

Ep 55 Ideal food and wine pairings with Sommelier and Author...

📅 Thu, 8/12 11:28AM ⌚ 36:51

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

wine, pairing, wines, pairings, flavours, people, book, drinking, jura, bit, dish, hot dog, food, wine pairings, tonic, tastes, claire, grape variety, sparkling wine, thought



SPEAKERS

Janina Doyle, Bert Blaize



Janina Doyle 00:07

Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me just cannot get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving wonderful world of wine. And wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you.



J

Janina Doyle 00:31

Hello to all you wine lovers. Now today I bring you a rather exciting episode as much as we all love wine. I am sure we equally love food and putting them together if we get that pairing right, is absolute heaven. So on today's podcast, we have Bert Blaize, who is one of the writers for *Which Wine When*, an amazing food and wine pairing book that will solve all of your problems in the kitchen. He is an absolute authority, certainly in London, Ex-Sommelier, turned Wine Consultant, building wine lists and training staff. He has his own wine shop, has made wine in Château Pesquié down in the south of Rhône. So he has a rather vibrant CV and we're gonna learn all about that. And, of course, some of his favourite pairings and recommendations. So we'll all be experts by the end of this. Now, as you know from yesterday's episode, as this is Season 2, this is the relaunch there's going to be episodes every day for this week, wish me luck. But also from that I want to get a little bit of enthusiasm and energy behind it. So I'm offering you guys a little bit of a competition. So you have till the 30th of August 2021 to leave a review and some stars on Apple podcasts. You just need to send me a screenshot of your review either by email: janina@eatsleepwinerepeat.co.uk or an Instagram handle [@eat_sleep_winerepeat](https://www.instagram.com/eat_sleep_winerepeat) and the winner will get a virtual wine tasting with me. So I will organise the wines, get them sent to your house. And then we'll have a little bit of fun on zoom, chatting about the wines and drinking them. Full details and instructions are in the show notes. So do go there. I wish you the best of luck and thank you in advance for those reviews. Right? Let's learn about food and wine together. Perhaps get a packet of crisps or some nuts because you are going to get hungry.

J

Janina Doyle 02:36

So hello, Bert Blaize, or should I call you Albert Blaize? Would you like to be more formal or informal today?

- B** Bert Blaize 02:43
Whichever you like, most people call me Bert. No one really calls me Albert actually.
- J** Janina Doyle 02:49
Does anyone call you Bertie?
- B** Bert Blaize 02:51
Yeah, people have just started doing that. It's become a thing.
- J** Janina Doyle 02:55
Ok this is a 2021 thing?
- B** Bert Blaize 02:58
Yeah, Bert, Bertie, whatever. But nobody calls me Albert.
- J** Janina Doyle 03:02
I'm gonna call you Bert because I know you as Bert. Okay, right. I think I should allow you to introduce yourself. You, when we met, we met when you were Sommelier in The Mandrake Hotel. But you've been at a few other little Michelin star places. I know from digging up a bit of history you even got Young Sommelier of the year. You've had a bit of fun and recognition. I don't know. Do you want to take us through a little story of how you got the wine bug? Should we do this now?
- B** Bert Blaize 03:27
Geez. Yeah, let's do it. Should we get back to the start?
- J** Janina Doyle 03:31
Oh I don't know. Where does it start? Where does it start?
- B** Bert Blaize 03:34
So, how I got the wine bug. So I studied computer game design at uni. Yeah, and then

went to work in computer games. This was my first ever job. Then I worked for Activision, which is pretty cool. I got paid to basically play video games. That was the first, that's kind of the job you get given, it's called a balance of you getting into video games, which is cool, but it's not as fun as it seems. It's pretty soulless. It's hard work.

J Janina Doyle 04:06

Oh yeah. I imagine really hard work. Yeah, playing computer games.

B Bert Blaize 04:10

Your thumbs get really achy. And so I left and moved back and just got a job in my local restaurant. Because obviously, you can just get a job in a restaurant and just to get a bit of money and to see what would happen until I found something. And I just, I got sent on a course. It wasn't WSET, it was kind of the equivalent Level one. Like you know, the basics, this is what a grape looks like, this is you know, how you make wine and what it tastes like. And I did that and I got the bug and I got back and I started teaching the rest of the guys what I'd learned. And then I got put forward and then got more responsibility and kept going and going. I was like, and I got chatting to one of the chefs in the kitchen. I was like I actually like this, like, can I do this as a career? He was like, yeah, of course you can like people, we need people like you in the industry right now, who actually give a damn and want to actually be in this long term. So then I worked my way up and did more courses. And I put myself through Level one, two and three WSET which I hated all the classes.

