

WESTENDER

EVERYTHING VANCOUVER

JANUARY 9, 2017

WINE-AND-CHEESE PAIRINGS BRING FRANCE INTO YOUR HOME

Michaela Morris — Westender



I'm not typically swayed by the “shelf-talker” or “on-pack” promotional tags in wine and liquor stores. However, when I saw a bottle tag offering 10 per cent off cheese at Les Amis du Fromage (with a \$50 purchase at said store), I was lured in. Someone had found my Achilles heel.

As my love of both cheese and wine was born in France, I often pay homage by pairing together examples from this illustrious culinary nation. I'm not suggesting anything revolutionary here – France is home to some of the world's most heavenly matches. The Loire Valley's tangy goat cheese is sheer perfection with her steely Sauvignon Blanc (think Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé). Then there's Alsace's pungent washed-rind Munster, which is best enjoyed with an equally full-flavoured Gewürztraminer. Perhaps the greatest of all partnerships is a piece of salty blue Roquefort with a lusciously sweet botrytis-affected Sauternes from the region of Bordeaux. While the two hail from different areas within France, they offer the most delectable study in opposites attracting.

With hundreds of cheeses and just about as many wine appellations, France provides endless combinations. Get an assortment of both, and just enjoy mixing and matching. I'm a big fan of whites with cheese – given the chilly season, my recommendations here are richer and wintry. As for reds, my preference is for fruity styles with soft tannins. And just make sure there's at least one sweet wine in the lineup. (Hopefully, you're not on a January cleanse or haven't misguidedly sworn off wine or cheese for the year.)

2015 Louis Bernard Côtes-du-Rhône • Villages AOC LTO • \$14.49 (regular \$16.49) (BC Liquor Stores)

Attention deal-hunters: This is the above-mentioned culprit. Not only does it come with that 10-per-cent-off coupon for Les Amis du Fromage; it's currently \$2 off the regular price, too. With straightforward raspberry and red-plum flavours – as well as soft, approachable tannin – it's easygoing with a young and supple Saint-Marcellin or a semi-firm Morbier and Tomme de Savoie.