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[Partida Tequila & Mondavi Dinner at Blackbird](#)



This past Tuesday evening I was fortunate enough to be invited to [Blackbird Restaurant](#) for a very interesting dinner featuring [Partida Tequila](#) and [Folio](#) wines from [Michael Mondavi](#). Now a lot of people may be saying "Tequila with dinner?!", but the flavor profile of this beverage matches well with many foods and sauces, not just with salt, lime and margaritas. If anything, this would prove to be an interesting experience.

Premium tequilas can be very smooth and have the flavor and aromas of citrus and tropical fruits, fresh flowers, herbs, vanilla, nuts, smoke, chocolate and spices, making them excellent food companions. **Partida** is a new ultra premium brand which places emphasis on mixing tradition with technology. Each of their blue agave plants are cultivated for 7-10 years until they are ripe and mature, then hand selected and slow baked in stainless steel autoclaves (pressure cookers). They make a [Blanco](#) (unaged), [Reposado](#) (barrel aged under 12 months), [Añejo](#) (aged over 1 year in [Jack Daniel's](#) barrels) and [Elegante](#), an [Extra Añejo](#) aged over 3 years and bottled in crystal.

We got our chance to taste some good wine as soon as we walked in the door when I was handed a glass of [2009 Isabel Mondavi "Deep Rose" of Cabernet Sauvignon](#) (\$15). The label is inspired by the wife of Michael Mondavi and the wine is her concept created by her son Rob. The color is nothing short of amazing- translucent purple/red. It is fruity, dry and delicious with watermelon and strawberry, balance and length. A great way to kick off the night before starting dinner.

Blackbird's Chef Paul Kahan makes great food and also pairs his dishes very well with beverages. We started with cured [hiramasa](#) (yellowtail amberjack), bread sauce, peaches and lime salt with [2008 Isabel Mondavi Sonoma Carneros Chardonnay](#) (\$20). The Blanco pairs great with the fish and lime salt, with its clean citrus and smooth balance. The wine was great with the bread sauce and peaches as it was creamy and toasty with loads of tropical fruit. A very good Chardonnay as the oak was apparent on the nose but



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amazingly not on the palate. Next we moved onto smoked [sweetbreads](#) (thymus gland), blackberry soubise and summer truffles with [2006 Isabel Mondavi Willamette Valley Pinot Noir](#) (\$30). If you've never tried sweetbreads, I highly recommend you try them, especially here! They were smokey, slightly crispy and very delicious, and the saltiness and blackberries meshed perfectly. The light red berries and elegance of the Pinot fought the flavors, thought the wine's earthiness matched the truffle. Only the smooth nature of the Reposado made it good with this dish, but the flavors didn't match up quite right.

It was then onto the main event with roasted lamb loin, charred polenta, sea beans and caramel paired with [2006 Mondavi "Emblem" Oso Vineyard Napa Cabernet Sauvignon](#) (\$49) and 2006 Mondavi "M" Napa Cabernet Sauvignon (\$200). The lamb, of course, was tender and terrific, with the Cabernets picking up the strength, char, tannin and fruit. The Emblem is more elegant with dark fruit from [Howell Mountain](#) and oak and vanilla flavor, while the M has more power, length and structure with fruit from a former [Opus One](#) vineyard on [Atlas Peak](#). I like the [Añejo](#) as it's toasty, sweeter character went with the sauce, but still the power was a bit much for the dish. Wine wins again.

Dessert was on the way and we were in for a treat as the **Elegante** was being poured. This extra aged select tequila had alot going on and did match well with the honey parfait with passion fruit, rum and caramelized white chocolate. A good way to sip through the rest of the experience.

To sum up, I think smooth, premium tequilas do match well with food, but I would pair blancos with light fresh seafood and spicy vegetables, while aged tequilas match well with desserts at the end of a meal, though I still like shooting them with salt and lime (for fun)! Wine still wins in this battle but they each have there place, and I encourage everyone to find where you like them- let us know!



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