



UNITY  
SELECTIONS

presents

# THE ART OF TASTING WINE



When tasting a wine to determine its worth or pleasure value, you must think of your three sensory evaluation centers and how to use them in combination to arrive at a complete picture of the wine. Your three sensory evaluation centers of sight, smell, and taste are the critical partners in the tasting game. Each adds its own distinctive component to the overall evaluation. What follows will provide you with a better understanding of how it all works. When that understanding is put to use, it will enhance your wine enjoyment immensely.

# Sensory Evaluation of Wine

## 1. Eye- Color, Clarity and Body

### Color

Tip the glass and examine the edge of the wine against a white background. Wine, being organic, is constantly changing. A wine color changes as the wine becomes more mature. The range of colors that you see depends on whether you are tasting a white or red wine.

### Clarity

All wines should be clear and bright, with no cloudiness present. Haziness in a wine should serve as a warning that the wine is troubled. But, do not confuse haziness with sediment.

The sediment in a bottle of wine is a natural product of aging and will settle out. Sometimes in white wine, you will find white crystals on the bottom of the bottle or on the cork. Disregard them, they are inert, tasteless, tartrate crystals, and are no cause for concern.

### Body

To determine the body (viscosity) of the wine, swirl the glass, then look at the drippings, or legs, coming down the side of the glass. A dry light wine should have thin legs that flow freely. A heavy bodied wine should have more condensed solid looking legs.

## 2. Nose- Aroma and Bouquet

The nose is a very reliable tool for measuring the degree of quality in a wine. Just as no two wines have exactly the same color, neither will two wines ever have exactly the same smell. Each wine has its own personalized scent which, depending upon the level of quality, can be recognized with the nose. These scents come from the varieties of grapes used in making the wine. Some grapes give strong, perfume like aromas to wine.

Others impart a more subtle, yet less distinctive qualities. These scents are reminiscent of wood, such as cedar or pine, and spices, such as clove, cinnamon, or vanilla, for instance. Your nose is a reliable determining device in distinguishing between scents.

Because wine is constantly changing as it ages, so does its smell. Two words are used to describe how a wine smells:

### **Aroma**

The aroma is the fruity scent of the grape variety, more pronounced in its youth. A wine's aroma, or nose, is the smell of the wine. It can be floral, citrus, woody, buttery, oak, vanilla or any number of familiar scents depending on the grapes used, the winemaking process and the storage conditions.

### **Bouquet**

The bouquet is used to describe a wine after it has matured to some degree. A wine can possess aroma and bouquet at the same time. As a wine's aroma becomes more developed from bottle aging, the aroma is transformed into a bouquet that is hopefully more than just the smell of the grape.

In essence, a wine should smell like the variety of grape from which it is derived.

### **“Off”**

Whether you are smelling a simple, everyday table wine, or a fine Chateau-bottled Bordeaux, it is important that there are not any off odors.

“Off” odors are produced, most typically, when air leaks into the bottle, thus causing the wine to oxidize. The wine appears to be darker than usual. Its smell is reminiscent of Sherry or Madiera. As such, a wine because of this odor is said to Maderized. This can be due to faulty corks, improper storage, or excessive age.

In some cases the smell of vinegar can be detected. All wines have some vinegar-like qualities in them. This is referred to as volatile acidity. When it is present in excess and produces a harsh unpleasant smell, the wine is defective. Sometimes, too, a sulphur smell is present in wines. Sulphur is used in most wines for its antioxidant properties. Occasionally, it will create a slight burning sensation in the back of one's nose. Another “off” odor is corkiness. Corkiness is due to a diseased cork, which after a certain period of time, releases a very unpleasant smell, that is likened to wet moldy. This particular smell is unmistakable when it is encountered.



### 3. Mouth- Physical and Chemical Interaction in the mouth.

We taste wine with our tongues. Liquids in the mouth flow into the taste buds where special nerves send messages to the brain. Different parts of the tongue are sensitive to different tastes.

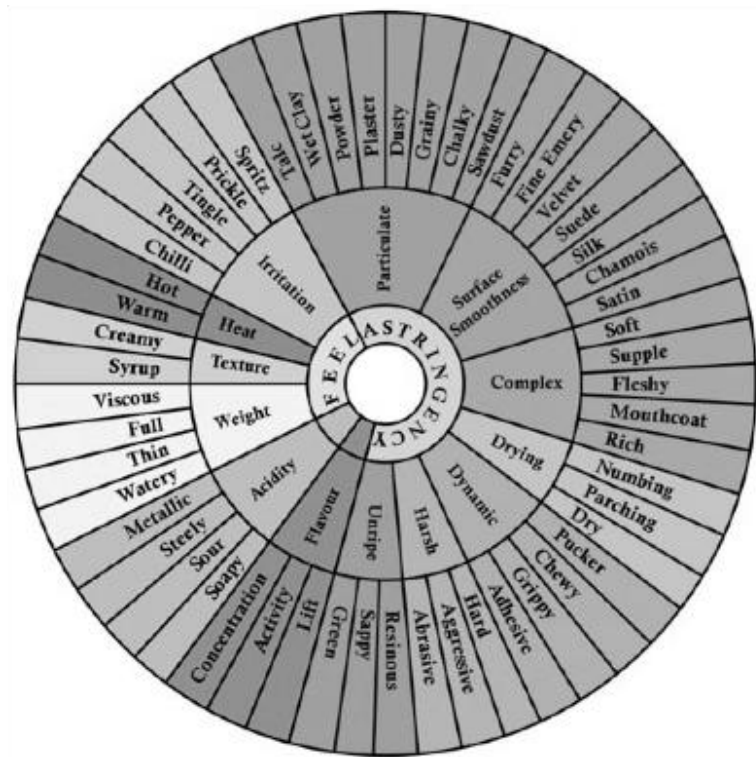
When you taste a wine, chew, or swish the wine around your mouth to expose all of the taste buds. Be aware of the most important sensations to taste, and where they occur on your tongue and in your mouth.

**Sweetness and dryness are measured by the tip of your tongue.**

**Acidity, or sourness, is revealed by the taste buds along the sides of your tongue.**

**Bitterness, or tannin, is sensed at the back of the tongue or on the sides of the cheeks.**

Remember that excessive acidity is unpleasantly tart, yet too little acidity makes wine taste dull. Balanced acidity gives a pleasant, lively sensation. Tannin in young wines shows up in a “puckerish” quality which will diminish as the wine gains balance with age. Tannin is essential for the proper development of any good red wine. When tasting a wine, you can also feel the density or weight of the wine. And how the wine lingers in your mouth afterwards.



# Tasting is Your Subjective Judgment

After you have had a chance to taste a wine, sit back for a few moments to savor it. Think about what you have just experienced. Ask yourself the following questions to focus your impressions.

1. Was the wine light, medium or full-bodied?
2. For a White wine, evaluate the level of acidity
  - Very little?
  - Just right?
  - Too much?
3. For a red wine, evaluate the level of tannin,
  - Too strong or astringent?
  - Pleasing?
  - Missing?
4. Did you notice the aftertaste? How long did it last?
5. Most importantly, did you like the wine?

## Putting the pieces together.....

Essentially, there are three elementary tastes responsible for a wine's flavor: Sweetness, Acidity and Bitterness. It is precisely the amount of harmony between these components that makes or breaks a wine. The winemaker attempts to create an excellent wine by blending in enough sweetness to counteract the sourness and bitterness.

All red wines, for example, have some sourness (from the grape acidity) and the bitterness (from the grape tannins). Without the neutralizing effect of sweetness (grape sugars and alcohol), red wines would taste sharp and biting. When these elements are in good balance, you have an excellent wine. There are some years that the grapes do not ripen due to a lack of sunshine, and the wines lack sufficient sweetness to balance out the acidity and tannins present.

The region and climate where grapes are grown have a large impact on how the wine will taste in the end.

	COOL CLIMATE	WARM CLIMATE
ACIDITY	Crisp and Tangy	Soft and Smooth
BODY	Light	Full
FRUIT STYLE	Lean and Tart	Ripe and Luscious

## Tasting: Remember the Five "S"s:

- See- Color, depth of color, clarity
- Swirl- Aerate, examine density, viscosity
- Sniff- Smell fruit, aroma, bouquet
- Savor- Dryness, sweetness, taste for acidity, tannin, weight
- Swallow- Aftertaste, finish, balance

# Wine Terminology

ACETIC-	Wine which has gone sour or vinegary caused by extensive contact with the air.
ACIDITY-	Essential for the life and vitality of the wine. Too little acidity makes a wine dull, flat and short; too much and it is sharp and raw.
AFTERTASTE-	The taste that stays in the mouth after the wine has been swallowed. It may be pleasant or unpleasant and may disappear instantly or linger.
ALCOHOL-	Found in concentrations of 9-15%, usually in table wines. Wines of low alcohol are said to taste light or weak, and those high in alcohol are said to be strong or alcoholic.
APPLES-	A fruit smell associated, with the presence of malic acid which is apparent in many white wines.
AROMA-	The part of the wine's nose or smell that can be attributed to the grape variety used. Not to be confused with the bouquet.
ASTRINGENT-	A wine containing too much tannin and with a "clawing" feeling. An astringent wine will cause a puckering effect in the mouth. Wine loses astringency with age. Not to be confused with dryness.
AUSTERE-	A wine that lacks fruit and is dominated by harsh acidity and/or tannin.
BAD-	Unsound or spoiled wine.
BAKED-	The flavor resulting from grapes grown in a hot climate; a warm, cooked, or roasted smell or flavor.
BALANCE-	The harmonious relationship between acid, alcohol, fruit, tannin, and other natural elements in wine.
BIG-	Strong, rich flavored and full-bodied wine.
BITE-	Wines that possess a high acidity level or an excessively astringent wine.
BLACK CURRANTS-	A blackberry fruit smell found in many reds, particularly Cabernet Sauvignon.
BODY-	The level of fruit and alcohol strength that together give an impression of weight in the mouth.
BOTTLE AGE-	The length of time a wine spends in the bottle before it is consumed.
BOUQUET-	The part of wine's nose or smell that is attributed to aging in the cask or bottle.
BRIGHT-	Said of a wine's color which is clear.
BRIGHT-	Said of a wine's color which is absolutely clear.

