

Wines



Demystified

Devesh Agarwal

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Wine, A Definition

The fermented juice of the grape genus *Vitis*. One species, *Vitis vinifera* (often erroneously called the European grape), is used almost exclusively. Beverages produced from *V. labrusca*, the native American grape, and from other grape species are also considered wines. When other fruits are fermented to produce a kind of wine, the name of the fruit is included, as in the terms peach wine and blackberry wine.

History of Wine, The spread of viticulture

Vitis vinifera was being cultivated in the Middle East by 4000 BC, or probably earlier. Egyptian records dating from 2500 BC refer to the use of grapes for wine making, and numerous Old Testament references to wine indicate the early origin and significance of the industry in the Middle East. The Greeks carried on an active wine trade and planted grapes in their colonies from Spain till India. The Romans carried grape growing into the valleys of the Rhine and Moselle (which became the great regions of Germany and Alsace), the Danube (in modern-day Romania, former Yugoslavian countries, Hungary, and Austria), and the Rhône, Saône, Garonne, Loire, and Marne (which define the great French regions of Rhône, Burgundy, Bordeaux, Loire, and Champagne, respectively). The role of wine in the Christian mass helped maintain the industry after the fall of the Roman Empire, and monastic orders preserved and developed many of the highly regarded wine-producing areas in Europe.

The colonisation of the Americas by the Europeans brought their grape culture and wine making. Spanish missionaries took viticulture to Chile and Argentina in the mid-16th century and to lower California in the 18th. With the flood of European immigration in the 19th and early 20th centuries, modern industries, based on imported *V. vinifera* grapes, were developed. The prime wine-growing regions of South America were established in the foothills of the Andes. In California, the centre of viticulture shifted from the southern missions to the Central Valley and the northern counties of Sonoma, Napa, and Mendocino.

British settlers planted European vines in Australia and New Zealand in the early 19th century, and Dutch settlers took grapes from the Rhine region to South Africa as early as 1654.

The introduction of the eastern American root louse, *phylloxera*, seriously threatened wine industries around the world between 1870 and 1900, destroying vineyards almost everywhere that *V. vinifera* was planted but especially in Europe and parts of Australia and California. To combat this parasite, *V. vinifera* scions (detached shoots including buds) were grafted to species native to the eastern United States, which proved almost completely resistant to *phylloxera*. After the vineyards recovered, European governments protected the reputations of the great regions by enacting laws that allotted regional names and quality rankings only to those wines produced in specific regions under strictly regulated procedures. Today, newer wine-producing countries have passed similar regulations.

The Wine Timeline

Evidence of wine production dates back as far as 6000 BC. The early Mesopotamians were the first known people to cultivate grapes. Since these civilizations developed around grain-growing areas, wine was only available to a small minority of citizens.

The people of Ancient Egypt recorded the harvest of grapes on stone tablets and the walls of their tombs.

Wine in Ancient Greece



The wines of ancient Greece were richly praised and immortalized by her poets, historians and artists. Like the Egyptians, the Greeks considered wine a

privilege of the upper classes and it was not consumed by ordinary citizens. Dionysus was the Greek deity of wine.

The Greeks established trade in wine with the Middle East and Egypt. Each island has its own particular flavour with the islands of Chios and Lesbos said to have produced the best of all Greek wines. Today, these wines would be considered as too sweet. The Greeks also flavoured their wine with seawater and spices.

Romans and Their Wines



The Romans placed great importance on wine. At its peak, the Roman Empire, spread wine production across most of Europe. France, Spain, Italy and even parts of Britain.

Wine also became available to the masses during this time. Cities like Pompeii built bars on almost every street to promote wine drinking.

Poorer classes drank vinegar mixed with water, which was called *Posca*.

The Dark Ages

After the fall of the Roman Empire the Emperor Charlemagne developed rules for better hygiene in wine production, dictating that grapes should not be stomped by foot or stored in animal skins.



During the Dark Ages wine making was kept alive mainly through the efforts of Christian monks. The monasteries developed some of the finest vineyards in Europe as Christianity spread.

Due to a lack of reliable drinking water wine was a staple of the diet. People also began to favour stronger, heavier wines instead of their sweeter Roman predecessors. England began to import

wine from Germany and Portugal once they lost Bordeaux to the French in the 14th century.

The New Challenges for Wine

The 17th century saw a brief decline of the wine industry. Apart from politics and religious propaganda wine faced competition from of a readily available supply of clean drinking water and others like :

- distilled spirits such as gin and brandy
- beer and ale
- coffee (Viennese coffee houses were "chic")
- tea
- champagne

The invention of better glass making methods, corks and accessories, and wine making methods greatly aided wine through this time. Despite



turbulent relations with the British, the French wine industry flourished especially wines of Bordeaux. Merchants from Holland, Germany, Ireland and Scandinavia traded coffee and other "in-demand" goods for wine.

Wine in Today's World

Improvements in science allow processes that were once impossible. For example, refrigeration, which allowed control of the fermentation process and enabled high quality wines to be produced in hot climates. Improvements in transport allows for a global trade in wine now. Mechanisation in the agricultural sector benefits vineyards as well. The wine maker today, has total physical control over every stage of wine making.

These benefits also have led to the temptation to produce more wine at the expense of quality. The challenge of today is to produce wine for global palates without losing the local character.

The wide ranging benefits of wine, health and otherwise, promises much to all the stakeholders.

The Basics of Making Wine

The Vineyard and what affects the Vine and ultimately the Wine

There are three main factors that drastically affect the flavour of the grape and ultimately, the wine that is made:

- Terroir
- Vine growing management
- Winemaking



Terroir (*Terro-wah*) is the one factor which cannot be readily altered, and many traditional wine growing areas of the world, use the terroir as a selling point. The following factors determine terroir :

- Climate, as measured by day and night temperatures, and rainfall
- The physical and chemical characteristics of the soil
- Amount of sunlight and its intensity
- Topography (altitude, slope, etc.)
- Soil water relations

Vine growing management: These are specific practices that the grower controls, which have a directly impact the flavour of the grapes and the resultant wine that is produced.

- **Canopy size** : Depending on the variety of grape and weather conditions, the grower decides how many leaves to leave on the vine. Too much shade and grapes could produce vegetal flavours. Too much sun and the grapes can burn and produce ‘burnt out’ aromas.
- **Irrigation** : The amount of water the vine is given at key stages in the growing season drastically affects the aromas. Too much water and the grapes are too diluted, too little and the fruit starves and the flavours suffer.

- **Type of grape planted (the varietal)** : Through technological advances, growers determine the specific varietals, clones, and rootstocks that are optimal for any given site. Not all grape varieties thrive in any given location. A root louse call *Phylloxera*, which devastated the French wine industry by destroying much of the vines in France, causes havoc with wine growers. It was discovered during the late 19th century that American vine species are resistant to phylloxera. It is now common practice in most wine regions to graft and plant European varietals on American rootstocks.
- **Age of the vine** : The maturity of the grape vine affects crop yields and its flavour profile. A vine will not begin producing wine-worthy fruit, until its third year. As a vine ages, the grape’s flavours normally become more complex, however, as the vine become very old they also produce lower yields.
- **Crop yields** : The amount of grape clusters that are permitted to reach maturity on any given vine has a direct correlation to flavour concentration. Too many grapes and flavour is diluted, too few and the cost becomes too high for economic wine production. Sometimes, mother nature helps in controlling crop yields thanks to various extreme weather.
- **Layout of the vineyard** : This includes vine spacing, trellising, and row direction. The number of vines planted per acre, the way the vines are pruned, the direction of the row and resultant sun exposure all affect the grapes.



Making White Wine

A general approach

It is important to remember each wine maker follows their own specific process. Below is a general process for a typical New world white wine which uses oak wood *barrel fermentation*.

White grapes (Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Chenin Blanc etc.) are hand harvested,



then hand sorted to discard defects. Then whole clusters are gently transferred directly to a *press*. The juice drips into a pan at the bottom of the press and is then pumped into a stainless steel, temperature controlled settling tank.

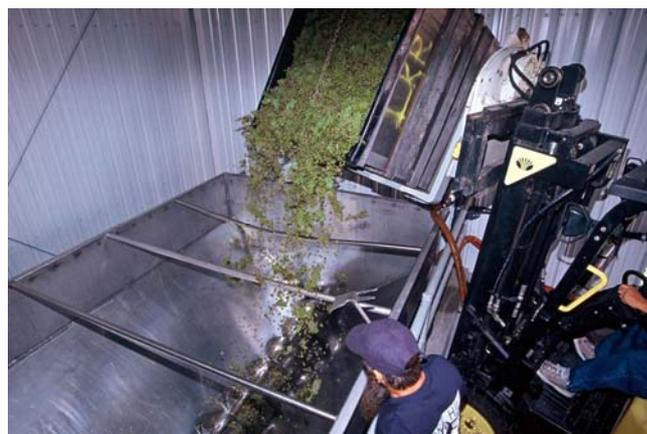
The juice is chilled to 10°C / 50°F overnight. The clear juice is pumped off the settlings (*lees*) into another stainless steel tank (*racking*), and Sulphur Dioxide and yeast nutrients are added.

The juice is immediately pumped into oak barrels for fermentation. Some lots are *inoculated* with *yeast*, and others are allowed to ferment with naturally occurring yeast which lends additional complexity and seamlessness.



When the barrels have finished fermentation (7-21 days) they are topped. The yeast sediment (*lees*) is stirred every month (for Chardonnay only) and one month before bottling, stirring stops. Stirring the *lees* adds silkiness

and flavour complexity to the wine. *Barrel Fermented Wines* are aged in oak barrels from 4 to 16 months.



Typically, cooler climate Chardonnays have very high acidity levels. In these case, typically, Chardonnay is encouraged to undergo a second fermentation, called *malolactic*; this secondary fermentation is a conversion of malic acid to lactic acid. The *malolactic* treatment softens the wine and adds buttery aromas. Warmer climate Chardonnays, Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc and Semillon are not subjected to *malolactic* treatment

Barrels are *racked* (clear wine separated from *lees*) with pressure from an inert gas (typically



nitrogen), for gentle handling and reduction of exposure to oxygen and hence aeration, and the wine is blended into stainless steel tanks.

Some wines are *fined* with *bentonite* to remove excess proteins, and *isinglass* to remove excess tannins and sculpt the mouth-feel. Some wines are *filtered* for clarification just prior to bottling. While *filtering* produces a clear wine, it also strips some of the structure of the wine.

Making Red Wine

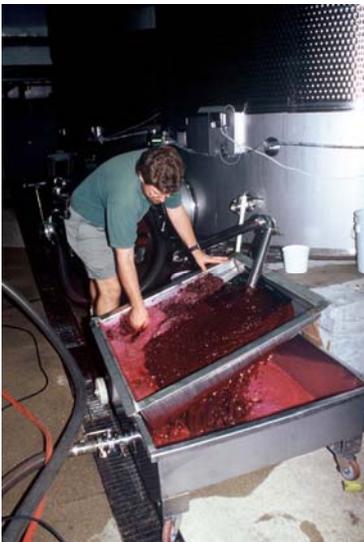
A general approach

It is important to remember each wine maker follows their own specific process. Below is a general process for a typical New world red wine which uses oak wood barrel fermentation.



