Can Thai Food Pair with Bordeaux Wine?

By Laurence Civil

hat was the interesting question posed by Jan Ganser and Benjawan Wisootat of Fin Wines to Jarret Wrisley and his team at Soul Food Mahanakorn on Thonglor. They love to do things differently; Thibault Despagne of Despagne Wines from St Emillion in Bordeaux was in town and wanted to host a wine dinner for a group of friends.

The Despagne family has been making wines in St. Emillion for over two centuries. Their wine estate is situated between Garonne and Dordogne Rivers with varying terroirs and is planted with traditional Bordeaux grape varieties - Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillion Blanc, Sémillon and Muscadelle. It was a tough challenge so how did Wrisley respond?

"Pairing wines with Thai food," says Wresley, "Bordeaux wines would be my last choice. Even before I started I knew it wasn't going to be easy but then that's part of the fun of working with Jan & Benjawan. I decided that dishes from the North or Northeast would most probably work and I knew to stay away from flavours that were too strong and would over power the wines."

The amuse bouche was a contemporary interpretation of Mieng Kham where the bettlenut leaf was replaced by butter head lettuce served open style with grilled pork jowl. This was



Challenn Bed Clier

paired with Champagne Blanc de Noir 1er Cru AOC Gonet-Medeville that was full, rich and expressive with a vibrant structure. Light strawberry, berry and mineral notes

ride on a chalky texture as this firms up with the fin-

The first dish was fresh mackerel marinated in fish sauce and fried, served with a traditional pomelo salad. This was paired with 2008 Chateau Despagne Bel Air Entre –Deux-mers AOC, predominantly made with Semillon, with some sauvignon and muscadelle; it's light and dry with a fragrant

aroma. Entre-deux-mer and fish are always a perfect pairing not strong spicy flavours in the food to challenge the wine; Tibault agreed the first course went well with his wine.

CHAMPAGNE

GONET-MEDEVILLE

Blane de Noirs

Then came slow-grilled Isaan style chicken wings, papaya salad and organic sticky rice. This was paired with 2008 Chateau Despagne Bel Air Rosé AOC made with Cabernet Sauvignon grapes that enchants the nose. It has a delightful palate with fruity aromas of raspberry with a fine air of lemon to round off the final swallow. With three taste elements on the plate a perfect pairing is going to be tough but what impressed me was the wine stood its own against the somtam which could have been the problem

Then we were served Australian lamb grapow which is the meat stir fried with basil leaves and chili, fried egg, fluffy jasmine rice and Geang

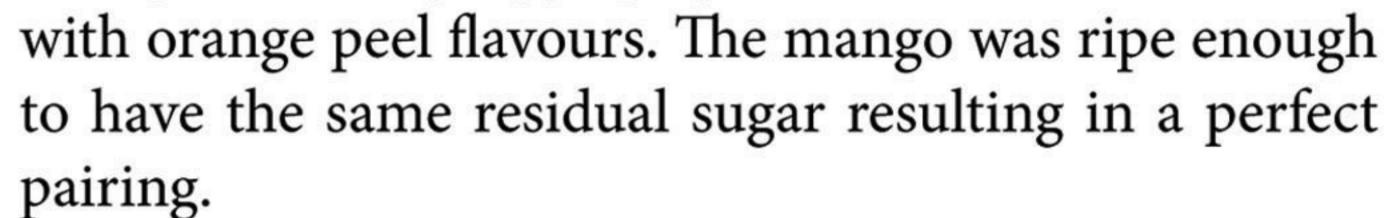
Jued a clear soup to smooth the taste. This was paired with 2007 Chateau Despagne Bel Air Rouge Reserve AOC with an opaque purple colour in the glass; on the nose great fruit aromas, opulent and voluptuous, gorgeous fruit purity, a good presence on the palate with a long hardy. Good food, good wine but if they don't match drink the wine you enjoy.



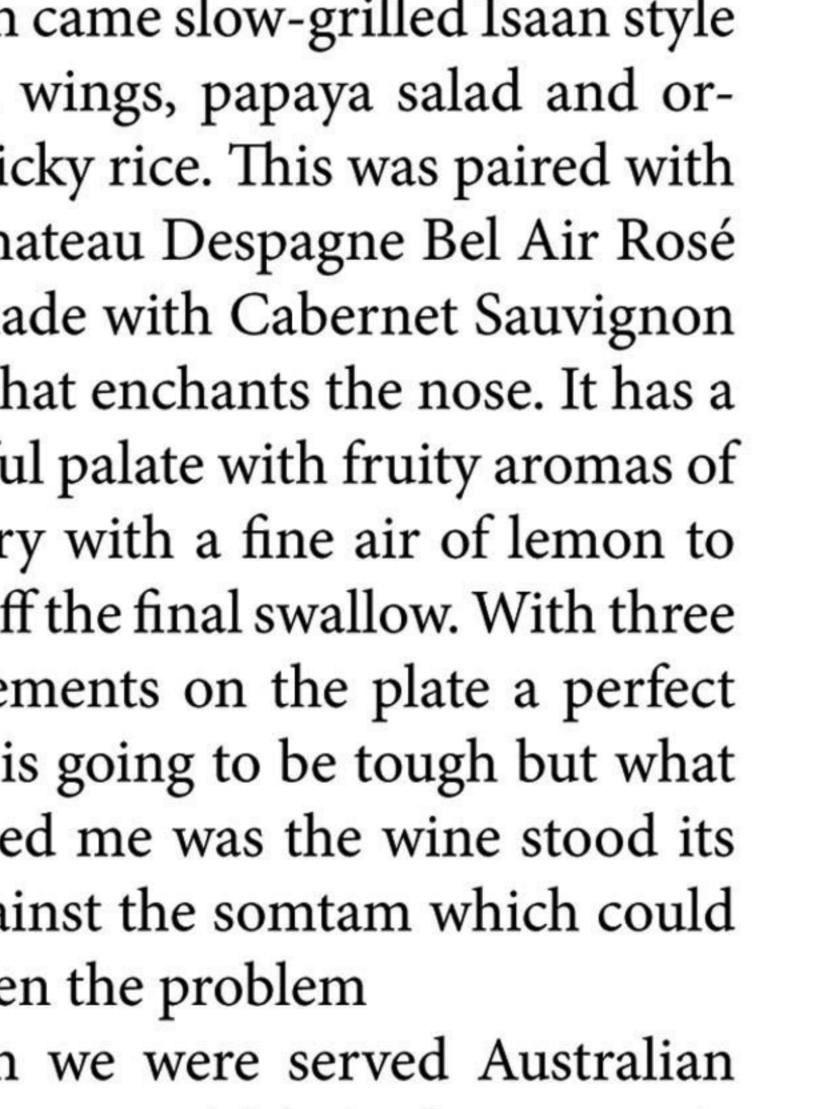
Gaeng Hang Lay

We moved onto Gaeng Hang Lay Moo with Mae Hong Son Salsa. It was paired with 1996 Chateau Despage Bel-Air AOC "Grand Cuvee" a deep ruby heading to purple colour with a soft plush consumerfriendly personality, copious quantities of fruit as glycerin and light to moderate tannins. This Gaeng Hong Loy is milder and a touch sweeter than others while the pork adds a caramel taste to the wine. The taste of food and wine interacted so moderately successful.

The perfect and most outstanding pairing of the night was mango sticky rice with 2006 Chateau Les Justices Sauternes Blanc AOC with its aromas of apple tart, almond and spices it's a syrupy, spicy finish



There were no disasters and some enchanting marriages, Jarrett excelled himself with what was a tough challenge. II



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