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Tagus Creek

CHIP IN AND HAVE A GOOD TIME

SAM WYLIE-HARRIS SUGGESTS SOME REFRESHING WINES TO PLEASE POTATO HEADS

The great thing about chips is they go with so many things, and unlike more tricky wine and food matches, you don't have to worry about potatoes, the nation's favourite vegetable, taking the punch out of your best bottle of vino.

Sliced or curly, oven-baked or deep-fried, chips boast a crisp outer shell which can be dipped into a tasty sauce, and then softens on contact into a fluffy filling and feeling of wellbeing – no wonder we eat nearly three billion portions a year.

Wine experts agree that a glass of bubbly is the top choice with fish and chips, and with more than 250 million fish and chip meals sold in the UK each year, the fizz factor is good news for sparkle producers who focus on a crisp, fresh style.

A cellar staple with fishy tapas, a cava such as Wine Selection Asda Cava, Spain (£5, Asda) has the acidic structure to cut through the batter, balance flavours and provide lemony refreshment to the dish.

Another star match to pair with this seaside staple, Wyfold Vineyard Sparkling Wine 2010, England (£29.99, www.laithwaites.co.uk) is the second release for Ridgeview estate (the 2009 first vintage won Best English Sparkling Wine of

2013) and Wyfold's champagne-like nose (it's made from the classic champagne blend of pinot noir, chardonnay and pinot meunier) and balance of sweetness

and acidity is the perfect foil to salt and vinegar, the mildness of flaky, white fish and earthy quality of spuds.

More French Riviera than the local chippy, Taittinger Prelude Grands Crus NV, France (£39.95, www.champagnedirect.co.uk) calls for posh pomme frites, and the generous proportion of chardonnay has the acidic structure to balance a light and crispy batter with tartar sauce. Plus the champagne's fresh, citrus fruits, rich body and good minerality can cope with a dollop of fresh mayonnaise.

Not forgetting the merits of a zesty, still white table wine with a pleasant nose of lemon peel, try Sainsbury's Winemakers' Selection Falanghina 2012, Italy (£6.29, Sainsbury's) from the Campania region in Southern Italy.

The green apple and grapefruit notes accented by mineral freshness would suit a portion of chips doused in vinegar, but if you prefer a bag of crunchy golden fries with a light sprinkling of salt, Tagus Creek Chardonnay Fernao Pires 2012, Portugal (£6.25, Asda) with its hints of tropical

fruit and white peach, will sit well with a tender fish fillet. Nettly and herbaceous, there's no disguising the taste of a good Kiwi sauvignon blanc and Vidal White Label Series Sauvignon Blanc 2013, New Zealand (£9.99, www.cambridgewine.com) is bright and breezy and guaranteed to put the wind back in your sails if you're fishing for a trophy white – What Food What Wine? awarded it five stars for its



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“pungent gooseberry flavours and fresh acidity to zip through the rich batter and oily potato”, in the fish and chips category a couple of years ago.

Rather more full-bodied – and the byword for rich and intense reds with a rustic feel Down Under – the ruby cabernet grape becomes even more powerful with a generous splash of petit verdot to add a dark, violet note, and Andrew McPherson’s aptly named The Full Fifteen 2013, Australia (£8.99, 15% abv, www.laithwaites.co.uk) couldn’t be a better fit with a man-sized burger.

With touches of spice and earthy aromas, the dense, juicy blackberry fruit has just enough oak on the lush finish to unite the strength of the red meat with the quality of hand-cut, gourmet fries without overwhelming the flavours.