J Janina Doyle 05:15

Me too. Me too.

B Bert Blaize 05:17

Oh, my tutor was so boring and we're buying wine from like Tesco. And it was just so uninspiring. I did Level three, and I nearly said, I'm not going to work in wine anymore. Screw this. And I actually went back to being a restaurant manager and a general manager because I thought I don't want to be a Sommelier, I don't find wine that interesting, actually. And because, they just put me to sleep. And it just goes to show like, how valuable a good educator actually is. Yeah, we need more more good wine educators who make quite interesting, just like at school, like, you always remember your good school teachers even if like the subject, you weren't really that into it. It makes a difference in your life later on. So yeah, I did do the courses and then moved to London, because that's kind of what you needed to be at the time. This is 10 years ago,

Manchester just did not have a wine scene at all.

J Janina Doyle 06:07
Well it's changing now, isn't it? But yeah, I can imagine 10 years ago, it was probably a little boring.

B Bert Blaize 06:13
Yeah, it was awful. And I think it kind of coincided with the BBC relocating up there because it meant more people had more disposable income, wanted to go out to enjoy eating, rather than going out just to feel full and drink a huge 250ml measure of wine in a glass which I still can't, that's like a third of a bottle. I don't understand people doing that.

J Janina Doyle 06:33
It is slightly ungraceful.

B Bert Blaize 06:36
It's just mad.

J Janina Doyle 06:37
I just have a problem. When you go to those pubs where they serve the 250ml glass. They even have the measurement etched on the glass. And there's zero room at the top to swirl it around. It just is literally like drinking from a bowl. I don't know. But anyway, sorry for those of you that do it, do what you want. You are allowed.

B Bert Blaize 06:56
Oh yeah. Like nothing wrong with that, but like only yeah, I wasn't gonna get passionate about wine around there. But now it's changed a lot and now I look at like Leeds Manchester, Sheffield, Birmingham, Liverpool. Yeah, for sure. There's some there's there's a new generation of people who are doing really brilliant and fun things with food and wine so I would probably, if I, if it was this period, I probably would have stayed up there to be honest because it's an awesome city Manchester. But London was cool and then I just started working hard. Worked my way up as a Sommelier. Got my first real break in The Clove Club. Where, do you know, you know Guy Palmer-Brown right?

J Janina Doyle 07:31
The Clove Club is Michelin star as well as isn't it.

B Bert Blaize 07:35
Yeah, it was Michelin star. Yeah, it's had a star for a long time. And the two weeks after I started working there, it actually got voted in the top 50 which was pretty cool, in the world.

J Janina Doyle 07:47
Do you think that was you? Do you think you did it?

B Bert Blaize 07:49
In those two week periods? Yeah maybe not. But then, and then after year, we actually went up and we actually became best restaurant in the UK on the top 50 which was mad. Which, yeah, which is pretty cool. And yeah, moved on to The Mandrake where I met you.

J Janina Doyle 08:09
And everything changed forever.

B Bert Blaize 08:12
And everthing changed forever.

J Janina Doyle 08:14
Yeah. Okay. Complete lies. Carry on.

B Bert Blaize 08:16
No, no, I really fell in love with those crazy Atacama... No, actually, I was pouring those at The Clove club as well. I was doing it with a monkfish dish on the, on the wine pairing, that's where I fell in love with those wines, there absolutely fantastic.

J Janina Doyle 08:30

Okay, there we go, plug for Tara. There you go. They are the Chilean wines that I, that I sell, when I can.

B Bert Blaize 08:36
Exactly. I nearly got a trip there, and then...

J Janina Doyle 08:39
You should. We can talk about that.

B Bert Blaize 08:43
And then and then yeah, I did that competition that you mentioned, which I still don't know how I did it. But it was the first and only competition I entered. I was a bit bored in my job wasn't really getting challenged that much. And I just like, I want to, I was speaking to people and they were like, enter a competition, see where you place and see how you do and it'll give you motivation to kind of, when you fail and crash out and burn...

J Janina Doyle 09:06
when you fail?

