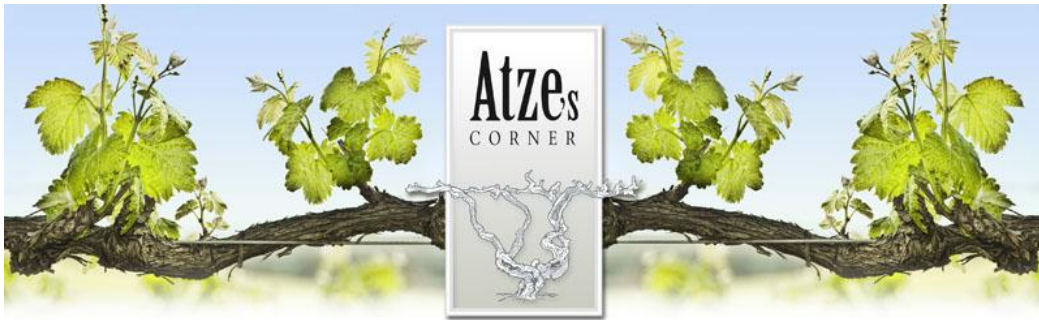


Experience Wine Report



Barossa Valley

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Types Of Wine – Know Your Reds And Whites

Red and white are only the beginning of the types of different wines. This initial classification of wine is based only on the color of the wine and has absolutely nothing to do with the types of grapes used to make the wines. It also has nothing to do with the different combinations of ingredients, the various vintage years, or even the quality of the wine, or the time the wine is aged.

Let's take a look at some of the different types of wines that may be familiar to you, and some you may not have been introduced to as yet.

Reds

Red wines are made with either a red or black variety of grape. Just as there are different types of citrus such as tangerines, grapefruit, clementine, or naval oranges, which all have different properties; grapes also have a wide variety of taste and color. These different grapes are then crushed and some even blended into different combinations in order to make the various types of red wine.

Shiraz (pictured left) also known as Syrah by European vintners, is a hearty red wine with intense, spicy undertones as well as an extremely long finish on the palate. This is the Barossa's most famous variety, with vines as old as 150 years the Barossa is also known as the spiritual home of the variety.

Mataro (Mourvedre) originates from Spain, a late ripening variety that likes a warm climate to assist the ripening. but often has a wild, gamey flavour, green spice with red fruit flavor, this variety is widely used in blends which integrate Grenache.

Grenache is widely planted in the Barossa Valley, generally produces a lighter style wine, often used in blends to soften out the more tannic Mataro.

Cabernet Sauvignon is probably the worlds' best known variety and is brimming with flavors of black currant when still young in age and rolls into more of an oak flavor due to the barrels in which it is aged.

Petit Verdot is a variety used in classic Bordeaux wines, a concentrated wine high in tannin and rich in flavor and colour, this is a great option to blend with varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz (in its leaner years).

Tempranillo is a relatively new variety to the Barossa Valley, it originates from Spain and has earthy character of tobacco and leather.

Petit Sirah makes a robust and sturdy wine, dark colour, bold tannin with good ageing potential.

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Graciano, another Spanish variety making its way onto the Australian wine stage, it has a lovely bright colour and richly perfumed nose, a great blending component we use in our Atze's Corner El Renegado.

Whites

Chardonnay and Pinot Gris alongside Sauvignon Blanc are undoubtedly the two most popular grape varieties when it comes to white wines. These are usually the go-to wines for most white wine drinkers. Chardonnay has a velvety citrus flavor, while Pinot Gris has a bit more acidic bite as a young wine.



Viognier, a fashionable grape of the early 2000's lovely aromatic perfume of Apricots and peach, and is often blended with Shiraz in small amounts to soften the wine and stabilize colour.

Sauvignon Blanc is another popular white wine, which is drier and less fruity than many of the other white wines, but still offers a fresh finish.

Semillon is an interesting white wine with more of a fig-like character. Semillon is sometimes blended with Sauvignon Blanc to help increase the fullness of the wine.