BROWNING-	The brownish tint of a well-aged red wine which can be noticed at the wines edge in the glass.
BURNT-	Highly cooked flavor.
BUTTERY-	A rich, fat and delicious character found in some Chardonnay wines, particularly if produced in a great vintage or warm climate.
CHARACTER-	Wine with distinguished qualities.
CHARM-	Attractiveness. Often said of light, fruity wines.
CLARET-	English term for a red Bordeaux Wine.
CLEAN-	A well-made wine with no "off" aroma or taste.
CLOUDY-	Hazy or murky wine.
CLOYING-	Used to describe wine with a sweet, heavy or tiresome taste; often has an unclean finish.
COARSE-	A sound wine, though usually crudely rough or harsh. Also, a young wine lacking finesse.
COMPLEX-	Wines offering a subtle blend of various scents and flavors. Great wines in their youth may have a certain complexity, but only bottle maturity will enable a wine to achieve its full potential in terms of complexity.
CORKY-	Odor and flavor imparted to wine by a flawed cork recognized by a musty, wood smell.
CREAMY-	Used to convey the impression of creamy flavor.
CRISP-	A clean wine with good acidity, yielding a fresh finish.
CRUSTY-	Containing deposits on the inside of the bottle; sediment.
DEEP-	A wine is said to have good depth when the flavor and the nose have several levels; used most often when referring to rich red wines.
DELICATE-	Applies to wines that are light, usually white, young and fresh.
DISTINCTIVE-	Positive recognizable characteristics of wine.
DRY-	A wine without the impression of sweetness, a wine with little or no residual sugar.
EARTHY-	Scents or flavors reminiscent of fresh earth.
ELEGANT-	Well balanced with finesse; a truly fine wine usually not overtly rich and lush.
FINISH-	The quality and enjoyment of a wine's aftertaste and length of time it continues in your mouth.
FLAT-	A wine lacking acidity.
FLESHY-	A wine with plenty of fruit and extract.



FLINTY-	Dry, steely, stony or mineral in taste nuance in the scent or taste, often used to describe a Chablis.
FLOWERY-	An appealing fragrance, almost perfume or flower-like.
FRAGRANT-	A wine offering a highly scented nose.
FRESH-	Used to describe young, fruity wines that are clean and still vital with youth; the opposite of tired.
FRUITY-	Ripe fruit scents and flavors; not always simply grape.
FULL-	Usually refers to body weight, but a wine can be light bodied and full of fruit.
GENEROUS-	A full-bodied wine having a high quality and rich in body.
GRAPEY-	A fruity wine with a fresh grape smell.
GRASSY-	The smell of grass or freshly mowed hay; often used to describe a Sauvignon Blanc.
GREEN-	Unique, unbalanced acidity, has a raw taste.
HARD-	Indicates a certain severity, often due to excess tannin and acidity.
HARSH-	Is an extremely astringent or acidic wine.
HEAVY-	A full-bodied wine.
INTENSE-	Wine with highly concentrated qualities.
JAMMY-	Commonly used to describe a fat, drinkable red wine rich in fruit, but lacking elegance.
LEGS-	The apparent drips on the inner walls of the wine glass which reveal the viscosity of the wine.
LEMONY-	Many dry and medium-sweet wines have a tangy, fruity acidity that is suggestive of lemons.
LENGTH/LONG-	Refers to a wine in which the flavor lingers in the mouth a long time after swallowing.
LIGHT-	A wine low in alcohol and subsequently not as viscose.
LITTLE-	Wine with little nose flavor or body.
LIVELY-	Usually implies youthful freshness or fruit due to good acidity and an above average carbonic gas content.
LUSCIOUS-	A wine that is rich and voluptuous.
MATURE-	Refers to a wine's development in a bottle, as opposed to ripe, which describes the maturity of the grape itself.
MEATY-	Suggests a wine so rich in body and extract that it feels chewy in the mouth; often has a high tannin content.
METALLIC-	A tin-like flavor found in dry white wines.

MOLDY-	An unpleasant smell and taste from rotten grapes.
MUSTY-	An unpleasant smell, like that of a dank cellar.
NEUTRAL-	An indistinctive wine.
NOSE-	The smell or odor of a wine, encompassing both aroma and bouquet.
NUANCE-	A subtle flavor or odor trace.
NUTTY-	The flavor of nuts sometimes found in rich, mature white wines.
OFF-	A wine that is partially or completely spoiled or defective.
OLD-	A wine past its peak.
OXIDIZED-	Wine with noticeable Sherry-like odor caused by excessive contact with the air.
QUAFFING WINE-	Unpretentious wine that is easy and enjoyable to drink.
RICH-	Wine possessing a balanced wealth of fruit and good depth on the palate and finish.
RIPE-	Wine with the richness that only ripe grapes can give; applies to ripeness of grapes, not maturity of the wine.
ROUND-	A wine that has rounded off all its edges of tannin, acidity, extract, ect through bottle-aging.
SHARP-	Biting acidity.
SHORT-	Said of a wine with a quick finish.
SMOKY-	Flavor or aroma of smoke produced by certain grapes or by oak casks.
SILKY-	Possessing of a smooth texture.
SOFT-	Wine low in acidity.
SOUND-	Not a judgment of quality, but rather a chemical state of wine properly made and stored.
SPICE-	A spicy flavor or aroma derived from certain grape varieties (Gewurztraminer) or bottle-age after time in wood.
STALKY-	Green, woody scent.
STRONG-	Descriptive word used for alcoholic wines.
SULPHURY-	Chemical taste due to excessive sulphur added to the wine.
SUPPLE-	A quality of wine with smooth or few tannins; easy to drink.
SWEET-	Opposite of dry; caused by the presence of fructose and glucose.
TANNIN-	The astringent substance found in grape skins, seeds and stems; found in young red wine and softens with age.

TART-	Refers to noticeable acidity.
THIN-	A Wine lacking in body and fruit, watery.
TIGHT-	A firm wine of good extract and significant tannin, with fruit that has not yet opened and reached its full potential.
VANILLA-	Often used to describe the nose and sometimes palate of an oak-aged wine.
VEGETAL-	Applied to wine of a certain maturity that have taken on a bouquet reminiscent of vegetation.
VELEVETY-	A wine which is mellow, fine and soft as velvet on the palate.
WOODY-	Quality of wine kept too long in wood; wood-like taste.
YEASTY-	Young wines tasting of yeast, as in fresh bread; a common characteristic of Champagne.

# White Grape Varietals

**BOURBOULENC** is an extremely old grape variety which is thought to have originated in Greece where it was known as the Asprokondoura. A late-ripening variety, it tends toward leanness and neutrality, but when picked at optimum maturity it retains high natural acidity and shows fresh citrus qualities with floral notes.

**CHARDONNAY** is a classic white wine grape known best for the wines produced in Burgundy, France. Widely planted throughout the world today, Chardonnay wines can range from clean and crisp with a hint of apples, figs and tropical fruit flavors to a rich, creamy style wine with complex, oak-aged buttery aromas. The most noble grape in the world for dry white wine, Chardonnay is responsible for all of the great white Burgundies; Meursault, Montrachet, Pouilly-Fuisse and Chablis. It is one of the grapes used in Brut Champagne and the only grape used to make Blanc de Blancs Champagne. Chardonnay wines can have exceptional aging potential.

**CHENIN BLANC** is best known for its production of Vouvray and sparkling wines of the Loire Valley in France. A grape capable of making wines that range from bone dry to very sweet, Chenin Blanc retains a well-defined fruitiness, often suggestive of pear and apple. Its high degree of acidity lends a pleasant crispness to its wines. Chenin Blanc is also widely grown in California where it tends to be best at an early age.

**CLAIRETTE** is a hot-climate variety native to the Mediterranean basin. It was once widely planted throughout southeastern France. Suited to hot, arid conditions and poor, dry soils, it is a late-ripening vine with fragile, thin skinned berries highly susceptible to rot and a tendency to coulure, or the failure of the vine flowers to remain on the vine long enough to develop into berries. Careful vinification results in light, fruity, floral, fleeting wines.

