

Versatile Merlot

When cooking a meal that consists of multiple courses for a couple of people (a romantic dinner for example), it is not always practical to pair each course with a different wine. Yet at the same time it is essential that the pairings throughout the meal are complementary.

Why not choose a wine that pairs not only with the entrée and main course, but also with the dessert? The versatile and food-friendly range from Creation Wines has been innovatively paired with an eclectic and diverse range of cuisines since the inception of our celebrity chef series, and this week it is the turn of Chef Coco Reinartz of Sel et Poivre, who we work with closely in both Johannesburg and Durban.

Chef Coco took time out from his busy schedule to help organise and produce a world-class food and wine pairing for a client of ours hosted at the exclusive Faircity Quartermain Hotel situated in Morningside. The menu for the evening was another triumph in pairing food and wine, the climax undoubtedly being the dessert course – Frozen Chocolate Parfait with Pear Compote served with the Creation Merlot 2012.

As we are celebrating Merlot this month, we decided it would be a great idea to suggest an all Merlot winter menu, with all three courses paired with the versatile Merlot 2012 from Creation. For the entrée, there was no contest – it had to be our famous:

Cauliflower and Gorgonzola Soup with Herbed Sourdough Croutons.

A perfect pairing if ever there was one. The subtle earthy flavour and warmth of the cauliflower help to soften the tannins and enrich the mouthfeel of the wine, while the salty Gorgonzola highlights the berry fruit notes in the wine

through contrast.

For the main course we selected Chef Zola Nene's Slow Roast Lamb Shoulder with Butternut and Potato Dauphinoise.

The wine is robust and can stand up to the full flavours of the slow cooked lamb. The spicy rub perfectly matches the spicy notes of the Merlot, while during the long cooking process, the onions and lamb juices soak up the flavour of the wine and the flavours intensify, making the sweet fruity notes more pronounced. All in all the wine and food don't overpower each other, but enhance each other and become more complex with each bite of the dish and each sip of wine.

And then for the pièce de résistance: Chef Coco Reinartz's Frozen Chocolate Parfait with Pear Compote.

The chocolate parfait dusted with cocoa, decorated with pomegranates and served with pear compote is just an ideal pairing with the 2012 Creation Merlot. The chocolate picks up on the mocha, coffee elements in the Merlot while the pomegranate and pear pick up on the fruity elements. All the flavours and textures, from velvety chocolate to jewel-like pomegranate and golden pear have a sublime richness and yet a delicacy to them – definitely a food and wine combination fit for kings and queens!

Multi-faceted like a finely cut ruby in the glass the Creation Merlot 2012 entices with a bounty of fruity and spicy aromas on the nose, while the palate rewards with dark chocolate and mocha notes that combine with ripe berry flavours. The wine has a firm structure derived from judicious maturation in French oak barriques. [CLICK HERE](#) to order yours now, and recreate this wonderful winter menu at home.

WHY MERLOT THRIVES AT CREATION

Merlot, one of the world's most difficult cultivars to grow has a home among nine other cultivars at Creation on the Hemel-en-Aarde Ridge. [CLICK HERE](#) to read more.

KLINK AWARDS: NOMINATE NOW!

It's KLINK time again and you can nominate your favourite wine estate at www.klinkawards.co.za. In the inaugural (2012) KLINK Awards, Creation won the Yin and Yang category for Best Food & Wine Pairing. If you think we deserve this award again, do nominate us now!

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