Red grapes (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Shiraz, Cabernet Franc, Zinfandel, Pinot Noir, Malbec) are hand harvested, then hand sorted to discard defects. The clusters are then gently de-stemmed without crushing and the *must* put into stainless steel tanks.

When naturally occurring yeasts have begun to ferment the must, nutrients are added during the first *pump-over*. Rather than inoculating with an introduced yeast, using the wild yeast results in added complexity and seamlessness in the wine.



Fermentation may last from 5 to 15 days. After fermentation finishes, the wine is left on the skins, often for an additional 30 days of extended *maceration*, to allow softening of the *tannins* which have been extracted from the skins.

The *free-run* wine is separated from the skins. The skins, which are still quite moist, are shovelled into bins and placed into a pneumatic press. The wine is monitored coming from the press and only wine without aggressive tannins is included with the *free-run*, making it the most supple and concentrated of all the lots. The wine is put into oak barrels where it completes the second fermentation called *malolactic* fermentation. The *malolactic* fermentation softens the wine. Wines are usually

aged in wooden containers made of oak, allowing oxygen to enter and water and alcohol to escape.

Oak is used extensively in red wine making



because it adds distinctive flavours such as vanilla and nutmeg. Humidity affects the kind of constituents that escape, with alcohol becoming more concentrated in wine stored under conditions of low humidity and weakening with high humidity. As the water and alcohol are

released, volume decreases, leaving headspace, or *ullage*, that is made up by the addition of more of the same wine from another container.

Racking of red wines occurs every three months. In the first year the wine is aerated during *racking* to soften the tannins. In the second year in the cellar the wine is not usually aerated during racking. Less tannic *varietals* such as Pinot Noir and Zinfandel are neither racked nor aerated, and the Pinot Noir is bottled after nine months. Blending of various varietals is also made during this time. In their second year the wines are *fined* with fresh egg whites, if necessary, to remove excess tannins. Good wines are aged up to 24



months in oak barrels, after which the wines are *racked* for a final time and bottled. Most red wines are not *filtered* as filtration normally strips the wine of some structure and complexity.

White Wines

Popular Varieties and Styles



Sauvignon Blanc (Soh-veen-yohn-blanc) – This grape is intensely aromatic and acidic. Originally from the Loire valley, in France, it is now grown in many parts of the world including India (Bangalore and Nashik). The

Marlborough region of New Zealand is famous for its Sauvignon Blanc. Grover and Sula have the best offerings in India. It has a classic grassy and herbaceous nose, and depending on the growing region and winemaking techniques it can add a range of aromas from flinty and green, to tropical scents of peach, mango, passion fruit, fresh hay and melons.



Chardonnay (Shar-do-nay) – Grown in most cooler parts of the wine growing world, this is the grape of the famous whites of Burgundy. Due to the hot climate it is not grown extensively in India. Rich is

the word that best both describes chardonnay and explains its popularity. Its aroma is distinct, yet delicate, difficult to characterize, easier to recognize. It often smells like apples, lemons, peaches or tropical fruits. This delicacy makes it extremely versatile and it readily absorbs external flavours from other varietals blended or vinification methods. In the *Chablis* region of France, it is the only grape permitted and it renders a "crisp, flinty" wine. In *Meursault* it takes on a lush, ripe, "fleshy", "buttery" quality. In sparkling wines and French Champagne, it is the major varietal used.

Chenin Blanc (Shay-nayn-blanc) – This grape is one of the most versatile of all wine grape



varieties. The grape used in the famous French *Vouvray*. Crisp, dry table wines, light sparkling wines, long-lived, unctuous, nectar-like dessert wines, and even brandy are produced using chenin blanc.

In India chenin blanc is grown in the Nashik Area with Sula, Renaissance, and Vinsura having good wines. No matter the style, floral, honeyed character, along with zesty acidity are the sensory trademarks of well-made Chenin Blanc.



Riesling (REES-ling) – This grape of originally from Alsace in France is now synonymous with Germany. Riesling wines have a brilliant sweet/acid balance ranging from bone dry to intensely

sweet. Riesling's varietal characteristics are very distinctive; delicate, perfumed, floral, and fruity with fresh apple and apricot scents. Australia and Canada are also famous for their Rieslings.



Viognier (Wee-yo-nee-yaih) – The main attraction of Viognier is its powerful, rich, and complex aroma that often seems like overripe apricots mixed with orange blossoms or acacia. With a distinctive and sweet aroma – flavour,

viognier is normally made in a dry style and will appeal more to the typical Chardonnay drinker. The distinctive Viognier perfume holds up even when blended with a large portion of other grapes. In India, Grover offers a nice Viognier-Clairette blend, grown in Bangalore.

Other major white wine varietals

Semillon used to make the famous desert wines in *Sauternes*. Now grown extensively in Chile and the Hunter Valley of Australia. It has a full body and low acidity, even "fat" at times. It is normally blended with Sauvignon Blanc or Chardonnay, though, Australia offers it as a varietal.

Gewürztraminer is probably the world's most intensely aromatic wine varietals. Bursting with flavours of spice, lychees and rose petals, it offers one of the best pairings with spicy food – Indian, Thai, Mexican or Sichuan. Apart from Alsace, Germany and Northern Italy, it is also grown in Washington and Oregon, USA and New Zealand.

Red Wines

Popular Varieties and Styles



Cabernet Sauvignon (cab-er-NAY-soh-vee-NYOHN) – Undoubtedly the king of red wine varieties, and a major component of Bordeaux reds. “Cabs” are capable of being the most tannic and long lived of

the reds. Complex and supple, aromas of concentrated blackberry and cassis are most commonly found. One of the most planted wine varieties in the world. Grown by all the major wine producers in India, who normally blend it with the Shiraz (also called Syrah).



Shiraz (shi-RAZ) – Known as Syrah in Europe and USA, Shiraz is heavily pigmented, tannic, and alcoholic. Normally imparts a spicy character of pepper and anise with touches of lavender and musk, but it can

be fruit driven, with aromas of blackberry, or wild with aromas of rosemary and thyme. Almost all wineries in India produce a Shiraz, and offer it as 100% varietal like Sula Dindori or as a Cabernet-Shiraz blend like the Grover’s La Reserve. Also offered as a “Rosè” (Ro-Zay), a light pink wine.



Zinfandel (ZIN-fan-dell) – A densely pigmented grape that frequently has high alcohol and highly extracted fruit flavours. Zinfandel is a heady, full-bodied red with ripe raspberry fruit accentuated by pepper and

spice. When done right, it is often described as dusky, brooding, briary, brambly, exotic, brawny, exuberant, or opulent. The Nashik region of India is growing Zinfandel and we can expect decent wines by 2008 as the vines reach maturity.



Sangiovese (SAN-joe-vay-say) – Sangiovese is to *Chianti* (Key-ANH-tee) as cabernet sauvignon is to Bordeaux (Bore-doh). Sangiovese is fruity, with moderate to high acidity and a medium-body

ranging from firm and elegant to assertive and robust. The aroma is not as assertive and easily identifiable as cabernet sauvignon, but can have a strawberry, blueberry, faintly floral, violet or plummy character.



Merlot (mehr-LO) – Another famous Bordeaux red, it is lower in colour and tannin than cabernet sauvignon, but produces good soft and supple wines. This is a friendly wine to everyone's palate, even a new

entrant to the wine scene. It can offer up some rich berry, honey, or mint, and is not as tannic as a cabernet sauvignon. Some Indian wineries import the wine in bulk and bottle it locally.



Pinot Noir (PEA-no-Nu-wahr) – The grape wine makers “love to hate”. A difficult grape to grow and vinify, but produces the soft, delicious and delicate wines of *Burgundy*. The wines are low in tannin, with good

acidity and broad expansive aroma and bouquet. *Pinots are one the few reds, served well cooled.*

Other major red wine varieties

Tempranillo is the red wine grape of Spain. Found in the famous Riojas, its most frequently blended with Grenache aka *garnacha*, carignan aka *Mazuelo*, in Spain, and recently, cabernet sauvignon. It has earthy, leather and berry aromas.

Pinotage was created in South Africa in 1925. A cross of the delicate Pinot Noir and the sturdy Cinsault (called Hermitage in South Africa), hence the name Pinotage. It is an adventure into the unknown when opening a bottle.

Nebbiolo, the varietal of Barolo, is one of the great wine varieties. Big, dark and tannic, even bitter, than most, but consequently long-lived and prized by collectors. Only Argentina, grows this grape outside Italy’s Piedmont region.

Cabernet Franc is best known as the blend-mate along with Malbec in the great reds of Bordeaux and Meritage of California. It has a great raspberry flavour with a light body.

Other Wines

Popular Varieties and Styles



Champagne or Sparkling Wine – made in most wine producing countries, but technically, the only region that has a right to call their sparkling wine, Champagne, is the Champagne region of

France. In Italy it is called Spumante. The most common being Asti Spumante from Piedmont. Sparkling wine can be made in different styles, but the common theme is bubbles. The bubbles come from dissolved carbon dioxide, held under pressure, in wine. Remember, one of the by-product of fermentation is carbon dioxide.

Extreme caution should be exercised when opening a bottle of sparkling wine. Holding the bottle at an angle, away from guests and valuable decorations, remove the wire harness, while keeping your thumb on the top of the cork. Place a napkin, and gently twist the bottle off the cork. The sound you want to hear is a gentle whisper as opposed to a loud pop. In India, Indage and Sula offer sparkling wines.



Dessert Wines – There are two main types of dessert wine: late harvested wines and brandy fortified wines.

Late Harvest Wines – Grapes are harvested late in the season to ensure high levels of sugar. The *Sauternes* region of France, the *Tokaji (toh-kai)* of Hungary, and the “Ice Wines” of Canada are all late harvest wines. Europe uses a system of “noble

rot” where *Botrytis cinerea* fungus is allowed to shrivel the grape. In case of Ice Wines, the grape is picked by hand in freezing conditions in the middle of winter and in the middle of the night. Due to a shrivelling or freezing of the grape, there is very little juice, but it has all the ripe fruit flavour. The resultant wines are high in sugar and low in alcohol. Acidity levels vary, but the wines are usually rich and viscous, and require great skill by the wine maker to balance the acid and sugar. The most famous and expensive dessert wine in the world is Château d’Yquem. Sula has introduced late harvest wines in India.

Fortified Wines – This wine type involves the addition of grape spirits, typically Brandy, either during fermentation to halt fermentation or after fermentation. The great fortified wines of the world include Sherry, Port, and Madeira. The wines are high in alcohol and residual sugar levels range from bone dry to very sweet. Good port wines are typically, 20 – 40 years old.

