

Feb 27, 2021, 02:42pm EST | 556 views

Wine And Spirit Pairings For Elevated American Classics



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Spirits

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A year into the pandemic, many of us have come to lean on the kind of comfort classics at dinnertime that provide not just a sense of sustenance, but also of familiarity in these thoroughly disorienting days. One of the more interesting results of this renewed focus on the American culinary canon—often with the help of great local restaurants—has been a forced reconsideration of what wines and spirits pair best with these dishes that so reliably anchor us and provide a sense of normalcy.

Guy Benny, owner-operator of Conshy Seafood Co. in Conshohocken, PA, opened his restaurant last year right before the pandemic hit. Yet he has managed to thrive: The elevated

comfort classics that he specializes in have made it a staple in the community, and a perfect lens through which to consider the sort of unexpected pairings that are possible when you think and drink outside of the proverbial box.

His crab macaroni and cheese and lobster rolls are good examples of dishes whose potential pairing partners are far broader than they usually get credit for. Macaroni and cheese, after all, is generally considered to work best with beer, as does lobster roll. But Benny actually recommends Prosecco with them, which makes sense: The amplified acidity cuts through the richness and creaminess of both dishes, the bubbles prepare the palate for the next bite, and the interplay between the fruitiness of the Prosecco and the natural sense of sweetness in the phenomenally fresh crab and lobster meat he uses bridge the two perfectly. A classically crafted Soave, like the Pieropan Soave Classico 2018, is also a home run with those dishes.



Elevated classics, like these riffs on the New England-style lobster roll at Conshy Seafood Co., ... [+] COURTESY OF CONSHY SEAFOOD CO.

Of course, as is often the case with beloved local destinations all over the country, Conshy Seafood Co. has managed to tweak their dishes in ways that challenge previously held conceptions. At the recommendation of esteemed Chef Daniel Stern of Philadelphia's R2L—which sadly closed last year; it was a phenomenal restaurant—Benny hired Chefs Oscar and German Flores, whose fine-dining backgrounds have impacted the menu and the business in unexpected ways. “The creativity, care, and consistency they bring to each dish, the things they've learned

and cultivated under the tutelage of Daniel Stern, and their quest for perfection in every meal, whether it's a simple mac and cheese or an elaborate lobster dinner finished in beurre blanc, really shines in everything that comes out of this kitchen. People are starting to recognize that our little, mostly takeout, spot is producing the same quality meals they'd find at a fine dining establishment, but at [far lower] prices." So why not treat an affordable, casual, yet beautifully crafted take-out seafood dinner to the same thoughtful pairings that you'd employ at a white-tablecloth establishment?