B Bert Blaize 09:08
It'll give you, it'll give you motivation to learn more and push yourself a bit more because just having a bit of like a mad period, and then I went in and won it, which just made my head big and then, yeah, it had the opposite effect. I was like, oh I won it. Now you need to do another one. And then I never quite got around to doing enough competition. But yeah.

J Janina Doyle 09:25
No don't, leave it. You won that one. Like you need 100% success rate.

B Bert Blaize 09:31
Yeah, exactly. But yeah, it was cool. It was a Q&A at the start. You fill out a questionnaire. It was a quick Q&A of like, Burgundy appellations mainly and then it was a blind tasting of

six wines. And then the final was the final three of us and it was a panel of like Master Sommeliers and they were all sat at a table and it was a dish cooked. And they basically said find a wine that will pair and present it in front of the crowd, which was pretty cool. So I had to pour it at the table, explain the wine and introduce it. And then they marked it and they picked me for some reason. So that was pretty cool.

J

Janina Doyle 10:04

For some reason. Well, now you said that that was the grand finale, pairing a wine with a specific food. At this point, had you become a little bit food-wine obsessed? What was your feelings towards food?

B

Bert Blaize 10:20

So it really came from, yeah, definitely, definitely that was, that gave me a lot of confidence for food and wine pairing. But it was The Clove Club, where every single service, we'd have a different menu.

J

Janina Doyle 10:34

Every single service?

B

Bert Blaize 10:36

Yeah, dishes will change. And, yeah, whole main dishes would change. And we'd have about 20 minutes to find the wine pairing, running around the cellar. You know, chefs, they don't love that, you know, they don't give you any notice and go Hi guys, this is the menu for next week. Hope you're doing well. It's like no, we're changing the menu in 20 minutes get fine wines, this better work kind of thing. So yeah. So I'd look back at my little booklets. I had a pack of booklets with basically wine pairings and why they worked. And I rediscovered those and because we didn't really do tasting menus at The Mandrake. It was more bottle service, which is cool because The Clove Club was like 70% wine pairings probably in an average evening, you know predict what was going to happen. But yeah, it's intense, like every guest would have like six to eight wines and each need to be served at the correct time with the dish and explained and introduced and yeah, you ran a lot. It was cool. I loved it. It was really good and definitely got the book for food and wine pairing there. And then, Guy was obviously, you know, passed on a lot of his knowledge and wisdom to me, which I'm very grateful for and always will be. And he was very supportive of me moving on as well, which was great. But yeah, that's that's where I kind of got the bug for it and had loads of notes that I looked back on. And that kind of led me

to the, to the book, I guess, which was the version in a pub.

J Janina Doyle 12:00
Let's do it. So the book, it's not 100% written by yourself. You teamed up with Claire Strickett. I don't know Claire.

B Bert Blaize 12:08
That's, yeah, Claire's great. Um, she's worked within food and drink a long time, but she doesn't blow our own trumpet like me, so.

J Janina Doyle 12:16
Listen, blow it as much as you want. Who else will, right?

B Bert Blaize 12:21
I've got a big head but Claire is very modest. And she's absolutely amazing what she does. She's a brilliant writer. She's very clever. She's got a great palette as well. And yeah, I tried writing the book ages ago. This is when I first started at The Mandrake and I call it Juice and Junk. And I just got like laughed at by a lot of people, it was just wasn't very good. And I told Claire about it. And she's like, yeah, it's not very good, is it? Pretty much. And then we started working the concept together and we kept going for coffees and meeting up and like bouncing ideas off each other. I just bloody loved working with her. Like she, we just had such a good relationship. We never once fell out. We never want stepped on each other. We both listened to each other. I've never had a working relationship like it. So it was perfect. It was great. I couldn't have asked for any more from a work partner but yeah, she, me and her collaborated really well on the book and, and yeah, that's where it came about.

J Janina Doyle 13:19
So Which Wine When, do you find that you are more of the wine authority. And then Claire has kind of come and made sure it all sounds good. And it's written in a way that's comprehensive. Or actually she also comes back with some wine pairings as well.

B Bert Blaize 13:36
A bit of both. She's got a great palate. She eats out and drinks out a lot. But yeah, me

obviously my background wine. I've worked in restaurants and been surrounded by wine for most of my working career. So that's obviously my strength. And in Claire's strength is the food side and the writing. She's just a brilliant writer. So she, yeah, she would tidy up things as well. It's 100% it was 50/50 between the two of us. Wouldn't be the book it is without Claire, for sure. Just rambling about wine. So yeah.

