

Women in WINE



Typical wine lunch at one of the Peach gastro pubs

A trip Jo particularly enjoyed was to Portugal's Douro area where she found fruity red wines for her winter list, although she was not able to give port producers much hope on sales. "No one under 60 buys it," she sighs. "The young order vodka or other drinks they prefer."

A strong constitution is needed to survive such trips – tasting the products of a dozen wineries each day plus heavy meals with more wines. But even more challenging is

answering the wineries' questions on how to sell their wines in world markets and how they compare with other wines. Jo feels it is hard for visiting buyers and sommeliers to have to bring the bad news to these eager winemakers and tell them that the world market is highly competitive, especially in the price conscious UK.

Screw cap closures is a development Jo welcomes. With corks there was always a 4 to 5 per cent possibility of a wine suffering from cork taint. The customer was not always knowledgeable enough to realise this, and just thought the restaurant was selling them a nasty wine. Jo believes her customers don't come to her restaurants to do complicated wine and food pairings. It's more a steak and good glass of wine approach.

Her wine list, therefore, has brief, off-beat and to the point tasting notes. A Chateau du Gaboupet 2008 from Provence is termed 'St Tropez: in a glass'; a Côtes du Rhône Villages, Les Granges Hautes St Cervais is 'peppery, spicy, Southern French red, great with char-grilled dishes'; Valengay 2009, Sebastian Vaillant is a 'really drinkable alternative to Sancerre' while Pepoul de Pinet, Domaine des Lauriers is 'bone-dry, zesty and refreshing. My husband drinks gallons of this at home – responsibly of course'. Jo's own preference at home is German Riesling which she wishes would come back into favour. ♦

WINE Tasting

Shining the Spotlight on Sauternes with Indian Flavours

Marisa D'Vari explores a new trend where sweet Sauternes and Barsac wines are paired with the unusual flavours and textures of Indian fusion cuisine by Chef **Maneet Chauhan** at Vermillion in New York



Ripe grapes with noble rot

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WINE Tasting

restaurant in an eye-popping, modern, red lacquer space, offering Indian and Latin fusion cuisine. Recently, journalists and sommeliers were invited to Vermilion to take part in a tutored wine tasting presentation, and lunch featuring Sauternes from top chateaux, with many producers such as Jean-Jacques Dubouche of D'Arny-Daëne and Marie-Louise Schyler of Château Suduiraut present.

"Sommeliers around the globe are beginning to recognize that many First and Second Growth wines from Bordeaux are quite affordable, and pair well with a variety of dishes," said Schyler. "In fact, Sauternes wines are perfect for Indian food as they are fresh, fruity, floral and sweet, but the sweetness is followed by a freshness that does not give an immediate impression of something heavy."

Maneet Chauhan planned the four-course lunch in such a way as to showcase as many styles of food and wine pairing as possible. She began by tasting the different wines to gauge their level of sweetness and body, which is often a result of both the winery's signature style as well as the vintage. The sweeter, fuller-bodied wines were paired with 'bolder' foods and the lighter, slightly drier wines were paired with 'cool' dishes. The first course offered two contrasting dishes which were paired with two different styles of Sauternes. For example, the cool Crab Salad (with salmon caviar, watercress juice, and seasoned vermicelli) was paired with the lighter **Château D'Arny-Daëne 2007** while the spicier, warmer Pami Puri (the Indian savoury or *chaat* made-up of flour shells, potato, and chilli mint water) was paired with the heavier, slightly more mature **Château Guiraud 2005**.

In the same way, the seafood course of two contrasting dishes saw Blue Corn Crusted Scallops, *kaffir* lime, Calabasa, and Coconut Cheese Purée paired with **Château Siglas-Robaud 2001**, because of the lighter weight, while the Caldeirada de Peixe (Brazilian Seasonal Seafood Stew) was paired with **Château de Myrat 2001** because of its spice, heavier weight, and style. The entrée was a single course of lobster –



Executive Chef Maneet trained at the Welcogroup Graduate School of Hotel Administration, one of India's top culinary and hotel management schools and the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park. She has cooked her way through many of India's finest culinary establishments and joined Vermilion at its inception, bringing creativity, passion and drive to her job at the restaurant.