**GERWURZTRAMINER** is a highly aromatic grape, which yields spicy, flavorful wine with hints of orange zest and strong floral aromas such as those of dried rose petals. Most often the wine is lively, fresh and dry, however, it can produce off-dry, sweet and very sweet desert wines. An important grape in France's Alsace region, Gewurztraminer is also grown in Germany, California and Washington State.

**GRENACHE BLANC** is native to northeast Spain. It is planted throughout the French and Spanish Mediterranean basin. It thrives in hot, arid, windy conditions on rocky soils but in this environment is threatened by a naturally low acidity. Properly vinified at low temperatures and without malolactic fermentation, it yields an attractive, fleshy, generously fruity wine with a fragrance of flowers and dill.

**MARSANNE** is widely planted in the northern Rhone Valley. It has migrated outside of France but not to any great extent. It is not allowed in the blend of Chateauneuf-du-Pape. Under optimum conditions and with care in production, it can yield an unusual, weighty, extracted wine of deep color, high alcohol, dense texture, and flavors and aromas of stone fruit and flowers with a touch of minerals.

**MUSCADET** is best known as a perfect match with fresh raw oysters. It is also known as Melon de Bourgogne where it is native to the Loire Valley. This grape produces a fresh, light, delicate white wine accented by floral aromas and a subtle citrus flavor. Muscadet is best drunk when young.

**PINOT BLANC** makes an elegant white wine with aromas of apples and melon and a clean, delicate finish. Grown mainly in Alsace, France, Pinot Blanc is closely related in taste and aroma to Chardonnay, although subtler and slightly more tart. The grape is known as Pinot Bianco in Italy and as Weissburgunder in Germany and Austria. In California and Australia the wine is vinified in oak barrels creating a fatter, more luscious style of wine. Pinot Blanc is often described as a "cousin" to Chardonnay, but it is in fact a clone derived from the red grape, Pinot Noir.

**PINOT GRIS** is a grape varietal found in Alsace, France where it is also known as Tokay d'Alsace. The grape is also known as Pinot Grigio in Italy, Rulander in Germany, Pinot Beurot in Burgundy, etc. The style of wine produced from Pinot Gris can vary from robust, mouth-filling and dense to light, crisp and dry. Oak is an option of the winemaker and is not often used in Alsace and Italy.

**RIESLING**, the classic white varietal of Germany, is capable of producing wine with an extraordinary balance of sweetness and acidity. The wines are characterized by a flowery, fragrant aroma and distinctive fruity acidity. Riesling can be dry, or it can produce some of the world's greatest naturally sweet wines with apricot and peach aromas and rich, honeyed, nectar-like flavors. These desert wines, which are the result of late harvesting and botrytis, are labeled as Auslese, Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese depending upon sweetness level.

**ROUSSANNE** is one of half-dozen principal white wine varieties of the Rhone Valley. It is the only one which figures in red and white appellations of both the northern and southern Rhone. When conscientiously produced as a stand-alone varietal, Roussanne yields elegant, complex wines of considerable finesse, with good acidic balance and flavors of melon, sweet white fruit, pears, tree blossoms and herbs.

**SAUVIGNON BLANC** is a white wine grape with many styles. Used often as a blend with Semillon in the Bordeaux region, they produce light, crisp, dry wines which are noted for high acidity and grassy, herbaceous aromas. In the Loire Valley the grape is used exclusively to produce the wines of Sancerre and Pouilly Fume, where their signature is the unforgettable aroma of citrus and a crisp, smoky style. Also known as the Fume Blanc in California, these wines are often vinified in oak offering a softer, fuller style than its French counterpart.

**SEMILLION** is a white grape variety most commonly known for its blending capabilities. Used in France with Sauvignon Blanc for the white wines of Bordeaux, Semillon offers softness, roundness, low acidity and an aroma described as lemony and lanolin-like. Today, it is grown in California, Washington State, and Australia and is often blended with Chardonnay to make a softer, lighter style wine. It has become known as a flexible variety with a special affinity with oak.

**TREBBIANO** is a principle white grape varietal of Italy. It is used in the making of the Soave, Orvieto and Frascati, and is generally blended with one or more grape varieties. The main characteristic of Trebbiano, also called Ugni Blanc in France, is its high yield. The wine produced is generally light, in color and body, with high acid and medium alcohol.

**VIOGNIER** origins are not clear, but the vine is thought to have been brought from Croatia to the Rhone Valley, along with Syrah in 281 A.D. It yields lush, seductive, exotically perfumed, golden wines with an intense bouquet of honeysuckle, ripe apricots, peaches and spice refreshed by a subtle touch of acidity.

# RED GRAPE VARIETALS

**CABERNET SAUVIGNON** is considered by many to be the best grape variety in the world. It is the easiest to grow and harvest and adapts admirably to different environments. This late ripening grape produces wines that are tannic, astringent and highly colored with complex aroma of black currants, cedar, mint and leather. This superb and noble grape is largely responsible for the great clarets of Bordeaux, particularly those of the Medoc and Graves areas. Cabernet Sauvignon can have incredible aging potential.

**CABERNET FRANC** is a late ripening variety, budding just before the Cabernet Sauvignon. Its wines are less tannic, very aromatic (violet, raspberry, black currant, and licorice) and are more refined. It is almost always blended, often with Cabernet Sauvignon and is often used in wine of the Bordeaux region,

**MERLOT** is a grape that produces not deep, but nicely colored wines, soft in fruit, but capable of great richness. A distinguished grape of Bordeaux, Merlot is often blended with Cabernet Sauvignon in the Medoc and Graves regions to give softness, grace and a velvety texture to the more austere Cabernet. In other parts of Bordeaux namely Pomerol and St. Emilion, Merlot is the principle grape producing rich and silky wines. Single varietal Merlot wines are soft, fruity, fragrant, and should be drunk fairly young. Merlot grapes are widely planted now worldwide.

**PINOT NOIR**, a very old traditional grape of Burgundy, produces rich, delicate, velvety smooth wines with great finesse. Pinot wines are usually more acidic than those of Cabernet Sauvignon, but less tannic. This delicate varietal yields wines that are rich ruby in color with aromas of the red soft fruits, violets, peppermint or truffles. Pinot Noir is responsible for the glorious wines of the Cote de Nuits, Corton, Volnay and Pommard among others. It is also a leading grape of the region of Champagne. Pinot Noir grapes have a vast aging potential.

**MOUVEDRE** is an excellent quality grape variety that is grown extensively throughout the Rhone, the Midi of France and under the name of Monastrell, in Spain. Mouvedre wine is usually highly colored, well constructed and very tannic. It has a spicy bouquet that has a hint of earthiness. This varietal is often blended with Grenache and adds to the wine superb color, structure, and complexity.

**GAMAY**, the famous grape of the Beaujolais, is early ripening and suitable for planting practically everywhere. Good Gamay wines are light, fresh, emit a pleasant bouquet and should be drunk young.

**ZINFANDEL**, California's widely planted grape, is a very late ripening varietal. The Zinfandel grape produces highly colored wines with spicy, black pepper, raspberry and blackberry aromas. This fruity, adaptable grape can be gloriously lush, producing medium-bodied wines similar in style to Cabernet Sauvignon, and can age nicely. Most Zinfandel now goes into making "blush" wine called White Zinfandel.

**SYRAH** produces wine which is strong in color and alcohol (11-13%), tannic and endowed with the bouquet of violets highlighted by cherry and black currants. This late ripening grape, which has been grown in the Rhone Valley for over 1000 years, is the exclusive grape of red Hermitage, the major grape of Cote Rotie and of the grapes used in Chateauneuf-de-Pape. Today it is successfully cultivated in California, Australia (called Shiraz) and South Africa. Syrah wine is deep purple in color, peppery and black fruit in flavor, generally tannic, but can mature to a big velvety, generous wine that is generally long lived.

**MALBEC or COT** is a primary grape varietal in the Cahors region of France. This early ripening grape produces wine that is highly colored, dense and markedly tannic, however, the aroma is somewhat feeble. Often used in blending, Malbec is used in the making of roses and uncomplicated reds.

**GRENACHE** is Spanish in origin and is one of the principle varieties in the wines of Rioja where it is known as Garnacha. This late ripening grape requires much warmth and is used extensively in Australia and California, most often to make roses. Grenache is also used in the Rhone and Southern France regions primarily as a blending grape. This variety produces fleshy, ripe wines which are high in alcohol, offer a deep fruity flavor, but lack in color.

**CARIGNAN** is the most common grape of France where it occupies nearly 220,000 hectares of French Soil. A late ripening varietal, it is dark in color, very harsh in its youth and is frequently bitter even when mature. For this reason, Carignan is seldom made as a single variety wine, but instead is used for blending often with Cinsault and Grenache.

**CINSAULT** is both a table grape and a wine grape. It hails from Southern France, but is being more widely cultivated elsewhere as growers come to appreciate its versatility. Cinsault lends finesse and softens, producing wines, which are usually full-colored, low in tannin and quickly maturing with elegantly floral aromas. It makes an excellent complement to the great varietals, but should not be used on its own.

**BARBERA** is the most widely planted grape variety in the Piedmont region of Italy. This soft grape produces medium-bodied, fresh, fruity wines which normally peak 3-7 years after bottling. More California wine producers have begun cultivating Barbera because of the grapes rich depth and mellow fruitiness.

