



Wine & Food Feature

## Spring Weddings

Eugenia Bone 04.13.06, 12:30 AM ET

The chilly days (or rather, nights) of osso buco and inky wines are over. Port after dinner? Not for some months, thank you very much.

Each season and its foods beg an appropriate wine--rich and heavy in the winter, to go with the cold months' beans and stewed meats; in the summer, fruity and floral wines paired with fresh tomatoes, grilled fish and zucchini flowers; earthy, woody, spicy wines in the fall to pair with wild mushrooms, game birds, pears and apples.

Then there is spring, when asparagus shoots are at their most succulent and the delicately nutty morel appears on menus all over the country. Soft-shelled crabs (actually molting blue crabs, not a separate species) become available--the daintiest in late spring. Crisp whites and fresh, aromatic reds are perfect for accompanying baby lamb, new peas and tiny organic strawberries so packed with flavor you can eat only a few in a small bowl of thick cream.

### In Pictures: Spring Weddings

I like to think of wines as having the same character as a particular season, the same way we approach food. Wines that love age on them are often wines that go well with the foods of the maturing year--there's nothing like opening an old Bordeaux in winter. We know wine production is influenced by the solar cycle. Wine drinking should be, too.

The best pairings of wine and food start, of course, with superior dishes. That's not to say I haven't indulged in some tacky combinations, like grilled American cheese sandwiches and a luscious white Santenay. But high-quality fare will be more satisfying--and is easily at hand as long as you eat in season. Because local seasonal foods travel less distance, vegetables have more time to ripen on the plant, meats and fish are at their most succulent, and fruits their sweetest. Foods that are in season and grown or raised close to home are also healthier and cheaper.

The other consideration to pairing wine with food is the advice you will find in any wine book--acidic wines taste less acidic when paired with salty foods or slightly sweet foods, etc. These conventions are useful, if occasionally burdensome. For me, it's like keeping track of pot lids--the trial-and-error approach can lead to pleasant surprises.

### Here are a few more of our favorite spring pairings.

#### Morels



Domaine Serene 2002 Evenstad Reserve (\$50)

**Fiddlehead Cellars 2001 Fiddlestix Seven Twenty Eight (\$45)**

We can't resist morels, especially when we prepare them in opulent sauces for filet mignon, in pasta dishes with tiny smoked scallops, or maybe most delectably, in great heaps over soft scrambled eggs. Pairing wine with eggs is tricky, but pairing with morels is a no-brainer. Other earthy, dusty red wines will do, but as the morels we buy are often gathered in Oregon, we go for an Oregon pinot noir.