From Mumbai to Manhattan, the new international trend among savvy sommeliers is pairing at least one course with a sweet wine such as Sauternes. Now you may already choose Sauternes as your 'go to' wine when it comes to a classic first course pairing such as foie gras. Yet why keep this exquisite, golden-hued beauty in your cellar when it deserves star treatment for every course of a meal? Let's take a closer look at Sauternes, exploring its unique history to show how one of Manhattan's most creative chefs finds it the perfect pairing for her new take on modern Indian-Latin fusion cuisine.

Understanding Sauternes Champagne may reign as the celebratory beverage when family and friends mark good times, but in Bordeaux the wine traditionally served is a refreshing glass of chilled Sauternes. According to Fabrice Dubouche of D'Arny-Daëne, its golden, scintillating colour signals opulence and luxury, setting a positive and even regal tone for the dinner or party to follow.

The magic of Sauternes occurs every autumn, in the area where the cool spring-fed Citron river meets the warmer Garonne river south of Bordeaux. As a result of the differing temperatures of the rivers, a fog develops, enveloping the vineyards and encouraging the development

Lobster Portuguese stewed in Coon-style gravy with Coconut Rice and Eggplant Chip Tomatillo Chutney. This was paired with **Château Coutet 1998** again in keeping with the weight, spice, and intensity.

Indian cuisine has some wonderful, exotic aromas that come from the various spices used for very flavourful dishes," says Aline Baly, of Château Coutet, one of the oldest properties in Barsac with historic origins dating back to 1643. "These spices, including chilli pepper, cumin and coriander, result in savoury dishes that contrast with the wines' sweetness. At the same time the use of cinnamon and ginger complements the same notes often found in aging Sauternes. Playing off each other, both contrasting and complementing our wines' aromas, Indian dishes bring a multitude of complex flavours to our palate, adding a new dimension of textural experience. Indian food is an optimal match for exploring the versatility of Sauternes. Each dish accentuates a unique note or characteristic in these complex wines."

With dessert, the two-plate motif returned once again and Chef Chauhan chose **Château Climens 1986** to pair with Mango Shrimp, Port Tapioca and Fennel Mango Chutney, in the spirit of matching the intense sweetness of the wine with the flavours on the plate, while **Château Suduiraut 1975** had a more classical pairing with Stilton cheese, *chanaur por gatan* brittle and candied spice nuts.

Chef Chauhan's pairings were both innovative and inspired. Bernice Lurton of Château Climens noted that the New York City event was an eye-opener for many people regarding the versatility of Sauternes, especially with Indian and Asian cuisines. International wine writer, Ian D'Agata, adds that Sauternes makes a magnificent pairing with scallops, shrimp, salmon and other fish dishes depending on their preparation. So whether you are pairing a lighter, fresher, crisper Sauternes with a 'cool Crab Salad' or matching the textures and substance of richer dishes with an older vintage and a richer, more complex style, the time is now, to shine the spotlight on Sauternes. ♦

of the fungus Botrytis Cinerea (noble rot) on the already ripe grapes. Over several days the moist early morning fog encourages the grapes to continue to shrivel and rot, while the afternoon sunshine completes the desiccation process which concentrates the sugars. Workers make several trips through the vineyards to pick grapes at the optimum moment, with 'optimum' being the key word. For centuries, jittery owners have struggled with the dilemma of whether to hold out for more botrytized grapes and risk destruction from hail and rain, or to play it safe with an early harvest that may have less concentrated sugars.

Value-for-money luxury Compared to their red Bordeaux counterparts, first and second growth Sauternes offer luxury value. Trendy restaurants across the globe are taking advantage of reasonable prices and increasing consumer demand to put more Sauternes on their wine lists, with sophisticated sommeliers realizing it should be paired with dishes during the progression of the meal, not merely at its end. And in keeping with today's more adventurous as well as health-conscious diners, sommeliers are turning to lighter, spicier dishes that pair well with Sauternes.

In Manhattan, no one follows this practice better than Maneet Chauhan, executive chef at Vermilion, a chic