Cooking

Japanese Dishes for Wine Lovers
Machiko Chiba
Kodansha International
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Mandarin Matches. The roster of exceptional pairings, from Fred and Ginger to peanut butter and chocolate, shouldn't make such a fuss over the relationship between wine and food. Clever chefs and sommeliers know that adding a particular wine to the pan during cooking lays the groundwork for a better marriage at the table, because the wine subtly permeates the food and becomes an extension of what's in the glass. This helps explain the symmetry between sake, wine made from rice, and the ubiquitous serving of rice in Japan.

The growing popularity of cooking in the grape-loving West has forced a testy tasting confrontation, while eschewing the old-school "red with meat, white with seafood" rule. *Japanese Dishes for Wine Lovers* (Kodansha International, full-color illustrations, 120 pages, hardcover, $25.00, 4-7700-3003-7) may be the first serious attempt to investigate the unique composition and flavors of traditional cuisine in a wine context. The book itself is a tandem effort, with sixty-one innovative recipes written by Machiko Chiba, a author of eight cookbooks and cooking school owner, and wine pairing advice by accredited expert and columnist J.K. Whelehan.

A stickler for nuance, Whelehan advises cooks to regulate the use of soy sauce, wasabi, rice vinegar, mirin, seven-spice mix, and other secondary ingredients, all of which can affect the wine selection. His notes for an accompaniment to Pork and Plum Stir-Fry read: "Halbtrocken Riesling can transform the dish … in much the same way that Europeans traditionally use the acidity and fruit in apple sauce to enhance simple roast pork."

A culinary meeting of East and West at its sumptuous best.