**NEBBIOLO** is the noble grape of Piedmont's greatest red wines. It is the Nebbiolo which is responsible for the magnificently rich and smoky Barolo and the refined, slightly more gentle, very elegant Barbaresco. Wines produced from this grape have an immense potential for aging.

**SANGIOVESE** is the mainstay of all Tuscan DOC red wines (Chianti, Montalcino and more), and is one of Italy's most widely planted vines. The principle variety used in Chianti, Sangiovese can produce fine, smooth, fruity red wines with an aging range from 1-25 years.

# MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF WINE AND FOOD PAIRINGS

## **BODY**

The relative weights of the wine and food are among the first elements to consider.

A big, heavy wine will swamp a delicately flavored food, like grilled trout.

Wines from hotter regions tend to be heavier than those from colder regions.

## **ACIDITY**

Think of vinegar with fish and chips or squeezing a lemon on fish. In much the same way, an acidic wine will cut through the oiliness of food to bring out more flavor.

Except for wines made in the hottest years, wines with good acidity can be found from the following areas: California, Chablis, Champagne, Alsace, Loire Valley, and Germany.

A fresh, acidic wine makes a great contrast to rich foods made with butter, oil and cream.

## **TANNIN**

Tannin is extracted from red grape skins (sometimes seeds and stems, too) as the grapes are crushed and fermented. White wines can also have some astringency.

It can make wine taste rough, often very hard, especially in young red wines, but provides the vital backbone necessary for optimal maturing.

Big, astringent red wines like a powerful young California Cabernet may taste unappetizing alone, but can be delicious with heavier foods, like a rich meat lasagna or steak.

## **FRUIT**

All wines need fruit to taste good, and any well-made properly stored wine that has not been kept past its peak will have some fruit. Fruit becomes less vibrant as it matures; so, if you want something really fruity, young wines are the best.

Fruitiness in an accompanying wine is especially important for dishes that contain fruit in their sauce (duck with orange sauce) or sweetened with honey or sweet wine.

## **SWEETNESS**

Sweet wines go well with desserts, but it is important to match the level of sweetness accurately.

If the dessert is sweeter than the wine, the wine may taste dry and dull or tart.

Sweet wines go very well with the contrasting salty flavors of some cheese (like Roquefort) and traditional English cheeses (like Cheshire), and the intense richness of Foie Gras.



# CONSIDER THIS WHEN MATCHING FOOD AND WINE

Consider these elements in both the food and the wine:

**Temperature**

**Texture**

**Weight/ Complexity**

**Spiciness**

**Sweetness**

**Acidity (tartness), Bitterness**

**Effervescence**

## **TEMPERATURE**

Spicy food is best with a cold white wine.

## **TEXTURE**

Consider the contrast between poached fish and a chewy steak.

## **WEIGHT**

Substantial dishes like lasagna or a creamy seafood casserole need a full-bodied wine.  
Angel hair pasta with fresh tomato and basil needs a light wine.

## **ACIDITY**

Fish paired with a lightly acidic white wine (Sauvignon Blanc) will act much like a lemon wedge you squeeze over the fish cutting through the fishy taste and the oiliness.

Also, matching foods prepared with rich cream sauce with acidic wines will help subtle flavors to emerge and cleanse your palate.

## **EFFERVESCENCE**

The tingle of bubbles in sparkling wine perks up the tongue and excites the palate. It is ideal as an aperitif.

# FOOD AND WINE MATCHING GUIDELINES

“If food is the body of good living, wine is the soul.” – Sir Winston Churchill

## **APPETIZERS**

Since the concept of appetizers is to taste and please the palate before a meal, dry or medium dry, light bodied acidic white wines are usually good choices because they have a refreshing quality that tends to stimulate one’s appetite. The carbonation in a sparkling wine is great with many hors d’oeuvres.

## **FISH/ SEAFOOD**

Dry White Wine (Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc) usually pair best with seafood because the wine’s crispness allows the food’s subtler flavors to surface. Also, light-bodied red wines with little tannin (Gamay, Beaujolais or Pinot Noir) are delicious with firmer-fleshed fish, like swordfish and Salmon that are grilled or prepared with tomato in the sauce.

## **POULTRY/ PORK**

Poultry and pork are the chameleons of food: depending on how they are prepared, their tastes, textures and appearances vary, as do the choices for a perfect wine match. Carefully consider the sauce to help you select the right wine. A white, blush or red may be appropriate.

## **VEAL**

The leanness and delicate flavor of veal is complemented by lighter red wines, well aged red wines or dry white wines. Be careful to not overwhelm the flavor of the meat and consider the flavors in the sauce.

## **BEEF/LAMB**

Both beef and lamb are higher in fat and require wines with sufficient tannin to cut through the full flavor of the food. Fine cuts of meat pair wonderfully with complex or aged red wines (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot). Meats that are braised in tomatoes or are highly seasoned or have been marinated need an aggressive younger red (young Cabernet or Zinfandel).

## **HAM**

Cured ham with wine takes careful matching of the contrast of the saltiness and sweetness of the meat. If the ham glaze is sweet, a fruity rose or blush (White Zinfandel) can be a nice match for both taste and color.

## MATCHING WINE AND MATCHING FOOD



Whether or not you are armed with all possible details about a dish and fully understand the principles of matching wine to food, there are still times when a few quick suggestions are very handy. Equally, there are occasions when, approaching the matching process from the other end with a special bottle or an unfamiliar one, an instant recommendation is all you need to inspire ideas of your own.

AGLIANICO DEL VULTURE  
Italy  
Smoky, spicy, full bodied  
red: rabbit, hard cheese

ALIGOTE  
France  
Tart, dry white wine:  
aperitif with dips, tortilla,  
mussels, snails, cod and  
trout.

ALTO ADIGE  
Italy  
Light, crisp dry white wine:  
Spaghetti carbonara,  
simple fish or salads  
Light to medium-bodied  
red wine: Beef carpachio.

AMARONE  
Italy  
Rich, strong, dry red wine:  
powerful game casseroles,  
parmesean.

AMONTILLADO  
Spain  
Dry, nutty, concentrated  
Sherry: Consomme, olives,  
tapas, salted nuts.

ANJOU ROUGE  
France  
Juicy, medium bodied red  
wine: Gammon steaks,  
lamb chops, nut cutlets.

ARNEIS  
Italy  
Dry, fragrant, quite  
complex white wine:  
Pasta with creamy sauces,

simply prepared white fish  
and seafood, onion tart.

ASTI (SPUMANTE)  
Italy  
Light, sweet, sparkling  
wine: Puddings, jelly, fruit  
salad, pavlova, lemon  
souffle, light chocolate  
mousse or Christmas  
pudding.

AUSELESE  
Germany/Austria  
Sweet White: Fruit salads,  
apple pie, roast goose or  
duck with fruit sauce.

BAIRRADA  
Portugal  
Ripe, full bodied red wine:  
Roast pork, beef ragout,  
aubergine stew, and spicy  
nut cutlets.

BANDOL  
France  
Tannic, aromatic, vigorous  
red wine: Barbequed  
meats and vegetables,  
beef en daube, game.

BANYULS  
France  
Rich, sweet fortified wine:  
Christmas pudding, coffee  
and chocolate cakes or  
strong blue cheese.

BARBARESCO  
Italy  
Deep, full bodied red  
wine: Roast game, beef,  
offal (not sweetbreads),  
ceps, and truffles.

BARBERA D'ASTI  
Italy  
Medium bodied, firm,  
fresh red wine: Antipasti,  
spaghetti Bolognese,  
tomatoes, parma ham. It  
is the only red that can  
take (just) smoked salmon.

BARDONLINO  
Italy  
Very light, crisp, red or  
rose wine: Antipasti,  
cannelloni, seafood soup  
or stew.

BAROLO  
Italy  
Rich, full bodied red wine:  
Rich beef and game stews.  
BARSAC  
France  
Rich, sweet white wine:  
Peach brulee, raspberry  
souffle, taste- Latin.

BATARD-MONTRACHET  
France  
Rich, full bodied dry white  
wine: Scallops, lobster or  
salmon with hollandaise or  
creamy sauces.

**BEAUJOLAIS**

France

Vibrant light to medium bodied red wine:  
Charcuterie and cold roast meats, pork chops, fish in red wine sauce, mushrooms on toast.

**BEAUJOLAIS-VILLAGES**

France

Fruity, medium bodied red wine: Kidneys with mustard, charcuterie, sausages and salmon.

**BEAUMES-DE-VENISE,  
MUSCAT**

France

Very Sweet, fortified white wine: Caramelized oranges, rhubarb crumble chocolate puddings.

**BEAUNE**

France

Medium to full-bodied red wine: Rabbit casserole, roast duck with cherries, wild mushroom fricassee.  
Medium to full-bodied white wine: Fish pie.

**BEERENAUSSLESE**

Germany/Austria

Concentrated, sweet white wine: Spotted dick sacher torte, fruit-based puddings, pancakes.

**BERGERAC**

France

Medium bodied red wine: Roast chicken or lamb steaks.  
Dry, crisp white wine: Fish and Chips, courgette soufflé.

