

21 DAYS TO WINE: DAY 21

LEARN HOW TO PAIR FOOD AND WINE

21 DAYS TO
WINE

WINE: Augusta Estate Bottled Norton 2014

SCENTS: Prunes, Plums, Bitter chocolate, Vanilla, Blackberries

SUPPLIES: A white napkin or piece of white paper (to observe), salty cheese, bitter chocolate, KC BBQ (or other sweet, smoky BBQ)

EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE

Food and wine pairing does have rules based on science, but your favorite combinations are always the exception to the rule. Wine and food are connected by way of tradition and there is no denying the powerful pleasure of nostalgia.

WHAT GROWS TOGETHER GOES TOGETHER.

Throughout much of the world, farmers and grape growers supply the local population as they have for centuries, so a lot of the flavors have evolved together.

We have a few examples of that here in the States. There are some wonderful, mineral-rich white wines from the North Fork of Long Island that go perfectly with the oysters and fresh-caught Atlantic salmon.

Let's say you are eating something with a very traditional, regional flavor, like Spaghetti Bolognese, a thick, meaty red sauce that originated in central Italy. It is rich, fatty and packed with powerful herbs and spices. *Consider a wine from the same region, specifically something made with Sangiovese, which is a classic pairing, but also a typically high acid wine that helps balance the fat in the sauce.*

THE SCIENCE OF FOOD AND WINE

Certain chemical elements of wine directly interact with sensations on your palate. For example: Acidity, effervescence, alcohol, and tannin all have various forms of cleaning and clearing properties, which can balance fatty, creamy, or heavy saucy foods.

WINE IS MOSTLY WATER.

Then, there are the things you feel on the palate. These are:

- Glycerol (in the form of sugar and alcohol) which feels silky.
- Acids and Tannins, which we might refer to as astringent – like Sea Breeze! Like a toner. They tingle and pucker and clean your palate.

- Bubbles or Effervescence do too.
- Minerals cause a mouthwatering sensation, which also helps to clean your palate.

INTENSITY OF FLAVOR AND AROMA

Then there are the aromas and flavors in their varying degrees of intensity.

The key is to balance the intensity of aroma and flavors in your food, with those of the wine, and find what feels good on the palate.

COMPLIMENT. DON'T CONTRAST.

Remember, food and wine pairing is all about **harmony**. The idea is to compliment, **not contrast**, because that can create a clash on your palate. You want to bring out the best in your food and your wine.

Acidic foods like pickles and a super citrusy Sauvignon Blanc will clash.

The same goes for cheese. Salty, sharp cheddar or Parmigiano is better with a silkier and fruitier wine rather than an acidic wine or something with a salty mineral finish.

Taste the Parmesan cheese. It's very salty. If you let it melt on your tongue can you feel the fattiness in it? Take your time. You might feel like having a sip of something just to balance out that feeling and the salt.

Try a small sip of the wine now. Repeat the process. First one, than the other. Are the fruit flavors in the wine a little clearer, a little prettier. Do you taste more than just salt in the cheese?

Now try the same thing with the dark chocolate.

If you are drinking a dry, acidic, or tannic red wine, it could leave you with a bitter sensation.

TRY DESSERT WINE OR SWEET FORTIFIED WINE WITH DARK CHOCOLATE.

Dessert doesn't always translate to sweet, and dessert wine can be crisp and balanced by acidity, tannin, and effervescence. In the case of dark chocolate, a *passito* wine or a sweet sherry-style wine will more harmoniously bring out flavors of dark chocolate without exacerbating the bitterness.

MISSOURI BBQ AND WINE PAIRING

First ask yourself what are the aromatic and tactile elements of Missouri BBQ?

- Intense aromas and flavors of sweet smoke
- In some cases, fatty skin
- Even in the case of poultry, the long marinade makes these substantial meat dishes.

Look for a wine that matches the unique aromatic and flavor profile, helps balance potentially unpleasant fattiness on your palate and provides a medium-to-long finish to truly savor the flavors. In this case, local Norton fits the bill!

APPELLATION OF ORIGIN

When most people think of American wine their heads go straight to California, or even Napa Valley specifically. California is an undisputed leader in American wine production with a long and storied past. That said, the history and current state of USA wine might surprise you!

In a movement similar to the European standards for quality and regional production (DO in Spain, DOC in Italy, AOC in France) the United States established the appellation of origin system. It starts at basic level and dictates that for a wine to carry the name of a state on the label, it must be produced from a minimum of 75% grapes grown in that state, and produced and bottled in that state.

AVA STANDS FOR AMERICAN VITICULTURAL AREA

Stricter standards apply to wines produced in American Viticultural Areas or AVAs. These are formed by more specific geographical and historical boundaries that factor in traditional grape cultivation as well as geological and climatic qualities that affect the wines and lend them a distinctive style. Some AVAs are massive and others are quite small.

