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THIS MONTH'S CHOCOLATES BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



Green & Black's is a chocolate brand founded on sustainable and ethical cocoa sourcing principles, based on our conviction that great taste comes from the finest ingredients. Green symbolizes our commitment to always sourcing ethical cocoa. Black stands for our high quality and the delicious intensity of our chocolate.

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THE ULTIMATE PAIRING

BY ALEXANDRA PASTRON

THE YEAR WAS 1967. The man was Craig Sams. And the idea was an organic market called Whole Earth Foods. More than a decade before Whole Foods appeared on the scene in the US, Craig was already bringing healthy, wholesome food to the people of London. A few decades later, as a pioneer in the industry, Craig was sent a sample of organic cocoa beans from which he made his first 70% dark chocolate bar. When Craig's wife Jo tasted the chocolate, she felt so strongly that this was something other chocolate fanatics would love that she invested all the proceeds of selling her home into producing the first batch of Green & Black's. And so a brand was born.

Rather than naming their chocolate after themselves, Craig and Jo decided on a name that represents their commitment to sustainable (Green) and high quality (Black) chocolate making. Only three years after the brand was founded, their dedication to these values lead them to create Britain's first ever organic and fair trade chocolate bar, the Maya Gold, in 1994.

Since then, Green & Black's has continued to be a leader in the realm of sustainably. Cocoa Life (www.cocoalife.org) is a third party verified cocoa sustainability program that has committed to providing Green & Black's with 100% ethically-sourced cocoa. Cocoa Life has also promised to invest \$400 million in the farming communities they source from in Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia, India, the Dominican Republic and Brazil.

So when our friends over at Green & Black's told us about the launch of their new line of premium chocolate, we knew we were onto something. The only thing we love as much as wine is chocolate, but we have never quite figured out how best to bring this pairing to life in thebacklabel.

Wine Awesomeness and Green & Black's are both committed to sharing not just awesome innovations in wine and chocolate, but discoveries that tell a larger story about where they are from, what they stand for and how amazing they can be.

Through this collaboration, we at thebacklabel have actually come to realize that one of the main reasons wine and chocolate pair so well together is because they are both products that require a certain level of care and craftsmanship to yield a truly delicious result. Neither can be automated or mass produced, and each bottle of wine or bar of chocolate is just the conclusion of a journey that was lead by many different artisans and experts of the trade.

But more on that later. For this month, we've brought you the best wines to pair with the best chocolates. We're incredibly excited to finally see this duo done justice - and we think you will be too.



SO MUCH IN COMMON

BY LOGAN LEE

WINE AND CHOCOLATE. Two treats that just seem to belong together. Whether it is the perfect Valentine's date or a Tuesday night solo session of binging *Girls*, this combo makes not just for a great pairing but for an experience. That experience is rooted in so much more than you'd think!

More than just insanely delicious and fun, both wine and chocolate are complex agricultural products. It is common knowledge that wine comes from all over the world. Wine grapes have a home and where they come from and how they are harvested can completely shape what that wine tastes like once it reaches your glass. In wine geek speak this idea is known as terroir aka a sense of place.

Not as commonly discussed with chocolate, but the indulgent treat also has its own version of terroir. Chocolate doesn't come from the same geographical places as wine, but it absolutely has a home. Both products are farmed and chocolate is harvested from the famous cocoa plant, while wine obviously comes from grapevines. Cocoa plants are farmed in some of the most interesting places on the globe in Central America, South America, Western Africa and the South Pacific. Chocolate, like wine, is unique based on where it comes from in the globe and how it was harvested.

On a nutritional level wine and chocolate have a ton in common as well. Both products are considered vices, but actually both bring a lot of health value. The aroma of chocolate boosts Theta brain waves which decrease anxiety and is loaded up with antioxidants that help combat aging. Wine has its very own health benefits. It is also full of antioxidants, but most famously red wine has resveratrol which helps keep the heart healthier!

But most importantly, how can we maximize the combo of enjoying wine and chocolate together?! For this we look to Paula Abdul's 1988 tune "Opposites Attract" as a lesson in what

not to do when it comes to pairing wine and chocolate.

Dark, intense chocolate like one's with 70% cacao is calling out for an equally intense wine. Think port or other fortified vino.

