

## SPICY FOOD:

- Bold, peppery, hot
- Wide variety of styles, preparations, accompaniments
- Requires a palate-cleansing wine to refresh the palate

## GENERAL Pairing Tips:

- Acidity in a wine cuts through richness and helps it stand up to bold flavors in food
- Tannins and alcohol in a wine enhance the perception of spice in food
- Sweetness and fruitiness in a wine can contrast with and tone down spice in food
- Pair “like” components: intensity, complexity, texture, fruit or earth
  - Example: delicate, fresh, clean flavors deserve a delicate, fresh, clean wine
  - Example: bold, rich, complex dishes deserve a bold, rich, complex wine
- What grows together goes together
- Consider the occasion

### 1) Spreitzer Oestricher Lenchen Kabinett Riesling '10 – Rheingau, Germany

- Riesling has naturally high acidity and can be made in a variety of styles from bone dry to off-dry to very sweet; the acidity balances the sweetness
- “Kabinett” is a designation used in Germany; it indicates the grapes were picked at lower levels of ripeness, which translates to lighter, lower alcohol wines; usually off-dry
- Light body won't overwhelm light dishes, or it can contrast with richer dishes
- Bright acidity and some sweetness refreshes the palate after eating spicy food

### 2) Clos Roche Blanche Sauvignon Blanc No. 2 '11 – Touraine, France

- Sancerre is the famous appellation for Sauvignon Blanc in the Loire Valley in France; this is from a larger area just east of there
- Tangy fruits, herbal and bell pepper notes complement dishes with peppers and/or fresh herbs; pungency stands up to bold flavors; light body and high acidity refreshes the palate
- Clos Roche Blanche is known for being very non-interventionist in approach



### 3) François Pinon Silex Noir '09 – Vouvray, France

- Vouvray is an area in the Loire Valley in France; the wines are 100% Chenin Blanc
- Chenin Blanc has extremely high acidity and can be made in a variety of styles from bone dry to off-dry to very sweet and even sparkling; the acid balances the sweetness
- Notes of citrus, honey, straw, orange blossom and honeysuckle complement spicy food; fuller body can stand up to richer dishes while the acidity refreshes palate
- Silex is a type of flinty soil found in the area; it contributes a strong sense of minerality
- Pinon is one of the most admired producers of traditional Vouvray; works organically

### 4) Bisson Portofino Ciliegiole '11 – Liguria, Italy

- Ciliegiole is a light-bodied red grape with notes of cherries (*ciliegio* means cherry in Italian); related to Sangiovese and grown in Liguria as well as Tuscany
- Liguria is a boomerang-shaped region lining the northwest coast of Italy; vineyards perch on terraces peering over the Ligurian Sea
- Bright, lightly fruity with good minerality; low alcohol doesn't clash with spice
- Bisson is one of Liguria's best producers and an advocate for its indigenous varieties

### 5) Chateau Cambon '10 – Beaujolais, France

- Beaujolais is a sub-region of Burgundy where they make red wines from Gamay grape
- Gamay is light and bright with red berry flavors; low alcohol and tannin give it a softer mouthfeel; juicy and bright fruit flavors counteract bold spice
- Easy-going and easy-drinking, can work well with a slight chill
- Cambon makes this from older vines, biodynamic farming, gentle winemaking

### 6) Storybook Mountain Vineyards Zinfandel '09 – Calistoga, California

- Zinfandel has notes of jammy, brambly berries, raisins, figs, sweet spice and cocoa
- Full-bodied and dry but often has some perceptible sweetness
- Can stand up to bold flavors and complement light spice, but be careful with very spicy food as higher alcohol and some tannins can enhance perception of spice
- Storybook Mountain estate has been working with Zinfandel on hills of Mayacama Mountains since 1880s; they currently farm organically