Riesling, which is originally from the regions of Germany, boasts a dry yet sweet flavor with a good bit of acid to round out this "pleases everyone" wine.

This is a short list of the wide variety of wines. Of course, you want to find a wine that you love and can always enjoy. However, it is good to experiment with different wines to develop your palate and explore new wines. A fun way to do this is to host or attend a wine tasting party. If you have a local wine shop, ask about wine tastings they host. Or, grab a friend and a new bottle of wine and imagine the fun and possibilities!

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Wine Pairings - What Wines Go With What Foods

The best way to figure out what wines go with what foods is to take the same approach that you take when planning a sit-down dinner. For instance, dinner courses typically include a light appetizer, followed by a fresh salad, then a filling main course and, finally, a rich dessert.

Your wine choice should follow the same progression that dinner courses have - light to dark. The more intense the flavor of the food, the more intense the wine should be to balance out the meal.

Since there is no wine and food pairing set in stone, evaluate each course separately and decide which wine you think would complement each portion of your meal.



Appetizer

Generally, a meal starts with a light and delicate appetizer. Since this first course is usually designed to get the palate perked up, a lighter wine with a crisp, somewhat dry flavor would go extremely well. As an example, consider the light brunch, where champagne is a perfect choice. A white wine, such as a Riesling, will do well as the citrus flavors usually complement most appetizers.

Salad

Let's assume that most salads served as a dinner course start with a bed of mixed greens. If that's the case, then it is normally wise to consider the type of dressing on the salad to determine the wine pairing.

Keeping in mind that the wine type should match the food, you would not pair a Sauvignon Blanc with a creamy dressing like a Ranch or a Thousand Island. The Sauvignon Blanc tilts more to the acidic side of the white wines, so a better match would be a Caesar or Greek-style salad; one with a little bite in the dressing. For the creamy salad dressings, err on the side of caution with a White Zinfandel or something similar.

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Main Course

Much like the salad, a creamy dish should have a creamy wine while an acidic dish should take the other end of the spectrum. Take most meat dishes for example, like beef or lamb. Since these meats are more of a fatty and flavorful dish, they pair well with big flavored wines such as the Cabernets and Shiraz. Pasta dishes with creamy sauce are perfect for the Chardonnay-like wines.

If there are any tendencies in wine pairing, it usually involves fish. More often than not, fish is served with a crisp white wine because of the way the dish is prepared. Many fish dishes use some sort of citrus in the cooking process, so it is only natural to have a lighter wine to help accentuate the flavors in the dish.

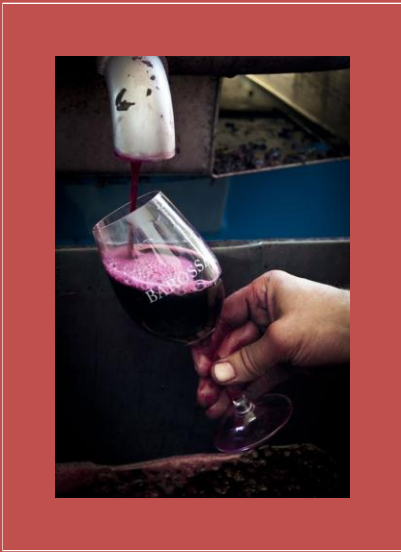
Dessert

Dessert is, without a doubt, the decadent portion of the meal. Typically, dessert time is the time to splurge on rich and creamy chocolates, and maybe sweet red strawberries. Since these flavors are so rich and deep, you would naturally want to pair them with rich and deep red wines, such as a Port. Sipping on a strong red wine helps to balance out the richness of the dessert without masking any of the flavors of the dish.

Of course, there is no pairing that is forbidden, only recommendations. The generally accepted rule is to drink what you like. If you like white wine, by all means pair your favorite white wine with your favorite steak. If you prefer to sip a dark red wine, go ahead and have it with your salad. You're not breaking any laws. Wine pairing is not a science, but instead a matter of taste. Enjoy sampling different wines with your friends and discover your own unique wine pairing favorites!

