

## THAT LITTLE WINE BAR

### From James the Sommelier – Select and Serve

*‘Wine honors the soul, so honor it with yours’*

#### Select and Serve!

The etiquette of wine transfers into the selecting and serving of wine. Part of wine’s inherent character intermingles with food so often that it would be a shame if we, the humble receptacles, were to ignore such a match made in heaven. We should respect the fact that wine allows us to appreciate food more, after all when was the last time you went on a bender fueled only by wine. I’ll tell you... never. Nobody does it. Can you imagine Michelangelo’s ‘The Last Judgment’ being painted anywhere other than the Sistine Chapel? Exactly.

Selecting a wine to pair with food, then, is important. The old fashioned conception is to pair red meat with red wine and fish with white. Unfortunately, thankfully, unquestionably it is not that simple. A more exact generalization would be to pair the ‘weight’ of your wine with the ‘weight’ of your food. One of the reasons wine goes so well with food is that fats and proteins negate the tannins in wine creating a smooth, creamy and tasty compliment to a dish. The question is, what are the different weights? The table shows a rough list of wines ranging from the heaviest at the top to the lightest at the bottom.

Other tips could be that fruity wines go very well with spicy dishes and champagne is a great compliment to very delicate dishes. Whatever it may be, don’t be afraid to try things. Like many things cultured in life, wine is incredibly subjective and as long as you like the combination that is all that matters. Just keep track of what you try so that you don’t have go through the whole process again. Actually, on second thoughts ...

Now you have selected your wine all that is left is to serve it. I say, the sooner the better! Hardly any other drinking implement is as fiddly to open as a wine bottle so make the most of it. Open it in front of people, let them gaze at the mysteriously decorative label and wonder in amazement at the foreign words; it adds interest. Conform to wine etiquette and whether you’re a waiter or diner host, serve the ladies first- pour a glass until just over half full and don’t forget to twist, baby.

Lastly, there seems to be some trepidation among customers when asked to taste wine in the restaurant before it is served. It’s not complicated and it ensures that the bottle is not corked before pouring it all away into your glasses. Any good waiter will open the bottle in front of you and present the cork to the person who ordered. The cork is the key. If the cork is overly moist, dry, cracked, stained in any way there is a good chance that the wine will be bad. Smell the cork; this will give the first real proof that the wine is corked. Smell, swirl, smell, taste and then decide for definite if you need to change the bottle. Don’t be afraid to say so, the only other thing worse than wine smelling of cheese, fish or durian is it tasting of vinegar. We will sympathize.

**TIPS: Do your homework; [winespectator.com](http://winespectator.com) has a comprehensive list of wines. Keep track of what you drink and eat with a small notebook**

Zinfandel
Cabernet Sauvignon
Northern Italian wine
Bordeaux blends
Chianti
Merlot
Pinot Noir
Burgundian wines
Chardonnay
French whites
Sauvignon blanc

For more information about wine join our wine classes at That Little Wine Bar, 54 Chow Thye Road, George Town, Penang

Email [thatlittlewinebar@gmail.com](mailto:thatlittlewinebar@gmail.com) for details