Oak in Winemaking

Wine makers extensively use fermentation of wines in oak barrels. Flavours like vanilla, cinnamon, clove and nutmeg are found naturally in oak wood. Oak also has a huge array of tannin molecules, and sugars that caramelize when the barrel is fired. Inside a well made oak barrel, the wine while fermenting, slowly absorbs the flavours and caramelised sugars from the wood which adds complexity and complement the flavours of the fruit in the wine. At the same time, the tannins in the oak blend with the tannins and colour of the wine to enrich and stabilize them.

Storing Wine

Most wines are designed to be drunk soon after purchase. The enemies of wine are heat, light, oxygen, low



humidity, and vibration, so the regular home refrigerator is not a good choice for extended storage. In India, due to the high heat, it is recommended that you do not store wines for more than 3 – 6 months without a wine cabinet. Keep the bottles horizontal in your cupboard in a cool, dark and humid place.

If you wish to store your bottles for an extended period of time or for commercial service, you should invest in a wine cabinet or place your bottles in an 24-hr air-conditioned room, *with a*

humidifier. While 12 – 14 °C is preferred, a room at 18 °C is the very least requirement. **Remember**, high humidity, no vibration and a steady temperature are more important, than just a low temperature.

Glass pictures courtesy Ridel

How to taste a Wine

The Five S's – See, Swirl, Smell, Sip, Savour



See

Look at the wine colour against a white surface under a fairly bright light, by tilting the glass at 45°. In addition to the aesthetics, colour tells you a lot about the wine. As a white wine ages, it becomes darker, more golden in colour, and as a red wine ages it loses its ruby colour and graduates to garnet, brick, deep ink, and eventually brown like the colour of dried blood. An extreme golden colour in a regular table white wine is an almost certain indication that the wine is “oxidised” by storage at high temperature and low humidity, which allows inlet of air and accelerates the aging process.



Swirl

The reason why a wine glass should never be filled more than half a glass for whites, and one third for reds. Keep the glass on the table and gently swirl, holding the bottom of the glass in a circular motion. Swirling oxygenates the wine which opens up the aromas and flavours and helps soften the tannins due to aeration. Different aroma volatiles occupy different layers with the glass, swirling helps bring the heavier aromas close to the surface of the wine up to the top of the glass by bringing the wine up to the rim of the glass.



Smell

Probably the most important component of the tasting process. Start smelling the wine a few inches above the rim of the glass held at 45° and slowly moving your nose right *in* to the glass, till the lower rim of the glass touches your upper lip. Often people miss the “top notes” and aromas by plunging their nose straight into the glass. Note the types of aromas, their intensity and harmony. “Smell the symphony of aromas” put together by the wine maker. If there are unpleasant smells, that may indicate that the wine is flawed.



Sip

Take a sip and ‘inhale’ the wine, *slurp* it like drinking very hot tea. **Do not be in a rush to swallow or gulp.** Take time to enjoy the symphony of diverse tastes, and flavours. Move the wine around your mouth. The tongue actually tastes only four “flavours”: sweet, salt, sour, and bitter. All other “flavours” comes from “smelling” the wine in the mouth (also called retro-olfaction). The weight/body of the wine should also be noted. Think of body like milk: a light-bodied wine is skimmed milk, a medium-bodied wine is regular whole milk, and a heavy-bodied wine is like cream.



Savour

Think about what you’re tasting. Is it seamless, angular, light, medium, full, fat, crisp, rounded, flabby, buttery, well-balanced in terms of the sugar, the acid, and the astringency? Is there an after-taste? Good, pleasant, bad? How long does the taste linger in your mouth (finish)? Does it have a long, medium, or short finish i.e. does the after-taste stay in your mouth? Ideally you want to taste to linger in your mouth for at least 30 seconds or longer. Do you like it or hate it or it is just acceptable?

Please see the following page for common aromas found in wines.

Tasting Wine

Some of the common aromas found in wines



Herbs and Spices

Dill, Tobacco, Bay Leaf, Mint, Green Grass, Straw, Basil, Vanilla, Black Pepper, Clove, Fennel, Nutmeg, Cinnamon, Lemon Grass, Thyme, Liquorice/Anise

Wood

Oak, Smoky, Tree Bark, Sawdust, Tar, Raw/Green Wood, Eucalyptus, Cedar, Toast

Fruit

Plum, Cherry, Blueberry, Currant, Raspberry, Blackberry, Strawberry, Fig, Coconut, Grape, Watermelon, Cranberry, Mango, Orange, Lemon, Pomegranate, Grapefruit, Lime, Tangerine, Pineapple, Banana, Kiwi, Apple, Apricot, Peach, Passion Fruit



Vegetable

Rhubarb, Bell Pepper, Black Olive, Green Olive, Tomato, Celery, Green Bean, Beet, Asparagus, Baked Potato

Floral

Violet, Rose, Lavender, Lilac, Honeysuckle, Orange Blossom Earth Underbrush, Mushroom, Truffle, Humus, White Flower

Other Aromas

Chocolate, Leather, Grilled Meat, Baked Bread, Butterscotch, Caramel, Soy Sauce, Cherry Cola, Coffee, Walnut, Almond, Musk, Butter, Maple Syrup, Hazelnut, Honey, Baker's Yeast, Dusty, Chalky

Off-Aromas – Something is wrong here!

Mouldy, Garlic, Onions, Nail Polish, Burnt Matches, Vinegar



Off-aromas indicate that the wine is flawed in

some way. The most common flaw in white wine is *Oxidation*, caused by improper storage at high temperature, which just accelerates the wine aging process, in reds it is wine spoiled by cork taint called “*corked*”. The affected wine has a musty, vinegary, mouldy, and generally unpleasant odour.

Oxidation is the process that allows the wine to breathe and mellow with age. Unlike spirits, wines are “alive” in the bottle, and therefore all wines have a life span. *Oxidation* due to storage at high temperature, results in a wine becoming just *too old* to drink. The lighter wines (whites and rosés) are usually best drunk within three to five years of bottling while heavier wines (reds) and those fortified with alcohol (port and sherry for example) have a much longer life.



A sample evaluation and scoring system

Major wine “gurus” of the world like Robert Parker and Mark Squires, evaluate wines on a 100 point scale. The form below is based the system used by Robert Parker. The points total up to 50. To the final score you add a flat 50 points. Wine below 60 is unacceptable, 60–69 is below average, 70–79 is average, 80–89 above average to very good 90–95 outstanding wines, and 96+ is an extraordinary wine.

WINE TASTING – EVALUATION AND SCORING SHEET

1. VISUAL APPEARANCE (5 points)	Remarks
<p><i>a. Clarity – 2 points</i></p> <p><i>b. Colour – 3 points</i></p>	Clarity is transparency through light. A brilliant diamond sparkle, clear, hazy, cloudy. With modern vinification techniques, almost all commercial wines do not have a clarity problem. Red wines may have sediments, which are not a defect. It just means that wine will need to be decanted. Whites get darker with age, reds get lighter. Whites – Almost colourless, straw, butter, gold, amber, brown. Reds – Pale Red, Ruby, Purple, Garnet, Brick, Tawny, Brown,
2. AROMA / NOSE (15 points)	Please refer to page above for detailed guidance on aromas. How complex it is ? How many dimensions ? The blending together ? The sharpness, the rounding etc.
<p>Complex, Rounded, Intense (12–15)</p> <p>Good, developed, pronounced (9–11)</p> <p>Clean, pleasant, simple (6–8)</p> <p>Low, Fleeting, elusive (2–5)</p> <p>Defective, sulphur, vinegar, nail-polish (0–1)</p>	The score ranges indicated on the left are indicatory. You should follow your own personal ranges for your better consistency
3. TASTE (total 20 points)	
<p><i>a. Mouthfeel / Balance (5 points)</i></p> <p>Total to Very Well Balanced</p> <p>Well balanced, with minor imbalance</p> <p>Average. Many imbalances</p> <p>Major imbalances</p> <p>Totally imbalanced</p>	How does the wine feel in your mouth. Refers to the balance of all of the wine’s components of fruit, acidity, sweetness, alcohol, and bitterness. Does it feel natural or overly hot ? <i>Do not confuse acidity with tannic</i> . Tannic is like very strong tea, bitter, dry mouth, and “puckered-up”. Acidity is the salivating taste of lemons and lime. “Tannic” is used to describe red wines while “astringent” are used to describe white wines.
<p><i>b. Body and Texture (5 points)</i></p> <p>Velvety, chewy, silky, fat</p> <p>Smooth, even, heavy, full</p> <p>Slightly thin, average</p> <p>Uneven, coarse, thin or flabby</p> <p>Empty, rough, nothing</p>	Think of body like milk: a light-bodied wine is skimmed milk, a medium-bodied wine is regular whole milk, and a heavy-bodied wine is like cream.
<p><i>c. Flavour (8 points)</i></p> <p>Complex, mature, luscious, rounded</p> <p>Fruity, robust, multi-layered</p> <p>Agreeable, clean, simple</p> <p>Lacking, green, raw</p> <p>Chemical, stemmy, hollow, no taste</p>	<p>What tastes are your getting. The types, what are they ? How well have the various tastes blended with each other.</p> <p>Complexity – multiple layers, and changes with aeration time in your glass. Used to describe both aromas and flavours.</p>
<p><i>d. Finish (total 2 points)</i></p>	The aftertaste and how long does it last in your mouth. Ideally you want a wine to last at least 30 seconds, to several minutes
4. OVERALL (maximum 10 points)	Capturing the feeling, essence and spirit of the wine.

Some tips and common misconceptions :

- Wine’s “legs” – the rivulets that run down the glass when you swirl. They are no indication of quality. Thicker and slower rivulets give an indication as to the wine's higher alcohol levels or a fuller body.
- Tannins are natural to wine. As they age, wines shed tannins, becoming softer in texture and complex in flavour. That is why tannic varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon only start entering their prime after 5 years, while the great reds of Bordeaux are best enjoyed typically after 20 years
- Don’t smell the cork. It does not reveal much about the wine, and it is not that pleasant a smell. Focus on the wine instead.

Serving Wine – The tools and the glass

Tools of the trade

Corkscrew – The ‘waiters’ corkscrew is the most commonly used corkscrew, both in restaurants and at home. A good one will have a blade for cutting the foil and a lever for easier opening.



Decanter – There are two main reasons to decant a wine: (a) to remove the sediment from an older bottle of red wine and (b) to aerate a young bottle of red or white wine. Yes, some whites improve with decanting. To decant a wine off its sediment, it can be helpful to hold a torchlight or candle under the neck of the bottle while pouring the wine into the decanter. This makes it possible to see the sediment as you are



pouring. Decanters with aerating attachments are very useful in softening younger wines by giving them ample room to relax and breathe.

Wine Bucket – The wine bucket should be used



to lower the temperature of a wine or to maintain the proper temperature. Fill the bucket with two parts ice and one part water. The water will make it easier to place the bottle in the bucket for quick chilling. Adding salt will lessen the melt rate.

