4. The stronger or oilier the fish, the more acidic the wine should be.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/REQUIREMENTS: Serve the wine cold. If smoked fish is used, take care not to serve too salty a fish. If fresh fish is used, cook it simply and serve it without a sauce. Accompany the fish with a lemon wedge.



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MODULE 4

GOAL: To learn how to pair wines with mild-flavored fish

SUGGESTED FOODS: Grilled ahi or mahi-mahi, served medium-medium rare, poached sole, cod or any other mild, white-fleshed fish. Garnish: side of strong-flavored sauce like dill dressing, honey mustard

SUGGESTED WINES: Unoaked whites and low tannic red wines. Pighin Pinot Grigio, Louis Jadot Mâcon-Villages, Domaine Carneros Pinot Noir, Louis Jadot Beaujolais Villages or Pinot Noir

TEACHING TECHNIQUE: Begin by talking about fish that are strong in flavor and those that are mild. Divide their menu offerings into these categories. Mild fish is more or less a canvas upon which the chef paints (much like chicken can be). Mild fish can pair well with a wide variety of wines. Talk about a basic ingredient-like a plain, mild, simply cooked fish-paired with a given wine. Then compare that food to the same one served with a strong sauce or cooked over an aromatic fire. What drives the match? Sometimes the ingredient, sometimes the method of preparation.

REVIEW OF THE MAIN POINTS COVERED:

1. Mild-flavored foods pair well with a variety of wines, both red and white.
2. When finding wines for mild flavored foods, determine where the tastes are coming from: the ingredient, the sauce or the cooking method – then match accordingly.
3. Forget the old rule of white wine with fish.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/REQUIREMENTS: When serving a meaty fish like tuna, take care not to overcook it. Make sure you sample the fish naked before tasting it with the strong-flavored sauce.



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MODULE 5

GOAL: To learn how to pair wines with red meat

SUGGESTED FOODS: Rare roast beef, rare steak plus a side of ketchup

SUGGESTED WINES: Big Cabernet or Barolo plus optional low tannin wine. Benziger Sonoma County Cabernet Sauvignon, Sequoia Grove Napa Cabernet Sauvignon, St. Francis Sonoma Cabernet Sauvignon, Michele Chiarlo Barolo

If ketchup is used, Louis Jadot Beaujolais-Villages can be tasted as a complementary wine.

TEACHING TECHNIQUE: Begin by talking about the rule of red wine with meat.

- Red wines have more tannin and ripe fruit than white wines.
- Astringent tannin is great for stripping fat off of the palate.
- The “sweet” ripeness of the fruit in many red wines matches the “sweetness” of the blood in rare meat.
- The tannins in wine are balanced by the proteins in red meat.

Taste the wine and food together and then talk about meats that aren’t fatty or bloody (veal, pork loin, fowl). Drive home the connection between fat and tannin – the less fat in the meat, the less tannic the wine needs to be. A rib eye or T-bone steak needs a “big” wine.

If tasting ketchup, go over the importance of determining what element in a given dish stands out the most – the ingredient, the sauce, or the method of cooking (with ketchup, it’s the sauce).

REVIEW OF THE MAIN POINTS COVERED:

1. The kernel of truth in the rule “red-wine-with-meat” is the connection between fat and tannin, and blood and ripe fruit. The less fat and blood in the dish, the less tannin and ripe fruit you need in the wine to make a good match.
2. Sauce/cooking method can have a dramatic effect on wine selection. Pay attention to the dominant taste on the plate.
3. It is possible to serve white wine with meat – provided the meat has minimal blood or fat.



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MODULE 6

GOAL: To learn how to pair wines with sweet foods

SUGGESTED FOODS: If Moscato is used: Sugar cookie with a side of apricot jam. If LBV Port is used: Not too sweet chocolate cookie with a side of chocolate sauce, dense brownie or chocolate cake with icing. Dark chocolate as opposed to milk chocolate should be used.

SUGGESTED WINES: Caposaldo Moscato, Taylor Fladgate 10 Year Old Tawny, Taylor Fladgate Late Bottled Vintage Port or Fonseca BIN 27. Plus any dry wine perhaps Cabernet left over from Module 5 (to contrast with the Port) or Chardonnay (to contrast with the Moscato)

TEACHING TECHNIQUE: Talk about desserts and dessert wines – the natural affinity for sweet with sweet. Mention how bad desserts can make dry wines taste (think about brut Champagne and wedding cake). Taste the dry wine with the dessert to drive home this point.

Desserts with dessert wines are easy to match, as long as you pay attention to the levels of sweetness (if the food is sweeter than the wine, it will make the wine taste dry). Taste the dessert wine alone first, then with just the cookie or just the cake. Next, increase the level of sweetness in the dessert using the jam/ chocolate sauce or icing until the dessert overpowers the wine – making the wine almost taste sour.

REVIEW OF THE MAIN POINTS COVERED:

1. Desserts and dessert wines have a natural affinity for each other. Always serve the wine prior to the dessert.
2. The key to finding great matches lies in matching the levels of sweetness.
3. Sweet food will make dry wines taste sour.
4. If you ever err on the side of one being sweeter than the other, make the wine sweeter than the food.



FOOD & WINE AFFINITY SEMINAR Continued

MODULE 7

GOAL: Show how the right wine can make food better

SUGGESTED FOODS: Poached chicken breast (no seasoning) and a lemon wedge, plus a pineapple glaze or tropical fruit sauce on the side

SUGGESTED WINES: A Sauvignon Blanc or Pinot Grigio and a Chardonnay. Benziger Sauvignon Blanc, Michel Redde Sancerre, Pighin Pinot Grigio, Benziger Sonoma County Chardonnay, St. Francis Chardonnay, Alta Vista Chardonnay

TEACHING TECHNIQUE: Taste the plain chicken with the Sauvignon Blanc. It's ok. Taste the plain chicken with the Chardonnay – most likely a better match. The flavors, richness and softer acid in the Chardonnay create balance and are complementary.

Squeeze the lemon on the chicken and taste the same two wines again. This time, try the Chardonnay first. It will probably taste either just ok or bad. Now try the chicken again with the Sauvignon Blanc. Notice how the addition of acidic lemon juice totally changes the match and makes the higher acid Sauvignon Blanc a better choice, by creating complementary balance.

Next try the two wines with chicken and the pineapple glaze. Note how the complementing tropical fruit of the glaze marries with the chicken and the Chardonnay.

REVIEW OF THE MAIN POINTS COVERED:

1. Notice how the sauce and the preparation of the food item are often more important in making the proper match with wine, than the main ingredient (chicken).
2. The flavors, richness and softer acidity of the Chardonnay work well with this plain protein but once more acidity was introduced (the lemon squeeze); the wine was not so good with the food.
3. Higher acidity wines match better with food with acidity.
4. Note how the tropical flavors in the Chardonnay are enhanced by the pineapple glaze.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: Confirm with the chef that you don't want any seasoning on the chicken.

Tropical Fruit Sauce

- 1 cup snipped assorted dried tropical fruit (such as mango, papaya and pineapple)
- 1 cup orange juice
- 2 T. apple cider vinegar
- ½ T. ground ginger
- ¼ cup pineapple preserves

In a small saucepan stir together fruit, orange juice, vinegar and ginger.
Bring to a boil. Stir in preserves. Remove from heat and let stand, covered, for 5 minutes.



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