Chocolate originally starts as fruit before it is roasted and many chocolates hold on to fruity notes. These chocolates pair perfectly with jammy, fruit forward California pinot noir.

Dense and weighty chocolate needs a big bold red wine to hold up to each other. Zinfandel, Syrah, and Shiraz (if you're hanging in South Africa or Australia) are your go to's for this indulgent pairing.

More sweet chocolates like milk chocolate make the best matches with sweet wines. This could be a dessert wine, ice wine or sweet rieslings.

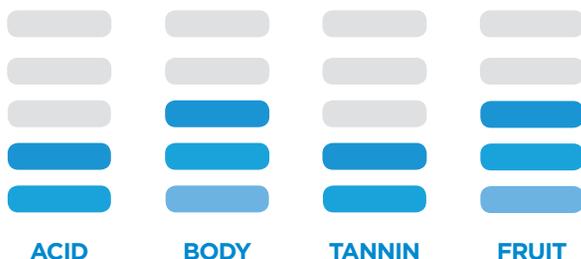
But do not fret! We're not here to judge your wine and pairing game. Experiment. Try new things. Find out what works the best for you because wine and chocolate are just getting better and better.

2013 SMASHBERRY, RED WINE

38% Merlot, 34% Petite Sirah, 28% Cabernet Sauvignon



- Santa Maria, California
- Watching a roaring bonfire.
- Foie Gras-Topped Filet with Red Wine Chocolate Reduction
- All About It - Hoodie Allen



- Stewed red fruits, roasted purple plums, wet tobacco and black licorice sprinkled with cinnamon.
- Soft and full, this wine tastes like a chocolate covered red starburst that was dropped into water.
- This is a large wine that won't crack under pressure, making it perfect for standing up to dark chocolate and sea salt.

This wine hails from the Santa Maria Valley, just north of Santa Barbara and slightly inland from California's central coast - but close enough to the ocean for the salty morning fog to roll in over the vineyards. The main ingredient in this red blend is Merlot, a varietal that has gotten a bad rap in recent years thanks to being trashed in the movie *Sideways*, but this bottle gives the grape a new chance to shine!

Smashberry has the ability to warm your soul and and make you feel like you are wearing a XXL fleece sweatshirt before it has been washed. Stewed Smucker's blueberry jam and cacao nibs notes give it a lavish mouthfeel, as if you were eating a Big Mac made of silk. This is a perfect wine for springtime showers, settling in front of the fire with a hearty meal.



FOIE GRAS-TOPPED FILET GREEN & BLACK'S PURE DARK CHOCOLATE SEA SALT

MAKES 2 SERVINGS

FILETS

- 1 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsps vegetable oil
- 2 8-oz filets, prepared at room temperature
- 2 thick slices foie gras (around 2 oz)
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper
- Gold leaf, to top (optional)

SAUCE

- 2 tsp butter, unsalted
- 2 shallots, finely diced
- ½ cup red wine
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 ½ cups beef stock
- ¼ oz chopped **Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate Sea Salt**
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

PREHEAT oven to 450°F.

MELT the butter in a saucepan, for the sauce.

ADD chopped shallots and sweat until glassy.

ADD bay leaf, red wine and stock. Stir.

SIMMER sauce until it has reduced by ½. It should coat the back of the spoon.

ADD chopped **Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate Sea Salt**. Stir until chocolate has melted into sauce.

SEASON to taste and set aside while you prepare filets.

SEASON filets with freshly ground pepper and sea salt.

HEAT the butter and vegetable oil in a frying pan over high heat.

SEAR the filet on all sides for 1-2 minutes, until they have a nice crust.

PUT filets into oven until they reach 130°F for medium rare (120°F for rare). This should only take about 5 minutes.

REST meat for 10 minutes before serving. Top with foie gras and red wine chocolate reduction.

Recipes developed by Ailsa von Dobeneck. Ailsa was a student of Le Cordon Bleu London and a contestant on FOX's MasterChef; had a weekly culinary column with the Daily Beast and was a frequent presenter at the Smithsonian; and now lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana where she recreates historic Gulf Coast recipes. Follow her at thecurioustastebud.com

2011 CHATEAU BIANCA, WILLAMETTE VALLEY, PINOT NOIR

100% Pinot Noir



- Willamette Valley, Oregon
- Getting in your beat up car and just driving to clear your mind.
- Mole Chicken Tacos
- Blowin' Smoke - Kacey Musgraves



- Crushed sun dried tomatoes in the fresh farm air on a cool morning by the pigpen.
- Overripe cantaloupe with sweet spices like cinnamon, nutmeg and candied ginger.
- This light bodied red is riddled with nuances that will pair beautifully with dark chocolate - try not to over do it.

