

Wine and Orchids: The Perfect Pairing

Orchid expert gives design tips and ideas for pairing orchids to specific wine



(San Francisco, Calif., February 2011) --- The 59th annual Pacific Orchid Exposition, the largest orchid show in the United States, is returning to Fort Mason Center's Festival Pavilion on March 3-6, 2011 to showcase over 150,000 orchids.

Bruce Rogers, orchid specialist and SFOS ambassador, has spent decades running his full service orchid business, as well as providing consulting and orchid displays for parties or events. He has worked with countless private clients, such as Senator Diane Feinstein as well as popular retail establishments like Ralph Lauren Polo, Saks Fifth Avenue and Nordstrom's to design amazing orchid centerpieces and décor.

Orchids have long been used in home, office and general interior design but recently, Rogers has noticed a shift toward incorporating food and wine into the actual designs

"A client wanted ideas concerning the centerpiece for an upcoming dinner party, a lavish affair with a French menu and older Chateau Laffite Rothschild wines," said Rogers. "We matched that fabulous French Bordeaux with a Paphiopedilium Rothschildianum, which is a regal historical orchid, every bit as rare in the marketplace as the wine and similarly very expensive when found. The stately dark striped flower echoed the same tone of the dark, dense wine. Using a soup tureen from the service as a container for the orchid, the long elegant leaves seemingly bisected the table and added much added flair to the normal dinner conversation."

From an aesthetic standpoint, Rogers recommends low growing standards like miltoniopsis and paphiopedilums to use on the dinner table.

"Using miniature orchids to create tiny orchid jungles or islands on the table can also add an extra dramatic dimension to the event," said Rogers.

Another popular trend that Rogers is seeing within his high profile wine-industry clients is the idea of pairing wine with fragrant orchids.

"It is challenging to try to counterpart the bouquet of a wine with the fragrance of an orchid," said Rogers. "The scents should complement each other enhancing the experience. Oncidium Sherry Baby, with its rich chocolate smell goes great with red wines, while Oncidium Twinkles with its sweet citrus scent lends itself to white wines. "

Rogers believes that there is an orchid to accompany every type of wine and gives several tips for picking the perfect pairing.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Bordeaux and Blends

Big heavy full-bodied wines such as these, call for heavy foods and heavy orchids.

Cattlayas, paphiopedilums, and the darker wine colored phaleonopsis offer rich, intense visual and fragrant attributes that can match the wine.

Pinot Noir / Burgundy

The orchids used paired with these types of wines should possess elegance and finesse. The grape is neither inexpensive nor easy to grow to perfection and the orchid should mimic both of these qualities. Darker colored Odontoglossums and Masdavallias are a good example. The scent of Rhycostylis can also be very pleasant when drinking red wine.

Zinfandel

The rough bunch. High content. More of an orchid in your hair in the wind feeling. Orchids like zygopetalums and cymbidiums are good choices here.

Chardonnay

Miltoniopsis (Miltonias) with their large but visually refined flowers coupled with rose to apricot fragrances blend well with these white wines. White odontoglossums could not be more correct. White Phaleonopsis look beautiful with crystal glasses with white wine. White fragrant Angraecums are ideal.

Sauvignon Blanc

Use orchids that mimic the crispy fragrances. Dendrochilums, with their heady scents are perfect, as are Maxallarias.

The Pacific Orchid Exposition is hosted by the non-profit San Francisco Orchid Society (SFOS), and the event serves as the organization's major fundraiser. Proceeds from the Gala Benefit Preview night will go to assisting other non-profit horticultural organizations such as the Conservatory of Flowers and the Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture.

- WHO: The San Francisco Orchid Society
WHAT: "Natural Wonders", the 59th Annual Pacific Orchid Exposition
WHERE: Fort Mason Center, San Francisco CA
WHEN: **March 3-6, 2011**
- HOURS: Thursday, March 3: Gala Benefit Preview, 6:30 – 10:00 pm
Friday, March 4: 10 am - 6 pm
Saturday, March 5: 9 am - 6 pm
Sunday, March 6: 10 am - 5 pm
- COST: Gala Benefit: \$35 advance/online and \$40 at the door (includes wine glass and tastings)
General Admission: \$12 online/\$14 at the door, Seniors (65+): \$8 online/\$10 at the door
Children 12 and under are free (except for Preview night)
Parking: \$10 at Marina Middle School or Fort Mason Center
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