J Janina Doyle 14:09

And you say you're you're the one that's always tooting your own trumpet. You sound rather modest to me right now, in this moment. You are doing well so far. Now. Tell me then, how do you personally go through this process of food and wine pairing, breaking down I guess the taste profile of the food first or the wine? How do you decide it's going to be a good food and wine pairing? What are you looking for?

B Bert Blaize 14:34

There's a lot of trial and error. I've done wine and food pairings on paper before and like they're definitely going to work, like we had this little almond tart. And I paired it up with a Macvin du Jura and I was like this is so gonna work. This is gonna be amazing. It's gonna come together.

J Janina Doyle 14:48

Because of the nuttiness and stuff.

B Bert Blaize 14:50

Oh yeah, exactly. Like the marzipan flavours coming through the Macvin du Jura, a little fruit and I tried it. It was just like, it was so boring. It wasn't doing anything. The tart was a little bit too buttery, and the Macvin du Jura didn't really have any acidity. And it just kind of made the whole thing kind of yeah, it was just a bit flabby and it just didn't work at all. And so it's a lot of trial and error. You could write down on pen and paper, the best pairing ever imaginable. And think, oh, that's gonna complement that and but until you try it and try it with the dish and the way that the chef's prepared dish you never actually know. So it's a lot of trial and error. And no matter how much experience you've had, you have to try it to know that it works firstly. But there's lots of different ways to present, to approach a pairing. You can think about a lot of the times, chefs have already given you ideas in the past they're like, take like venison. Like you're trying to think what flavours go well with venison. Well what flavours do chef's normally put on their plate next to venison? They go like, maybe a berry jus or some kind of sweet root vegetables. So you kind of,

ahhh, I know what kind of wines have those kind of flavour profiles. So maybe Pinot Noir would work quite well, from the New World, maybe that will compliment it quite well. And it isn't a fatty meat. So you don't need high tannins or high acidity. So you know, you know, you kind of approach it that way or you can see what the food is lacking. So like the classic one I always use is fish and chips. The first one you get fish and chips is you throw vinegar and fresh lemon all over it to cut through the grease, so you want to wine it's gonna cut through the grease essentially, that's what your palates craving. But then some great pairings like Manzanilla and fish and chips works really well. Wow. Yeah, I really, that's a great pairing.

J

Janina Doyle 16:39

Yeah, you know what, I'm gonna to, sorry, I'm gonna interrupt you for one second. You said about Manzanilla, going through your book, one of the interesting pairings I thought was Manzanilla Sherry with fried chicken, which I, it makes sense to me because again of the grease, but I don't know, I just never personally would have thought of a Sherry to go with fried chicken. So I think that's quite an unusual pairing.

B

Bert Blaize 17:03

Absolutely. So the, I think the best pairing with roasted chicken is Jura White. I think the nuttiness just, kind of the butteryness and like it just works so well with the chicken. It matches the texture and complements it, especially when you've got like a really like fatty chicken and like corn fed chicken that's full of flavour and it's already slightly nutty anyway. It just brings it out in a chicken, it works so so well. I never understood people pairing chicken with red wine before, it just it just doesn't work for me.

J

Janina Doyle 17:31

I'm a bit of a classic like well, white burgundy or obviously Chardonnay oaked probably you know, from the new world with a roast chicken, but you're gonna go Jura White. Now I rarely drink any wines from Jura. So okay, I might have to go and give that a go and see if I agree which of course I trust you but yeah, I should. I should probably give it a go right?

B

Bert Blaize 17:53

Well, now you're hanging out in places like Dalston and Shoreditch...



Janina Doyle 17:56

Ah stop it. Don't listen. Don't you be bringing out the cool side, that we had a conversation. Nobody listening here understands what we're talking about here. Okay, but for those, because there are a lot of people listening to this in America, and they won't understand that Dalston. Hackney, Shoreditch is the cool area in London where there's a lot of natural wine, there is a natural wine scene and I am being teased because obviously our Tara wine from the Atacama desert is a natural wine, but it doesn't taste crazy natural. But anyway, so they don't understand your reference to Dalston. Thank you.



Bert Blaize 18:28

I'm sorry. I keep forgetting we are having a, this is a podcast. That'd be a great wine pairing with the chicken as well, you know.



