

Right food, wine an 'orgasmic' experience, writer says

Posted By Judy Creighton, the Canadian Press

Until now, the thought of enjoying appetizers with wine as a hedonistic experience eluded me. But a new book entitled **Orgasmic Appetizers and Matching Wines** has changed that perception.

"I call it orgasmic because it is the level of enjoyment that people get when they start to understand the flavour combinations with food and wine and it actually heightens the experience," says Shari Darling, author of the book subtitled "Tiny Bites With the Moan Factor" (Whitecap).

"Moaning is an involuntary release, an expulsion of air and sound," she says. "When a wine and food partnership tastes sublime, our senses, sight, sound, touch, smell and taste are heightened."

"It's spiritual. It's spine-tingling. It's ecstatic. I call it a 'culinary orgasm.'"

A wine educator, Darling is a graduate of Toronto's George Brown College sommelier program. Besides teaching a wine certificate course near her home at Fleming College in Peterborough, she writes a syndicated column "The Sophisticated Wino," which appears in a number of Canadian publications.

She has two other books to her credit, including **Canada's Wine Country Cookbook** and **Harmony on the Palate**.

Orgasmic Appetizers and Matching Wines provides readers with information on how senses and tastes work together with food's flavours and textures.

Darling describes the building blocks to help readers pair wine with food effectively. She provides matching wine notes with an array of appetizer recipes.

One of the most valuable chapters in the book shows how to stage a successful small or large wine and appetizer event. This includes a list summing up the primary details to make any party a success.

Here from the book is one of Darling's treasured recipes.

Scampi Stuffed With Goat Cheese

250 g (8 oz) goat cheese, at room temperature
10 ml (2 tsp) finely chopped chives
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
18 large shrimp, peeled and butterflied, with their tails on
12 shaved slices of prosciutto (strips 5 mm/1/4 inch wide)
Olive oil, as needed

In a medium bowl, blend cheese and chives. Season mixture with salt and pepper. Season shrimp with salt and pepper. Press 5 ml (1 tsp) of the cheese mixture in the cavity of each shrimp. Wrap a piece of prosciutto tightly around each shrimp. In a skillet, heat oil. When oil is hot, add stuffed shrimp and sear for 2 to 3 minutes on each side or until shrimp turn pink, their tails curl toward their bodies and prosciutto is crisp. Remove shrimp from pan and place on a large plate. Serve hot.

Wine match: Choose a crisp, dry white with herbal tones to bring out the subtle flavour of the chives.