The Chateau Bianca Winery & Vineyard is lead by a fourth-generation winemaking family. The chateau keeps their production intentionally small so that they can continue to focus on quality over quantity, year after year. This Willamette Valley Pinot Noir is a prime example of both the family's history of winemaking as well as the complexity of an Oregon juice.

This wine transports you to a place where you can turn your radio all the way up, roll your windows down and put the pedal to the floor. Open road, the smell of fresh air and a bright future while making waves with your hand in the wind. Fresh grass clipping and dusty sun-baked raspberry notes. The color of this wine is immaculate, luminous ruby with a hint of rust due to its age.



MOLE CHICKEN TACOS

GREEN & BLACK'S PURE DARK CHOCOLATE 70% CACAO

MAKES 4 SERVING

- 12 boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 3 tbsps sunflower oil
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 8 cloves of garlic, peeled
- 1 28-oz can diced tomatoes
- 6 chipotle chiles in adobo sauce
- Sprinkle of cayenne, to taste
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 1 bar of Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate 70% Cacao, roughly chopped
- Corn tortillas
- Pico de gallo, to taste
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped
- Lime wedges

COAT each chicken thigh with sunflower oil, salt and pepper.

LINE UP chicken thighs side by side in a large covered pot.

USE a blender to combine onion, garlic, tomatoes, chipotle chiles, cayenne, ground cumin, cinnamon and **Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate 70% Cacao** until a thick sauce forms.

POUR mole sauce over chicken thighs and place covered pot over low heat

COOK on low for 4 hours, occasionally stirring.

REMOVE chicken, and shred using two forks.

SERVE on corn tortillas with pico de gallo and chopped cilantro.

Recipes developed by Ailsa von Dobeneck. Ailsa was a student of Le Cordon Bleu London and a contestant on FOX's MasterChef; had a weekly culinary column with the Daily Beast and was a frequent presenter at the Smithsonian; and now lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana where she recreates historic Gulf Coast recipes. Follow her at thecurioustastebud.com

2014 LOVE OVER MONEY, ZAZOU, MINERVOIS

60% Syrah, 30% Grenache, 10% Mourvèdre



- Languedoc-Roussillon, France
- Realizing that even though you're exhausted, your dreams are coming true.
- Salted Chocolate Caramel Tart
- Yellow - Coldplay



- A straightforward funk with aromas of wet smashed blackberries, candied lavender and fresh hay bales.
- Slightly smoky metallic notes with deep sun-drenched orange peels and nuances of your mother's spice drawer.
- The funk in this wine opens up the palate so it isn't overwhelmed by the caramel's sweetness.

Situated on the Mediterranean coast of southern France, the Languedoc-Roussillon region is known for its blends - like this Minervois! - rather than single-varietal wines. The Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre in this wine were each fermented separately and then blended before being bottled.

It's a classically funky Minervois and it's a straight killer, with a groovy barnyard vibe that makes you want to go take a long walk and breath the clean air of the countryside. Tastes like a macerated bing cherry juice box you'd sip on while walking around row after row of horse stables at the Kentucky Derby. Sheep wool with wet crunchy leaves and dirt, clad with nuances of leather bound books and the inside of an old Cuban cigar box.



SALTED CHOCOLATE CARAMEL TART GREEN & BLACK'S PURE DARK CHOCOLATE SALTED CARAMEL

MAKES 1 TART

CRUST

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 2 tbsps granulated sugar
- 1 stick of unsalted butter, cold and cut into small pieces
- 2 tbsps heavy cream
- ¼ cup ice water

FILLING

- 1 cup heavy cream
- ½ cup half and half
- 3 tbsps granulated sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs
- 10 oz Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate Salted Caramel, chopped
- Confectioner's sugar, for dusting (optional)

PREHEAT oven to 350°F.

PREPARE the pastry shell: use a food processor to combine the flour and sugar. Add butter and pulse until you have a coarse sand-like consistency.

