

Wine pairing for Game



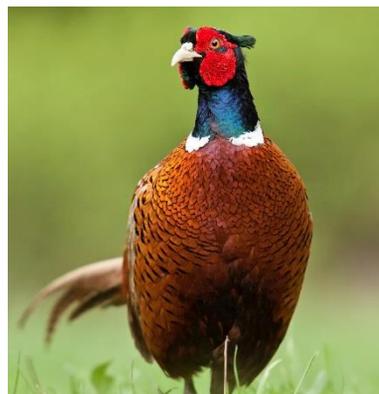
Venison has a rich, gamey flavour yet is very lean, which can make it fiendishly hard to match, but Pinot Noir is best placed to cope with its structure. Roast venison does not like too much tannin, so seek out a mature red Burgundy to go with it – although Pinot Noirs from New Zealand, Australia and North America make for worthy alternatives. (If Pinot Noir is not to your liking, a suitable substitute here might be a Côtes du Rhône.) A casserole widens your choice of wine: when cooked in red wine with herbs, onions and pot-vegetables you can opt for more full-bodied fare such as a Cabernet Sauvignon/Syrah blend, or even a Zinfandel.



Grouse is a full-flavoured bird that can cope with a full-flavoured red wine. As with all poultry you need to be aware of tannin and opt for wines that aren't heavily tannic. The perfect choice with roast grouse is either a red from the Northern Rhône or a top-class mature red Burgundy.



Roast **partridge** can easily be overpowered by a tannic wine. Syrah is thus the ideal variety to seek out for this particular bird, although the optimum match would be a not-too-full-bodied version such as a Vin de Pays. That said, the classic French dish Perdrix aux Choux (lit. 'braised partridge with cabbage'), which is flavoured with juniper and the aforementioned cabbage, will also pair well with white wines. In this instance try an unoaked Chardonnay or a white Rhône.



Pheasant

Another classic French game dish is Faisan à la Normande (or Normandy-style pheasant), a recipe prepared with apples and cream. Whites work wonders here, especially a dry Pinot Gris, as this aromatic variety will complement the sweetness of the apples in the mix. Roast pheasant partners very well with light, fruity varieties such as Pinot Noir, especially those from North America or New Zealand.



Wild duck such as **Mallard** has far more flavour than its domestic cousins, thus it correspondingly requires a more flavoursome wine to match. A red from Northern Rhône would be the perfect solution here, as would an Australian Shiraz.



Roast **Wood Pigeon** relishes mature but full-flavoured reds such as Claret or Rioja. Pigeon breasts served warm with a green leaf salad meanwhile will benefit from wines that complement the salad dressing rather than the bird. Otherwise, as is true of all casseroles, if a wine has been used in the dish itself, always drink the same wine. For wood pigeon casserole – which is not all that dissimilar to coq au vin – fruity reds such as North American Pinot Noir or ‘bigger’ Australian Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz work well.



Rabbit

With this fairly mild-flavoured meat, try an Italian Chianti, a light red Burgundy or a good Beaujolais from France. For the classic rabbit in mustard sauce, you might like to try a white, such as a Pinot Gris from Oregon or a grassy Sauvignon Blanc from California.



Other game can be sourced to order. For more information, please call Ben Lee on 01377 217243 or visit www.soanespoultry.co.uk



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