Janina Doyle 18:37

Yes, it would.



Bert Blaize 18:38

Yeah, the Manzanilla, I had it in Sanlúcar de Barrameda and they, in a really traditional tapas restaurant where they just basically take anything and everything out of the sea and they put it in batter and fry it and they bring it to your table, which is amazing. So I tried all kinds of weird and wonderful things out of the sea I didn't even know existed. And one of the things they brought to the table was some chicken, prepared exactly the same way. So we had some chicken and we're all drinking Manzanilla so that was the thing we're drinking, Manzanilla and tonic and it works so well. Yeah, Manzanilla and tonic, it is the best.



Janina Doyle 19:11

Oh, I know nothing. Okay, well...



Bert Blaize 19:15

Honestly, Manzanilla, a double measure 50ml of Manzanilla, it's basically make a gin and tonic, but with Manzanilla. It's lower in ABV. It tastes a million times better. It works better with the tonic. And its nutty. It's got more complexity than a gin and tonic and it doesn't get you as drunk so you can drink more like on a hot day in the park. Manzanilla and

tonic. Honestly, it's the best or Fino, you can get it obviously from Jerez instead. But yeah, honestly, it's it's one of my favourite drinks.

J

Janina Doyle 19:41

But the Manzanilla Sherry with fried chicken, you were having it as just Manzanita. Not with the tonic, right?

B

Bert Blaize 19:47

At the time, it was a blurry night, drinking it all in all different ways. But yeah, that's because we've got taken out by there via La Guita Sherry brand. So they actually took us to a cocktail bar that only did Manzanilla Sherry and cocktails as well. So the whole cocktail list was just cocktails using Sherry, which was awesome. But yeah.

J

Janina Doyle 20:10

I just find it. I mean, Manzanilla, or, you know, any of these Sherry's that are aged under flor. You know, for anyone who doesn't understand, that's like this layer of yeast. I find, I suppose the saltiness. So first of all the slightly salty nuttiness that you can get from that wine, I can understand definitely how it would pair with lots of the saltiness of seafood. That kind of makes sense, but I don't know, I just find it really intriguing that it would work with chicken and I wonder, I would have thought that you'd need a wine with much higher acidity. Obviously, typically, you don't get that acidity, but you do get the freshness vibe.

B

Bert Blaize 20:44

You do, you do especially for, with Manzanilla, because obviously you are closer to the coast. Yeah, the Palomino that grows there, you get the cool air coming in from the bay. You actually do get really nice freshness and good acidity structure in the wine. So, um, yeah, next time I see you, we're gonna, we're gonna try that.

J

Janina Doyle 21:02

Okay, there we go. Well, anyone who's listening, you now have a pairing that you need to try and then you could let us know. Did Bert get it right or not?

B

Bert Blaize 21:13

Not did Bert get it right? How good was it?



Janina Doyle 21:16

Oh, sorry. There we go. How good was it!



Bert Blaize 21:18

Honestly, I'm so confident in that pairing. It's one to try honestly.



Janina Doyle 21:22

Ok, well, how about another pairing from your book; Hot dog and Verdejo. Let's stick with another white wine of Spain. I thought that was a pretty cool pairing. And I would never have thought of that but it makes sense. Explain to everyone listening, why should they pair a hot dog with Verdejo?



Bert Blaize 21:41

Yeah, it's a bit of a weird one again, and I love those wines from North West Spain. I think, Verdejo is such a cool grape variety. I got into it through the wine producer Ossian first and they've got some of the some of the oldest vines in Europe. Some of the vines are 120 years old, pre phylloxera. And there's a winemaker called Ishmael Gonzalez. And he left and went to set his own agency called Microbio. Which I think The Winemakers Club bring into the country nowadays, it's cool, but he's gone completely wild rogue and natty. But great, but some of the wines are real gems and they're such a pure Verdejo. But um, yeah, I just found it really interesting because hot dog is is... Is it meat? What is it? It's kind of like...



Janina Doyle 22:29

Yeah, what is it? What's inside of it? I don't think we want to know.