AUGUSTA AVA

The first federally recognized AVA was actually located in Missouri. It takes its name for the town of Augusta and the alluvial (flood) plains along the winding Missouri River. The flooding has resulted in a clay-rich soil type that

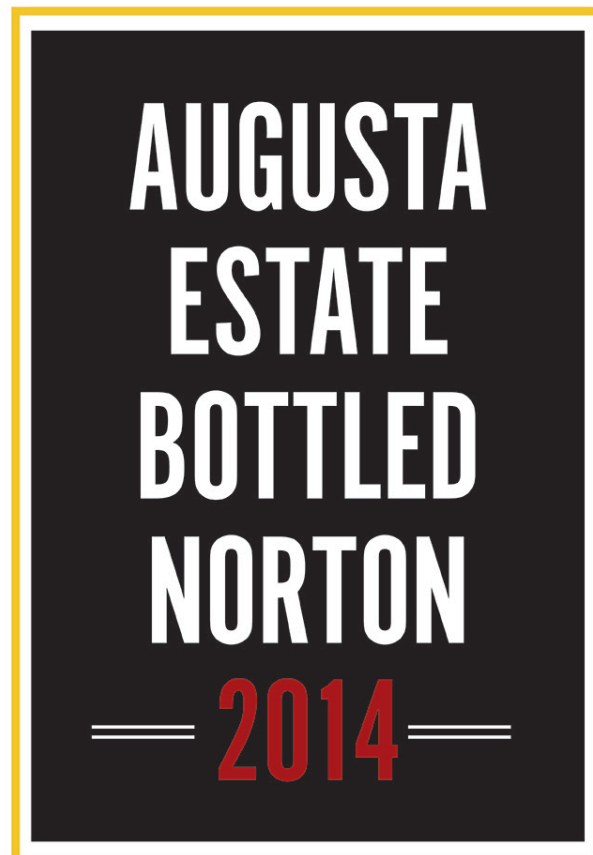
proved successful for early grape plantings in the late 1800s, spearheaded by German immigrants.

Prohibition virtually annihilated the wine industry in later years, and the Eastern part of the United States never fully recovered to the extent that California, Washington and Oregon did, hence their current success and name recognition.

AUGUSTA GRAPES

The Augusta AVA is planted with a mix of traditional wine grapes (*Vitis vinifera*) like Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Merlot, and Chardonnay, as well the official Missouri state grape, Norton, which is actually not a wine grape, but semi-wild species derived from *Vitis aestivalis* that thrives in the clay rich soil in much of the Midwest.

Augusta and Missouri wineries in general have also had great success with French-American hybrid grapes including Chambourcin, Chardonel, Seyval Blanc, St. Vincent and Vidal Blanc, among others.



NORTON

(AKA CYNTHIANA)

PRONUNCIATION: **Nore-Ton // Sin-Thee-Ah-Na**

*The grape was first developed as a cultivar by a man named Dr. Daniel Norton and is believed to be derived in part from the wild species **Vitis vinifera** that can actually grow up to ten feet in trees. The entire parentage is still unknown, but what has distinguished Norton from other indigenous grape species in the USA is that it lacks an overtly musky, animalic, savage note, in industry terminology: **FOXY**.*

Norton produces a deep purple red color, rich in anthocyanins, which are a subset of polyphenols. This means not only color, but marked acidity and some tannin, which allows the wines to age and evolve, mellowing out and developing earthy notes, rich fruity notes of brambly blackberry and even some leafy eucalyptus.

WINE NOTES

WINERY

Augusta Winery was founded in 1988 by Tony Kooyumjian, a third generation wine grower and producer. His grandmother and her family immigrated to California in 1915 and established their winery in San Joaquin Valley. In a departure from the family business, Tony initially chose a career as a pilot during which he had the opportunity to taste wines all over the world, an experience that ignited his passion for winemaking.

It ultimately led him to Missouri where he took the reins at historic Weprich Winery in St. Charles and later to open his own winery, Augusta.

The winery is located in the town of Augusta, Missouri is nestled on the bluffs overlooking the rolling hillsides of the Missouri River Valley. They farm sustainably and work with primarily indigenous Missouri grapes with an emphasis on freshness and varietal character. They do their best to let the fruit and the land speak for itself.

WINEMAKING

100 percent estate-grown Norton grapes, crushed fermented in stainless steel. Aged in oak barrels and blended from a final selection of the best wine.

TASTING NOTES

LOOK: **Deep purple, garnet red**

SMELL: **Ripe blackberries, balsamic notes of eucalyptus and cassis**

TASTE: **Spicy and smoky to the end with some earthy fruitiness. Medium-body.**

DISCUSS

A quintessential expression of aged Norton. Some of the fruit has faded but the sweet smoke remains on the finish and the crispness of the wine makes it an excellent companion to local BBQ.

Cheers!
ANNIE

my notes

