

Annual Pizza Wine Review



Where did the summer go? How did we get all the way through the unbearable heat and humidity of the August – which actually wasn't as torrid as usual this year - and slide so quickly into September and the hustle and bustle associated with deadlines at work and school bus schedules?

I vaguely recall getting some relief from the summertime blues with the help of assorted crisp white wines and a few sparkling here and there. But now we're back into the thick of it, with rush-hour traffic and constant reminders of impending homework assignments (do teenagers ever remember to do anything on their own that does not involve their smart phones?).

So with demands on our time piling up like cars on the Beltway at rush hour, sometimes the best course of action one can take to regain some modicum of relief is to simply order a pizza and open a decent bottle of wine. That's where our annual pizza wine review comes to the proverbial rescue of harried households everywhere.

While Cindy and I do not always agree on the type of wine we like to kick back and relax with, we do agree on two simple rules; "pizza wines" by definition – at least our definition – should be full of flavor and cost less than the pizza, generally less than \$20. So, in an attempt to help reduce the stress of having to make one more decision at the end of a busy day, we offer our picks for the perfect wine to go with pizza.

Cindy's Picks

This year, Cindy has been ordering a lot of white pizzas with caramelized onions, so she wants a wine that will complement the sweetness of the onions and balance the rich cheese flavors.

If you're in the mood for white pizza, the **2012 Champalou Vouvray** is a wonderful Loire Valley wine, made exclusively from Chenin Blanc, is a good match. Pretty scents of melon, grapefruit and orange zest dominate the nose while lush flavors of peach, apricot and nectarine glide over a citrus-based frame. The noticeable acidity kept the wine in focus and accented the notes of lemon/lime on the medium finish. **\$18**

The **2013 Adelsheim Pinot Gris** from the Willamette Valley of Oregon is both refreshing and luscious at the same time. It features pretty scents of acacia and white peach with notes of apricot, peach and spicy acidity. Subtle hints of guava linger on the crisp and just enough acidity to cut through the creamy texture of the cheese. **\$18**

Scott's Picks

Who ever invented the "meat lover" pizza should be inducted into the pizza hall of fame. I generally use pizza as a pepperoni, sausage, ham and black olive delivery vehicle, so the wines I'm looking to match up have to hold up – to both the weight of the meat and spiciness of the sauce.

The value-oriented **2009 Bodegas Sierra Salinas Puerto Salinas Alicante** from Valencia transports me back to a farmhouse villa in Spain. The Alicante grape is transformed into a juicy wine offering tons of ripe black cherries and raspberry fruit on the aromatic nose. The fresh fruit flavors of black plum, blackberry and bright cherry maintain balance and depth thanks to the soft tannins and acidity. **\$16**

You can't have a "pizza wine" article without including at least one Italian wine. The

2010 Planeta La Segreta Red from Sicily is made from Nero d'Avola, Merlot, Syrah and Cabernet Franc. The grapes are de-stemmed and crushed, then macerated on the skins for 10–14 days. After racking, the wine is kept in stainless steel vessels until bottling.

An explosion of fresh red currant, mulberry, raspberry, cherry and prune are balanced by a zesty spiciness which is nicely balanced by ripe, soft tannins and refreshing acidity. It's an ideal pizza companion. **\$15**