Glasses, Glasses, Glasses

One cannot emphasize enough about having the correct wine glass. A good wine yearns to be

adored for its looks, its smell, and its flavour and, therefore, holds so much delicious potential for the eyes, nose, and mouth. The wine glass is the instrument that brings together: the personality of the wine – smell, taste, and appearance – in all its beauty. Good wine glasses emphasize a wine’s harmony, bad one only emphasise the faults.

To appreciate the beauty of wine, have glasses that are not coloured or decoratively chiselled. Drinking out of a good thin, crystal glass is like drinking wine from a delicate rose petal

Red wine glasses are typically 420ml – 650ml capacity. White wine glasses are typically 300ml – 650ml capacity. ***Despite the size, for both reds and whites, fill with 150 ml of wine, maximum.***

Below is a selection of Riedel glasses.



If don’t want to spend to much money, buy the generic tulip-shaped wine glasses, ***but not the standard “all-purpose” or A-P wine glass.***

It is strongly recommend you always wash your wine glasses in hot water only. Soap can build up inside the glass and affect a wine’s flavour.

Wine – Serving, Tasting Sequence, Etiquette

Wine Serving Temperatures

While it may seem a trivial thing, serving wine correctly can add class to any occasion from the casual to a formal. In addition to the tools and glasses, serving wine at the proper temperature is very important.

The temperature at which a wine is served has an immense impact on its taste. Serving wine cool will mask some imperfections – good for young or cheap wine or wines with higher alcohol levels (13.5% and above), while a warmer temperature allows expression of the wine's characteristics – best with an older or more expensive wine. A bottle of wine will cool or warm up at 2 °C per 10 minutes – it is important to remember that the temperature of the room will affect the rate at which the wine warms up.

Wine Serving Temperature °C		
Wine Type	Range	Ideal
Sparkling Wine	6 – 9	7
Rosé Wine	9 – 12	10
White Wines	9 – 14	10
Sherry (Light)	9 – 14	11
Light Bodied Red	10 – 14	12
Medium to full-bodied red	13 – 18	16
Fortified Wine	13 – 20	17
Sherry (Dark)	13 – 20	18

Pouring Wine

Still wines should be poured towards the centre of the glass, while sparkling wines should be poured against the side to preserve bubbles. *To control drips, twist the bottle slightly as you tilt it upright.*

When pouring wine, fill the glass with about 125ml – 150ml. As a rough guide no more than one half glass (for whites) and one-third for reds. This will allow your guests to swirl the wine, smell the bouquet (remember the 5-S's ?). A glass can always be refilled as desired.

Tasting Sequence

Sparkling, then Whites, then Reds;
Old before Young; (this is *my* view)
Light before heavy;
Dry before sweet;
Common before fine wines.

Etiquette for Wine Drinking, Tasting and Serving

Whether at a private wine tasting or at a vineyard, the rules of etiquette for wine drinking and tasting are the same. Here are some tips that will give the professional touch . . . as a host or as a guest.

For the Host

Serving Order

At a dinner party, women and older guests should be served first, then men, then the host.

Guest Count

Invite only the number of tasters that can fit comfortably at your venue. A crowd around the tasting table is intimidating and guests do not like to feel rushed when pouring a glass of wine.

Water

Always have bottled water on hand; it is good to rinse mouths between wines. A pitcher of water for rinsing glasses between tastings is strongly recommended . . . and remember to have a “spit bucket” for discarded rinse water and wine.

Food and Wine

Unsalted crackers or unflavoured bread should be provided for palate cleansing during the tasting. A few sticks of processed cheese is also acceptable. Save the stronger foods for after the wine tasting.

For the Guest

Handling a Wine Glass

The proper way to hold any style of wine glass is by the stem or hold the base. *Not the bowl.* This prevents fingerprints on the bowl and also keeps your hand from heating the wine.

Perfume and Cologne

Avoid wearing scent to a wine tasting affair. This includes perfumes, colognes, after-shaves, and scented hair spray or gel.

Smoking

Smoking at or just before a wine tasting will affect the taste of your wines. The smoke and odour of cigarettes or cigars not only interferes with the enjoyment of the taste and smell of the wines, it can be irritating to other guests.

Mints, Chewing Gum, Paan

Gum, breath mints will, Paan alter the taste of wine. Eat some bread and use water to rinse your mouth thoroughly before beginning a tasting.

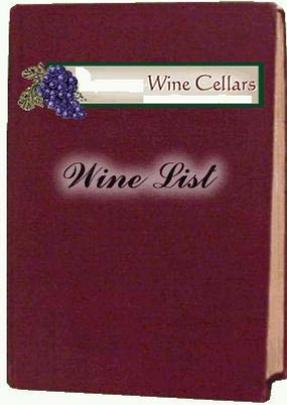
Comments

If you have negative comments about a wine, keep them to yourself, until asked, especially at a complimentary tasting.

Navigating a Restaurant Wine List

Restaurant wine lists can be intimidating to many a wine drinker. Not just the novice, but an experienced enthusiast like me. I can spend up to half an hour just paging through an extensive list, glancing over prices, producers, and vintages. Sometimes it's the fault of the wine list that makes the selection process so slow.

The Traditional Varietal or Regional Wine List



A common approach to listing restaurant wines is according to grape varietal. The wines are first categorized by either red or white, further broken down into the most popular grapes. Unfortunately, what you get is White Wine, broken down into Chardonnay and Other White Grapes, and Red Wine, divided into Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Other Red Grapes.

A better grape varietal list would have more sub-groupings of red and white grape varieties, such as Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, and a Blended Wines category for whites and Pinot Noir, Shiraz/Syrah, Zinfandel and Blended Red Wines for reds. This kind of breakdown into many more grapes helps when you know what you are looking for.

But what if you're not familiar with what differentiates wines made from one grape over another? Then the varietal list is not helpful to an most wine drinkers, not just the inexperienced one.

Another type of list you will see presents a geographic grouping of wines according to various wine regions. You will see local wines listed separately from imported wines and possibly further broken down by smaller wine regions within each country.

The listing of imported wines will usually include the most popular wine countries like the US, France and Italy. The domestic side of the list may be grouped by state or region. A California grouping may break down into wines from Napa, Sonoma or Santa Barbara, etc. This type of list can be helpful if you know that you prefer a wine from Santa Barbara, for example. But still, one needs to have a basic understanding of the differences among wine appellations of the world.

Combining the two approaches, grape varietal with geographic listings, makes life a little easier for the beginning wine list reader. However, even given a wine's geographic origin and grape variety, a beginner could still be in a quandary when forced to choose.

The Progressive Wine List

Becoming more popular is the Progressive wine list, probably the easiest to navigate for beginners. The Progressive list ranks wines in order of style, from lightest to fullest. Starting usually with Sparkling Wines, then Light Bodied White Wines, then Medium-Bodied, then Full-Bodied, and so on again with red wines. The heaviest, most full-bodied red wines are always found at the end of the Progressive wine list.

Some Progressive lists include fun, creative categories, such as Ripe, Fruit-Bomb, Medium-Bodied Wines. A group like this may even include both white and red wines.

The purpose of the Progressive list is to make it easier to pair wines with both your meal and your mood. For example, you may not be aware that a Rabbit Ridge Paso Robles Zinfandel is a black-fruit, spicy, dense wine, with higher than average alcohol, but when you see it listed among the bottom few wines on a Progressive list, you'll know what you're getting into.

An example of a progressive wine list is given on page 19.

Restaurant/Bar Wine Service

Benefits of Wine Service

Beyond the monetary benefits, there are a number of great reasons to recommend wine to your guests:



- It tastes good!
- Food and wine are natural partners and when paired properly will enhance the flavour of each other.
- An enhanced dining experience will bring guests back to your restaurant or bar or pub or club for repeat visits.
- Customers are growing in awareness about wine and its health benefits

How to Increase Wine Sales

Familiarise yourself with the wine list. Guests often look to waiters and stewards for recommendations, as it is virtually impossible for the average local

consumer, or the overseas visitor, to be familiar with ALL the wine labels available in the Indian market. *You cannot make a recommendation, if you don't know anything about the wine.* **Recommend** Wine. Wine is upscale dining.

Wine lists should be presented to the host instead of just being placed on the table. Do not forget the House Wines or Wines by the glass.

- May I suggest champagne or sparkling wine to start?
- May I recommend a bottle to share or wines by the glass?
- Cabernet Sauvignon pairs well with the meat. May I bring you a glass?

House Wines or Wine By the Glass

In my humble opinion, Indian establishments, pay inadequate attention to this crucial sales driver. Unless, it's a large party and all members of the party are wine drinkers, it is difficult to consume the full bottle. Wines by the glass are a great way to improve your sales volumes, and meet the individual glass needs of your customers. However, it is important that the wines taste very similar to a freshly opened bottle. **Serve good wines, need not be the best.** Check for any

oxidisation of whites. You cannot give your customers a pleasant experience with a 3 day old wine, lying outside in the heat. You do not serve 3 day old fish, do you? Invest in a wine preservation system. Keep ALL opened wines in the chiller; white wines for a maximum of 1 day after opening, and reds for a maximum of 2 days. After that, use it for cooking. You are charging a slight premium, for wines by the glass, which covers up any wastage. Ultimately, in the hospitality business, you want your customer to have a memorable experience which causes them to return.



Banish Wine Snobbery

Many guests are intimidated by wine and therefore never order it for fear of embarrassment. Pronunciations are difficult and tasting etiquette confusing. *Help your guests feel comfortable with wine.* Wine is a drink meant to be enjoyed on many different levels. Some guests will welcome a little pomp and ceremony with a fine bottle of wine; others will simply want a great tasting drink. Read your guest's wine level and accommodate them. *Never contradict a customer's wine selection;* everyone has different tastes and unless your opinion is solicited, don't offer it.

Types of Customers

- Wine-Savvy – usually know what they want and are willing to pay premiums to consume the upscale wines.
- Special Occasion – want something special to celebrate an occasion. Normally, they will look for and take recommendations from the staff. **Don't be greedy.** *Always offer from a range of prices to enabling them to choose as per their budget.*
- Casual Diners – normally do not want to spend a lot of money and always look for budget-friendly suggestions. Overseas visitors often look for local wines. Remember, they know the prices overseas, and are on a budget too.
- Frequent Diners – who patronize your establishment regularly and expect you to know their preferences

Above all else RELAX!!!!

Wine is a relaxed drink, meant to be enjoyed and savoured at a relaxed pace. Due to its sheer diversity in product and price, it requires a much more delicate handling. Customers who enjoy wine are not in for the “kick”. Wine customers dislike over-enthusiastic waiters who keep topping up their glasses in the hope that they will order more wine than they really want, or can afford. Nothing ruins the dining experience, for a customer, more, than an over-inflated check at the end of the meal, or a splitting hang-over the next morning.