**BERNKASTEL**

Germany

Fine, penetrating dry to sweet white from the village (not from Bereich), for the off-dry Kabinett style: Poached trout, sweetbreads in cream, cucumber mousse.

**BIANCO DI CUSTOZA**

Italy

Light, dry white wine: Grilled cod, seafood soup, spinach and ricotta ravioli, quiche.

**BONNES-MARES**

France

Fine, full bodied red wine: Roast game, duck or goose, kidneys and morels.

**BORDEAUX**

France

Medium bodied, dry red wine: Lamb, Irish stew, rare roast beef (hot or cold) with old clarets.  
Crisp, dry white wine: Grilled fish, mussels, poultry and seafood.

**BOURGOGNE**

France

Medium bodied red wine: Duck breastm ouef en meurette, game, truffles.  
Medium to full bodied white wine: Fish in creamy sauces, cheese soufflé, roast chicken.

**BOURGUEIL**

France

Light to medium-bodied red wine: Rabbit, duck pate, charcuterie, carbonnade, shepherd's pie, asparagus.

**BROUILLY**

France

Fruity, medium bodied red wine: Cold meats, cotechino, and stuffed peppers.

**BRUNELLO DI****MONTALCINO**

Italy

Rich, full bodied red wine: Oxtail, game casseroles and pies, mushroom stews, hard cheeses.

### CABERNET SAUVIGNON

France/ Everywhere  
Tannic, deeply flavored red wine:  
France-Red meats, especially lamb, poultry, and hard cheeses.  
California-Full flavored; meaty casseroles.  
Australia; Kidneys , kangaroo or beet.  
New Zealand- Lamb.  
Chile/Argentina- full flavored meat dishes.  
Eastern Europe- Sausages, lasagna, turkey.  
Italy- Char grilled meat or game.

### CAHORS

France  
Tannic, concentrated red wine: Cassoulet, comfit de canard, steak or kidney pie, braised lamb shanks, or Chantal cheese.

### CAVA

Spain  
Sparkling, dry white wine:  
Drink as an aperitif or with scrambled eggs and smoked salmon.

### CHABLIS

France  
Firm, dry white wine:  
White fish (Dover sole) turbot, shellfish or oysters, trout with almonds, poached salmon, brandade, kedgerree, deep-fried food, Chaource cheese.

### CHAMBERTIN

France  
Full bodied red wine: Coq au vin, roast guinea fowl, partridge, grouse, hare or venison.

### CHAMBOLLE-MUSIGNY

France  
Medium to full bodied red wine: Roast poultry or pheasant, game, veal, kidneys with ceps, truffle omelets.

### CHAMPAGNE, BRUT

France  
Fine, dry sparkling wine:  
Drink as an aperitif, with oysters, smoked salmon, caviar or with Chinese food.

### CHARDONNAY

France/Everywhere from Old World  
Medium bodied, fruity, dry white wine: Drink with cheese and egg dishes, asparagus and artichokes, potted shrimp and other seafood, poultry, or dishes with nut sauces.  
From the New World  
Full-bodied, fruity, voluptuous white wine:  
Richly sauced/flavored food such as lobster thermidor, guacamole, vegetable terrine, duck a l'orange, or mild creamy coconut curries.

### CHASSAGNE-MONTRACHET

France  
Rich, full-bodied white wine: Roast veal or richly sauced fish, grilled turbot.  
Full-bodied red: Mature cheeses, and game birds.

### CHEVALIER-MONTRACHET

France  
Luxurious full bodied, dry white wine: Mussels, lobster, prawns, scallops in cream sauce, duck or goose.

### CHATEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE

France  
Full bodied red wine:  
Casseroles, lamb, venison, beef, game or lentil, cassoulet, or roast game.

### CHENIN BLANC

France  
Crisp, dry medium or sweet white wine: In the Loire Valley is used as an aperitif or with delicate creamy fish dishes. If it is sweet, then paired with fruit-based or almond pudding.  
New World  
Dry white wine: Curry, stuffed courgettes.

### CHIANTI

Italy

Fruity, medium bodied red wine: Spinach and ricotta cannelloni, cold meats, simple light meat dishes, pizza, barbecued foods.

### CHIANTI CLASSICO

Italy

Full bodied red wine: Roast pork, grilled steak, white truffles with pasta.

### CHINON

France

Juicy, medium bodied red wine: Asparagus, goat's cheese, fish, charcuterie, not too heavy meat dishes (stews in beer or stout).

### CHIROUBLES

France

Medium bodied, fruity red wine: Steak tartare, Brie, rabbit in red wine, boiled or grilled gammon.

### COLOMBARD

France

Light, dry white wine: Light salads, snacks, and Thai food.

### COLLIO

Italy

Light, dry white wine: Shellfish, corn on the cob, pork with ginger and garlic.

### COMMANDARIA

Cyprus

Rich, sweet, concentrated, dessert wine: Christmas pudding or cake, chocolate ice cream.

### CONDRIEU

France

Full bodied, very aromatic white wine: Crab, Lobster, creamy curries, pork with rosemary.

### COPERTINTO

Italy

Ripe, full bodied red wine: Hearty stews, barbecued beef and meats.

### CORBIERES

France

Full bodied red wine: Lamb, liver and onions, game, potted hare, ratatouille, sausages, mussels Provençal.

### CORNAS

France

Dark, sturdy, full-bodied red wine: Beef casseroles, rare steak, wild duck, kidneys.

### CORTON

France

Rich, powerful red wine: Roast or casseroled poultry or game.

### CORTON-CHARLEMAGNE

France

Rich, luxurious, full bodied white wine: Roast veal, lobster, richly-sauced white fish, fresh salmon and scallops.

### COTE DE BEAUNE

France

Medium bodied red wine: Roast pheasant, vegetable rissoles, sweetbreads. Full-bodied white wine: Lobster, richly-sauced fish dishes.

### COTE CHALONNAISE

France

Medium bodied white wine: Pasta and poultry, especially in cream sauces, Parma and Bayonne Hams.

### COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC

France

Medium to full bodied red wine: Steak, stews, rabbit with mustard.

### COTEAUX DU LAYON

France

Very sweet, yet crisp white wine: Fruit-based and nut-based puddings and pastries, and rich pates.

### COTES DE BOURG

France

Medium bodied red wine: Lentil stew, spaghetti Bolognese, lamb chops.

#### COTES DU RHONE

France

Medium bodied red wine:  
Shepherds pie or  
mousaka, goulash,  
sausages, vegetarian  
casseroles, chili con carne,  
and ratatouille.

#### CROZES-HERMITAGE

France

Full bodied red wine: Pot  
roast, pheasant, beef  
casserole, game, and  
meatballs.

#### DAO

Portugal

Solid, full bodied red wine:  
Beef burgers, heart (lamb),  
grilled kidneys, lamb with  
garlic and rosemary, and  
mousaka.

#### DOLCETTO

Italy

Light bodied red wine:  
Mozzarella or fontina  
cheese, cold meat, meaty  
pasta dishes, stuffed  
peppers, osso bucco, and  
black pudding.

#### ECHEZEAUX

France

Fine, full bodied fragrant  
red wine: Game birds,  
venison, mushrooms, and  
truffles.

#### EISWEIN

Germany

Luscious, concentrated,  
sweet white wine: Buttery  
biscuits, peaches,  
greengages, fruit  
puddings.

#### ENTRES-DEUX-MERS

France

Light to medium bodied  
dry, fresh white wine:  
Shellfish, seafood, salads.

#### EST! EST!! EST!!!

Italy

Light, dry white wine:  
Spaghetti carbonara,  
mussels.

#### FITOU

France

Full bodied, spicy red  
wine: Cassoulet, lamb  
with flageolets, vegetable  
bakes, pork sausages.

#### FLEURIE

France

Fruity, medium bodied red  
wine: Rabbit with  
mustard, wild mushrooms,  
nut roast sausages,  
charcuterie.

#### FRASCATI

Italy

Light bodied dry white  
wine: Light pasta dishes,  
white fish, chicken chow  
mein, omelet's.

#### FRONSAC

France

Medium bodied red wine:  
Mixed grill, guinea fowl,  
roast and grilled lamb.

#### FUME BLANC

California

Medium to full bodied dry  
white wine: Barbecued  
fish, vegetables and  
poultry, and lightly spiced  
curries.

#### GAILLAC

France

Medium bodied red wine:  
Garbure, comfit de  
Canard, Bayonne ham  
Dry white wine: Pasta and  
pesto, sardines, mackerel,  
herrings.

#### GAMAY

See Beaujolais

#### GATTINARA

Italy

Full-bodied red wine:  
Pasta with hare sauce  
(pappardelle alle lepre),  
porcini mushrooms,  
parmesan cheese.

#### GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN

France

Fine, full-bodied red wine:  
Game birds, especially in  
casseroles, coq au vin,  
duck, mushroom dishes,  
mature cheeses, soft ripe  
cheeses such as Milleens  
and Camembert.



#### GERWURZTRAMINER

France/ New World  
Spicy, medium to full bodied white wine:  
Pungent cheese dishes, smoked salmon, pork rillettes, pates, spicy food, onion tarts and peppers.  
Sweet, late harvested white wine: Foie gras and pates, puddings.

#### GIGONDAS

France  
Full bodied red wine: Rich meat and game casseroles, roast goose, moussaka, char-grilled steak.

