

**E**xperiment! Dry wines need not be reserved for savory dishes only, nor sweet wines for dessert.

Contrast red wine with white fish. Use sweet wines with pork and duck. Pair spicier and crisper wines, such as Gewurztraminer, Riesling, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris, with Asian flavors and hot-chili cuisines. Basically, loosen up and have fun in the kitchen and at the dining room table.



Um...should I cook with this Meritage or drink it?

**T**here have been references to acidic or higher acid wines among these tips. Higher acid does not mean an astringent, vinegary wine. A wine that is balanced will hide much of its acid and alcohol. What the acid provides is structure and backbone to the wine and many times is the element that keeps it fresh and alive.

Most chefs impulsively reach for wine when cooking. They use it as a base as one would use an onion for flavor. It is just another tool for adding depth and character to a dish.

When chefs were asked why they cooked with wine and/or which varietals they preferred to use and why, these were their heartfelt responses:

**Charlie Palmer of Aureole Restaurants**

“There is such a close tie between wine and food--one doesn't exist without the other in my mind. As I'm working on a dish, I'm always thinking about what types of wine it will work with. In terms of wines to cook with, it always depends on the kind of dish. If it's a heavy red meat, something like short ribs or pork shoulder, I think of a full-bodied Cabernet Sauvignon or a fruit-driven Zinfandel that will hold up to the caramelization of the meat. In terms of white wine, I'm looking for good acid or wine that's been enhanced with verjus.”

**Cory Shreiber of Wildwood Restaurant**

“When cooking with wine, it is important to remember that wine begins as a fruit. Although it is somewhat altered in the cooking process, wine retains the grape's essential characteristics including fruitiness, acidity, moisture and color. Each of these elements contributes to the final dish. I use wines and raw ingredients from the Pacific Northwest, because I believe in the simple philosophy, that what grows together goes together.”