DRIZZLE in heavy cream, while the machine is still running on low. Then drizzle in ice water while the machine is still running.

REMOVE dough from food processor onto a floured surface. Coat with flour and form a flat round disc. Refrigerate for an hour.

ROLL out dough on a floured surface, until large enough to cover the bottom of a 9-inch tart pan (with removable bottom).

PUSH down firmly to the bottom and sides of the pan, using your fingers. Cover the pastry with aluminum foil and add baking beans to keep the pastry in place.

BAKE for 30 minutes and set aside to cool while preparing filling. Reduce the oven temperature to 325°F.

USE a double boiler to melt chopped **Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate Salted Caramel**, cream, and half and half until glossy, for the filling. Remove from heat and add the sugar. Stir to combine.

BEAT the eggs with a fork in a separate bowl. Add eggs to the chocolate mixture and stir until well combined.

POUR the chocolate mixture over your prepared pastry.

BAKE the tart until set but not cracked (15 minutes). Cool and dust with confectioners sugar before serving.

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CACAO AROUND THE WORLD

LIKE WINE, THERE ARE ONLY specific parts of the world where cacao trees can grow. Most regions where the trees are happiest are just above or below the equator, in areas where the climate is tropical. This means hot temperatures, plenty of sticky humidity and heavy rainfall year round.

Cacao trees are actually native to Central and South America, and there is evidence of cacao fruit having been harvested and consumed in these regions dating as far back as 5,000 years ago. These days, though, the trees can be found on many different continents and the majority of cacao is not grown in the Americas, but in West Africa. In each new place, the trees have made slight adaptations to their homes, just like old world grapes in new world wine regions.

One thing remains the same though: world demand for chocolate steadily increases year after year after year. No matter who you are and where you're from, people just can't get enough chocolate in their lives. Which is why it's important to choose chocolate brands that uphold sustainable and ethical growing practices to protect both the cacao farmers and the trees they harvest from.

-  Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate 70% Cacao only contains four ingredients: unsweetened chocolate, cocoa butter, sugar and natural vanilla flavor.
-  Cacao trees can live to be 200 years old, but they only produce quality cacao beans for 25 years.
-  Dark chocolate can help lower blood pressure, is high in antioxidants and can improve brain functions!
-  It takes about 400 cacao beans to equal one pound of chocolate.
-  Green & Black's Pure Dark and Milk Chocolate only use sustainably and ethically-sourced cacao from Cocoa Life.

2016 LOVE OVER MONEY, GREEN EYES, GRÜNER VELTLINER
100% Grüner Veltliner



- Kremstal, Austria
- Brunching with your long lost best friend.
- Roasted Almond Dark Chocolate Cheesecake
- Tennessee Whiskey - Chris Stapleton



- Juicy, green pear jelly beans that have been tossed into the bottom of a bottle of Minute Maid lemonade.
- Caramel apple rice cakes with acidic lime notes that sting the back of your jaw.
- The acidity of this juice will brighten up the palate and cut through any fattiness brought by the roasted almonds.

Grüner Veltliner is a native varietal to the hills of Austria - and this bottle is a prime example of it. Crisp and clean but with a biting acidity, these Green Eyes are not messing around. While at first you may notice notes of pear-lemonade rising from the glass, beneath these are dried dill and supple-sweet apricots left out in the sun.

This wine basically just transports you straight into a country song: wearing cut off blue jeans and running barefoot through open lush fields. It makes you want to lay down in the middle of your kitchen, close your eyes and drift into the beginning of a Georgia summer.



ROASTED ALMOND DARK CHOCOLATE CHEESECAKE
GREEN & BLACK'S PURE DARK CHOCOLATE ROASTED ALMOND

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

CRUST

- 2 cups graham crackers, finely crumbled
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 3 oz unsalted butter, melted
- 1 oz butter, softened
- 3 tbsp cocoa powder

FILLING

- 4 8-oz packages of cream cheese, softened
- 10 oz granulated sugar
- 6 eggs, separated
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 tbsp flour
- 1 pint sour cream
- 3 oz **Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate Roasted Almond, chopped plus additional for garnish**

PREHEAT oven to 350°F.

COMBINE graham cracker crust, sugar and cocoa powder in a mixing bowl.

ADD melted butter (3 oz) until mixture has a wet sand consistency.

