

Super Wine Pairings for the Super Bowl



Make no mistake – I really like beer. And I know that the party beverage of choice for the majority of traditional Super Bowl get-togethers is usually reserved for the realm of finely crafted brews. After all, just look at all of the money mega-brewers spend on advertising during the Big Game and you get a sense that they know the day belongs to them. But this year, you can break out of the routine game plan and pair your Super Bowl treats with super wines for a more upscale affair.

In our house, we rarely need an excuse to reach for the cork screw over the bottle opener, but when the cooking is elevated from chow to cuisine, the decision is a no-brainer. Wine will win the day every time. But what wine we select is always predicated on the menu we're preparing. This Super Bowl, we're taking a page out of our friend's cookbook and preparing some delectable bites to enjoy with perfectly-paired wines between downs. Of course, we'll take a time-out during commercial breaks to enjoy the beer commercials....

If you are kicking off your Super Bowl party with **Nachos**, then you are going to want something festive and versatile. A Sparkling wine, like the **Non-Vintage Zardetto Brut Prosecco** from Italy should fill the bill. A very clean and balanced sparkling wine, with bright flavors of nectarine, green apple and citrus notes delivered by tight bubbles on a light, fresh frame. The crisp finish is a palate-cleansing compliment to the salty, spicy, cheesy nacho components. A nice beer alternative, it is a perfect aperitif for large gatherings. **\$14**

I am known in my Football-watching-circle of friends for my **chicken wings** – which feature a sauce that brings the heat with the sweat – so I have to make sure that I have a wine on hand that can cut through the spice and keep the palate cool between wings. The **2013 Jim Barry The Lodge Hill Riesling** from Australia is just the ticket. Beautiful aromas of wet stone, white peaches and lemon zest dominate the bouquet. The flavors of lemon pie, pear and peach are juicy and lively in the mouth, with hints of chalky minerals and spicy ginger on the crisp, refreshing, bone-dry finish. An exceptional value at **\$17**

Big juicy **Burgers** and with rich beef, gooey cheese and ketchup deserves a big, juicy red wine. The **2012 Borsao Tres Picos Garnacha** from Spain is the perfect partner. This bright red beauty features lively raspberry, strawberry, cola and earthy sassafras aromas. Lush and silky in the mouth, with jammy red berry flavors building and deepening through the finish where notes of black cherries and dark chocolate add to the mix. It's warm, velvety and juicy on the finish. **\$16**

Chili is usually a welcomed guest at Super Bowl parties, but most people will associate chili with beer. The **2010 Andrew Hardy Little OX Shiraz** from South Australia will change that! This wine consistently receives high marks in the wine press because it "really over delivers for the price," thanks, in part, to the fragrant aromas of blackberry, mocha and licorice on the smoky bouquet. The palate enjoys lush flavors of blackberry, blueberry and cassis on the front of the tongue and rich notes of mocha and savory black pepper on the velvety-yet-firm finish. **\$20**

I know a lot of my friends think that **Pizza** is the kitchen-sink food of football, but really good pizza deserves to be elevated with the **2012 Poggio Amorelli Chianti Classico** from Italy. Made exclusively from the famous Sangiovese grape, this wine is produced by Marco Mazzarini, a consulting oenologist who now has his own vineyards and cellar in Chianti. Aromas of violets and vanilla follow through to a full-bodied palate with flavors of sweet cherry, red plum, tobacco, earth and smoky cedar. Soft tannins provide a long, flavorful finish. **\$18**