



Easter Food, Wine and Chocolate Matching Made Easy

Matching Wines with Easter Chocolates and Spring Cuisine

ST. CATHARINES, Ontario -- March 14, 2005 -- Spring is the season of re-birth and, in Canada, the end of our long, cold winter. Easter is traditionally a time in which families and friends get together to celebrate the beginning of spring by enjoying meals made with fresh seasonal ingredients.

Spring Wine Trends

Because of spring's promise of warmer weather, lighter white wines, such as Ontario Chardonnays, Rieslings and Gewürztraminers, and lighter bodied, fruity red wines, such as Ontario Merlots, Gamays, Pinot Noirs and Cabernet Francs, are expected to be popular this season. Lighter whites and fruity reds match very well with food, and so are versatile wines that can be enjoyed on their own or as an enhancement to a meal or special occasion. Some of Ontario's winemakers have selected their favourite lighter white and fruity red wines that they recommend serving this Easter and spring.

The winemakers' recommendations for lighter white wines are:

- Strewn Winery Riesling - available at the LCBO for \$10.95
- Hillebrand Trius Chardonnay - available at the LCBO for \$19.95
- Reif Gewürztraminer - available at the LCBO for \$12.45

The winemakers' recommendations for fruity red wines are:

- Cave Spring Cellars Gamay - available at the LCBO for \$12.65
- Inniskillin Pinot Noir – available at the LCBO for \$13.95
- Henry of Pelham Baco Noir- available at the LCBO for \$12.95

Matching Easter Chocolates to Wines

If you are looking for a wine to enjoy with chocolate Easter eggs this season, you have a variety of wines to choose from. Try an Ontario Merlot or Cabernet Franc, which have chocolate-like aromas and textures in the mouth or with a refreshing sparkling wine that will offer balance to the chocolate's sweetness and texture. Icewine can be matched with dark chocolate, such as fruit cheesecake with a dark chocolate drizzle.

There are many types and styles of chocolates. Here are a few tips to help you make your wine and chocolate pairing decisions.

- **Natural Vanilla Chocolate** – a rich hazelnut, vanilla and creamy smell, silky texture and a hot chocolate, caramel flavour that is soft and not overpowering: A barrel aged Chardonnay, with essences of toasted oak, nuts and citrus with a butter finish.
- **Extra Creamy Milk** – with butter cream and coconut smell, silky texture and caramel along with tropical flavours, such as mango. A Pinot Noir with cherry, blackberry, and vanilla augmented soft tannins, or try with a Cabernet Franc Icewine.

Tasting wine and chocolate should not be difficult—even with dry wines. Here are a few simple tips on tasting both.

1. Pour a bit of wine (red or white depending on the chocolate being tasted) into a tulip shaped glass. Examine the wine's colour and clarity. Swirl it a bit to release the bouquet and aroma of the wine. Sniff lightly, take a sip and roll it around your mouth. Swallow and savour the finish.
2. Take a bit of water to clear the palate.
3. Take a bit of the chocolate and chew it, roll it around your tongue—again savouring the flavours.
4. Take another sip of the wine while you still have the chocolate in your mouth. Mingle the flavours and let them marry to each other.
5. Savour the beauty of the merged taste.

Wine Matching For Easter and Spring Foods

Because of their acidity and balanced structure, Ontario wines match well with foods by bringing out and enhancing flavours, which make them the perfect accompaniment for Easter and springtime celebrations and dinners. Think of food and wine matching as finding a partnership of equals. It's about balance – the food and the wine shouldn't overpower each other. If you are unsure of your guests' preferences give them a choice. Chardonnay or Riesling will complement baked ham, roast pork, chicken and turkey as deliciously as light, fruity red wines such as Gamay or Pinot Noir.

Henry of Pelham winemaker, Ron Giesbrecht suggests the following wine and food recommendations for Easter and spring:

- Baked ham with dry red wines, such as Ontario Pinot Noir;
- Roasted pork tenderloin with a light red wine, such as an Ontario Merlot, Cabernet Franc or Gamay.
- An Ontario off dry or semi-dry Riesling, or Gewürztraminer with apricot or honey glazed ham and sweet potatoes

In view of Good Friday and Easter Sunday, winery retail stores will be closed on March 25, 2005 and March 27, 2005. Wineries will re-open on Easter Monday, March 28, 2005

Ontario's three established wine regions - Niagara Peninsula, Pelee Island and Lake Erie North Shore - are spread over 15,000 acres in southern Ontario and produce 90 percent of the grapes used in Canadian wine production. The province also has an emerging wine region in Prince Edward County. Ontario wines consistently win gold medals at the world's top wine competitions. Ontario is home to more than 90 wineries that produce 44 million litres of wine annually. Ontario wines are available at LCBO and Vintages stores, and winery retail stores. For more information on Ontario wines, wineries and the wine industry, visit www.winesofontario.ca

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