USE softened butter (1 oz) to grease 9-inch springform pan (bottom and sides).

PAT down an even layer of crumb mixture on the bottom and sides of the pan.

STORE in the refrigerator while you are making the filling.

CREAM together cream cheese and granulated sugar with mixer.

BEAT in egg yolks one at a time.

ADD sour cream, flour and vanilla.

STIR in chopped **Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate Roasted Almond** chocolate and set aside.

WHISK egg whites in a different bowl until soft peaks are formed.

FOLD egg white into the chocolate mixture. Do not overmix.

POUR the filling into pan and bake for one hour.

TURN OFF oven and, let the cake remain in the oven for an additional fifteen minutes with the oven door open.

REMOVE the cake from the springform pan when it has cooled to room temperature, being sure to run a knife around the edge of the pan to loosen.

TOP cheesecake with additional chocolate, if desired

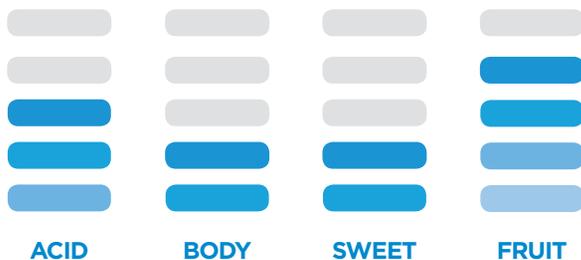
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2014 ARÍOS, AGUAFUERTE, ALBARIÑO

100% Albariño



- Galicia, Spain
- Dipping your toes into a delicately flowing stream on a mid-morning hike.
- Chocolate Chip Bacon Cookies
- Dog Years - Maggie Rogers



- Bursting with freshly macerated white peaches and an enormous bouquet of green leafy herbs.
- Freshly squeezed mint lemonade with the texture of getting sand in your mouth while lounging on the beach.
- Fragrant white floral and honeyed fruit notes matched with the sweet savory sea salt will create an umami dreamland.

This wine hails from Galicia - the "land of 1000 rivers." The vineyard where these grapes were grown sits on a slope between two estuaries and just upstream from the Umia river - which is what gives the soil its gravelly, silty texture that translates into the wine. These vines are young - they're not even 21 yet! - but the region's winemaking history dates back centuries.

This Albariño tastes like walking down the yellow brick road, skipping along singing songs about nothing and loving every second of it. The juice is so damn cheery, slightly off-dry but so luminous and shiny on the palate. This wine makes your mouth feel like you've just consumed a jar of fireflies. Crunchy citrus, gold tropical fruit and sunshine in a glass!



CHOCOLATE CHIP BACON COOKIES GREEN & BLACK'S PURE MILK CHOCOLATE SEA SALT

MAKES 36 COOKIES

- 6 strips thick cut bacon
- 12 tbsps unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 ¼ cup all purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 8 oz roughly chopped **Green & Black's Pure Milk Chocolate Sea Salt**

PREHEAT oven to 375°F.

FRY bacon until crispy.

DRAIN, crumble and set aside.

CREAM the butter, brown sugar and granulated sugar together.

ADD the eggs and vanilla to the wet ingredients. Mix together.

SIFT flour and baking soda into wet ingredients. Stir to combine.

DROP spoonfuls of the batter onto greased cookie sheets.

FLATTEN with fingers and top with an equal sprinkling of chopped **Green & Black's Pure Milk Chocolate Sea Salt** and reserved bacon.

BAKE for 10 - 12 minutes, until golden brown.

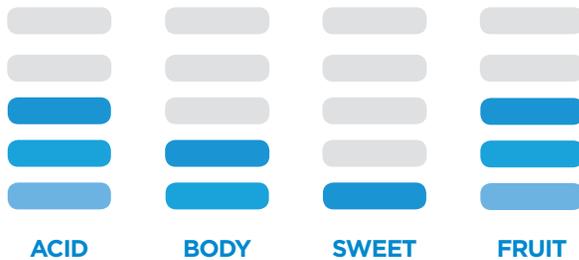
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2016 SECRET IDENTITY, ROSÉ

Shhh, it's a secret!



