

A different pairing

Wine expert shares the nuances of matching Asian food with wine

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PAIRING Asian food with wine is no easy task because of the various sauces and spices in the ingredients.

"For western food, it is easy to pair a red wine with red meat or white wine with white meat but it's a totally different approach for Asian food," said Ed Soon, a wine author and qualified oenologist.

Soon was the special guest at an interactive wine dinner featuring Bordeaux wine at the Tasting Room Wine Bistro in Kuala Lumpur.

He recently wrote a book about wine pairing with Asian food with another author Patricia Guy.

"Instead of matching the type of meat, we're pairing the wine with the sauce and the flavours of the food.

"For example, a green curry could be cooked with chicken, duck or beef but it's the curry that we're pairing the wine with," said Soon, who is also *StarMag's* *Uncorked* columnist.

He said another thing to watch out for was strong spices that could kill the taste of subtle wines.

"The idea of having a good match is that you want it to work. It has to taste nice. You don't want flavours to fight in your mouth.

"The most important is what stands out in food. It could be sweet, sour, salty or bitter and we group the wines into flavours. Some could be sweet and some tart," he said.

One of the tips he gave was that

the food should be more acidic than the wine.

"If the wine is more sour than the food, it will make your wine taste unpleasant," said Soon.

About 40 guests attended the dinner and had the opportunity to test some pre-dinner wines with different flavours: sour lemon juice, salty fish sauce, spicy chopped chillies and sweet black sauce.

Soon was at hand to answer questions like "What wine should I pair with *peranakan* curry that has pineapples" and "Which wine goes well with *bak kut teh*?"

To the latter, he replied with a laugh: "I would have to write another book just to answer that question."

He said *bak kut teh* was different because it had a strong herbal and peppery taste and the flavours varied depending on the region.

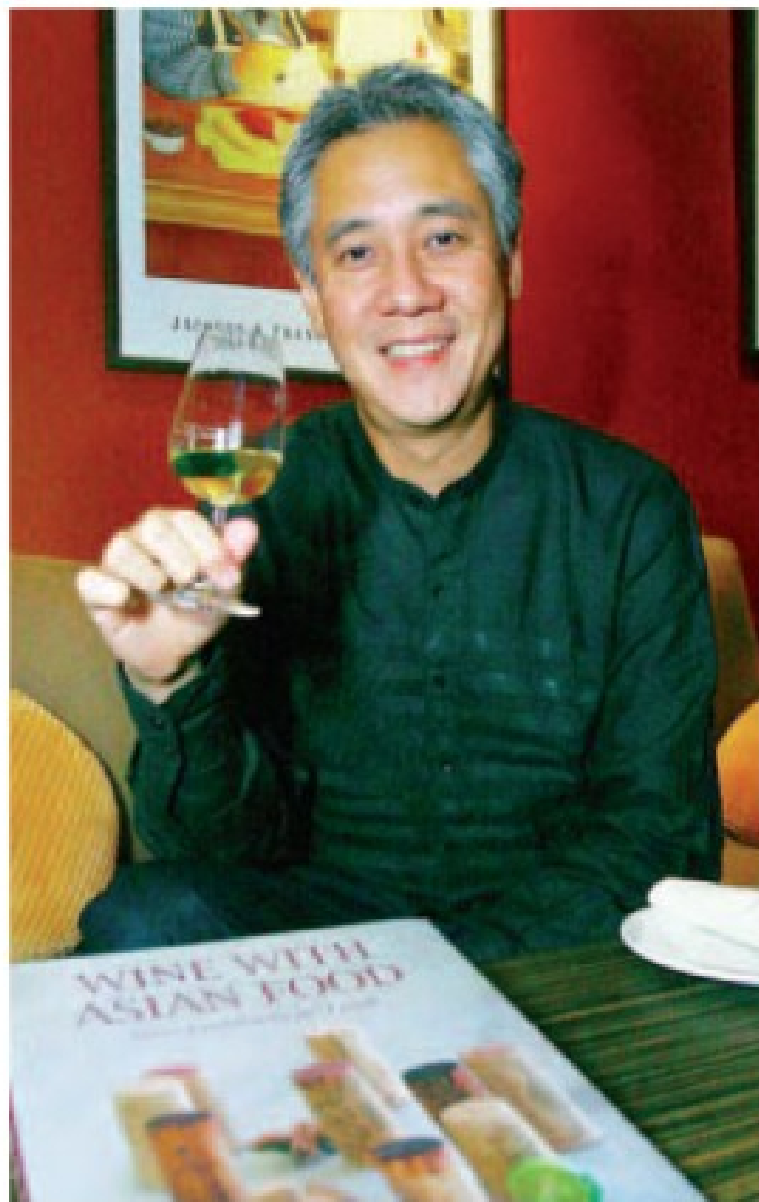
Guests tucked into their dinner starting with a serving of Vietnamese deep-fried rice paper rolls paired with the Chateau Marjose Bordeaux 2005.

The main course was a choice of beef tenderloin or New Zealand lamb served with black pepper and porcini mushrooms.

The Chateau Camensac 2004 and the Chateau Caronne Sainte Gemme 2005 were the choice of wines paired with the meats.

According to Soon, the Camensac has more tannins while the Caronne Sainte Gemme tastes rounder and has a softer texture.

"You can serve tannic wines with meat that has a bit of fat. The



Expert: Soon has written a book on pairing wine with Asian food.

tannins bind with the fat and proteins of the meat, making the wine taste smoother. The match also works with a softer and rounder wine so you should feel comfortable with choosing from a range of suitable wines for a dish," said Soon.

Dessert was one of pure indulgence – deep fried banana pieces in a filo pastry bowl, sprinkled with warm caramel sauce and topped with a scoop of rich Movenpick vanilla ice cream.

This sweet creation was complemented with the Chateau Castelnau de Suduiraut Sauternes 2002.

For more information about Bordeaux wines, contact the Wine Cellar at 03-2093 1919.

The Tasting Room Wine Bistro is located at 65-1 Jalan Bangkung, Bukit Bandaraya, Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03-2092 4404. The bistro is open from Tuesdays to Fridays noon onwards and Saturdays and Sundays 4pm onwards.



Perfect: For dessert, the deep fried bananas in the pastry and warm caramel sauce is paired with the sweet Chateau Camensac 2002



Inviting: For the main course, a choice of beef or lamb with black pepper and porcini mushrooms, paired with the Chateau Camensac 2004.