The Four P's – Propose, Present, Pull, Pour



Propose

Guests often depend on waiters, stewards, bartenders, or sommeliers to propose a wine recommendation. Prepare a separate “Wine List” of only wines. Present the wine list to the host, rather than just placing it randomly on the table. Know the wines on your list, as well as possible food pairings. Many times, overseas visitors want to try the local wines. Proposing several wines in different price categories will put the customer at ease and allow them to make a choice that they are comfortable with.



Present

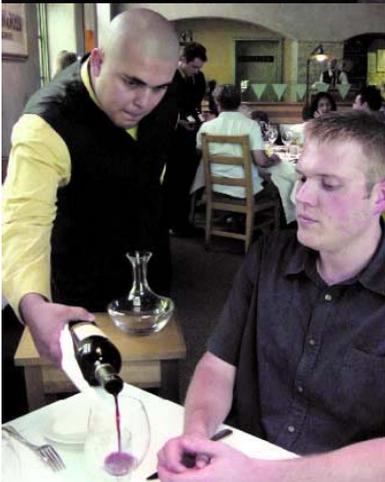
Present the bottle to the host, with the label facing the host, and repeat the wine name and vintage. After approval from the host, proceed to cut the top of the capsule (the foil at the top of the bottle). For aesthetic reasons, always cut, only the top of the capsule, with a knife (normally in the waiter's corkscrew). **Do not remove the capsule completely, unless, you are decanting the wine, and need to see the sediment.**

Make sure you are serving the wine at the right temperature.



Pull

Pull the cork at the table and present the cork to the host. The cork is presented so that the guest can see that the wine has been stored properly; normally one side of the cork should be wet and the other side dry. If there is wine seepage along the length of the cork, it is possible that the cork has dried and shrunk, and this will oxidise the wine. For hygiene reasons, you should not smell the cork or the bottle. **Never push the cork in to the bottle.** For sparkling wines, exercise extreme caution when opening. Point the cold bottle away from guests and valuable decorations. Remove the foil wrap. Untwist the wire, keeping your thumb over the top of the cork, and remove the wire hood. Place a napkin over the cork. Holding the bottle at an angle, gently twist the bottle off the cork. Unless the guest wants, you should open the bottle with a gentle whisper not a loud pop



Pour

Pour 30ml – 60ml of wine for the host to taste. If the wine is satisfactory, continue pouring for the rest of the table, moving clockwise around the table, but ladies first. Glasses should not be filled more than 1/3 full to allow the guests to swirl their glasses. The last person to receive wine is the host. A bottle of wine contains 750ml. You should be familiar with your restaurant's glasses so that pouring for large groups isn't a problem. There is nothing worse than over pouring for five people and not having enough wine left for the sixth person! The remaining wine should be placed to the right of the host and poured when needed. Glasses should be kept filled, but be careful not to over pour. Ask for a second bottle order before the bottle is empty, ensuring uninterrupted wine service throughout the meal.

The Fifth P – Practice

It's easy to feel intimidated by wine service. So remember, **Practice Makes Perfect!** If you are not confident opening a wine bottle tableside, practice with old bottles that have had the cork pushed back in at the end of the night.

Photo location and staff courtesy of Tra Vigne Ristorante, St. Helena, Napa Valley.

A Sample Progressive Wine List

In an effort to reduce the intimidation faced by many wine drinkers, not just the novice, but the experienced enthusiast like me, restaurants are moving to the Progressive wine list. It is the easiest to navigate for most customers. The Progressive list ranks wines in order of style, from lightest to fullest.

Courtyard Restaurant Ottawa, Canada Wine List

White Wine

Mouth-Watering Freshness

Simonsig Chenin Blanc '03 (SAF)
Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate Sauvignon Blanc '04 (CAN)
Leon Beyer Réserve Riesling '04 (FRA)
Bonny Doon Pacific Rim Chenin Blanc '04 (USA)
Pencarrow Sauvignon Blanc '04 (NZE)
Yalumba Viognier '99 (AUS)

Up-Front Fullness

Hardys Nottage Hill Chardonnay '04 (AUS)
Mittnacht-Klack Tokay Pinot Gris '01 (FRA)
Kendall-Jackson Vintner's Reserve Chardonnay '00 (USA)
Stratus Barrel-Fermented Chardonnay '02 (CAN)

Richness with Restraint

EastDell Unoaked Chardonnay '04 (CAN)
Domaine de Bachellery Chardonnay '02 (FRA)
Rabl Spiegel Grüner Veltliner '03 (AUT)

Dry and Refreshing

Villa Marianna Pinot Grigio delle Venezie '04 (ITA)
Jaffelin Bourgogne Aligoté '04 (FRA)
La Monacesca Verdicchio di Matelica '03 (ITA)

A Touch of Sweet Fruit

Maleta Reserve Riesling '02 (CAN)
Crabtree Watervale Riesling '03 (AUS)
St. Urbans-Hof Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Spätlese '99 (GER)

Rosé Wine

Angels Gate Rosé Blend '03 (CAN)

Sparkling Wine

Seaview Sparkling Brut (AUS)
Hillebrand Trius Sparkling Brut (CAN)
Lanson Black Label Brut Champagne (FRA)
Moët & Chandon Dom Pérignon Champagne '96 (FRA)

Red Wine

Lighter-Bodied Charmers

Georges Duboeuf Beaujolais Brouilly '04 (FRA)
Beringer Founders' Estate Pinot Noir '01 (USA)
Quail's Gate Family Reserve Gamay Noir '02 (CAN)

Rene Bouvier Marsannay Longerois '02 (FRA)

Crushing the Berries

Drotsdy-Hof Merlot '03 (SAF)
Hardys Nottage Hill Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz '03 (AUS)
Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate Merlot '03 (CAN)
Alta Vista Malbec '02 (ARG)
Carmen Reserve Carmenère Cabernet Sauvignon '03 (CHI)
Catena Cabernet Sauvignon '02 (ARG)
Sacred Hill Whitecliff Estate Merlot '02 (NZE)
Konzelmann Reserve Cabernet Merlot '98 (CAN)
Clos du l'Echo Chinon '00 (FRA)
Pikes Cabernet '99 (AUS)
Hess Cabernet Sauvignon '99 (USA)
Frog's Leap Cabernet Sauvignon '99 (USA)

Vibrant & Juicy

Finca Antigua Tempranillo '02 (SPA)
Castell de Remei Gotim Bru Costers del Segre '00 (SPA)
Pio Cesare Dolchetto d'Alba '03 (ITA)

Spicy, Warm-Hearted Lads

Kingston Estate Shiraz '05 (AUS)
Etienne Pochon Crozes-Hermitage '03 (FRA)
Pirramimma Petit Verdot '98 (AUS)
Guardian Peak Syrah/Mouvèdre/Grenache'01 (SAF)
Renwood d'Agostini Bros. Zinfandel '01 (USA)
Nichol Syrah '99 (CAN)
Ridge York Creek Petite Sirah '97 (USA)
Château La Nerthe, Châteauneuf-du-Pape '98 (FRA)
Penfolds St-Henri Shiraz '97 (AUS)
Baron Philippe de Rothschild, Vin de Pays d'Oc Baron'arques '98 (FRA)

The Heavy Hitters

Corte Grande Amarone '01 (ITA)
Château du Cayrou Cahors '88 (FRA)
Brigaladara Amarone '98 (ITA)
Masi Mezzanella Recioto Amarone '97 (ITA)
Pio Cesare Barbaresco '97 (ITA)

Balance & Finesse

Luigi Righetti Campolieti Valpolicella '02 (ITA)
Château Veyran Saint Chinian Cuvée Henri '98 (FRA)
L'Enclos du Château Lezongars Premieres Cotes de Bordeaux '00 (FRA)

Château Loudenne Médoc Cru Bourgeois '98 (FRA)

Capezzana Conte Contini Bonacossi Carmignano '97 (ITA)
Three Hills Charles Andreas '99 (AUS)
Muga Rioja Reserva '96 (SPA)
Michele Satta Cavaliere Toscana '97 (ITA)
Château Sociando-Mallet Haut-Medoc '97 (FRA)
Château Balestard La Tonelle Saint-Émilion Grand Cru '95 (FRA)
Château Gruaud Larose Saint-Julien Grand Cru '96 (FRA)
Frescobaldi-Mondavi Luce della Vite Toscana '97 (ITA)

Dessert & Port Wine

Late harvest, Icewine

Fischer Trockenbeerenauslese '99 (AST)
Malivoire Miskew Vineyard Riesling Icewine '01 (CAN)

Late-bottled, tawny & vintage port

Taylor Fladgate LBV '99
Taylor Fladgate 20 Year Old Tawny

Wine by the Glass

White Wine

Hardys Nottage Hill Chardonnay '04 (AUS)
Vineland Estates Dry Riesling '04 (CAN)
Leon Beyer Réserve Riesling '03 (FRA)

Red Wine

Alta Vista Malbec '02 (ARG)
Kingston Estate Shiraz '03 (AUS)
Luigi Righetti Campolieti Valpolicella '03 (ITA)
Concha y Toro Marques de Casa Concha Cabernet Sauvignon '04 (CHI)
Georges Duboeuf Beaujolais Brouilly '04 (FRA)

House Wine

Jackson-Triggs Sauvignon Blanc (CAN)
Mommessin Cuvée Saint-Pierre Blanc (FRA)

Red Wine

Jackson-Triggs Merlot (CAN)
Mommessin Cuvée Saint-Pierre Rouge (FRA)

Rosé Wine

Sutter Home White Zinfandel (USA)

The Art of Wine and Food Pairing

Simple Guidelines – Never drink or eat anything you don't like

Spicy foods cancel some of a wine's fruitiness too. The spice increases the perception of tannins. Sweet cuts heat, so a sweeter wine will lower the degree of spiciness in food. Serve them with lightly sweet, very fruity, low tannin, and/or crisp wines. Stay away from higher alcohol, tannic red, and/or oaky wines, as these will increase the heat of the spices in the mouth.

Spicy Indian food and a fruity Chenin Blanc or Gewürztraminer

Rich dishes overpower delicately flavoured, lighter bodied wines. Proteins and fat in foods will lower the sensation of tannins in wine. Acidic wines will cut the fattiness. Rich, full-bodied wines with rich foods will compliment each other. Serve with full flavoured, full bodied, higher acid wines.

Pasta Carbonara or Braised Ribs and Cabernet Sauvignon

Salty foods also cancel the "fruit" in wines. Salt will lower the perception of bitterness in wine. Very salty dishes will increase the sensation of alcohol in wine, so you want to serve a low alcohol wine. Will increase the sensation of sweetness, and lower the perception of acidity. Salty dishes call for aromatic wines with high acidity, some sweetness, low tannins, and/or intense fruitiness.

Oysters and sparkling wine

Fish and game overpower mildly flavoured, medium bodied, dry wines. Try these with very fruity, full bodied, high acid, and/or medium sweet wines.

