

A Tough Question For Cooks: When Serving Asparagus, Which Wine To Serve?

(NAPSA)—Of all the spring vegetables that inspire cooks the most, asparagus poses a special challenge for wine lovers. That's because it contains an amino acid called methionine that can actually alter a wine's taste—and not for the better. So if this particular veggie is on your menu, take care and know that you can't go wrong with a white wine from the Alsace region of France.

"It conquers asparagus' acidity with its fruity, aromatic and complex character," says Belinda Chang, wine director of The Modern in New York.

An Alsace Riesling works best with asparagus smothered in a rich sauce, for example, while an Alsace Pinot Blanc shines with asparagus cooked on the grill. You can see other pairings at www.JustAddFood.com, but meanwhile, try the recipe below with a nice bottle of Alsace Riesling or Crémant d'Alsace, the sparkling wine of the region.

Asparagus and Smoked Salmon "Love Affair" *(serves 4)*

- 1 bunch asparagus, ends trimmed (equals about 20 spears)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary leaves
- Pinch salt
- Pinch freshly ground black pepper
- 4 to 6 ounces thinly sliced smoked salmon (1 slice per asparagus spear)



For an elegant appetizer or light lunch, try an asparagus salad.

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Place the asparagus on a foil-lined baking sheet.
3. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with rosemary, salt and pepper.
4. Roast the asparagus until cooked (the asparagus will start to brown around the edges, which takes about 10 minutes).
5. Take the asparagus out of the oven and transfer to another baking sheet to cool.
6. Once cooled, wrap each spear in a slice of smoked salmon.
7. Arrange on a serving platter and serve at room temperature.