



THE PERFECT PAIR

Bypass the wine list and choose unexpected flavors to highlight autumn's robust fare.

by **Fernanda Mueller** photography by **Ryan Liu**

IN ORDER to have a complete gastronomic experience, you must choose the perfect pairing of a dish and a beverage. Like pasta with wine, a classic. For this fall issue we asked some great New York chefs, who specialize in a variety of cuisines, to recommend some unexpected pairings from their menus. You will be surprised by the combinations of flavors they suggested.

CAFE KATJA

The memory is still clear in his head. Erwin Schroettner was only 11 years old when he cooked his first meal at his home in Austria. Growing up, eating fresh vegetables and fruits was definitely what helped the chef develop his special relationship with food. In his restaurant, Cafe Katja, you can see a picture of the farm where he grew up hanging on the wall.

At Cafe Katja, Schroettner serves traditional Austrian dishes, like schnitzel, bratwurst, and spätzle, but the most important thing, he says, is the beer—served with the proper amount of foam, which is rare in the United States.

We all agree that Austrian food matches



CHEF ERWIN SCHROETTNER
in the kitchen of Cafe Katja.

perfectly with a glass of beer. However, since the idea for this column was to suggest unexpected pairings, Chef Schroettner also selected another traditional drink—a special apple cider from Austria. According to his friend, cider producer Hans Reisetbauer, “this cider is made from meticulously farmed apples and is vinified like Champagne, aging it for 18 months on the lees—the sediment at the bottom of wine barrels. A dosage of apple juice is added to induce secondary fermentation. The result is a dry apple wine with very fine bubbles that reveals the complexity and nobility of the apple.” Schroettner pairs this citric beverage with a dish called *schweinshaxe* (pork knuckle), served with the same sides as his mother did: sauerkraut and *servietten knoedel* (a kind of bread dumpling).

To finish the meal, Schroettner chose a traditional Austrian dessert: linzer torte (a crumbly pastry made with a hazelnut crust and usually filled with homemade raspberry jam). He paired it with a glass of raspberry schnapps. In his words, “with all the spices in the linzer torte, the schnapps gives the dessert a fulfilling round finish.” cafekatja.com

NONNA BEPPA

Italian restaurants are everywhere in New York City. But at Nonna Beppa, you will not eat spaghetti with meatballs or chicken parmesan. The restaurant, which features dishes from Emilia-Romagna, a region in Italy known for its rich gastronomy, has two locations in the U.S., one in Miami and the other in New York. Chef Giancarlo Cacciatori, known as Wendy, wanted to give his customers the experience of a traditional Italian grandmother’s cooking, even naming the restaurant after his grandmother, Beppa.



The menu is simple, yet unique. Each dish has a maximum of three ingredients, so you are able to recognize them in just one bite, but many of the offerings are not even known in some parts of Italy.

The pairing Chef Wendy picked from his menu: Cotoletta alla Bolognese (breaded chicken with prosciutto and parmesan fondue) with Viola Bionda, a hand-crafted pale lager from Emilia-Romagna. Since the dish is not very fatty, it pairs very well with a beer. nonnabeppa.com



CHEF GIANCARLO CACCIATORI AND VALENTINA IMBRENDADA

MALIBU FARM

“An exclusive location with an inclusive cuisine”—that’s how Malibu Farm’s founder, Helene Henderson, describes her restaurant. The restaurant’s two locations, in Malibu and New York’s Seaport District, offer similarly casual customer experiences, including both outposts being located on waterfront piers. You don’t have to be a “foodie” to eat at Malibu Farm, she explains. The food is simple, healthy, and local. Henderson began by offering cooking classes and dinners from



her home in Malibu, and she wants to remain faithful to those origins.

The organic and local concept of the restaurant is clear in the pairing Henderson picked from her menu: A dish called Surfer Ranchero (roasted veggies, beans, crispy corn tortilla, eggs, red salsa, sour cream and cabbage)—is perfect for lunch or Sunday brunch, served with the tequila-based Kale Cocktail. Yes, at Malibu Farm you can drink alcohol and still feel healthy! malibufarm.nyc



HELENE HENDERSON

LADURÉE

For most people, introducing plant-based recipes to a brand known for its love of butter seems impossible, but Elisabeth Holder and her brother David, the presidents of Ladurée USA, have proved that it’s actually not that difficult. Through a partnership with plant-based chef and author Matthew Kenney, they decided to incorporate their healthy lifestyle into the restaurants’ menus, calling it a “Green Evolution.”

The Beverly Hills location is their first 100 percent plant-based restaurant, but they are



adding vegan menus to other locations around the world, including New York. Among the new offerings are plant-based omelets, with a mung bean base, and Croque-Monsieur with nut-based gruyère and tofu ham. They have also recreated the patisserie’s famous macarons using vegan ingredients. According to Kenney, a sweet-but-citrusy drink is best to balance a rich dessert like macarons, so he recommends pairing them with a frozen citrus martini with agave and mint, which is refreshing and invigorating at the same time. laduree.us **DT**



DAVID HOLDER, MATTHEW KENNEY, ELISABETH HOLDER