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How the style of A wine glass affects taste

As odd as this may seem, it's true that you could drink the same wine out of three different glasses and have three different taste experiences. There are as many different wine glasses as there are wines, but this does not mean that you will need to spend thousands of dollars on refined stemware in order to get the full experience out of every bottle of wine. Let's take a look at what determines a proper wine glass.

Components

There are three main components of any standard wine glass: base, stem, and bowl.

Base - The base, a flat round piece at the bottom of the bowl, keeps your wine glass standing upright. The shape of the base may vary slightly, but the purpose remains the same. It is simply a way to connect the stem to the bowl and to keep the bowl upright. Some wine glasses may have a base that is thicker than the rest of the glass. This adds some nice weight to the feel of the wine glass, although there are some who prefer a lighter-than-air feel. It's all a matter of preference as the base still only functions as a support piece and has little to do with the quality of the wine drinking experience.

Stem - The stem gives you a way to hold your glass, but more importantly it allows you to keep your hands from warming the wine. Also, the stem keeps fingerprints from smudging the bowl, which would reduce the visual stimulus of the wine. Today, you'll find a streamlined version of wine glasses that are stemless. There are people who love them, and people who regard these popular wine glasses as an affront to serious wine appreciation. Opinions vary widely about the stemless glasses. However, in wine drinking countries like Italy, you'll often see all sorts of wines served in what looks like jelly jars; stemless, indeed. This is often considered very fun and very continental! Stemless wine glasses have also gained in popularity as they are more resistant to the occasional tipping and spilling at large gatherings.

Bowl - The bowl is where you will see the most variation in shape and size. Every bowl has the same general function, holding the wine, but the variations allow more or less air into the wine to further develop the flavors. All wine glass bowls have roughly the same shape; wider bottom, tapering upward. The ratio of wide to narrow determines which wine would fare better in which shape. The general "wider bottom, tapered top" shape allows the wine's aroma to be captured and delivered straight to your nose and palate.

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Red Wine Glass

Glasses designed for red wines are usually much more round at the bottom, tapering only slightly to the top, giving them a wider opening, which invites you to get your nose into the glass and breathe in all of those rich red flavors. The full bodied wines, such as Merlots and Ports usually have a taller glass, which directs the wine straight to the back of the palate where the taste buds can get the most out of the flavor.

White Wine Glass

White wine glasses are more of a bell shape, which allow the wine to maintain a cooler temperature. The curvature at the top of the bell shape helps the wine to contact the sides of the tongue where the sweet sensation resides. The wider mouth of the glass also allows more air in to push the crisp, bold flavors to the surface of the wine.



Sparkling Wine and Champagne Flute

The only variation in white wine glasses is the flute shape for Sparkling Wine and Champagne, which is tall and narrow. This shape works well as it holds the carbonation in. This style of wine glass also keeps the wine at the back of the palate for optimal taste.

How To Choose Your Wine Glasses

When all is said and done, unless you plan to become a wine connoisseur, you really only need one or two nice wine glasses. Choose a larger, more open bowl for your red wines and a more slender bell-shaped glass for your white wines. The most important thing to look for in any wine glass is good, solid construction; something that feels good in your hand and looks clear and clean.

Whether you choose stemmed glasses, or stemless glasses, lift up the glass, feel the weight, and consider the shape. If the glass is pleasing to touch and to see, you have chosen the right wine glass for you!

[GLASSES DESIGNED FOR RED WINES ARE USUALLY MUCH MORE ROUND AT THE BOTTOM, TAPERING ONLY SLIGHTLY TO THE TOP, GIVING THEM A WIDER OPENING, WHICH INVITES YOU TO GET YOUR NOSE INTO THE GLASS AND BREATHE IN ALL OF THOSE RICH RED FLAVORS..]