Bert Blaize 22:32

No, like, I'm talking about like, not like a posh hot dog. Like when you go to like when you go to Bubbledogs and get those awesome hot dogs that are actually proper hot dogs. We're talking about, like the hot dog you have out of the tin. Yeah, that like I think the World Health Organisation classes it as like grade one or something like, you really shouldn't be eating them but, yeah, honestly, it's pretty grim. But um, but yeah, everyone has a guilty pleasures, everyone does stuff for fun. Yeah. But I just thought about like, what what do you normally put on a hot dog? What are the normal things, you normally go with

some onions, which compliment it. And kind of give, they kind of give the the hot dog some astringency. And this is what I was looking for from the wine, I needed to be quite fresh. And it needed to have texture to match up with, with the meats in quotation marks. So that's kind of why we, that's kind of why we went with it. And I think and what I, one of the things that I did in the book, is if there was a certain wine like Verdejo, who I don't think people are drinking enough of it, I would pair it with a food that's really really common that people have quite a lot. Because it was a conscious decision to get people to be drinking more of that wine. And plus if you'd like to just did like, I could have done, you know, like a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc with something that everyone has, like really, obviously in every day, you might just focus on that, but I really wanted people to explore the book. So each pairing either one of the wines is really recognisable, or one of the foods is really comfortable and recognisable. So to navigate it, it feels quite natural. And there's not like a niche food and wine together that people like yeah, I'm not probably gonna, I'm not gonna try that.

J Janina Doyle 24:09

Yeah. Okay. And also for anyone who doesn't know what Verdejo is, I would say obviously actually often blended with Sauvignon Blanc anyway, but as a style it is that, if you like Sauvignon Blanc or you like fresher whites or even Pinot Grigio and things like that, it's going to work. But it has these lovely kind of lemon and grapefruit flavours, doesn't it and a little bit of a grassiness but super fresh. It's totally underrated as a grape variety. So go and try it anyway. But definitely why not with a hot dog? You know, that's what Saturdays and Sundays are for.

B Bert Blaize 24:39

Absolutely, yeah. And the Ossian Verdejos that used to have, they were great because they're almost slightly oxidised as well. And they had that same kind of oxidation you get with like high quality Burgundy's as well, that you'd pay a lot more, a lot of money for. And so you get really good value for money I think with Verdejo wines.

J Janina Doyle 24:56

There you go, top tip for everyone. So what's your perfect pairings? Do you actually have a few that are just like, oh my god, melt in mouth. This is what I'm going to do if I'm ever going to show off to somebody.

B Bert Blaize 25:07

No, not really. I don't have like a hit. I'm not like, you know, I don't like you know, like, have like a hit song I think more like a more like an album kind of guy like I've got like a lot to share. I haven't got that like that hit song that like, maybe maybe it's fish and chips and English sparkling wine, just because it fits, you know.

J

Janina Doyle 25:26

Blanc de Blanc, a Chardonnay, right?

B

Bert Blaize 25:29

Absolutely, because it's just like, it's so British. And it's so funny. And it just works and

J

Janina Doyle 25:35

Zing! Zest!

B

Bert Blaize 25:35

Exactly, and English sparkling wines are not cheap. And fish and chips is, so it's great because you can basically sit on the sofa and eat your fish and chips out of a wrapper and have a wonderful glass of English sparkling and not feel guilty and it's a great way to enjoy it. And yeah, I think the wine really comes alive because the acidity in English sparkling wine in some cases, if you drink it's like on its own, can be a little bit harsh for some people. I love it because it just cleanses your palate and it's clear, it's great.

J

Janina Doyle 25:57

Like a lemon sorbet sort of thing.

B

Bert Blaize 26:10

Yeah, exactly. But I think for some people, it does need a bit of fatty food and the wines really come to life and you realise like, a normal glass of white wine would just feel really flabby next to this, this greasy fish and chips. So I think it really comes to life. So yeah, I really I really love that as a pairing. I think I think that's great. But yeah, I haven't got like perfect pairings. They're pretty hard. And then and then everyone's palates obviously different. So some people might go, I absolutely hate English sparkling wine.



Janina Doyle 26:37

How could they? How could they? That's not a thing. It's not allowed.



Bert Blaize 26:45

Definitely not.



Janina Doyle 26:46

Anyway. Yeah. Well, I'll tell you one of my favourite pairings that I had a moment with. It was just it was a Vermentino from Sardinia and it was a Mussels spaghetti and really zingy and loads of lemon over it and, and parsley. And I was totally in heaven. That was something that was divine. No, yeah, that's just one that's popped to my head. But you know, I have a whole album as well. I'm not just a one hit wonder, either.



