

Forbes

Dining

4 Tips for Virtual Wine Tastings Done Right: An Update

Cathy Huyghe | Jan 29, 2021

Virtual wine tastings were one of the first of many pivots made by wineries during COVID, as the reality and restrictions of work-from-home and shelter-in-place regulations began to take hold. Rather than extend their hospitality in real life, face to face, at their wineries and in their tasting rooms, winery staff instead needed to figure out how to welcome new and repeat guests through the computer screen.

It wasn't easy and there were plenty of learnings along the way, but indications are that virtual tastings will remain part of our collective wine experience moving forward albeit to a lesser extent once we can start traveling regularly again.

FOOD PAIRINGS, SIMPLIFIED

Last night I joined a particularly well-curated media tasting with consulting winemaker Philippe Melka and the Napa-based **Parallel Wines** brand, organized by GM Adrienne Smith and Kimberly Noelle Charles of Charles Communications Associates. The tasting lasted a little over an hour with right around twelve guests (so far so good!) and each of the three Parallel wines came with one specific recommended food pairing that was itself individually packaged: rosemary mixed nuts with the 2018 Napa Valley Chardonnay, saucisson Provençal with the 2017 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon and olive and herb grissini with the 2017 Black Diamond "Eclipse." It sounds basic, to recommend one specific food to taste with one specific wine (this with this, and that with that), but I found such certain and thoughtful decisions made on the guests' behalf to be something of a relief and very welcome. And also surprisingly rare.

