

Sipping a glass of wine accompanied with a sumptuous meal is what the festive season is all about. While speaking to a few experts from the industry, **Kinjal Shah** finds out both historical and factual connections between the two

Fine dining

According to history, the association of wine dates back to the last supper held by Christ before he was crucified. He then distributed bread to all his apostles saying, 'This is my Body' and then poured wine saying, 'This is my Blood'. Thus, came about the practice of eating bread with wine and with time, wine became an essential part of Christmas meals across the globe.

So agrees, Reva Singh, publisher, *Sommelier India - The Wine Magazine*, "The best of wine denotes fellowship and when combined with a celebration such as Christmas, the very essence of sharing is brought to surface quite clearly. This helps bring about the integral part of sharing as you settle down to devour the Christmas meal. However, in the western countries, mulled wine is served with food. This wine is a produce of mixture of one or two wines and spices. Going with the weather, mulled wine is the finest tastes of wine available in most western countries."

However, today pairing wine with holiday or festive meals is quite a task even for the skilled and experienced wine connoisseurs. "Despite being skilled and experienced connoisseurs are experts in knowing the types and kind of grapes involved in wine making. They are also the ones who will distinctively note down the characteristics of wine. But they are not sommeliers. And therefore it's a difficult task for them to pair wine with food," informs Ranjit Dhuru, managing director, Chateau D'ori.

Dhuru goes to explain further, "As a connoisseur, I know that wine is a best beverage with meat preparations espe-



cially, lamb and beef. Due to wine being acidic in nature, it helps break down the tissues of meat such as those mentioned above. It is then that one tends to say how juicy and chewy the meat tastes. But it is actually the wine that works on the meat and makes it tastier and juicy when consumed. Sommeliers know such nuances of food and preparations thus laid for a festive meal. They know the process and style of a food preparation and also of wines and are therefore in a stronger position to pair the two."

Tips off Singh, "Unlike other spirits or cola, wine is not a static drink. It is a living beverage that changes characteristics each time it changes its area of occupancy. Meaning, when transferred from a barrel to a bottle, there is a change in characteristic as it continues to evolve within the constraints of either area. Therefore, pairing of food takes place accordingly. So for a layman, while visiting the vineyard for wine tasting, the tip is to pay attention to all the characteristics and nuances of wine in his/her glass. This will help them pair their fes-

tive special meal with the correct brand and type of wine." She is on board of advisors for The Wine Society of India.

As per experts from the industry, tasting white wine before red is the ideal way to taste wines. This kind of tasting helps distinguish between the two types of wine very distinctly. The steps for the same are, firstly for the colour and aroma, swirl the glass. This will aerate the wine inside the glass and help you get the texture and aroma of the same. Then for the real characteristic like the content of alcohol and sugar, tilt the glass on one side, slightly. You will notice the 'tear' of wine. This will help you know the aforementioned content of the ingredients. Take a sip and swirl it inside your mouth. Roll it on your palette to get the different tastes of wine - sweet, bitter and sour. Then, slurp it down your neck, its characteristics will get enhanced and you will get the real taste of the produce. These steps, activate all the qualities of wine including its dryness, which is very essential while pairing it with a particular food preparation.

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KNOW YOUR WINE BEST



Red Wine and White Wine:

It may seem like red wine and white wines are always in competition with each other, but the truth is, both are different in flavour and go best with different preparations. While red wines are typically good at enhancing meals made of red meat or tomato sauce, white wines are usually good at enhancing meals made of white meat or white sauces.

Rose Wine: Also known as pink wines have a very popular name as well, summer wines they are often refreshing in mid-summer heat. Rose wine aren't really red and aren't really white instead, they possess attributes of both true red wines and true white wines. They are often best served with seafood, salad, cold cuts, and pork.

Sparkling Wines: Probably the most famous member of the sparkling wine family is Champagne, a drink that routinely fills the glasses at wedding receptions and banquet hall. But Champagne can't hog the entire sparkling spotlight; sparkling wines can be any type of wine infused with carbon dioxide. Because sparkling wines do not usually pair well with meals, they are best served alone or with appetizers.