Salmon or Pomfret with Pinot Noir, Grilled Bhakti with Sauvignon Blanc or Chardonnay

Smoked foods overpower all but the fruitiest, richest wines. Low tannin, extremely rich, and/or moderately sweet wines are best here.

Reshmi Kabab or Raan and Merlot



Tart foods cancel some of a wine's fruitiness. Acidity in foods can increase the bitterness in tannic wines. Serve them with lightly sweet, very fruity, and/or full bodied wines. In some cases, tart or crisp wines will also work well. High concentrations of Vinegar can prove difficult to pair with any wine.

Veal Piccata with Sauvignon Blanc or a crisp Chardonnay

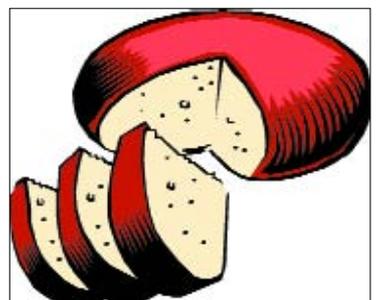
Sweetness in food cancels the "fruit" and/or any residual sugar in wines, making them taste drier than they are. Tannic wines can taste more tannic and bitter. In acidic wines there can be an increased perception of acid or sourness. Sweet dishes call for wines of at least equal sweetness.

Crème Brulée and Dessert Wine

When pairing, look for **complementary or contrasting** flavours in your food and wine selections.

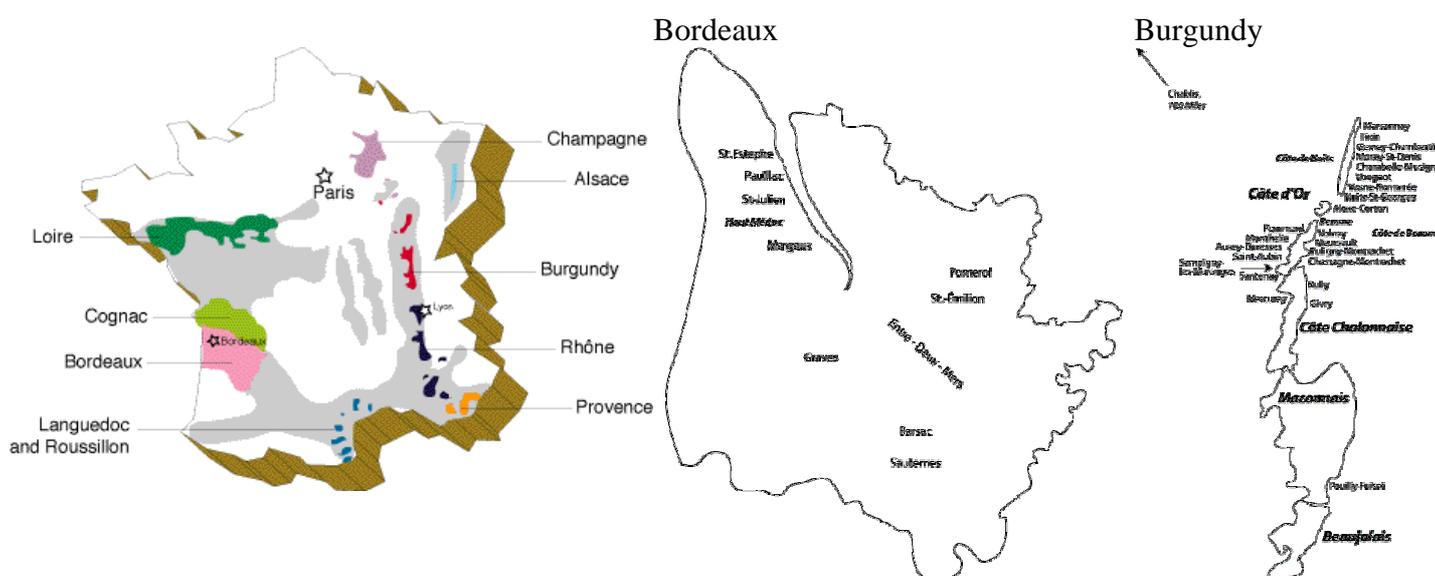
Bleu Cheese and Dessert Wine or Port

Be careful when serving pungent foods loaded with onions, ginger or garlic.



Wine Regions of the World

France



Without a shadow of doubt, when anyone thinks of wine, they think of France. The home of premier names in wine – Rothschild, d’Yquem, Margaux, Petrus, Dom Perignon, etc. – names which regularly command in excess of \$250 per bottle of wine. Each wine producing region in France specializes in the production of different types of wines and with distinct flavours and styles.

Although New World regions such as California and Australia are recently presenting a challenge to the French wine industry, France is still considered the best region in the world to find excellent wines with great finesse and elegance. The records kept by Christian monks have enabled the French to continue to make the quality wine they have perfected over centuries of work.

The major wine areas in France are: Burgundy, Bordeaux, Alsace, the Rhone Valley, Champagne and the Loire Valley. Bordeaux vineyards have a system of First, Second, Third Growths (Cru’s) and so on. One can on and on and on and on the French wine industry and its regions and sub-regions are a study by themselves.

The chart below illustrates the major regions of France and the types of wines each produces.

<i>Region</i>	<i>Grapes</i>	<i>Wines</i>	<i>Qualities</i>
Bordeaux	Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot	Red, White and Sweet	Deeply flavoured reds, sweet whites
Burgundy	Pinot Noir, Gamay, Chardonnay	Red and White	Dry whites, richly textured lighter reds
Loire	Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris, Chenin Blanc, Cabernet Franc	Rose, Red, White, Sparkling	Light fruity reds, dry whites, sweet wines
Rhone	Syrah, Grenache, Carignan, Viognier	Red, White, Sparkling	Very earthy and big wines
Champagne	Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier, Chardonnay	White, Red, Champagne	Thin and tart, the home of Champagne sparkling wine
Alsace	Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, Riesling, Gewürztraminer	Red, White, Sweet	Fruity and sweet wines
Beaujolais	Chardonnay and the local Gamay	Reds, Whites, slightly fizzy	Fresh tasting, light, slight fruit

Italy



Despite being the world's biggest producer of wine, Italy only exports about a quarter of her wine. The current international wine market contains a large amount of Italian wine. Italian wines have very high quality standards, placing them among the best in the world.

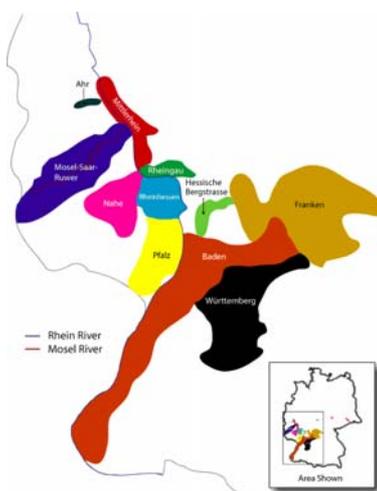
The most famous wine growing region of Italy is **Tuscany**, centred around the cities of Florence and Sienna, with its reds – Chianti, Brunello (both Sangiovese based), and the very unusual white Vernaccia (Vernaccia grape) wines. Tuscany makes leading reds and is now blending native Tuscan grapes with foreign varietals like Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot to make the new international hit “*Super Tuscan*” wines.

Tuscany is followed by **Piedmont** with its famous reds Barolo and Barbaresco (both Nebbiolo grape based), the white Gavi and famous Asti sparkling wines. The area’s winemakers boast the largest number of officially classified wines, but, they are now adopting new techniques, like using wood barrels instead of stone. Piedmont soil offers rich black-cherry reds, lighter-bodied reds, and some of the most refreshing in both still and sparkling whites

Other well known wine regions in Italy include :

- **Emilia-Romagnia:** The wines from this region account for about 50% of Italian exports to America.
- **Sardinia:** The Sherry-like wines from this area are found world-wide.
- **Sicily:** The island produces more wine than any other Italian region. These wines are high quality and flavour.
- **Umbria:** This region produces Ovierto, a rich white wine.
- **Veneto:** The home of Amarone a dry hearty red wine made from Corvina grapes, dried on racks before pressing.

Germany



Germany wine production is concentrated in the south-west of the country along the Mosel and Rhine rivers. It produces roughly 20% as much wine as France. The focus is on whites, though there are some quality reds, but due to lack of international demand, these are rarely exported. Germany's global recognition for production of the sweet Riesling wine is on the increase. Although, some these wines are too sweet, there are some very dry versions of Riesling. Because German vineyards are so far north, it is difficult to get the grapes to ripen to a point where they contain a large quantity of sugar, so that the sweet wines these grapes produce are highly sought after and rarely available outside Germany.

When selecting a German wine it is helpful to remember that the German term for dry is "trocken" and half-dry is "halbtrocken". The German government has a good regulation system for ranking their wines.

- Tafelwein: The lowest quality level of wine,
- Qualitätswein bestimmte Anbaugebiete (QbA):The middle level of quality.
- Qualitätswein mit Prädikat (QmP):The highest quality level

This information is printed on all German wine labels and makes it easy in choosing a German wine for consumers.

Germany uses several different grapes in wine production. The most wide-spread varieties are:

- Kabinett- very ripe grapes with at least 9.5% alcohol
- Spatlese- late harvested grapes for the production of sweet wines
- Auslese- individually picked ripe bunches of grapes for use in dessert wines
- Beerenauslese- hand selected grapes used for sweet wines
- Trockenbeerenauslese- the grapes used to make the sweetest and most expensive German dessert wines.

Spain



The wine industry in Spain is as old and established as that of neighbouring France. Despite this similarity, the wines produced by these two countries are vastly different. Spain produces a large amount of red wine, sparkling wines, and Sherry, which are in high demand throughout the world thanks to their excellent QPR. Given the great similarities between Spanish and Indian food styles and customs, it is puzzling why Spanish wines are not popular in India.

The Rioja: This is one of the best known wine regions of Spain. When the Phylloxera epidemic struck France many of its wine makers moved to northern Spain. The *Bodegas* (wine yards) use local red Tempranillo grapes often blended with Garnacha (Grenache) to make the famous red Rioja. Enjoyed globally today, many of the Rioja reds are aged many years in large wooden barrels. This process gives these wines a distinct woody

taste. Riojas are strong and powerful wines that are best suited for grilled or barbecued meats.

The **Ribera del Duero** is blessed by a combination of terroir, microclimate and a native grape that gives superb, complex red wines. At this altitude Tempranillo gives thin-skinned and refreshingly acid fruit, which gives wines that are delicious when they are young but also have the capacity to age into magnificent Gran Reservas. In 1982 many vineyard sites were replanted, and bodegas (wineries) began to invest in modern winemaking technology. Families who for generations grew and sold their grapes to other bodegas have been building their own small wineries. This newly acquired expertise has resulted in quality wines, which are now exported right around the world.