#### GRAVES

France  
Medium to full-bodied, dry red wine: Game terrine, roast lamb, steak, kidney and oyster pie.  
Medium to full-bodied white wine: Mussel stew with cream or any richly-sauced fish dish.

#### GROS PLANT DU PAYS NANTAIS

France  
Crisp, dry, light white wine: Crudites, oily fish like mackerel, oysters.

#### HERMITAGE

France  
Full-bodied red wine: Beef dishes/casseroles, rare steak, beef wellington, roast game, and English hard cheeses.

#### JULIENAS

France  
Medium-bodied, tangy, dry white wine: Sauced fish, composed salads, cheese fondue.  
Medium-bodied sweet white wine: Foie gras, Brebis cheeses, pastries.

#### KABINETT

Germany  
Light and off-dry white wine: Smoked fish, sushi, and sashimi, Chinese food, and crab salad.

#### KEKFRANKOS

Hungary  
Light to medium bodied red wine: Toad in the hole, sausage and mash, faggots, beef stroganov.

#### LAMBRUSCO SECCO DOC

Italy  
Sparkling, tangy red wine: Parma ham and salami, cotecchino.

#### LIEBFRAUMILCH

Germany  
Light bodied, semi-sweet white wine: Drink as an aperitif or dim sum.

#### LIQUEUR MUSCAT

Australia  
Concentrated, fortified dessert wine: Christmas pudding, mince pies, dark chocolate pies, and ice-cream.

#### LIRAC

France  
Full bodied red wine: Rabbit and other game casseroles, smoked ham, barbecued meat.

#### LOUPIAC

France  
Concentrated sweet white wine: Strawberry or raspberry mousse, crepes suzette, bread and butter pudding.

#### LUGANA

Italy  
Medium bodied white wine: Braised fennel, pasta and pesto, stuffed courgettes, or aubergine, and Chinese food.

#### MACON

France  
Medium to full bodied dry white wine: Cream-based dishes, pasta, Parma ham, seafood brochettes, roast chicken, blanquette de veau.  
Medium-bodied red wine: Pork or charcuterie, fish cooked in red wine.

**MADEIRA**

Madeira

Tangy dry to lusciously sweet fortified wine: dry: salted almonds, consommé; sweet e.g. Malmsey: Christmas cake or pudding mince pies and brandy butter, baked apples.

**MADIRAN**

France

Dark full bodied red wine: comfit de canard, magret substantial stews.

**MALAGA**

Spain

Concentrated fortified dessert wine: steamed chocolate, date or Christmas pudding; ice cream and fudge sauce.

**MANZANILLA**

Spain

Tangy dry lightly fortified white wine: tapas, consommé, olives, salted nuts.

**MARGAUX**

France

Complex medium bodied red wine: roast lamb with herbs, fillet steak, roast duck or goose.

**MARSALA**

Italy

Fortified tangy dry to concentrated sweet: dry: aperitif with nuts or oily antipasti; sweet: chocolate and almond gâteau, sticky toffee pudding.

**MARSANNE**

France/Austria

Full bodied fruity dry white wine: spicy or coconut dishes, creamy curries.

**MEDOC**

France

Medium bodied red wine: simply roast or grilled meat such as lamb (especially with Pauillac or St.Julien), roast pork and garlic, roast chicken, kidneys, cheese soufflé.

**MERLOT**

France/Everywhere

Soft medium to full bodied red: beef with stout, bean stew.

New World

Try calf's liver and grilled food including tuna.

**MEURSAULT**

France

Full bodied dry white wine: chicken with truffles, monkfish or scallops in cream sauce, asparagus with hollandaise.

**MINERVOIS**

France

Medium to full bodied red wine: ratatouille lamb with flageolets, squid with tomato stuffing, spicy sausages.

**MONBAZILLAC**

France

Concentrated sweet white wine: pears stud with blue cheese, sautéed foie gras and apples, crème caramel.

**MONTEPULCIANO**

D'ABRUZZO

Italy

Medium to full bodied red wine: lasagna, rabbit and peppers, chicken with olives, spaghetti Bolognese, pizza.

**MONTEPULCIANO, VINO**

NOBILE DE

Italy

Full bodied red wine: roast boar or pork, roast pigeon, quail.

**MONTRACHET, LE**

France

Finest rich full bodied dry white wine: chicken with crayfish, rich sauced lobster, and turbot.

**MORELLINO DI SCANSANO**

Italy

Fruity medium to full bodied red wine: roast marinade lamb, mixed grill, pork chops.

**MOREY-SAINT DENIS**

France

Fragrant medium to full bodied red wine: game birds and venison, roast or casserole.

**MORGON**

France

Juicy full bodied red wine: casseroles, braised beef with olives, cassoulet, coq au vin.

**MOSCATO D'ASTI**

Italy

Light sweet sparkling white: baked Alaska, meringue nests, Christmas pudding.

**MOSEL**

Germany

Light aromatic white wine: smoked mackerel with black peppercorns, Gravadt Lax, duck a l'orange.

**MOULIN-A-VENT**

France

Juicy full bodied red wine: baked ham, beef wellington, steak tartare.

**MUSCADET**

France

Light crisp dry white wine: moules marinières, oysters, plateau des fruits de la mer, herb omelets, light antipasti and salads, mackerel.

**MUSCAT**

France/Everywhere

Dry to very sweet grapey white wine: dry: chicken with grapes, avocado salad; sweet: puddings-exotic fruit salad, mince pies, chocolate, nut and ginger based puddings.

**NAVARRA**

Spain

Medium dry white wine: fried whitebait, bouillabaisse; (rose): grilled red mullet (red): chorizo, spicy vegetable couscous, lamb.

**NIERSTEIN**

Germany

Light medium dry to sweet white wine: best wines only, medium-dry Kabinett style: Chinese dishes, including dim sum, or light salads, or drink as aperitif.

**NUITS-SAINT-GEORGES**

France

Full bodied red wine: any game, venison steaks, goose comfit, kidneys with wild mushrooms.

**OLOROSO**

Spain

Full flavored dry to sweet fortified wine: dry: olives, hard cheese; sweet: trifle, crème brulee chocolate gateau.

**ORVIETO**

Italy

Crisp dry to medium sweet white wine: dry: pasta carbonara, grilled plaice, other light fish dishes; sweet: fruit salad, almonds biscuits.

**PASSITO**

Italy

Concentrated sweet white wine: blue cheese, baked peaches, praline ice cream.

**PAUILLAC**

France

Fine medium to full bodied red wine: lamb with rosemary, stewed pigeons, and roast guinea fowl.

**PINOT BLANC/BIANCO**

France/Italy

Medium bodied dry white wine: good with fish, cheese and egg dishes: quiche Lorraine, pike in cream sauce, pasta and pesto, also try with Thai green curry.

### PINOT GRIS/GRIGIO

France/Italy

Light to full bodied white wine: Pinot Gris: cold dishes and spicy dishes, courgette, or onion flan, pork with juniper; Pinot Grigio: mushroom ravioli, linguine with cream and parmesan; sweet: foie gras, smooth liver pates, puddings.

### PINOT NOIR

France/Everywhere

Old world: fine light to full bodied red wine: roast poultry, game, charcuterie, meatier fish. New world: ripe medium to full bodied red wine: cold meat and game, partridge with spiced damsons, duck with mango, tuna, and salmon.

### POMMARD

France Velvety full bodied red wine: wild boar, sautéed ham or kidneys, pheasant and truffles.

Portugal

Sweet fortified wine: Stilton, blue cheese and cheddars, chocolate cake or puddings, nuts.

### POUILLY FUISSE

France

Full bodied white wine: pasta, poultry, fish in creamy sauces, asparagus quiche, gougeres, salmon en croute.

### POUILLY FUME'

France

Crisp concentrated dry white wine: trout meuniere, smoked salmon sandwiches, creamy chicken pie, goat cheese.

### PULIGNY-MONTRACHET

France

Fine full bodied dry white wine: lobster, crab souffle, monkfish.

### RECIOTO

Italy

Concentrated sweet red or white wine: Red: blue cheeses. White: foie gras and puddings that are not too sweet: cakes, biscuits, fruit tarts.

### RETSINA

Greece

Strong medium bodied white wine: taramasalata, olives, spiced chick pea bake.

### RHEINGAU

Germany

Dry to sweet intense white wine: Medium dry: sweetbreads, braised celery, pork, duck or goose

with fruit sauce. Sweet: fruit pies and tarts, langues du chat biscuits.

### RIBEIRO

Spain

Crisp dry white wine: smoked mackerel with black peppercorns, deep fried courgettes or aubergine (red): sardines.

### RIBERA DEL DUERO

Spain

Full bodied red wine: beef en croute, spit roasted boar and other roast meats, mature hard cheeses.

### RICHEBOURG

France

Luxurious full bodied red wine: game birds, venison, magret calves liver.

### RIESLING

Germany/Everywhere

Old world: light aromatic dry to sweet white wine: stir fried or poached dishes, e.g. poached sole, avocado salad, roast hot or cold goose, duck, wild boar, apple and raspberry puddings.

