



A. WONG

THE COOKBOOK

Extraordinary dim sum,
exceptional street food &
unexpected Chinese dishes,
from Sichuan to Yunnan



Andrew Wong

選用美酒配中餐

MATCHING WINE WITH CHINESE FOOD

Andrew Wong's food captivated me from the moment I first tasted his har gao dumpling with its unique flourishes: the slick of sweet chilli sauce and zippy acidity of the rice vinegar foam, both of these elements sparking off against bouncy sweet prawn, with the sharpness and sweetness carefully in balance. But what to drink alongside?

The myriad complexities and intricacies of Chinese cuisine involve enough tricky considerations to send many wines (and even cocktails) scurrying for the hills, with China's 14 national borders offering such a tremendous diversity and richness of cultural influences. It's one vast playground for drink matching.

The tradition and ritual of drinking Chinese tea with dim sum is probably enough for us to declare this as the 'perfect' and unquestionable match for dumplings, resonating far beyond any attempt to justify the choice on the basis of flavour profile. But after this, alcohol beckons...

Aromatic white wines with plenty of fresh acidity tend to be a good 'catch-all' pairing, and in this category, one grape variety stands tallest: Riesling. It's great with steamed dim sum, and the off-dry versions, particularly German examples, can even cope with fiery chilli dipping sauces (including the sweet chilli on that har gao), the residual sugar helping to dampen the chilli heat. Sweetness and chilli are the enemies of many wines, and some of the sweeter elements, such as hoisin or sweet and sour sauce, can strip wines of their fruit character, so fuller-bodied and juicy reds with low tannins are a good bet here. Lusher aromatic whites, such as New World Pinot Gris, Gewürztraminer and Viognier should also have enough in the locker to cope.

Sparkling wine is often overlooked as something to drink throughout a meal, but wok-fried dishes and deep-fried items such as won tons find a palate-cleansing foil in a glass of fizz. Lighter reds like Pinot Noir and Beaujolais can be fantastic with Peking duck, as long as you keep accompanying sauces in check. Rosé is always a good option if dishes on the table are many and varied.

Cocktails offer another dimension. In the Forbidden City bar at A.Wong, a blend of oolong tea, yuzu sake and lemon has the verve and freshness to cut through the richness of crispy foie gras with air-dried sausage and pomelo.

Finally, a blizzard-cold Tsingtao lager never fails.

Zeren Wilson