

entertaining with nicole

Chocolate and Wine Together—Who Knew?

By Nicole Aloni

Chocolate lovers and red wine enthusiasts have been thrilled in recent years to see research indicating that these two indulgences may have pronounced health benefits (see “Health News” sidebar). In our stressful lives, it’s nice to hear the news that some of our favorite things are good for us, too. Because many chocolates and wines are delicious when enjoyed together (in moderation, of course) this month’s column focuses on the dynamic taste sensations that can be achieved when these two “healthy” treats are served together correctly. To help you explore the creative possibilities, I asked Bob Paulinski, Master of Wine and Sam’s Club® Chief Wine Merchant, and Carole Bloom, a renowned chocolate expert, to consult on the wine and chocolate pairing advice below.



nicole aloni

Nicole Aloni is a cookbook author, culinary instructor and freelance writer with more than 20 years of experience as a leader in the catering industry. Her popular books on the art of entertaining include *Secrets From a Caterer’s Kitchen* and *Cooking for Company* and are now available on samsclub.com. Her new book, *The Backyard Bartender*, is due out in May 2007.



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Health News: Red Wine and Chocolate

Chocolate contains substances that improve brain function—it literally makes us feel better. In response to eating chocolate, the brain releases serotonin, which has a beneficial effect on mood as well as endorphins that stimulate feelings of energy and well-being.

Red wine lovers have something to cheer about, too. In the past decade or so, scientists have found that cocoa beans and red wine are naturally rich in flavonols, which appear to be beneficial to cardiovascular health.

Statistically speaking, the recommended daily serving of 4 squares of dark chocolate, 1 glass of red wine, 2/3 cup of blueberries or 2 cups of green tea contains about the same antioxidant capacity.

Dark chocolate, which is highest in cocoa solids, seems to contain the most healthful properties.

How to Enjoy Wine with Chocolate

The basic principle is that wines should be at least as sweet (if not a touch sweeter) than the chocolates being served; otherwise, the taste of the wine may quickly become tart or puckery. When pairing chocolate with wine, your best bet is to match lighter, milder chocolates with lighter-bodied wines; likewise, the stronger the chocolate (i.e., the higher the percentage of cocoa components) the more full-bodied the wine should be.

White Chocolate Wine Suggestions

White chocolate tends to be mellow and buttery in flavor, making it an ideal candidate for a Moscato or champagne pairing.

Milk Chocolate and Dark Milk Chocolate Wine Suggestions (10–42% cocoa components)

Mild milk chocolates are flattered by dessert wines and Late Harvest Rieslings. Offer one of these with a milk chocolate bar, a creamy chocolate mousse or chocolate-accented cheesecake. Darker milk chocolate is complemented by Port, Pinot Noir or a light-bodied Merlot.

Dark Chocolate Wine Suggestions (50–82% cocoa components)

Semisweet or bittersweet dark chocolates (such as Ghirardelli®, Scharffen Berger® or Hershey’s®) need to be enjoyed with a robust wine. A Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz or Zinfandel will explode with flavor alongside a dark-chocolate brownie, layer cake or truffles. Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel are also thought to possess a subtle chocolate note that will enhance the enjoyment of the chocolate dessert. **S**

Expert information provided by:

•Bob Paulinski, Master of Wine and Sam’s Club Chief Wine Merchant
•Carole Bloom, author and spokesperson for The Chocolate Manufacturers Association. Visit www.carolebloom.com or www.chocolateusa.org.

How to Pair Fine Chocolates with Wine

	White Chocolate	Milk Chocolate	Dark Milk Chocolate	Dark Chocolate
			✓	✓
Cabernet Sauvignon			✓	✓
Champagne	✓			
Pinot Noir		✓	✓	
Port			✓	✓
Merlot (light-bodied)		✓	✓	
Riesling (Late Harvest)	✓	✓		
Shiraz			✓	✓
Zinfandel			✓	✓
Moscato/Dessert	✓	✓		

Food items are available in-Club only.

Wine brands available in select Clubs and in limited quantities. Brands may vary by Club. Please drink responsibly.

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

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