

Restaurant Week Wines



Not that long ago, DC was a foddie wasteland, with limited dining options and only a handful of innovative chefs.

Today, DC is one of the foodie-friendliest cities in America, known for a wide variety of hip hangouts, celebrity chef outposts and exceptional restaurants. Best of all, during Restaurant Week – which begins August 17th and runs through the 23rd, you can experience many of the top establishments at a discount. Enjoy a 3-course lunch for just \$22 and a 3-course dinner for only \$35. That's a pretty good deal. Presented by Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington, this year's summer restaurant week has 250 participating restaurants spread out all over the District, Maryland and Virginia.

Now lest you think I have forgotten about wine, here are four area restaurants that will be featuring Wine pairings specifically designed for Restaurant Week.

La Chaumiere, the classical French-country establishment in Georgetown, is offering two wines by the glass for your enjoyment. The white wine is a beautiful Sauvignon Blanc, the **2013 Domaine La Craie Sancerre** from the Loire Valley in France (**\$13**) and will pair beautifully with either the trout or the roasted Cornish hen. The red offering is from a grand cru estate in the Saint-Émilion appellation of Bordeaux, France. At **\$17** per glass, the **2011 Les Cadrans de Lassègue**, the estate's second label, has been recommended with the delicious Beef Short Ribs.

La Chaumiere 2813 M St NW, Washington, DC 20007

Celebrity chef Bryan Volatgio's Italian eatery, Aggio, in Chevy Chase, DC has the luxury of pairing Bryan's food with Kathy Morgan's wine selections. Kathy is one of just a handful of Master Sommeliers in town, and she has put together a fabulous list of ala carte wines by the glass for the Restaurant Week menu – However, if a guest chooses a pairing with all three courses, the price is only an additional \$20.15 for the paring (get it? 2015?). Here are a couple sample pairings with a la carte glass prices: The Caesar Salad will pair beautifully with the **2014 Argillae Orvieto** from Umbria, Italy (**\$11**), while Kathy's choice for the Tonnarelli Nero (maryland blue crab, jalapeño, sea urchin, bay spices) is the **2013 Lageder Pinot Bianco** from the Alto Adige region in Italy (**\$10**). Finally, the **2013 Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona, Rosso di Montalcino** from Tuscany (**\$14**) is a match made for the Pork Shank.

Aggio 5335 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington, DC 20015

A romantic wine bar and bistro, Vinoteca is located in the hot U Street Corridor of DC serves up small plates as well as larger entrees. Best of all, a bocce court can be found on the outside patio.

Daniel at Vinoteca says offering **\$30 for three full glasses**. Small plate includes Chilled Pea Soup with Avacado paired with **Patricius Hárslevelü** (pronounced harsh-level) from Tokaj, Hungary is the varietal the sweet Tokaj is made from, but this version bone dry and perfect with the soup. A new entree will be featured for Restaurant Week; squid and shrimp pasta with house-made spaghetti and it will be paired with the **Domaine Guindon Muscadet Coteaux de la Loire Sur Lie** from the Loire Valley in France.

Vinoteca 1940 11th St NW, Washington, DC 20001

The hip, New American cuisine found at **Slate Wine Bar**, features wines from around the world in a modern-rustic room with exposed brick in my old neighborhood of Glover Park. The new American menu by Chef Danny Lledó is a 'melting pot' of flavors based on his upbringing in the kitchen and in the vineyards of his native Portugal. He is offering a thoughtful selection of wine pairing to go with each dish offered on the pre-set three-course menu for just **\$20 for half-glass pours**. Some of the highlights include, a **Quinta Encontro, Baga and Merlot** blend from Portugal to go with the Duck Breast Egg Rolls; a **Duckhorn Sauvignon Blanc** from Napa Valley, California will amp up the Jumbo Lump Crab Cake, and for dessert, the House-Made Creamy Cheesecake with Peaches gets support from a **Beautiful Sparkling Rosé** – made from Grenache – from Spain.

Slate Wine Bar 2404 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington, DC 20007

If you have a special bottle of wine that you have been waiting to open, here are a few tips:

The District of Columbia allows patrons to bring their own wines to a restaurant that has a corkage policy. It is important to understand that the ability to bring your own wine to a restaurant in the District is a privilege, not a right.

If you are bringing a bottle with you, make sure that the same wine is NOT offered on restaurant's wine list. I strongly advise that you call the restaurant ahead of time to let them know what wine you are bringing so you can avoid this situation. Next, make sure you understand the restaurant's corkage policy and pricing since both can vary widely. The District no longer has a cap on corkage fees, so the per bottle charge is set by each restaurant and can run anywhere from \$15 - \$50 dollars, so ask in advance and remember, be respectful of the restaurant's policy. After all, it's a restaurant, not a catering hall.

I also recommend that you always offer a taste of the wine to both the sommelier and your server. A little kindness goes a long way. And remember to tip generously! It will definitely help your server forget the bottle of wine they did not sell to your table. (PS – If enjoying more than one bottle, try to order at least one bottle of wine off of the wine list as a way of showing appreciation).