## RIOJA

Spain

Medium to full bodied red and white wines. Red: casseroled or roast lamb, game or poultry, mushrooms, truffles. White: onion tart, tapas, barbecued chicken.

## ROMANEE-CONTI, LA

France

Fine complex full bodied red wine: see Vosne-Romanee.

## ROSE D' ANJOU/DE LOIRE

France

Dry to medium dry wine: aperitif or gentle salads.

## ROUSSILLON, COTES DU

France

Full bodied red wine: vegetable based dishes, spiced pork or beef, snails with anchovy butter.

## RUEDA

Spain

Light to medium bodied dry or sherry like white wine: simple or garlicky fish, seafood and poultry, green vegetables and salads.

## RUILLY

France

Medium bodied red wine: roast pork, coq au vin. Dry white wine: jambon persille, artichokes, cheese fondue.

## SAINT JOSEPH

France

Full bodied red wine: Toulouse sausage, barbecued kebabs, beef casseroles, roasted vegetables, game.

## SAUMUR-CHAMPIGNY

France

Light bodied red wine: lighter meat dishes such as spring lamb, cheese and herb soufflé, salmon, trout.

## SAUTERINES

France

Luscious sweet white wine: blue cheese, foie gras, duck with orange and honey, cream based puddings e.g. crème caramel and brulee.

## SAUVIGNON BLANC

France/Everywhere

Old world, tangy dry white wine: Loire seafood salad, Thai food, asparagus quiche. New world, white wine: more intense flavors and denser textures such as hollandaise and mayonnaise sauces, asparagus and shellfish, tomatoes and Thai food.

## SAINT EMILION

France

Medium to full bodied red wine: roast beef, wild boar with chestnuts, roast turkey, lobster in red wine, chicken casserole, truffles, Camembert.

## SAINT ESTEPHE

France

Medium to full bodied red: roast lamb, lamb en croute, lamb with flageolets, and lampreys in red wine.

## SAVENNIERES

France

Intense, crisp dry white wine: river fish, sorrel sauce, goat cheese soufflé.

## SEMILLON

France/Australia

Old world: medium bodied dry white wine – usually blended: prawns, mussels and many other fish. New world: ripe and full bodied white wine: fish pie, richly sauced fish, spicy pork dishes, (botrytised), Roquefort cheese, cream based pudding, honey roast poultry.

SHERRY

Spain

Fortified dry to sweet: dry fino to medium amontillado, gazpacho, grilled sardines, very sweet oloroso, mince pies, fudge or chocolate ice cream, treacle pudding.

SHIRAZ

Australia

Ripe full bodied red wine: rich meat stews, barbecued meats or vegetables, chili con carne, roast goose, duck and turkey with traditional trimmings.

SILVANER

Germany

Light dry white wine: cheese choux puffs, quiche Lorraine, poached fish or poultry.

SAINT NICOLAS DE BOURGUEIL

France

Light to medium bodied red: See Bourgueil.

SALICE SALENTINO

Italy

Ripe full bodied red wine: game stew, stuffed aubergine, some curries.

SANCERRE

France

Medium bodied crisp dry white wine: poached trout, smoked salmon, sandwiches, avocado mousse, goat cheese, sashimi (light red), brandade, red mullet or salmon.

SOAVE

Italy

Light dry white wine: pasta and pesto, spinach and ricotta tortelk, chicken salad, light fish dishes.

SPARKLING SHIRAZ

Australia

Full sparkling red wine: roast turkey, mature goat cheese, rich pate'.

SPATBURGUNDER

Germany

Light to medium bodied red: boiled ham, smoked, garlic and fresh sausage, stuffed mushrooms.

SPATLESE

Germany

Light medium sweet white wine: pork with mustard, cold roast pork and duck, sun dried tomatoes, crab mousse.

SYRAH

France

Aromatic usually full bodied red wine: game and cold meats, beef cooked in red wine, liver, wild mushroom dishes, hard cheeses.

TACHE, LA

France

Fine full bodied red wine: See Vosne-Romanee

TAVEL

France

Full bodied dry rose: fish soup, stuffed red peppers, ratatouille and couscous.

TOKAJI

Hungary

Dry to intensely sweet white wine: dry: aperitif with nuts. Sweet: Christmas pudding, treacle tart crème caramel, mild creamy blue cheese, foie gras.

TOKAY-PINOT GRIS

France

Full bodied dry to sweet white wine. See Pinot Gris.

TREBBIANO

Italy

Light dry white wine: pasta carbonara, spinach canellont, sardines, Weiner schnitzel.

**TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE**

Germany/Austria

Intense sweet white wine: apple and sultana tart, black forest gateau, pavlova, crepes suzette.

**VACQUEYRAS**

France

Full bodied red wine: cassoulet rabbit stew, stuffed peppers, snails in garlic butter, pigeon.

**VALDEPENAS**

Spain

Medium to full bodied red wine: stuffed squid, olive and garlic bread, herb roasted lamb, braised lamb shanks, kebabs, or any mushroom dish.

**VALPOLICELLA**

Italy

Fruity light red wine: deep fried mushrooms, tuna and bean salad, lentil patties, sausages, bresaola.

**VENDANGE TARDIVE**

France

Intense sweet white wine: baked custard tart, terrine of foie gras, Muenster cheese.

**VERDELHO**

Australia

Ripe tangy dry white wine: spicy dishes, roast vegetables, Indian dishes. Madeira, Fortified medium dry white wine: salted nuts and olives, game consommé.

**VERDICCHIO**

Italy

Light dry white wine: linguine with cream and smokes salmon, fish and chips, seafood salad.

**VERNACCIA DI SAN****GIMIGNANO**

Italy

Light to medium bodied dry white wine: pasta and pesto, salmon, carpaccio, fish stews.

**VIN JAUNE**

France

Concentrated madeirized dry white wine: duck with olives, ripe hard cheese.

**VIN DE PAILLE**

France

Concentrated sweet white wine: apricot soufflé, sweet omelets, apple charlotte, praline gateau.

**VIN SANTO**

Italy

Concentrated sweet white wine: cantuccini biscuits, apple fritters, panforte, walnuts, hazelnuts and pecans.

**VINHO VERDE**

Portugal

Crisp light dry white wine: Oily fish such as sardines, light green vegetables meals and salads.

**VIOGNIER**

France

Medium to full bodied dry white wine: lobster or scallops with saffron, crab, carrot and orange soup, spiced parsnips, chicken korma and other mild to medium curries, and rosemary.

**VOLNAY**

France

Medium to full bodied red wine: roast veal, duck or beef, mushroom or game dishes.

**VOSNE-ROMANEE**

France

Perfumed medium to full bodied complex red wine: saddle of venison, not to well hung game birds, casseroles, crepes and truffles, mature cheeses.

## VOUGEOT, CLOS DE

France

Fine full bodied red wine:  
Boeuf a la bourguignonne,  
grand game dishes.

## VOUVRAY

France

Dry to sweet white wine.  
Dry to medium wine:  
delicately flavored fish like  
trout in cream, goat  
cheese soufflé. Sweet: tart  
tatin, baked pears, apricot  
and peach tarts, nut  
pastries.

## WHITE ZINFANDEL

California

Medium dry medium  
bodied rose: aperitif or  
prawn cocktail.

## ZINFANDEL

California

Aromatic powerful red  
wine: well flavored, spicy  
dishes (can have a touch  
of sweetness e.g.  
Barbecue sauce with spare  
ribs), game casserole,  
Thanksgiving turkey and  
its traditional  
accompaniments, steak  
with mustard and soy  
sauce, ratatouille, stuffed  
peppers, anchovy and  
olive antipasti, dark  
chocolate biscuit cake.



# DO'S AND DON'TS OF WINE SERVICE

Was it in your restaurant or someone else's, where you last saw a waiter pull out just part of a wine's cork? Could any of your wait staff be guilty of handling wine glasses by the bowl... or dripping wine on the table cloth... or icing a Champagne glass before filling it?

Such mistakes are far more common than they should be, perhaps because of high wait staff turnover. According to Anne Papa of the National Restaurant Association, "in full menu table service restaurants, it takes 85 employees to fill 40 positions for a year." Another reason for poor wine service is that on average, waiters serve bottles of wine only 10% as often as they serve food.

The unavoidable truth is that to achieve the same consistency as with food service, wait staff must be trained in the service of wine. The individual responsible for managing the wine program should conduct wine service training.

The best method of training combines lecture with demonstration. As the wine manager describes each procedure, an experienced server demonstrates to the novices precisely how it should be done. It is ideal if each server follows along with an illustrated wine service guide. The following instructions should be given to your wait staff, both in written form and by demonstration.

## **EQUIPMENT**

Each server should have a waiter's corkscrew that has a sharp blade and a long spiral (with five turns). Point should pierce the cork easily.

## **INITIAL APPROACH**

If the house policy is to solicit a drink order, be sure to have a wine list available. It would help to give recommendations for the customers for wine choices.

## **TAKING THE ORDER**

As the patron tells you the wine selection, record it, and repeat the wine's

name to reassure the customer and yourself that you have the correct bottle.

## **MISE EN PLACE**

Set the table with appropriate glasses and, if needed, ice bucket or decanting equipment. Fetch the bottle and carry it, label up, cradled in your arm. The bottle and stemware could also be carried on a tray. Clean wine glasses should be carried upside down by the stems. Do not touch the bowl of the glass.

