

Passport to Pleasure

Blommer Chocolate Co. pairs its fine-flavor chocolates with a range of wines, demonstrating how the interplay of flavors enhances the tastings of both.

It's no secret that Chicago-based Blommer Chocolate Co. has a history of pairing its chocolate with wine. During the past ten years, the company has hosted tastings at Retail Confectioners International gatherings in Hershey, Pa., and San Francisco, presentations at the American Association of Candy Technologists' and PMCA dinners, even a Georgetown University alumni gathering in Washington, D.C.

The company's most recent pairing — held at this year's *Sweets & Snacks Expo* — aims at introducing chocolatiers to the nuances of fine-flavor chocolates, which are enhanced when paired with complementary wines.

Rose Potts, the corporate manager of sensory and product guidance for Blommer Chocolate, has conducted many of these pairings. In doing so, she underscores the importance of qualifying the experiences to better enjoy the tasting.

For example, when it comes to chocolate, the company uses both a chocolate wheel of flavor as well as a flavor intensity scale (see chart). The wheel of flavor features



Blommer Chocolate's Rose Potts has conducted several wine and chocolate pairings for the company, including the most recent one held during the *Sweets & Snacks Expo* (right). Pictured are Melissa Tisoncik of Blommer Chocolate as well as Nick Bland of the Vinic Wine Co., who sourced the wines and provided his expertise for the tasting and the article.

12 primary descriptors: Fruity; oxidized; dairy; vegetable; cacao intensity; roast; nutty spicy; floral; caramel, earthy and chemical.

Those primary categories are then further subdivided into specific descriptors. Under the fruity designation, there's citrus, red berry, tropical fruit, brown fruit and artificial fruit. Those also undergo another division. Again, under the brown fruit subcategory, there are descriptors such as raisins, figs and tobacco.

Specificity helps when trying to quantify such a subjective science as taste.

Of course, not only does one have to describe the flavor note, but its intensity as well. Here, Potts relies on a flavor intensity scale developed by the company. The rankings break down intensities into numbers, enabling chocolate makers and chocolatiers to formulate accordingly. It's all about delivering a nuance or a knockout.

This pairing brings together three different wines with three different chocolates. In each case, the wines and chocolates work together in bringing out descriptors and intensity levels. Enjoy. 



Blommer Chocolate's Rainforest Alliance Certified Organic Milk Chocolate with a non-vintage Scarpetta Brut Rose

Blommer Chocolate Rainforest Alliance Certified Organic Milk: A robust milk chocolate made with the most wholesome organic ingredients. This is a full-bodied chocolate with hints of the Caribbean influence with subtle fruit notes to compliment the milk.

Blommer Chocolate's Rose Potts' Chocolate Notes: Delicate fruit at a threshold level with threshold lactic sour notes and a milk intensity that is slight to moderate. Mild overall, with a smooth melt.

NV Scarpetta Brut Rose, Friuli, Italy: Scarpetta "Timido" Brut Rose is a blend of Franconia and Pinot Nero grapes sourced from Collio in Friuli; old-vine fruit lends itself to a clear and delicious fruit profile, highlighting notes of strawberry, fresh raspberries along with just a hint of fresh herbs and wild flowers.

Flavor Intensity Scale

Number Scale	Word Scale	Description
0	None	None of the attributes detected
1	Threshold	Just barely perceptible, below recognition
2	Threshold to Slight	Just recognizable
3	Slight	Apparent, recognizable, but at a low level
4	Slight to Moderate	Apparent and recognizable
5	Moderate	Obvious, clearly noticeable
6	Moderate to Strong	Dominant, nearly overpowering
7	Strong	Overpowering, dominating all other flavors in the product

Candy Industry: This sparkling wine featured just the right amount of sweet tones to blend perfectly with the smooth milk chocolate. The chocolate was light enough to bring out the subtle fruit notes of the refreshing rose-colored wine, without overpowering it, and the combination left a pleasant aftertaste. These two pair perfectly during a warm summer night on the patio. Just dreamy.

Blommer Chocolate Wheel of Flavor



Blommer CHOCOLATE COMPANY
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Blommer Chocolate's Rainforest Alliance Certified Yorktown Dark Chocolate with a non-vintage J. Bookwalter "Subplot 25" Red Wine

Rainforest Alliance Certified Yorktown Dark Chocolate This is a well-rounded dark chocolate made from select cocoa beans for a unique chocolate intensity.

Blommer Chocolate's Rose Potts' Chocolate Notes: Slight brown fruit notes with a moderate chocolate intensity.

NV J. Bookwalter Subplot 25 Red Wine, Columbia Valley, Washington: "Subplot is a complex wine that offers aromatics of plums, red and black berries, vanilla, cinnamon, and subtle nuances of graphite. The wine enters the palate sweet and has a full-bodied mid-palate. Flavors abound: dates, figs, plums, red and black cherries, dashes of cocoa and sweet spices lend themselves to the wine. A long finish complemented by natural sweetness and acidity make this wine incredibly complex.

Candy Industry: Smooth upon smooth. The RA-certified Yorktown Dark integrates flavor with finesse. That duet complements J. Bookwalter's Subplot 25 in a seamless glide. Its initial sweetness — reminiscent of tree fruits — dances with the chocolate's own complex blend of beans and flavor-forward sweetness. For some, the pairing might be too complementary; a darker, semi-sweet chocolate such as the RA-certified Organic 72% Dark Chocolate also provides an interesting counterpoint to this wonderfully drinkable red.



Blommer Chocolates Rainforest Alliance Certified Organic 72% Dark Chocolate with 2009 Clos de los Siete Red Wine

Rainforest Alliance Certified Organic 72% Dark Chocolate This is a semi-sweet dark chocolate with 72% cocoa mass made from the most wholesome organic ingredients. It has delicate brown fruit, chocolate impact with a mild fruity acidity.

Blommer Chocolate's Rose Potts' Chocolate Notes: Slight brownie notes with threshold acidity and a moderate cacao level. Very "eatable."

2009 Clos de los Siete Red Wine, Mendoza, Argentina: The 2009 Clos de Los Siete is a blend of 56% Malbec, 21% Merlot, with the balance Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon aged for 11 months in one-third new French, one-third second use barrels, and one-third in vat. It offers up an expressive nose of cedar, spice box, brier, floral notes, and assorted black fruits

Candy Industry: The earthy, tannic notes in the 2009 Clos de Siete easily complement the slight bitterness in Blommer's 72% semi-sweet RA-certified organic dark chocolate. The bodied blend of Malbec, Merlot and Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon found in the Clos also enhance the sweetness of chocolate, bringing it to the forefront of the flavor experience. It's a decadent pairing perfect for an evening by the fireside. No need for marshmallows.