- Lodi, California
- A tiki party complete with torches and Mai Tais.
- Raspberry Hazelnut Chocolate Pavlova
- XO - Beyoncé



- Peonies and pink fruit like grapefruit, strawberries and raspberries with just a pinch of salt.
- Full, curvaceous body that is jammy with blooming cherry blossoms and macerated raspberries.
- Raspberries swathed in dark chocolate complements all the red-fruit-jamminess in this bottle!

This dry rosé gets its name from its unwillingness to be trapped by convention - it's a wine that operates undercover, not sticking to one regional or varietal identity, but instead choosing to become a blend that achieves peak balance in its flavors. The result is crisp, clean and low in ABV, making it perfect for day drinking at a barbecue or pool party.

Fruit notes akin to when your mom sent you to school with a gallon zip-lock bag full of fresh mixed farmers market berries, but after running around on the playground you open your backpack to find a mixed berry massacre. This wine was made for ringing in the warmer weather and preparing for parties on the beach in your summer whites.



RASPBERRY HAZELNUT CHOCOLATE PAVLOVA GREEN & BLACK'S PURE DARK CHOCOLATE RASPBERRY HAZELNUT

MAKES 1 PAVLOVA

- 6 egg whites
- 1 cup superfine sugar
- 1 tsp white vinegar
- 6 oz **Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate Raspberry Hazelnut**, chopped, plus additional for garnish
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 17 oz fresh raspberries

PREHEAT oven to 300°F.

BEAT the egg whites until they start to form soft peaks.

WHISK in sugar slowly, spoonful by spoonful.

ADD vinegar and continue to whisk until the mixture has stiff glossy peaks.

FOLD in half (3 oz) of chopped **Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate Raspberry Hazelnut**, gently. Do not over mix.

LINE a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place the mixture on the baking tray and create a circular shape. Smooth.

BAKE for 90 minutes or until completely dry to touch. Turn off oven, crack the door and wait until the meringue is completely cooled.

WHIP the cream while the meringue is cooling. Add half of the raspberries and whip until pink and thick.

TOP meringue with cream, fresh raspberries and remaining chopped **Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate Raspberry Hazelnut**.

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DIY: CHOCOLATE GOBLETS

BY WA CREW

AS WE'VE SHOWN, WINE AND CHOCOLATE truly are the perfect pairing. So how do we take this match to the next level? Chocolate goblets. Oh yeah, you heard that right, you can now drink your wine straight from a chocolate glass - if you follow these simple steps that is.

There are a few ways to go about this, because chocolate is one of those magically delicate substances that must be respected in the kitchen. One way is to choose a chocolate that is high in cacao (**Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate** falls into this category) and temper it yourself to keep it from melting. Tempering is a process of heating and cooling your melted chocolate so that the final result is a stiff, glossy chocolate that has a nice snap to it. The other way to do this is to purchase a melting chocolate that is designed specifically for this sort of handling.

Whichever way you choose, the end result is going to be a wine pairing unlike any other.

- 24 oz high quality chocolate (between 60% and 70% cacao, like **Green & Black's Pure Dark Chocolate**) or melting chocolate
- 8 water balloons
- Cooking spray
- Baking sheet
- Parchment paper

LINE baking sheet with parchment paper.

SPRAY lightly with cooking spray.

INFLATE water balloons.

TEMPER high quality chocolate (if using) or heat melting chocolate (if using). You'll want your chocolate to be completely melted, with no solids, but not steaming hot.

SPOON 8 small circles, about the diameter of a tangerine, onto your parchment paper. This will be the base of your goblet.

DIP water balloons, one at a time, gently into the chocolate. You will want to lift straight up, out of the chocolate, holding the balloon over the bowl for a few seconds to allow the chocolate to drip off, then dunk again. Repeat three times for a nice, thick layer.

PLACE the chocolate covered water balloons chocolate side down so they rest on their bases on the baking sheet. Reserve melted chocolate for later.

ALLOW to cool for a minute then transfer to the refrigerator for one hour or until solid.

REMOVE from the refrigerator and carefully pop each balloon. The goblets should firmly retain their round shape.

REMOVE goblets from the parchment paper, careful not to tear the bases. If goblets do tear and leave a hole in the base, simply reinforce with a small dab of reserved melted chocolate and allow to harden and cool once more. Return goblets to the refrigerator until ready to serve.

POUR in your wine - preferably chilled - and enjoy your new chocolate goblets!

Share your @wineawesomeness experience using #wineallthetime for a chance to win your next month free!



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