

## FOOD &amp; DRINK

## WINE

## Perhaps a Nice Super Tuscan With Your Chips?

Five top sommeliers suggest pairings for Super Bowl standbys; Pinot Gris and pigs in a blanket

By KATY McLAUGHLIN

**T**HE CULINARY mainstays of Super Bowl Sunday are generally paired with a bold, well-balanced...can of Budweiser.

But wine experts say there's no reason a Sauvignon Blanc or a Riesling can't accompany seven-layer bean dip and jalapeño poppers.

We challenged five top sommeliers to find wines to match five traditional foods for Super Bowl Sunday, asking them to suggest bacchanalian partners for dishes like sweet pork and brioche (aka pigs in a blanket).

While their suggestions varied, they agreed on core issues: The fried, cheesy and greasy aspects of Super Bowl snacks (the very reasons we love them so much) call for wines with sufficient acidity to cut the fat.

To that end, several

experts also specified sparkling wines. The carbonation "scrubs the palate," says Craig Sindelar, the sommelier at Alinea in Chicago, where wine is paired with chef Grant Achatz's oddball food creations.

Aldo Sohm, the sommelier at New York's Le Bernardin and the 2008 winner of the Best Sommelier in the World contest, said that at least some of the wines served at a Super Bowl party should be light and highly drinkable, so they can be enjoyed for the duration of the game. (As any non-football-loving spouse who has been dragged to a Super Bowl party knows, overtime can drag.)

Most of the experts suggested fruity Italian reds to pair with pizza and said low-alcohol wines are key for spicy items like jalapeño poppers—otherwise, the mouth will burn too much.

Seven-layer bean dip was the hardest challenge, several

experts said. Its cacophony of rich, cheesy, starchy and acidic ingredients drew pairings all over the map. June Rodil, of Uchi, a creative sushi restaurant in Austin, Texas, suggested a California Chardonnay, but warned it can't be a buttery variety—it needs "a good amount of acidity to balance out the weight" of seven strata of creamy dip.

Potato chips were the most divisive snack. Chase DuBay of Cyrus in Healdsburg, Calif., went with a bargain Berger Grüner Veltliner (about \$13 a liter) while Mr. Sohm chose a Côtes du Rhône. Lindsey D'Ann Whipple-Fletcher of Wolfgang Puck's Cut in Las Vegas opted to nod to the scene in the movie "The Seven Year Itch" in which Marilyn Monroe pairs potato chips with Champagne, but said the sparkling wine should be domestic, in honor of the American event.



### Seven-Layer Bean Dip and...

**2008 Heltz Cellar Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley, \$20 (Or try: another California Sauvignon Blanc)**

"The slight mineral touch is good with a starch like beans. Its crispness matches the

tomatoes and onions."

—Aldo Sohm, *Le Bernardin*

**Baileyana Chardonnay Estate, Edna Valley, \$22 (Or try: another acidic California Chardonnay)**

"Make sure you get a good amount of acidity to balance out the weight, otherwise the creaminess of wine and dip is

going to end up coating your mouth like honey."

—June Rodil, *Uchi*

**Bonny Doon Vineyards Vin Gris de Cigare, California, \$14 (Or try: a West Coast dry rosé)**

"Ideal for a dish with many elements." —Lindsey D'Ann Whipple-Fletcher, *Cut*