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Proper Wine Storage Temperature and Humidity - Why It Matters

Temperature and humidity are two of the most overlooked aspects of wine tasting. When wine is not kept within the best temperature and humidity ranges, wine may age prematurely or lose aromas which can damage the wine. Proper storage of wine helps to ensure the contents will be served in their prime state. Unfortunately, there are a large number of wine collections damaged each year due to uneven temperature and humidity when being stored. Here is a basic guideline to wine storage and why temperature and humidity matter.

Proper Temperature

Temperatures that are too warm, around 18 degrees Celsius, cause the cork to start drying out, at the same time causing the fruit in the wine to age prematurely. When the cork dries out, air and humidity begin to seep into the wine, resulting in discoloration and either a sour or bitter taste.

Storing wines in areas that are too cool, below 7 degrees Celsius, can slow down the maturation of the wine, leaving strong tannins and an extremely acidic bite. Storing wine in these cool temperatures will cause an unbalanced product.



Proper Humidity

Humidity plays a big part in wine taste. Just like temperature, if the humidity is too high or too low, the wine can become damaged and unpalatable. Ideal humidity for storing wine to maintain optimal taste is between 60 and 70 percent relative humidity. If the humidity is any higher, mold can actually start to form inside the bottle. Too dry of a climate can dry out the cork, exposing the wine to air, releasing the aromas, and unsettling the fermentation process.

Temperature and Taste

We know that a warm, humid climate will help age wine. We know that a cool, dry climate will keep the wine from aging. Now, we are armed with the most important tool a wine expert can have. Being able to work with the age of wine, you begin to understand how to make a good wine even better.

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For wines that need to age, storing them at a slightly warmer temperature will speed up their aging process so that you may enjoy them sooner. The biggest trick is to gradually increase the temperature over a few days so as not to shock the wine. Giving the wine time to slowly raise its internal temperature will allow the enzymes to break down the sugars and allow the wine to become more complex. Having too high of a temperature, too quickly will not allow the wine to develop slowly, which develops the taste properly.

Delaying or slowing a wine's aging process is not required quite as often as speeding up a wine's development. However, once a bottle is opened, holding back further developing is a good idea. Slowing the aging process of an opened bottle of wine is commonly done by storing the open wine in the refrigerator. Freezing wine is not recommended as the ice crystals can alter the flavor of the wine as well as introduce water causing dilution of the wine.

How Should I Store My Wine?

Generally speaking, storing wines between 10 and 16 degrees Celsius with a relative humidity around 50 percent is the best way to preserve wine taste and keep the integrity of the wine intact.

If the aging process needs to be slowed down or sped up, adjusting the temperature gradually will allow you to have a slight effect on aging the wine. For opened bottles, storage in the refrigerator is recommended, but freezing is not advisable.

Storing your wine at the proper temperature and humidity will ensure that your next wine tasting will give you the results you expect – and appreciate!

If you are lucky enough to have one the ideal place to store your wine would be an underground cellar, wine storage cabinets are also widely available, costing anywhere from around \$200 to over \$5,000 and with storage capacity from 12 bottles and up to 500 are also a good option.



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Proper Wine Tasting Techniques

If you asked ten people about their techniques of tasting wine, you would probably get as many different answers. Why? Many people who taste wine don't really think about the uniformity and consistency that go into tasting wines.

Why is this 'technique repetition' so vital for tasting wines? Each wine must be judged equally. If there are different techniques, each wine will not get equal footing on which to judge.

While there are no set rules of order for tasting wine, there are a few techniques to consider that will make the tasting more enjoyable. The most important thing to remember is be consistent. If you are consistent, then all of the wines will have their unique tastes come through equitably.



Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes

Drinking wine starts with the eyes. The first thing to do in a wine tasting is to assess the way the wine looks. Does the wine look good for its age? When a wine reaches its full potential, the first thing you'll notice is its colour. As wine ages, the color becomes more intense. For instance, a young Pinot Grigio will have a lighter yellow, almost clear color. As it ages in the bottle, the color will develop into more of a warmer, golden color.

