

LIKE SEEKS LIKE... IN GASTRONOMY TOO!

For both wine waiters and beer experts, pairing the right dishes and drinks together is not a trivial matter. People prefer a glass of Muscadet to go with oysters or a white Hoegaarden beer to accompany a lemon meringue pie. For gourmets, the secret of a successful combination partly lies in the aromatic similarity between the dish and the beverage that accompanies it. Thus, the iodine taste of oysters goes well with the marked minerality of a Muscadet. But what does science have to say about this?

To understand the principle of aromatic similarity, researchers from the CSGA tested several associations of dishes and beverages with different degrees of aromatic similarity. This work was done in collaboration with the Institut Paul Bocuse Research Center. It was funded by the fund Baillet-Latour and the French National Association of Research and Technology (ANRT).

In their first study, the researchers confirmed that consumers preferred associations of dishes and beverages with a high level of aromatic similarity. Lemon syrup matched better with a lemon-flavoured cottage cheese than with a vanilla-flavoured cottage cheese. In a second study, the authors observed that a white beer with a slight lemon flavour matched better with a verrine with a dominant lemon flavour while the dark beer matched better with a verrine with a dominant smoky taste. Interestingly, the aromatic similarity between lemon products leads to an increase in the perceived harmony while the aromatic similarity between smoked products leads to a decrease in the perceived complexity of the association. In other words, the impact of the aromatic similarity is identical – an increased pleasure in eating – but the underlying cognitive mechanisms vary according to the associations..

These studies confirm that aromatic similarity is probably at the origin of many successful pairings of dishes and beverages. Even if it cannot guarantee the impossibility of "divorce", the old adage "like seeks like" also seems to prevail when applied to a dish and a bottle!



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To know more

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Key words

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