Bert Blaize 27:13

No, no, no, it but it is so rewarding when you find that that one pairing that makes you happy because a lot of people, I think a while ago, somebody gave me a shout out about the book. And then they had a few comments, like, majority of them are all cool, looks great. I'm gonna get it. And I think like two people is like, it's that one thing, right? When you get like 100 good reviews that the two you always like overanalyze and like, that aren't very good. And when someone put like, I've never understood food and wine pairings, I just don't get it. I don't see the point of this book. I'm like, well if you have not had a really amazing food pairing. Like of course you're not gonna understand it, but it's so rewarding. It makes this, a little bit of happiness just making, you know taking something you already do, taking a delicious dish that you already made. And yeah, you already buy wine and why not buy the wine that's gonna sing with this dish and make you happy. Like it's, you're not actually having to spend any more money or any more time, you're just changing and getting the right wine. I think it's such a cool thing to do. And it's so rewarding.



Janina Doyle 28:08

When you get it right, the food tastes better and the wine tastes better, like this one pairing I had. So if anyone wants to try Vermentino and they haven't. It's again another zingy high acidity, grape variety. And it's lovely that kind of grapefruity and lemon flavours and it's got a slight nuttiness and a saltiness. The best, the best if you want, well, there's lots of places to get it from but Vermentino di Gallura is a DOCG and it's a higher

quality and tends to be a little bit richer and rounder. And that's what I was drinking. And it was that, it brought out the saltiness of the mussels and the lemon squeezed all over the fish just kind of, you know, again, it was strong enough to match the wine and they just kind of blended together so perfectly. I just it was actually just a moment when I thought oh my God, I've actually done it, like spot on, the fish in this food has never been as good. Yeah, anyway, enough of that. There you go, try some Vermentino. Any unusual pairings that, well we've mentioned a few already, like the Verdejo and the hot dogs, have you got any that people go, urgh, that would never work and then are really surprised.

B

Bert Blaize 29:08

I actually was trying to think of this, but it's just it's just trial and error. I've had so many ones that like I actually thought we're going to be perfect and work together and didn't, you never know. You never know when it's gonna catch you off guard. But you will you always have some idea.

J

Janina Doyle 29:23

So what about with eggs? Eggs are such a hard one to pair often.

B

Bert Blaize 29:28

Eggs are hard. Yeah. Yeah, Eggs are hard. There is a little group of vegetables and...

J

Janina Doyle 29:34

Yes, and artichokes?

B

Bert Blaize 29:36

Yeah. And asparagus. I always get asked, oh what are you pairing.

J

Janina Doyle 29:40

Oh asparagus, I feel like obviously Sauvignon Blanc is kind of a general...

B

Bert Blaize 29:46

Yeah the green flavours. For some reason people find it hard to pair, I don't know.

J

Janina Doyle 29:51

Prosecco. You know, Prosecco gets such a bad rap from a lot of people. And of course, yes an £8 Prosecco it, just knock it back, have fun and whatever. But as you get into the higher qualities in Valdobbiadene and up in, to the Cartizze, the Grand Cru, I think they can be, have some really complex flavours and I think they go well with a whole range of vegetables and I think, would you agree or not, that top end Proseccos can handle artichokes quite well and...

B

Bert Blaize 30:18

I definitely think that whenever I was struggling with a food pairing, I would always approach it from a fizz point of view because it just does something different to your palate and it adds a different complexity to your palate. And it refreshes and the carbonation helps the flavours to travel and to cleanse your palate as well, if you've got something unusual on your palate, so yeah, definitely 100% that's why everyone always goes for champagne. You can even, if you're stuck in a wine pairing situation, or you don't want to get for dinner, get champagne, you can drink it with anything. I had it with a steak before, it works great. I've had it with tartar, I've had it with vegetable dishes, whatever. It's just great. Obviously, if you can afford it, obviously, I definitely can't at the moment, but yeah.

J

Janina Doyle 31:04

Well, as my listeners will know, we did an episode on Cap Classique, recently. And also in Crémant of course, you know, from the different areas of France or Luxembourg, if you want to add that one in, but Cap Classique as a whole, I mean, you know South Africa, they just are really embracing that as a category and when you can, from the £10 level get a pretty decent lees aged, traditional method sparkling wine. I mean, they are my champions. Obviously I'll always be English at heart, but we need money for the English sparkling wine and what's coming out of South Africa, you know if you need a good sparkling wine, that's where I'm going to go.

