

PASSPORT SERIES 2017 TASTING NOTES

I had the opportunity to attend a wine and food pairing seminar to taste the commercial equivalents to this year's limited release wines. The tasting was vegetarian friendly but keep in mind that many of these wines would pair wonderfully with meat dishes. Below are my notes from the tasting:

* These are my personal opinions on the wine and food pairings



RIESLING

AUSTRALIA, CLARE VALLEY

Release Date: Jan 2017

TASTE: I found this wine very light and fresh. It had a strong apple flavour with hints of lime.

FOOD PAIRING: This wine was paired with a cold nacho dish which included salted tortilla chips, fresh tomatoes, black beans, onion, cilantro and avocado. On the side they served a spicy salsa and sour cream for dipping.

WINE WITH FOOD: This wine paired nicely with the nacho plate. I found the flavour got sweeter with the salty-ness of the chips and the spicy salsa, but with a bite of the creamy avocado and sour cream the wine almost disappeared.

This wine would pair wonderfully with many light dishes, but would also be great to drink on its own.

This wine should be consumed within one year, as it is best consumed young.



CABERNET SAUVIGNON ROSE (one of my favourites!)

CALIFORNIA, SACRAMENTO COUNTY

Release Date: Feb 2017

TASTE: I found this rose to have a strong strawberry flavour, with hints of other dark berries as well. It was very light and fresh as well.

FOOD PAIRING: This wine was paired with a Greek salad made up of lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, green and black olives and feta cheese.

WINE WITH FOOD: The Greek salad was a wonderful pairing for this rose, but I would probably leave out the olives because they seemed to overpower the wine.

This wine would be great with anything **FETA!** Think: feta bruschetta, spinach and feta stuffed chicken, etc.

This wine is meant to be a spring/summer wine and should be consumed young. Once it arrives in February, you should have it gone by October!



SYRAH

FRANCE, LANGUEDOC

Release Date: Dec 2016

TASTE: I found this red wine to have a peppery taste to start with a very fruit forward after taste.

FOOD PAIRING: This wine was paired with pecorino cheese and 70% dark chocolate.

WINE WITH FOOD: I found that the wine tasted even better with a bite of the pecorino cheese, but with the chocolate the flavour of the wine almost disappeared (which is strange for me - because I LOVE dark chocolate paired with red wine!)

This wine is a VERY meat forward wine and would be great with many different meat dishes including: homemade burgers, slow cooked lamb and grilled red meats.

This wine should be aged at least 4 - 6 months before drinking and should be consumed within 2 years.



NERO D'AVOLA

ITALY, SICILY

Release Date: Jan 2017

TASTE: I found this red wine to be very fruity. Mostly flavours of black fruit - cherries & plums. It also had a smooth vanilla finish to it.

FOOD PAIRING: This wine was paired with a shitake mushroom risotto.

WINE WITH FOOD: The mushroom risotto paired very well with this wine. The risotto was very rich and I found that the wine helped balance it out.

This wine would pair very well with rich stews and meat dishes. It is a very food friendly wine, but would also be great on its own.

This wine should be consumed young but can be aged for up to 18 months.



KOOKABURRA RED

AUSTRALIA, RIVERLAND REGION

Release Date: Mar 2017

TASTE: I found this red wine to be very full bodied with hints of raspberry and blackberry.

FOOD PAIRING: This wine was paired with an eggplant lasagna.

WINE WITH FOOD: I found that the eggplant lasagna really softened the flavours of the wine. I also tried this wine with the 70% dark chocolate and found that it paired very nicely.

This wine would pair very well with anything that includes rosemary, and also many earthy vegetarian dishes.

This wine should be aged about 4-6 months before drinking and should be consumed within 2 years.