

COLLIN'S COLUMN

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Sake: Pairings (First Attempt)

by Collin Williams



This article is my first attempt to apply what I know about wine pairings to sake. I have studied a few articles relating to this unique dining experience, but am by no means an "expert" yet. Also, I have noticed there is a widespread lack of focus in this arena as I do not recall ever seeing a sake - pairing class or sake pairings on menus at any local restaurants.

Through these studies, I took into account that many of the rules are the same as they are in wine:

- 1) Only drink what you like and are comfortable with
- 2) Either try to pair like flavors or contrasts
- 3) The weight of the sake should match weight of the food

However, since sake is a different animal entirely, you must keep in mind a few elements of the beverage:

- 1) Sake is "generally" extremely dry. Most spicy dishes will overpower the flavors in the beverage.
- 2) Sake can be very potent on the alcohol front. Spicy dishes may exacerbate the alcohol sensation.
- 3) Often times, the flavors in sake relate more to herbs and minerals than fruit. So, meals heavy on herbs or vegetables may work perfectly.

See below for my recommendation for a great sake and its complementary dish:

Fukucho "Moon on the Water"
Junmai Ginjo Sake (45% grain polished)
 16.5% ABV, 1.4 acidity
 \$17.55 cash - 300ml
 CW - "3.5 of 5"; Soft and delicate

Tasting Notes:

Very clean on the nose with ripe guava, melon, and mineral. Palate is heavy, making for a "creamy" consistency. The flavors are mineral and herbal throughout which combines nicely with the soft and delicate mouthfeel. Excellent.

Info: -88pts International Wine Cellar; ("Moon on the Water") is rather Chablis-like . . . rich and soft in the mouth."



Herb and Sesame Scallops with Orange and Fennel Salad

Recipe courtesy Rachael Ray, 2008

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley leaves
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh thyme, 6 sprigs
- 6 tablespoons toasted sesame seeds
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- 1 head fennel, thinly sliced, plus fronds
- 12 sea scallops, pat dry, check to make sure the foot has been removed
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil



Orange and Fennel Salad:

- 1 navel orange, cut into wedges
- 1/2 lemon, zested and juiced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Extra-virgin olive oil

Directions

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.

Combine parsley, thyme, sesame seeds, lemon zest, and fennel fronds. Season scallops with salt and pepper. Roll the sides of the scallops in herb mix. Coat a cast iron skillet or a nonstick pan with olive oil, about 2 tablespoons. Place scallops in hot skillet and sear about 2 minutes per side until the scallops are opaque and firm.

Orange and Fennel Salad:

Place the orange wedges and fennel into a bowl. Zest and juice the lemon over the orange and fennel. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper and drizzle with olive oil. Toss gently and place onto serving plates.

Place seared scallops on top.

Sommelier Analysis:

The herbacious characteristics in this sake and the meal should complement each other creating a seamless balance on the palate. Also, the citrus in the dish makes a fresh accompaniment to the beverage. I like the relation of medium bodied seafood to a medium - full bodied sake. "Moon on the Water" should hold its own nicely.



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 with feedback.