## **BOTTLE PRESENTATION**

Do carry a napkin at every stage of the wine service and use it as a nest to frame the bottle as you present it to the person who ordered the wine. "Sir (or Madam), Dry Fume Blanc 2000." If the host desires, hand him the bottle. He may wish to see how cold or warm the bottle is.

Next ask, "May I pour you a taste?" Your goal is to complete this ritual as quickly and early as possible because if the wine is returned you will want to rectify the

problem before the course is served.

### **OPENING THE BOTTLE**

The patron's affirmative nod is your cue to unholster your corkscrew. Whereas in a very informal bistro an experienced waiter may choose to open a bottle without benefit of a table, in most restaurants, and for most servers, using a table top relieves the need to jerk or spin the bottle. It also provides better leverage to withdraw the cork.

Do cut the capsule three quarters of an inch below the top. If the lead capsule is trimmed at the mouth the wine will dribble over it.

Do not get into the habit of spinning the bottle while pressing your blade against the capsule because if the bottle contains sediment, you will make it impossible to decant successfully. If the top of the bottle is dirty, wipe it clean with a moistened corner of your napkin.

### **REMOVING THE CORK**

Pierce the cork off center so that the hole in the spiral is at the center of the cork. If the spiral starts against the glass however, simply tilt it diagonally

toward the opposite side so that it will travel through the cork's center on its way down.

Do pierce the bottom of the cork to ensure you get all of it. Using your other hand, hold the fulcrum steady against the lip to keep from chipping the glass (place a napkin between the fulcrum and bottle top to protect from chips). Pull the cork out with out bending it. (If cork is difficult, turn spiral again after the first ½" is out).

When the cork is out, put it on the table in front of the host. Without hesitation, wipe any grime off the mouth of the bottle and pour the host about an ounce to sample. As the host picks up the glass, remove the cork immediately.

### **BROKEN CORK**

When you push the cork, or part of it, into the bottle, do not get nervous, it happens to all of us sooner or later. You need not get a new bottle. Smile.

The smart manager will have a cork retriever on hand to pull it out. When part of the cork is wedged in the neck, use the spiral point to snag it.

### **BREATHING**

As early as possible in the meal, do offer to aerate a young, robust red wine that will be drunk long before it reaches maturity. Exposing the wine to oxygen will plunge the development into "fast forward". Either empty the bottle into a carafe or, better yet, pour a glass for each patron. Maximizing the wine surface to air ratio is the simplest way to swiftly age the wine.

### **SAMPLING**

Do not rush the sampler. Those who know what they are looking for may wish to take 15 to 20 seconds to truly evaluate the wine. After you get the affirmative nod, do serve the ladies first, then the gentlemen and finally the host.

### **POURING**

In the interest of speed and if your hand is large enough, grasp the bottle so that the patron may view the label as you are filling his glass. Otherwise, when you notice someone turning to see it, stop and display it. A 4 ounce pour serves six glasses to a bottle. If it is a fortified wine, like sherry or port, or a sweet wine, 3 ounces is appropriate. As you are

pulling away from your pour, touch the mouth of the bottle with the napkin to catch any drops. It is best to place the bottle on the table when finished.

### **DECANTING**

Do offer to decant any red wine with enough sediment to make the wine cloudy. However, as such a wine is already mature any may begin to fade after it is poured, decant it just before serving. Ideally the bottle has rested on its back label up, so that it is easy to locate the sediment. If it has been upright, keep it in that position until you begin decanting.

Transport the bottle without changing its position. A decanting basket is a handy carriage. Present the bottle to the host and without moving the bottle, remove the cork and wipe clean the mouth of the bottle. Light the candle and begin emptying the bottle into a carafe as you sight the flame through the shoulder of the bottle. If you are decanting without a basket, do hold the bottle so that the label faces upward as you pour. Do not position the bottle directly over the flame. Do not stop pouring until you

see the steam of opaque sediment about to flow out. Rocking the bottle will disturb the sediment. If you have handled the bottle gently throughout the procedure, there will be about an ounce left. Place the bottle on the table where the party may see it and pour the sample from the carafe.

### **SERVING TEMPERATURE**

Connoisseurs enjoy dry white wine in the 40 to 50 degree Fahrenheit range, most red wines between 62 and 68 degrees, light fruity reds with low tannis (Beaujolais, Valpolicella, etc.) at 55 to 60 degrees, sweet and sparkling wines ice cold. Some customers may ask for ice or for the white wine to be removed from the ice.

### **SPARKLING WINES**

Once you begin up wrapping the wire that surrounds the cork, keep one hand on the cork until it is safely out of the bottle. If the bottle is not cold, the cork could become a dangerous missile.

Do not pour sparkling wine so as to produce a head of foam. It is both an elegant touch and a considerate gesture to pick up and tilt the glass. Gently trickle

the liquid down the side of the glass so as to minimize the loss of effervescence. Do not dilute sparkling wine by icing the glass for a moment before filling. Do serve sparkling wine ice cold in a clean, dry, rinse free glass to preserve the sparkle.

### **FOLLOW UP**

Refresh glasses before they are empty. Do not continually refill the glass of a patron who is merely sipping. As you empty it, do not overturn the bottle into the ice bucket. The customer may do this if you have not noticed that they are ready for another bottle. Quickly ask the host if he would like another bottle of the same wine or something else.

### **SECOND BOTTLE**

Even if it is a bottle of the same wine, do pour the same into a fresh glass so that none of the first bottle's wine can interfere with that of the new bottle. After the sampling, remove the glass. If it is a new wine, all should be given a new glass.

### **REJECTED BOTTLE**

When the host deems the wine "bad" the most important first step is to defuse the situation. Do

not keep the host waiting while you fetch the resident wine expert. Immediately express your regrets that he does not like the wine and that you will take it back. Ask the host to describe the wine's flaw so a report can be made for the wine. A quick sample away from the table will back up the response. If the wine was not what the host expected, ask what type wine he was looking for. An example or two will help you guide them towards a more satisfactory selection.

### **SUGGESTIVE SELLING**

An age old sales maxim states simply: "You must ask for the order." In the pursuit of wine sales, the answer will be yes more often if the sale is approached correctly.

The first and most critical point is that the service staff should anticipate the sale the moment the customers enter the dining room. Customers are never asked if they want to see a menu. It is assumed they are there to eat. It can also be assumed they would enjoy wine with their meal. Create a wine environment and

involve customers immediately in the wine experience by offering them the wine list along with the menu. A positive attitude sells anything.

Training is a key to building the confidence necessary for a positive sales attitude, but there is also an inter play between service staff and the customers that must be considered.

A well trained staff member evaluates a table for selling opportunities. The server must impart enough wine knowledge to create confidence in his opinion. The server should not give too much information as the customer may be a wine sophisticate and want to exhibit his knowledge. When the customer knows very little about wines, the server must lead gently so as not to embarrass the customer at the table.

The server should permit the customer to make his own wine choice but always be ready with a suggestion. Often forgotten is the suggestion of an after dinner wine.

In many cases, the actual wording used in discussing

the wine order has a major effect on the sale. For example: "You do not want any wine with dinner tonight do you?" This is a negative question. "Have you decided on a red or white wine?" This could be considered to pushy by the server. The best question is phrased so that a positive answer is the easiest response. "Have you decided on a wine with your dinner?" This version asks if they plan on wine with the meal and which wine they would like. It also gives the patron a chance to say no without eliminating the wine purchase he might just need more time. If the guest is not clear about which wine to order the server can flow from initial questions to suggestive selling. "Would you like a bottle of Chardonnay with your lobster?" "Would you like a bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon with your steak?" "There are several wines that will compliment your Veal Oscar."

The key is knowledge of wines.

Suggestive selling is not limited to any particular course of the meal since there are wines available

and appropriate for any meal course. Whether the suggestions are made by a food/wine server or by a sommelier depends on a restaurant's style and procedure, the point to remember is that a positive, constructive, suggestive approach will sell wines.

White, rose', sparkling wines and light, dry sherry are popular before meal aperitifs. Champagne makes a meal special. The sale of dessert wines can be started when the patron orders the first selection. "Keep in mind we serve port after dinner."

A well balanced, reasonably price selection of bottles and house wines makes suggestive selling opportunities available throughout the meal. Imagine how your sales will grow if you serve dry white with hors d'oeuvres or the first course, a hearty red with the entrée, sweet dessert or sparkling after dinner and a cream sherry with coffee. In all cases, suggestive selling should include consideration of both food and price.

Suggestive selling also entails selling more wine than initially order. The key here is not just to get the wine in the glass, but to keep the wine glass filled. Suggesting the service of the wine with specific courses or letting the wine breath could also help to get the bottle open and on the table and therefore consumed. Suggest another bottle before pouring the last of the first bottle to allow time to chill or breath.

There are few hard and fast rules in anything, but flexibility is the key to suggestive selling. Sometimes it is best to suggest a bottle for a table of four and by the glass for a couple. A bottle of wine (750ml or 25.4oz) contains four 6oz glasses of wine. Generally each person will drink at least two glasses, more if served early. Half bottle, magnums and by the glass wine all contribute to the wine sale.