B

Bert Blaize 31:40

Yeah, I completely agree. I visited, and one of the best I found was Le Lude there. They're fabulous wines and so affordable. They're just outside Franschoek. I was staying with friends and the guys that make the Terracura wines in the Swartland and they said it's one of the best at the moment and they, they really recommend it. I don't, I think it was just about to come on to the UK market at the time. So it might be on their now as this was a

few years ago. But yeah, it's a beautiful vineyard. Very clever winemaker there and they did, they do the...

J Janina Doyle 32:13
Never tasted.

B Bert Blaize 32:14
You've never tasted? Try the Blanc de Noir expressions, I think they're the best. I think they're really nailing the red expressions their really well and it reminded me of like a, like Agrapart or like a Pinot Noir dominant grower champagne. Fantastic.

J Janina Doyle 32:31
I've definitely, I've seen the bottles and anyone who said Le Lude, it's two separate words like Le and then Lude, because they've got the great etching in to their glass. So I'll have to look to see if we've got that in the UK. And again, maybe see if it's in America for anyone who's listening there. But yeah, okay, Le Lude. There you go, everyone, you need to try that. Now, I just want to touch on Which Wine When, your wonderful book. Anybody who hasn't got it, do go and get it. What I, I love, I don't even know, it's so complex that you've gone into all these different sections. So you've got your classic pairings, then you have wine basics, and you even describe regions. And so people can really from the beginners point of view and upward really get to know wine and the breakdown of food. And then the thing that I love the most, you have that, 'at a glance' sections. So you break down, what do you have? You have all the Asian food at a glance. You have dessert at a glance and even pies. So British. That, was that really complex to create there, for anyone who hasn't got the book, it's like a, it's like a chart, you've created a chart of all these different wines that are going to go with all these different styles of pies and all these different styles of pastas. Was that really quite complex to put that together in a visual aspect?

B Bert Blaize 33:46
Umm yeah, when we're writing Which Wine When, we had loads of pairings kind of, which sounded very similar. So like with the pie ones, it just kind of changed with the filling. Yeah, and the editor was kind of like, I don't know what we're gonna, you know, a lot of these are very similar. And we kind of came up with it. And I actually just sketched something out in my sketchbook, as a kind of a map. Claire sent me a reference of like, wouldn't it be amazing if we could do something like this from a book that she found. And it was, it is

ours is very, very different to the example if any bo's are listening, it's very, very different to that example, but I sketched something out included all these pairings and I, it was something that happened on the journey on the way, it happened quite naturally because I had already had all these pairings ready. And it was just about ordering them correctly. And then Tegan Hendel who is a brilliant graphic designer who designed the cover and the book. She also designs all the P Franco posters as you might have seen those. She's yeah, she does really bold, like really interesting, beautiful typography posters. And she was like that, when we when we had to find a designer for the book. She's like the first one but she translated those sketches that didn't, into these diagrams and shaded them and they happened really naturally but I'm really proud of them and it's the one thing that most people always comment on because you know like if you get..

J Janina Doyle 35:15
They are brilliant.

B Bert Blaize 35:17
A takeaway, it's like obviously a load of different dishes and you can just glance at it and just have a bit of fun and the pizza one as well, that's the other one that people's go crazy for.

J Janina Doyle 35:26
Yea pizza. I think it's amazing, people need to get this, so everyone it's called Which Wine When, bright and vibrant orange colour, you can't miss it and I think it's definitely super useful for beginners and professionals alike. I found it super useful and it's quite inspiring to think okay, now I'm going to try this grape variety with that dish. So everybody go and get that book. Now. Done.

J Janina Doyle 35:57
So, for the rest of the episode, you shall have to wait till tomorrow, a little preview we are talking about one of Bert's favourite wine regions and that is Tuscany. Now as always, I like to leave you with a wine quote. And this one is from an American called Clifton Fadiman. And he says:

J Janina Doyle 36:18
"If food is the body of good living wine, is it soul."



Janina Doyle 36:22

Ummm, it certainly is. Right all you lovely lot. Get yourselves in the kitchen and start pairing and don't forget to share, subscribe, get people involved. I hope you're looking forward to this competition. And I shall see you again on another episode of Eat Sleep Wine Repeat. Cheers to you.