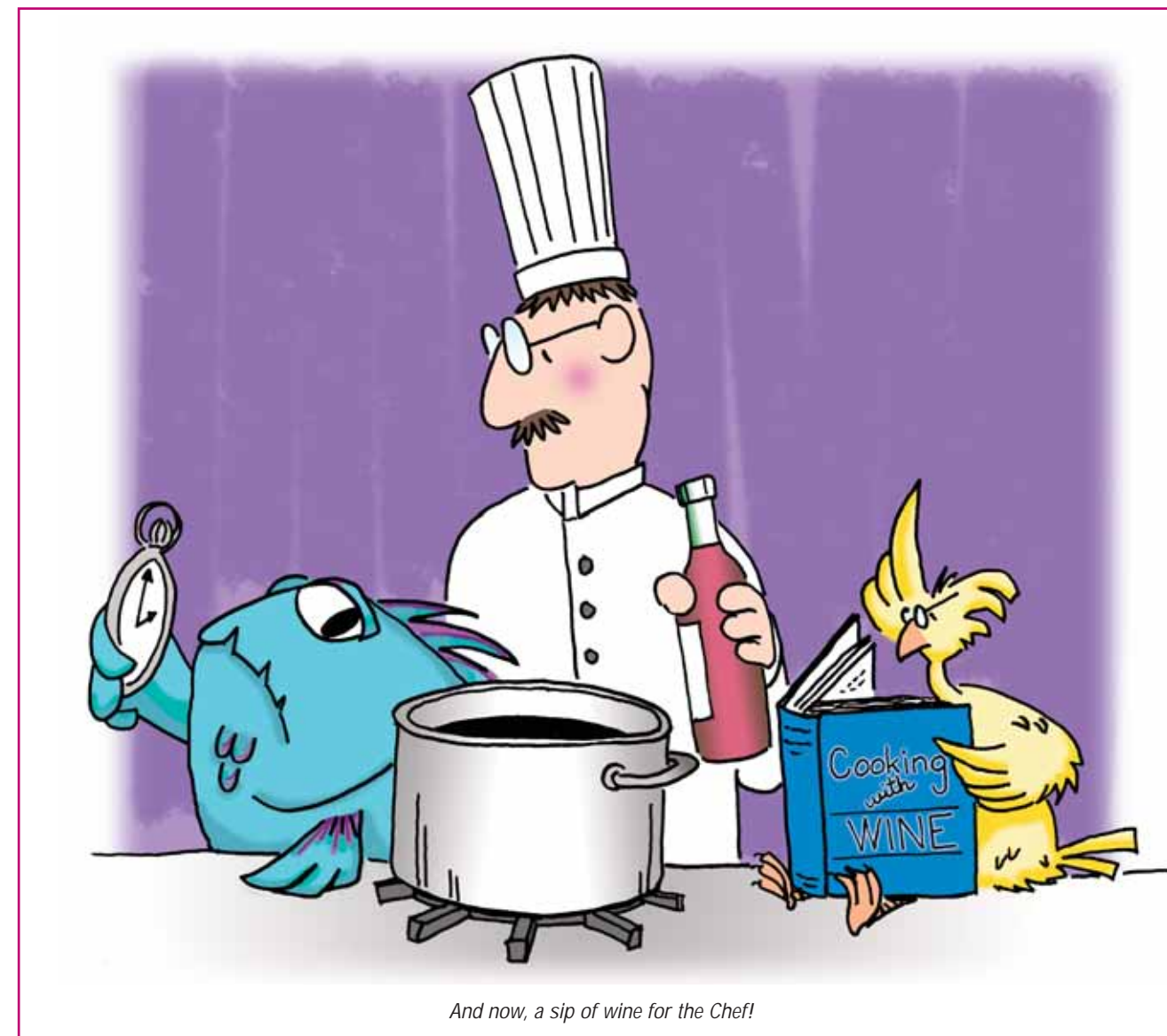
**David Bouley of Bouley Restaurant**

“The acid in wine neutralizes fats and marries the flavors of vegetables and proteins to create a harmonious dish.”

Finally, be mindful that some believe wine moves the thought process from the analytical to the creative side of the brain. All the more reason to leave a good glass of sipping wine at hand while cooking!



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And now, a sip of wine for the Chef!

# Wine 101

## Cooking with Wine

**T**hat timeless adage, “life is too short to drink bad wine,” could just as well be restated as, “life is too short to *cook* with bad wine.” The fun part of cooking with wine is that the wine needs to be tasted and evaluated prior to using, to ensure it is not corked, is well balanced and goes with the planned dishes and the meal. Drinking, appreciating and educating the palate all take time and a bit of effort--swirl, sniff, spit. Cooking with wine has a few golden rules of its own. If you are shy about cooking with wine here are a few guidelines and tips:

## ONLY USE WINE YOU CAN DRINK **1**

This is the premiere rule. It means you shouldn't reach for that tiny bottle of wine labeled “cooking wine” in the supermarket that is standing next to the vinegars. Why do you think it is keeping company with the vinegars and not in the wine section? Cooking will only intensify the flavors, be they good or bad. Taste it. If you can't drink it, you should not cook with it!

## **2** BOILING WINE BURNS OFF THE ALCOHOL

Bring wine to a boil, and let it boil for a minute or two, to reduce the alcohol content of the wine. What will be left is the richness of the fruit in the wine.

## WHEN MAKING A BUTTER SAUCE, USE A MORE ACIDIC WINE

The acid in the wine will help suspend the butter and keep it emulsified as long as the mixture does not get too hot. Gradually whisk the butter into the reduction. The butter will greatly soften the acidity.



## **3** FORTIFIED WINES WILL CAMELIZE AND SCORCH IF REDUCED TOO MUCH

Fortified wines, such as Madeira, Port, Sherry and Marsala, and Late Harvest dessert wines, can all be used in cooking—if you're careful. They all possess residual sugar-- some have very high percentages of sugar-- which has the potential to caramelize, if all of the wine and/or liquid has been reduced. The moment following caramelization becomes the burnt stage, a stage beyond repair.

## **4** REDUCE THE WINE BEFORE ADDING OTHER LIQUIDS **5**

When making a sauce, the wine is the first liquid ingredient added to the pan and then becomes a cornerstone of the sauce. By cooking the wine until it is nearly evaporated, it will remove the raw wine flavor and leave just the essence of the wine. Then, add the stock, broth or juice.



## **6** CHOOSE A WINE THAT REFLECTS SOME OF THE FLAVOR PROFILES OF THE DISH

For example: An Oregon Pinot Gris would make a great base for a vinaigrette being used on a salad of fruit, blue cheese and hazelnuts. They all complement and enhance each other.

## **7** USE A HIGH ACID WINE WITH FATTY FISH

Fatty fish such as salmon, Chilean sea bass or black cod will marry nicely with a more acidic wine. The wine will create a better balance, texture, and mouth-feel.

## **8** DO NOT MARINATE MEAT OR FISH FOR EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME IN RAW WINE

Raw wine will “cook” the exterior and inhibit the flavor absorption into the flesh. It will not tenderize, but will create just the opposite effect. Bring the wine to a boil. Cool. Then marinate.

## **9** DEGLAZE WITH WINE

First, let's define deglazing. When browning meats, vegetables or fruit there will be browned bits or juices left in the pan. Adding wine will lift those browned juices from the pan and put them back into the wine reduction. They will ultimately be absorbed into the finished dish, thus intensifying the flavors of the item being cooked.

## **10** POACH FRUIT IN ANY WINE

Fruit is a great receptor of wine's flavor, color and liveliness. Add sugar, honey and/or dried fruits and spices to give an accent. Remove the fruit from the wine when tender and reduce the liquid to form a finishing sauce to be served with the fruit.