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## PINOT NOIR AND TRUFFLES, *a Match Made in Heaven*

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As the saying goes, “What grows together goes together,” and that has never been truer than the pairing of Oregon truffles and Oregon wines. Due to the arduous work of Leslie Scott and Charles Lefevre, the Oregon truffle industry is booming, and the Oregon Truffle Festival is a must-do experience. In 2018 I attended my first Oregon Truffle Festival in Eugene, Oregon, and discovered the marriage made in heaven between truffles and pinot noir. One sip and I was convinced.

Prior to the events and dinners at The Oregon Truffle Festival, I was not an enthusiastic fan of pinot noir or Burgundy from

France. This admission does not go over well when living close to one of the world’s top pinot noir destinations, Willamette Valley, Oregon. However, I distinctly remember my first dinner at Marché & Le Bar.

A group of 20 or so was sitting around a large table, and every course featured truffles. Broadley Vineyards Marché Cuvée Pinot Noir 2016 was the only wine served throughout the evening. Previously all pinot noirs I tasted were light-bodied and delicate; since I prefer big, bold reds, these wines never agreed with me. However, the Broadley pinot noir served that night was bold, rich, and layered with flavors that sang when paired with the dishes featuring the assorted truffles. It was a transformative moment for me.

Even since that night, I have become a “fan” of truffles and pinot noirs. My taste buds have matured, and I now enjoy a variety of pinots and burgundy wines that range from lighter with subtle flavors to even bigger and bolder ones.

One of my favorite places to enjoy truffles is Truffles Folies Paris, owned by Chef Cyril Boccia-relli—he now owns two truffle restaurants. Truffle connoisseurs will discover a grand selection of delightful truffle dishes.

During my visit, I dined on al dente tagliatelle pasta bathed in a cream sauce and then topped with black truffles, followed by a rich and creamy risotto where Chef Boccia-relli used black Périgord truffles from Australia with abandon. However, the simple baked eggs with toast points were the perfect unadorned backdrop to highlight the freshly shaved truffles on top. Pair any and all of those

with a glass of Mercurey 1er cru Jérôme & Gaele Meunier, and I am in heaven.

Fabulous pinot noirs are all over the world. Whether you are looking for classic pinot noir flavors from grapes grown in cool climates, like bright red cherry, raspberry, strawberry, cranberry, plum, currant, and pomegranate, or richer black cherry notes found in warmer climate pinots, there is something for everyone. Secondary notes are what typically pair with truffles. These notes include gravel, chalk, mushrooms, earth, spice, and light oak.

Here are a few tips for pairing wines with truffles:

- 1) Do not overpower the truffle with the wine you select. Truffles have an enchanting aroma, although delicate. Make sure the wine highlights the truffle dish and does not overwhelm them.
- 2) Ensure that the wine is rich in aromas without too much body that can overpower the delicate character of the truffles. Wines with a bit of time on them are perfect for enhancing the truffle in taste and smell.
- 3) Be mindful of what else is in the dish serving as a backdrop for your truffles.
- 4) Always remember what grows together goes together

The bottom line is that pinot noir and truffles have an affinity for one another. Each one boasts a delicious lingering perfume, expresses a sense of the earth and place, and is surrounded by an allure of mystery. Put them together, and you will experience a new level of culinary seduction. ♦