Penedès has long been associated with innovative vineyards and wineries. It is located in the Cataluña region around Barcelona. In the 1970s, it became the first area in Spain to use stainless steel equipment and cold-fermentation. Since then the Penedès producers have been making excellent modern wines blending native with French varieties. Produces quality reds of native grapes and Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, etc., fruity, light whites and the famous Cava sparkling.

Jerez: This city is one of the most famous of the Spanish wine regions. Its Sherry is what made Spain's wine industry famous. The British coined the name "Sherry" from an English form of Jerez. A visitor to any part of Spain, cannot escape the extended "dinner" of *Tapas* (finger foods) with Sherry, coupled with social interaction amongst friends

Quality levels of Spanish reds by aging are :

- Gran Reserva: The best vintages aged a minimum 2 years in oak and 3 in the bottle.
- Reserva: Aged a minimum of 1 year in oak and 2 in the bottle or a combination of both.
- Crianza: Aged 6 to 12 months in oak.
- Sin Crianza: Not aged in oak or aged less than 1 year in oak.

Chile



Chile in South America, is fast earning a reputation for offering wines of decent to good quality with an affordable price. This unbeatable Quality-Price-Ratio (QPR) is spurring demand for Chilean wines across the world.

The Chilean four natural borders (desert, Andes, Pacific Ocean and Antarctica) act as a deterrent to the Phylloxera epidemic, and Chile is the only wine producing region in the New World that does not have to graft its vines onto American roots.

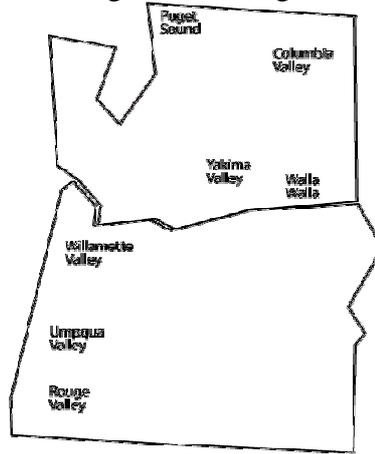
The key wine regions of Chile are the **Maipo** valley, home to the great Cabernets of Almaviva and Don Melchor, the **Colchagua** valley, where Merlot and Carmenère excel as can be tasted in the great Clos Apalta of Casa Lapostolle and the **Casablanca** region, an east-west valley bringing the cool breezes of the Pacific Ocean to great vineyards planted with Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. This narrow country with a length of 4300 km offers an impressive variety of wines from all grape types. While it is the home of the recently discovered Carmenère, Syrah presents a tremendous potential as do Pinot Noir and Riesling in the southern regions, at the limit of Patagonia. And though it has done its wine revolution in the 1980's, Chile is still a country on the rise and discovery of its *terroir*.

North America

California



Washington and Oregon



The west coast of the United States is a major producer of wine in today's market. Americans' interest in wine has turned the nation into one of the largest producers of quality wines.

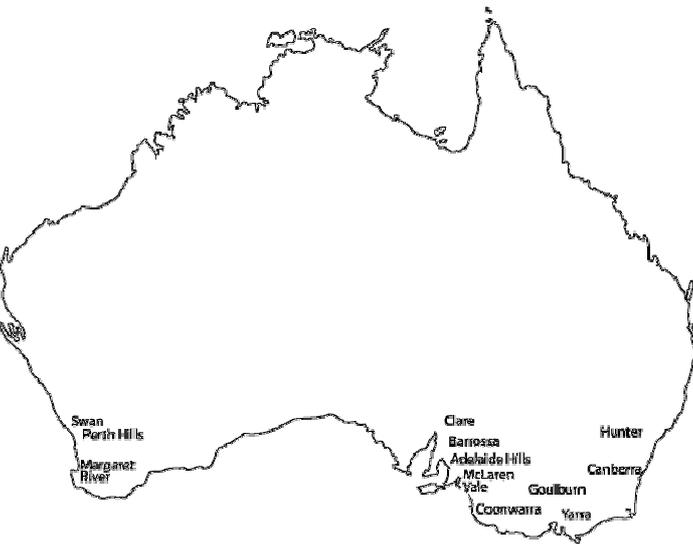
California

California is perhaps the biggest producer of American wine. Many of the new technologies used in wine making were pioneered in this state, and California wines now rank among the highest quality wines in the world. The wines from the Napa Valley or Sonoma County of California are very popular and competitive with the best in the world.

The Pacific Northwest

Pacific Northwest region of **Washington** and **Oregon**, and Canada's **British Columbia** produces some very fine wines. The cool climate allows wine makers to copy the methods of their European counterparts with greater ease than California. White wines have the most success, but some quality Merlots, Cabernets and Pinot Noir are also produced. Washington grapes are high in quality and vineyards in Oregon and BC use them to boost the flavour of their wines. The vineyards of **Idaho** are at a very high altitude and grapes of this region tend to have a high natural sugar level, which gives them a good body and taste. Despite being light the reds of Idaho have a delicate fruity flavour. Virtually every state in the USA has wineries, including my home state of Texas. Canada's **Pelee Island** is just across the river from Detroit and the southern most point in Canada. Its wineries produce excellent cool climate whites and delicate reds. The **Niagara Peninsula**, 60km south of Toronto is best known for its "Ice Wine" which is some of the best desert wine a wine lover can enjoy.

Australia



Australia was settled by the British who have long been lovers and merchants of wine, but due to the climate, had never been able to produce their own. Australia was a dream come true. The last 20-30 years has seen technical breakthroughs in wine making, and vineyard management growing, enabling Australia to jump ahead of the rest of the world in this critical area

Coonawarra: One of the most notable red wine regions, situated in South Australia, primarily planted to Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Hunter Valley: The oldest vineyard region in Australia. About 100 miles northwest of Sydney. Traditionally Shiraz is king here, with Sémillon the white grape. However, owing to demand, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay constitute almost 50% of total vines planted.

Margret River: in Western Australia. The cool climate has proved to be one of the most successful in Australia.

Adelaide Hills: One of the oldest wine producing regions situated around the city of Adelaide.

Barossa Valley: One of the South Australia wine regions. North of the city of Adelaide, Because the vines tend to have a greater average age, and this region produced high quality wines of international repute and demand.

Clare Valley: A long history of winemaking here, and a long slow ripening season, produces very hearty red wines.

Yarra Valley: Situated just north of the Australian city of Melbourne, this may be the area's best known wine region. It is dotted with picturesque wineries that are well prepared for tours and entertaining.

Wine Labels

The label(s) on the bottle of wine, are a great source of information on what is inside. You can always trust the wine label to provide you with facts about the wine. Always turn the bottle and review the second (back) label, most times it is a rich source of information. While there is no fixed rule, wine labels normally provide the vintage (the year of wine making, not bottling), the terrior or region, the alcohol content, and sometimes the grape varietal. European labels are regional, whereas “New World” are varietal. Don't be put off or confused when a wine label provides only minimal or vague, information. Europe, with certain exceptions such as Alsace wines, traditionally classifies wine types according to region, rather than grape variety. By implication, they assume that the buyer knows what grape varieties are produced in a certain region. Hopefully this document has helped you learn the basics.



"New World" wine labels, are much simpler and easy to decipher. They will give you the varietal, the region, the vintage, and the alcohol content.



Classification

Classification codes aren't the most helpful bits of label information! If you want a guaranteed quality, you're better off choosing a reliable producer name, but a superficial acquaintance with a few basics does not hurt. The “New World” classification system, tends to guarantee geographical origins of wine, not quality. Europe tends to classify by region and by quality. The following pared-down list offers a basic guideline:

	Special Quality Wine	Quality Wine	Regional Wine	Table Wine
France	No specific	AC / AOC	Vin de pays	Vin de table
Germany	QmP	QbA or VDQS	Landwein	Tafelwein
Italy	DOCG	DOC	IGT	Vino da tavola
Spain	DOC	DO	Vino de Tierra or Vino comarcal	Vino de mesa
Portugal	No specific	DOC or IPR	Vinho regional	Vinho de mesa

Finally, a few confusing wine phrases and words to dismiss:

"**Supérieur**" does not necessarily refer to superior wine. "**Grand vin**" on Bordeaux labels means that it is the main wine of the winery, rather than a great wine. The word "**Reserve**" is often misleading. In new world wines, it implies a better quality of grapes and longer aging. Many times it means nothing. Ignore terms like "classic", "special", "limited release", etc. These are simply marketing fluff to make the wine seem more unique.

Robert Parker's Wine Glossary

acetic: Wines, no matter how well made, contain quantities of acetic acidity that have a vinegary smell. If there is an excessive amount of acetic acidity, the wine will have a vinegary smell and be a flawed, acetic wine.

acidic: Wines need natural acidity to taste fresh and lively, but an excess of acidity results in an acidic wine that is tart and sour.

acidity: The acidity level in a wine is critical to its enjoyment and livelihood. The natural acids that appear in wine are citric, tartaric, malic, and lactic. Wines from hot years tend to be lower in acidity, whereas wines from cool, rainy years tend to be high in acidity. Acidity in a wine can preserve the wine's freshness and keep the wine lively, but too much acidity, which masks the wines flavours and compresses its texture, is a flaw.

aftertaste: As the term suggests, the taste left in the mouth when one swallows is the aftertaste. This word is a synonym for length or finish. The longer the aftertaste lingers in the mouth (assuming it is a pleasant taste), the finer the quality of the wine.

aggressive: Aggressive is usually applied to wines that are either high in acidity or have harsh tannins, or both.

angular: Angular wines are wines that lack roundness, generosity, and depth. Wine from poor vintages or wines that are too acidic are often described as being angular.

aroma: Aroma is the smell of a young wine before it has had sufficient time to develop nuances of smell that are then called its bouquet. The word aroma is commonly used to mean the smell of a relatively young, un-evolved wine.

astringent: Wines that are astringent are not necessarily bad or good wines. Astringent wines are harsh and coarse to taste, either because they are too young and tannic and just need time to develop, or because they are not well made. The level of tannins (if it is harsh) in a wine contributes to its degree of astringency.

austere: Wines that are austere are generally not terribly pleasant wines to drink. An austere wine is a hard, rather dry wine that lacks richness and generosity. However, young Rhônes are not as austere as young Bordeaux.

backward: An adjective used to describe (1) a young largely un-evolved, closed, and undrinkable wine, (2) a wine that is not ready to drink, or (3) a wine that simply refuses to release its charms and personality.

balance: One of the most desired traits in a wine is good balance, where the concentration of fruit, level of tannins, and acidity are in total harmony. Balanced wines are symmetrical and tend to age gracefully.

berrylike: As this descriptive term implies, most red wines have an intense berry fruit character that can suggest blackberries, raspberries, black cherries, mulberries, or even strawberries and cranberries.

big: A big wine is a large-framed, full-bodied wine with an intense and concentrated feel on the palate. Most red Rhône wines are big wines.

blackcurrant: A pronounced smell of blackcurrant fruit is commonly associated with certain Rhône wines. It can vary in intensity from faint to very deep and rich.

body: Body is the weight and fullness of a wine that can be sensed as it crosses the palate. Full-bodied wines tend to have a lot of alcohol, concentration, and glycerine.