When looking at the wine, you want to make sure the color looks right for the age. This technique takes a bit of practice. The more you taste wine, the better you will become at knowing what colour a wine should be at each stage of the aging process. So, begin by drinking only with thine eyes.

Swirl and Sniff

Swirling and sniffing the wine is a very important technique in tasting a wine. Not surprising since most of us know that when eating food, about 50% of the taste comes from the smell that travels through your nose. Consider how food loses some of its appeal when you have a stuffy nose. The same holds true for wine. Half of the flavor of the wine comes from the aroma.

Swirling the wine allows the aromatics to come out of the wine and oxygen to further develop the wine, similar to the act of decanting. Once you have swirled the wine, take a slow, soft sniff with your nose. Many people barely sniff because the sugar and alcohol catch them off guard, stinging the nostrils.

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The trick to a proper sniff is to put your nose completely into the glass, then start breathing in slowly, so the sugar and alcohol smells do not catch you unaware. Once you are past the sugar and alcohol, finish with a deep breath. Try to identify aromas that are filling your nostrils.

Sip or Spit

If you taste many different wines, spitting may be your preference simply because, in the end, you want to be able to enjoy the wines you purchase later! Sipping that many wines may be a bit more alcohol than most people can tolerate. However, spitting may not be an option at some wine tasting events. It all depends on the set up. If that's the case, ask for very small portions of each wine sample, or pass on several varieties and sip fewer samples.

Whether sipping or spitting, try to identify the flavors you taste while the wine is in your mouth and on your tongue. This is referred to as the mid-palate. This tasting technique is based upon the different taste regions of your tongue.

The Finish

When you finish tasting the wine by either swallowing or spitting, also known as the finish, you get yet another part of the taste. Again, try to analyze what tastes are coming through.

Reflect, Record, Repeat

Give some thought to your experience sipping the various samples of wine. Did one particular wine make you think about sitting by the pool, nibbling on fruit while another wine put you in the mood for a big, Italian meal?

Jot these ideas down in a wine tasting journal to help you recall the different wines you've tried. Many seasoned wine tasters include a label in their journal so they can quickly recall which wine to enjoy with which meal or occasion.

Practice makes perfect. This does not mean you must go out and buy thirty bottles of wine and try them all in one night. Gradually taste different varieties of wines at different wine tasting events and you'll get a well-rounded education.

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Party Ideas

Before you know it, you'll be identifying wines that suit every occasion – and enjoying them more than ever! Cheeses, Chocolates and Other Wine Tasting Treats

If you are having a wine tasting party, or even just a sunny afternoon, relaxing with friends by the pool, appetizers served with a suitable wine can be a real hit.

When serving several wines at a gathering, having the proper snacks will help cleanse the palate between different wines. And, serving the proper appetizers can turn a good tasting wine into a great tasting wine.

Here are some basics for proper appetizers to serve with wine, as well as a few ideas for quick and easy recipes.

The Basics

- ❑ **Cheese** – A typical accompaniment at wine tasting parties, cheese and wine go together like milk and cookies. The oils and flavors from the cheeses will help to cut some of the acidity of the wine while diluting the aftertaste of the wine. Having a wide variety of cheeses available will make any wine tasting party a great success. It's great fun trying to pair different dairy flavors with favorite wines. Stay away from the 'stinky' variety of cheeses as they will fill the air with their special 'perfume' and do not mix well with any wine. The aroma is much better suited for very strong beer.
- ❑ **Crackers** – A staple with many cheeses, crackers help to cleanse the palate while absorbing some of the alcohol from the back of the throat and cheeks. A tip with crackers is to keep it simple. Crackers with strong flavors may actually alter the taste of wines because they are so overpowering. Look for lightly salted, simple crackers that let the flavors of the cheese and wine come through. And, heaven forbid, do not include any cheese-flavored crackers. That just defeats the purpose.
- ❑ **Nuts** – An assortment of different nuts is a perfect accompaniment to wine. A good assortment of nuts goes well with cheese, as well as wines. Macadamia nuts, walnuts, and almonds are great options for light, yet rich nuts to serve at a wine tasting party. You can choose to buy unroasted nuts and toast them in a skillet or cookie sheet and sprinkle with a light dusting of salt.



