

Home Cooking Chronicles: Sparkling rosé's best friend

Recipe pairs sparkling wine, pimento cheese and saltines

BY BRIAN MEDFORD

One of my closest friends and I share the same name. We go by our last names to not confuse those around us. When I hear, "Medford" I know it's me people are referring to, not the Oregon city. It is the closest I have come to feeling like a player on a sports team since I turned 8 years old — T-ball was my crowning achievement.

The other Brian does wine. He is the kind of person that opens a bottle and can tell you the variety of grape, the country of origin, the year bottled and probably the chemical composition of the soil from just a whiff. I've learned that wine comes in shades of straw, yellow, gold, copper, pink, salmon, ruby, purple and garnet. Before, I thought wine was just red or white. Who knew I was missing the rainbow of flavor?

I've learned through sharing bottles with the other Brian that I like southern Rhone Valley grapes. grenache, mourvèdre and cinsault are my jam (and can taste jammy so it's fitting). But I have a weakness for anything sparkling ... wine-wise, although I



Brian Medford

Pimento cheese pairs with rosé wine for a delicious treat.

have said before that my favorite color is shiny.

While tasting a new bottle delights me, the best part of my wine visit is the other Brian's partner, Julie. She is a glorious cook. I eat dinner with them multiple times a week. When I cross the threshold of their house, the other Brian nods and says "Medford" as a greeting. Julie always has a glass of sparkling rosé ready to hand me. Plus, there's always something in the oven that induces a Pavlovian response in me. It's like walking into a warm hug.

My favorite appetizer for sparkling rosé (other than Fritos, which pair well with everything) is pimento cheese. The subtle sweetness and tiny bubbles of the wine cuts through the hot sauce heat of the pimento cheese and reminds me of home.

So, raise your glass, toast your friends

(by last name or first), make some pimento cheese and start a conversation about wine or home. We have a lot of catching up to do.

Pimento cheese (yields 2 cups)

Pair pimento cheese with any wine you'd like. However, I believe the only acceptable cracker to serve it on is a saltine.

Ingredients

- One 4 ounce jar of diced pimento, drained
- 4 ounces of mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon of grated sweet yellow onion (flesh and juice)
- 1 tablespoon of hot sauce
- ½ teaspoon of kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper
- 12 ounces of grated sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 sleeve of saltine crackers, for serving

Preparation

In a medium bowl, combine the pimento, mayonnaise, hot sauce, grated onion, salt and pepper.

Add the grated sharp cheddar cheese (grate your own cheese, it's much better). Lightly mix into the pimento mixture.

Refrigerate for one hour and then slather on top of saltine crackers.

Pair the crackers and cheese with wine of your choice. A few of my favorite local sparkling rosés are Underwood Rosé by Union Wine Co. (Tualatin), Brut Rosé Scintillation by Syncline Wine Cellars (Lyle, Washington) and Sparkling Blanc de Noir #JanelleMonae by Abbey Creek Winery (North Plains).

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