

On January 12th Diane Kean presented a wine and food tasting

This was not a wine tasting in the usual sense, but rather a chance to give the participants an opportunity to analyze how various wines affected the taste of certain foods and vice versa.

The meeting began with an introduction to some of the basic tastes found in wine. Four prepared solutions were used to help identify sugar, acid, alcohol and tannin. Food samples were provided to help contrast depth of flavor. Lettuce and spinach did this nicely and fresh green apples were contrasted with dried apples. This provided good example of the difference malo-lactic acid fermentation could have on a wine. A red table grape was used to get a feel for grape tannins. By peeling the grape we were able to isolate the bitter tannin flavor of the skin from the grape pulp. Red wines are especially abundant in grape tannin since they are fermented on the skins to get color and tannin in the wine.

Three flights of wine were served and each was compared to a selection of foods appropriate for the wine. The first flight was a Riesling and a Barbera Asti. These wines provided a great bit of discussion among members as they formulated their favorite combo. Generally it was observed that the Parmesan and Gorgonzola, higher fat content cheeses, were best appreciated with the Barbera a richly tannic wine. The Gouda and Brie were most appreciated with the lighter style of the Riesling. Not everyone agreed about what was a perfect match and order had to be restored to the room.

The second flight was a Pinot Noir and a Pinot Grigio paired with three vegetable dishes: a mushroom tart, Hummas with pine nuts and olive Tapinad. The red and white wines were markedly different even though they are relatives by nature. Tasters enjoyed identifying the components of the wine from the introduction and the vegetables helped establish a favorite food combination. The Hummas seemed be consistently paired with the Pinot with great success.

The third flight of wines was a Muscato and a Tawny Port. These are the sweetest of the wines served and they were paired with dessert foods. Scottish shortbread, Biscotti, chocolate wafers and Brie. The Tawny Port was most easily identified by the high alcohol taste. There did not seem to be any clear favorites in the combinations. All provided a good finale for the event.

The wines, source of purchase and price were:

Kabinett Riesling from Trader Joe's \$6

Michele Chiarlo Barbera D'Asti from World Market \$12

Mirassou Pinot Noir from World Market \$10

Barefoot Pinot Grigio from Food Lion \$5.50

Dow Tawny Port from World Market \$12

Sutter Home Muscato from Food Lion \$5.50

The two "Starter Wines" were

Akku Chardonnay from Work Market \$7

Black Mountain Sauvignon Blanc from Trader Joe's \$6