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- ❑ **Dried Fruit** – Since dried fruit usually have a lighter taste and a more solid texture than fresh fruit, a simple dried fruit selection can actually help to play out the fruit tastes in the wine. Dried strawberries, cherries, blueberries, cranberries, and apricots make great additions to a wine tasting party.
- ❑ **Cured Olives** – We see more and more of these treats at prestigious parties and modern restaurants during wine tastings. The salty flavor compliments many wines, while the briny solution allows the mouth to salivate, thus recovering from some of the drier wines. Kalamata olives are an excellent choice that many people are familiar with. Be sure to provide bowls for the olive pits.
- ❑ **Chocolates** – Rich red wine and rich dark chocolates go hand in hand. Of all the flavor combinations, this is the one that makes people 'purr.' Choose very good chocolate, rich in cocoa, which usually means a bit darker. You don't have to choose bitter chocolate. Look for somewhat darker, very smooth, individual chocolates that are free of fillings and nuts; you don't want anything to distract from the chocolate-wine combination. Simple, solid, smooth chocolates that melt in your mouth will be the perfect accompaniment to most any red wine.

If you want something other than basic appetizers, here are a few simple dishes you can prepare to expand your menu.

Bruschetta is a great snack for wine tasting because it combines the soaking ability of the bread along with the oily cheese and even some tomato and basil to help cut the acidity in the wines.

Bleu Cheese & Honey Dip combines Bleu Cheese with a touch of honey, to give you a delightful salty and sweet combination. To add an unexpected flavor 'oomph' to this cracker dip, add a very small amount of White Truffle Oil to the honey before mixing in the bleu cheese. This deeply rich flavor combination will definitely enhance your wine tasting.

Now you know the basics for any wine tasting event, plus a few special treats to set your party apart from the others. Choose your foods as carefully as you choose your wine and your guests will be raving – and coming back for more!

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Aging a Bottle Of Wine – What Does This Mean Today

The old adage “all wine improves with age” is only partially true. Only a few varieties of wines actually get significantly better with age. Only about 10% of red wines and 5% of white wines taste better after aging five years as opposed to aging one year.

Most wines these days are specially crafted to be enjoyed shortly after bottling. According to Master of Wine Jancis Robinson, it is more typical now that wine is being consumed past its prime rather than while it's too young.

In general, many wines start to lose a majority of their fruitiness and appeal after being bottled for only six months. The way it happens is wines with a lower pH, such as Pinot Noir, have the greatest ability to get better with age. A lower pH is usually achieved in red wine by the addition of tannins, thus increasing the amount of phenolics in the wine. White wines that do well with age are those that have a high acidity level. The phenols and acid found in these wines act as a preservative and start to break down and mellow out over time.



Today, many wine makers are starting to bottle wines when they feel the wine is at the peak of flavor. This is in part due to the fact that wine makers are aware that consumers have become a 'microwave society' - meaning consumers don't want to buy a bottle of wine and have to wait to consume it until it ages in the cellar. We want to buy a bottle of wine and uncork it that night.

White Wine

When white wine is made, the producer tried to keep the skin contact to a minimum. Having contact produces phenols and tannins in the wine and keeping the contact down means the wine will have significantly less phenolic compounds. The only time these phenols are introduced is when the wine is fermented in oak barrels or is left to age in the oak barrels. The contact with the wood over an extended period of time will impart a small amount of phenols into the wine, but not enough to make aging after the wine is bottled worthwhile. The same goes for rose wines, thus reducing their aging potential.

