

# Chocolate & Wine Pairing

Artisan chocolate is a very complex delicacy and some viticulturists believe it has an even greater array of flavor notes and intricate nuances than wine. So, it is no surprise that the two, like an irrepressible passion, were a romance destined for each other. Yet, choosing a chocolate and wine to marry can be a daunting prospect. *Don't let it be!* Chocolate pairing is *not* an exact science. There are no wrong choices. The only real concern is *your* personal preference.

Marco Paolo chocolate truffles can bring out the best characteristics of good wine, and vice versa. When pairing the two, these flavors can either embrace or repulse each other. Depending on the type of chocolate, extra bitter, bitter, semisweet, milk, and white, its sweetness can often clash with very dry wine making it taste acidic. It is a common practice to match chocolate with a wine that is comparably as sweet or sweeter, while keeping in mind that chocolates with a lighter flavor pair well with light-bodied wines, and those with intense flavors couple best with more full-bodied wines. However, a better approach is to look for a chocolate truffle with flavor notes that most closely match that of your wine. Recall that a *flavor note* = *aroma* + *taste*, and *richness* (see [Guide to Colorful Chocolate Descriptors](#)). The focus is on balance, so try matching either the characteristics of the truffle's outer chocolate shell or the duo of flavored ganache ingredients inside.

Remember to trust your own perceptions, for if you can at least please yourself, then certainly there will be others that feel the same way. And, above all, have fun researching it!

## Pairing Marco Paolo Chocolates with Wine

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A better suggestion is to look for a chocolate truffle with flavor notes that most closely match that of your wine. Recall that a **flavor note = aroma + taste, and richness** (see *Guide to Colorful Chocolate Descriptors*). The focus is on balance, so try matching either the characteristics of the truffle's outer chocolate shell or the duo of flavored ganache ingredients inside.

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## White Wines

Full-bodied white wine like a fruity Chardonnay or medium dry sparkling wines with descriptions such as Brut /Extra Dry/Extra Sec/Dry/Sec Champagnes work well with medium dark to milk chocolate, and especially white chocolate paired with sweet tangy fruit flavors, caramels, nuts, and especially vanilla like our *Pineapple and Burnt Caramel* or *Elderberry & Lavender Vanilla* truffle.

Dry acidic white wines such as Pinot Grigio, Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, and super dry Champagnes or Sparkling wines classified as Ultra Brut/Extra Brut/Brut Zero/Brut Nature/Brut Sauvage are great with sour tart fruits and darker chocolates that can mask the acidity and allow the herbal and tropical fruit flavor notes to emerge from the white wine. Chocolate is sweet and because these wines are very dry it can make them taste acidic, so only dark chocolates with very tart fruit combos like tamarind and pomegranate will hold up against these wines, unless you enjoy the sharp contrast of flavors. Alternatively, salty chocolates pair well with the sparkling wines that tend to cleanse the palate.

Fruity, less dry, or slightly sweet wines like Gewürztraminers, Reisling, and Viognier pair well with very sweet chocolate such as milk and white, like our *Pineapple and Burnt Caramel*, but will contrast well with dark chocolate truffles with lighter fruity and herbal ganache, like our *Coconut Cilantro with Dark Lime* truffle.

Sweet wines such as Sauternes and Ice Wine (Eiswein) surprisingly work well with stronger bolder and savory chocolate truffles such as those that pair well with full-bodied red wines or our fragrant *Elderberry & Lavender Vanilla* truffle.

## Red Wines

Full-bodied Cabernets, Riojas, and Malbecs, Bordeaux, as well as, are known for their depth of complexity and rich berry flavors among other flavor notes. Therefore, they pair very well with dark full-flavored truffles with savory ganaches such as chevre or parmesan that are accompanied with tangy tart berry fruits. The rich buttery chocolate will soothe the tannins in the wine revealing its usually subtle fruit and herbaceous qualities. *Morello Cherry with Chevre* truffle is a perfect match.

Zinfandels and Syrah, or Shiraz as it is called down-under, are admired for their prominent peppery, spicy blackberry, and cherry flavors often with flavor notes of bitter chocolate and coffee. It is easy to see why complex dark chocolates like our *Dark Lime with Red Chili Mango Gelee*, or *Red Berry Pink Peppercorn and Mint* bring out the rich fruit flavor notes in these wines.

Barolos, Brunellos, and Amarones are strong robust wines with a heavy tannin taste that enhances other intrinsic flavor notes such as violets, anise, chocolate, tobacco, cinnamon, raisins, mint, herbs, and plums. Only the darkest boldest chocolate truffles can match these flavor forces, therefore, *Tamarind Tea with Green Cardamom* or *Espresso with Anise Marzipan* just the ones to quell the tannins of these wines and release their myriad of flavor notes.

Medium bodied Merlots are soft, mellower wines than the full-bodied reds, but still have depth of character. They often have plum qualities that make them a perfect compliment with dark, not-too-sweet chocolates like our *Pomegranate with Aged Balsamic* truffle or *Lemon Basil Kiss*.

Light bodied reds like Beaujolais Nouveau and Pinot Noir accent both the fruit and the fruitiness inherent in some fine artisan chocolate. Because of their milder tannins they also pair well with subtler creamy ganache fillings such as our *Cilantro Coconut with Dark Lime* truffle.

## Alcohol Free Verjus

Verjus, the pressed juice of unfermented grapes is usually acidic, often used in cooking, and alcohol free. However, there are some very good quality verjus, like Sangiovese Verjus, similar to the classic Sangiovese wine though slightly sweeter and pair perfectly

well with chocolate truffles. Try pairing Sangiovese Verjus with more delicate truffles such as *Coconut Cilantro with Dark Lime*.