

Aakanksha Agarwal / February 7, 2020 / Culture+Society, Eat+Drink

5 Washington Wine Couples and Their Favorite Valentine's Day Food & Wine Pairings

Valentine's Day may come across as gimmicky to some because of difficult-to-get restaurant reservations, pushy product marketing, and a sea of pink and red stuffed animals and treats. However, for many, it's an opportunity to celebrate love. This time around, skip the crowds and sneak in an intimate evening with your loved one.

A candlelit, cozy dinner at home is a great way to bypass the long crowds. To score brownie points with your date, cook up a special meal, paired with some special wine. Wine and Valentine's Day make for the best pair, indeed. You could cook a delicious meal, complete with wine pairings for your sweetheart. You could even cook the meal with your better half. Oysters, asparagus, scallops, strawberries, dark chocolate—it's easy to get overwhelmed with choices and pairing it with the right wine. But there's no need to go into a tizzy over it. Five power couples from the Washington wine scene are here to help, with delicious pairings for a five course meal.

We spoke to couples of the wine world; in love with each other, and the fruit of the vine. With their expert advice, you can look forward to a soulful experience with your Valentine's Day date. Each couple recommends a food and wine pairing, with two wines per course. It takes two to tango, and each partner recommends a different wine for the same dish, reflecting their individual personalities and preferences. You can choose whichever one you naturally gravitate to, or better yet, try both. To further sweeten the deal, these lovely couples share romantic snippets from their own stories.



Wine brought Dan Wampfler and Amy Alvarez-Wampfler together, quite literally. While working on Columbia Crest's barrel-fermented chardonnay program, the couple met and fell in love, hence the necessity of a chardonnay on their Valentine's Day dinner table. "Chardonnay brought us together," Dan says, "but it's our mutual love for cabernet sauvignon that keeps us together," he says with a wink.

Since joining Abeja in January 2016, Dan and Amy have combined their formidable winemaking talents with their love for one another. Their goal is to create handcrafted wines that are the result of meticulous viticultural practices; customized, small lot fermentation and aging; and selective blending.

Abeja Chardonnay, Washington State SRP \$45; Abeja Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley SRP \$60

OUR REVIEW—The beef ribs with their fall-off-the-bone yumminess need full-bodied, complex wines to complement the rich meat. Red or white wine? ‘Both’ is a perfectly acceptable answer too! Both the citrusy chardonnay and the intense cabernet sauvignon offsets this meat-heavy entree beautifully. The chardonnay with its notes of green apple and tropical fruit is an unconventional but lovely choice. It cuts through the rich meal with its vibrant acidity. The tannins in the elegant Cabernet Sauvignon provide a great contrast to the delectable, fatty meat. The wine is powerful and bold with a herby finish—a great match for the juicy beef.