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Red Wine

Unlike white wines, reds have a very high percentage of skin contact when making the wine and are usually filled with tannins. As the red wine ages, the harsh taste of tannin slowly gives way to a softer, more full-bodied wine. This can be noted in the color change, from a deep red, almost black, to a lighter red as it ages. Once the wine is past its prime, the color turns to a brownish hue.



As the tannins start to give up some of their bitterness, sediment starts to form on the bottom of the bottle. The presence of this sediment usually indicates a mature red wine, but is separated out by decanting to avoid the bitter taste. Vintage Ports and other bottle-aged Ports and even some Sherries will benefit from some additional aging, but many other red wines start to diminish after three to five years.

As wines start to age, their floral bouquets will start to become more prominent, but today most of this aging is done before the wines are ever bottled, thus allowing us to go to the store, pick up a bottle and enjoy it at its peak that evening.
The World of Wine Tasting Terminology

The wine tasting world is full of unusual words, like tannin, maderized, ponderous and even cloying. No matter how strange the words seem to you, in order to effectively communicate within a group of wine tasters, you should have a basic understanding of the terminology.

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Let's take a look at some of the words used in the wine tasting world. Some you may know, others may seem strange to you, but keep your mind open as some of the descriptors might just surprise you.

- ❑ **Acidity** – Used to describe a tart or sour taste when the overall acidity in a wine is extremely high. Usual acid content of either lactic acid, citric acid or malic acid should be around 0.6 and 0.7 percent of the total volume. Anything above this is usually referred to as “acidic.”
- ❑ **Ascendence** – This term is used to describe the vinegar-like taste in the mouth, with a slight twinge upon the nose. This is due to the presence of acetic acid and ethyl acetate.
- ❑ **Austere** – This is another way to describe the dry, acidic wines that are shallow and hollow in body and flavor. This word is also used to describe a wine that is made with young grapes, grown in cooler climates, giving the wine a sharp pinch on the inside of the cheeks.
- ❑ **Big** – This term is used to describe the rich, full flavor of a wine; the overall body and taste of a wine. Red wines are usually big in tannin, while white wines usually have a higher alcohol content. Of course, “big” is supposed to be within a context, for example some wines are said to be more elegant than big.
- ❑ **Buttery** – A creamy texture, often found in extremely good white wines, such as Chardonnay. This is a full mouth, thick feeling as the wine is in the palate area.
- ❑ **Finish** – The aftertaste, or amount of time the flavors linger in your mouth. A exceptional finish will last anywhere from 15 to 40 seconds. Anything less than this is considered standard, or if under 8 seconds, a poor finish.
- ❑ **Flinty** – Similar to mineral, flinty literally means rock-like taste. This is a smoky, dark taste that may be slightly hidden behind the floral bouquets of the wine, said to be similar to if you actually licked a flint rock.
- ❑ **Green** – This term refers to a wine made with under-ripe fruits. It can also be significant in dealing with colors, such as Rieslings, which have a greenish color indicating a youthful wine.
- ❑ **Hollow** – Wines have dimensions. A hollow wine is one that is missing a mid-palate taste. These wines usually have a strong attack and finish, but are lacking in flavor while in the mouth and on the tongue.
- ❑ **Nose** – The nose of the wine is the aroma produced. A balanced nose is one which does not strike the taster as having too much of any one component.

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- ❑ **Tannin** – This is the pucker factor of wines. An astringent taste, naturally occurring in grape skins, seeds and stems. It is responsible for the bitter component in wines and acts as a preservative to aid in proper aging of the wine.

Wine terminology is a fun world to live in for wine tasters, as well as plain old wine enthusiasts. It is full of descriptors ranging from chalky to burnt rubber. If you rub elbows with any group of wine tasters long enough, you will surely become familiar with these terms and even enjoy throwing a few terms out yourself!

Most of all enjoy wine for what it is, a product of the earth and the vine, relax with a glass of wine, be it a wine familiar to you or a new style or variety, include your friends and enjoy the moment.

Cheers!!



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