Botrytis cinerea: The fungus that attacks the grape skins under specific climatic conditions (usually alternating periods of moisture and sunny weather). It causes the grape to become super-concentrated because it causes a natural dehydration. *Botrytis cinerea* is essential for the great sweet white wines of Barsac and Sauternes. It rarely occurs in the Rhône Valley because of the dry, constant sunshine and gusty winds.

bouquet: 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.

brawny: A hefty, muscular, full-bodied wine with plenty of weight and flavour, although not always the most elegant or refined sort of wine.

brilliant: Brilliant relates to the colour of the wine. A brilliant wine is one that's clear, with no haze or cloudiness to the colour.

browning: As red wines age, their colour changes from ruby/purple to dark ruby, to medium ruby, to ruby with an amber edge, to ruby with a brown edge. When a wine is browning it is usually fully mature and not likely to get better.

carbonic maceration: This vinification method is used to make soft, fruity, very accessible wines. Whole clusters of grapes are put into a vat that is then filled with carbonic gas. This system is used when fruit is to be emphasized in the final wine in contrast to structure and tannin.

cedar: Rhône reds can have a bouquet that suggests either faintly or overtly the smell of cedar wood. It is a complex aspect of the bouquet.

chewy: If a wine has a rather dense, viscous texture from a high glycerine content, it is often referred to as being chewy. High-extract wines from great vintages can often be chewy, largely because they have higher alcohol hence high levels of glycerine, which imparts a fleshy mouthfeel.

closed: The term closed is used to denote that the wine is not showing its potential, which remains locked in because it is too young. Young wines often close up about 12-18 months after bottling, and depending on the vintage and storage conditions, remain in such a state for several years to more than a decade.

complex: One of the most subjective descriptive terms used, a complex wine is a wine that the taster never gets bored with and finds interesting to drink. Complex wines tend to have a variety of subtle scents and flavours that hold one's interest in the wine.

concentrated: Fine wines, whether they are light-, medium-, or full-bodied, should have concentrated flavours. Concentrated denotes that the wine has a depth and richness of fruit that gives it appeal and interest. Deep is a synonym for concentrated.

corked: A corked wine is a flawed wine that has taken on the smell of cork as a result of an unclean or faulty cork. It is perceptible in a bouquet that shows no fruit, only the smell of musty cork, which reminds me of wet cardboard.

cuvée: Many producers in the Rhône Valley produce special, deluxe lots of wine or a lot of wine from a specific grape variety that they bottle separately. These lots are often referred to as cuvées.

decadent: If you are an ice cream and chocolate lover, you know the feeling of eating a huge sundae of rich vanilla ice cream lavished with hot fudge and real whipped cream. If you are a wine enthusiast, a wine loaded with opulent, even unctuous layers of fruit, with a huge bouquet, and a plump, luxurious texture can be said to be decadent.

deep: Essentially the same as concentrated, expressing the fact that the wine is rich, full of extract, and mouth filling.

delicate: As this word implies, delicate wines are light, subtle, understated wines that are prized for their shyness rather than for an extroverted, robust character. White wines are usually more delicate than red wines. Few Rhône red wines can correctly be called delicate.

diffuse: Wines that smell and taste unstructured and unfocused are said to be diffuse. When red wines are served at too warm a temperature they often become diffuse.

earthy: May be used in both a negative and a positive sense; however, I prefer to use earthy to denote a positive aroma of fresh, rich, clean soil. Earthy is a more intense smell than woody or truffle scents.

elegant: Although more white wines than red are described as being elegant, lighter-styled, graceful, balance red wines can be elegant.

extract: This is everything in a wine besides water, sugar, alcohol, and acidity.

exuberant: Like extroverted, somewhat hyper people, wines too can be gushing with fruit and seem nervous and intensely vigorous.

fat: When the Rhône has an exceptionally hot year for its crop and the wines attain a super sort of maturity, they are often quite rich and concentrated, with low to average acidity. Often such wines are said to be fat, which is a prized commodity. If they become too fat, that is a flaw and they are then called flabby.

flabby: A wine that is too fat or obese is a flabby wine. Flabby wines lack structure and are heavy to taste.

fleshy: Fleshy is a synonym for chewy, meaty, or beefy. It denotes that the wine has a lot of body, alcohol, and extract, and usually a high glycerine content. Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Hermitage are particularly fleshy wines.

floral: Wines made from the Muscat or Viognier grape have a flowery component, and occasionally a red wine will have a floral scent.

focused: Both a fine wine's bouquet and flavour should be focused. Focused simply means that the scents, aromas, and flavours are precise and clearly delineated. If they are not, the wine is like an out-of-focus picture—diffuse, hazy, and possibly problematic.

forward: An adjective used to describe wines that are (1) delicious, evolved, and close to maturity, (2) wines that border on being flamboyant or ostentatious, or (3) unusually evolved and/or quickly maturing wines.

fresh: Freshness in both young and old wines is a welcome and pleasing component. A wine is said to be fresh when it is lively and cleanly made. The opposite of fresh is stale. Fruity: A very good wine should have enough concentration of fruit so that it can be said to be fruity. Fortunately, the best wines will have more than just a fruity personality.

full-bodied: Wines rich in extract, alcohol, and glycerine are full-bodied wines. Most Rhône wines are full-bodied.

green: Green wines are wines made from under-ripe grapes; they lack richness and generosity as well as having a vegetal character. Green wines are infrequently made in the Rhône, although vintages such as 1977 were characterized by a lack of ripening.

hard: Wines with abrasive, astringent tannins or high acidity are said to be hard. Young vintages of Rhône wines can be hard, but they should never be harsh.

harsh: If a wine is too hard it is said to be harsh. Harshness in a wine, young or old, is a flaw.

hedonistic: Certain styles of wine are meant to be inspected; they are introspective and intellectual wines. Others are designed to provide sheer delight, joy, and euphoria. Hedonistic wines can be criticized because in one sense they provide so much ecstasy that they can be called obvious, but in essence, they are totally gratifying wines meant to fascinate and enthrall-pleasure at its best.

herbaceous: Many wines have a distinctive herbal smell that is generally said to be herbaceous. Specific herbal smells can be of thyme, lavender, rosemary, oregano, fennel, or basil and are common in Rhône wines.

hollow: Also known as shallow, hollow wines are diluted and lack depth and concentration.

honeyed: A common personality trait of specific white Rhône wines, a honeyed wine is one that has the smell and taste of bee's honey.

hot: Rather than meaning that the temperature of the wine is too warm to drink, hot denotes that the wine is too high in alcohol and therefore leaves a burning sensation in the back of the throat when swallowed. Wines with alcohol levels in excess of 14.5% often taste hot if the requisite depth of fruit is not present.

intensity: Intensity is one of the most desirable traits of a high-quality wine. Wines of great intensity must also have balance. They should never be heavy or cloying. Intensely concentrated great wines are alive, vibrant, aromatic, layered, and texturally compelling. Their intensity adds to their character, rather than detracting from it.

jammy: When wines have a great intensity of fruit from excellent ripeness they can be jammy, which is a very concentrated, flavourful wine with superb extract. In great vintages such as 1961, 1978, 1985, 1989, 1990, and 1995, some of the wines are so concentrated that they are said to be jammy.

Kisselguhr filtration system: This is a filtration system using diatomaceous earth as the filtering material, rather than cellulose,

leafy: A leafy character in a wine is similar to a herbaceous character only in that it refers to the smell of leaves rather than herbs. A wine that is too leafy is a vegetal or green wine.

lean: Lean wines are slim, rather streamlined wines that lack generosity and fatness but can still be enjoyable and pleasant.

lively: A synonym for fresh or exuberant, a lively wine is usually young wine with good acidity and a thirst-quenching personality.

long: A very desirable trait in any fine wine is that it be long in the mouth. Long (or length) relates to a wine's finish, meaning that after you swallow the wine, you sense its presence for a long time. (Thirty seconds to several minutes is great length.) In a young wine, the difference between something good and something great is the length of the wine.

lush: Lush wines are velvety, soft, richly fruity wines that are both concentrated and fat. A lush wine can never be an astringent or hard wine.

massive: In great vintages where there is a high degree of ripeness and superb concentration, some wines can turn out to be so big, full-bodied, and rich that they are called massive. A great wine such as the 1961 or 1990 Hermitage La Chapelle is a textbook example of a massive wine.

meaty: A chewy, fleshy wine is also said to be meaty.

monocepage: This term describes a wine made totally of one specific varietal.

monopole: Used to denote a vineyard owned exclusively by one proprietor, the word monopole appears on the label of a wine made from such a vineyard.

morsellated: Many vineyards are fragmented, with multiple growers owning a portion of the same vineyard. Such a vineyard is often referred to as a morsellated vineyard.

mouth-filling: Big, rich, concentrated wines that are filled with fruit extract and are high in alcohol and glycerine are wines that tend to texturally fill the mouth. A mouth-filling wine is also a chewy, fleshy, fat wine.

musty: Wines aged in dirty barrels or un-kept cellars or exposed to a bad cork take on a damp, musty character that is a flaw.

nose: The general smell and aroma of a wine as sensed through one's nose and olfactory senses is often called the wine's nose.

oaky: Many red Rhône wines are aged from 6 months to 30 months in various sizes of oak barrels. At some properties, a percentage of the oak barrels may be new, and these barrels impart a toasty, vanillin flavour and smell to the wine. If the wine is not rich and concentrated, the barrels can overwhelm the wine, making it taste overly oaky. Where the wine is rich and concentrated and the winemaker has made a judicious use of barrels, however, the results are a wonderful marriage of fruit and oak.

off: If a wine is not showing its true character, or is flawed or spoiled in some way, it is said to be "off."

overripe: An undesirable characteristic: grapes left too long on the vine become too ripe, lose their acidity, and produce wines that are heavy and balance. This can happen frequently in the hot viticultural areas of the Rhône Valley if the growers harvest too late.

oxidized: If a wine has been excessively exposed to air during either its making or aging, the wine loses freshness and takes on a stale, old smell and taste. Such a wine is said to be oxidized.

peppery: A peppery quality to a wine is usually noticeable in many Rhône wines that have an aroma of black or white pepper and a pungent flavour.

perfumed: This term usually is more applicable to fragrant, aromatic white wines than to red wines. However, some of the dry white wines (particularly Condrieu) and sweet white wines can have a strong perfumed smell.

plummy: Rich, concentrated wines can often have the smell and taste of ripe plums. When they do, the term plummy is applicable.

ponderous: Ponderous is often used as a synonym for massive, but in my usage a massive wine is simply a big, rich, very concentrated wine with balance, whereas a ponderous wine is a wine that has become heavy and tiring to drink.

precocious: Wines that mature quickly are precocious. However the term also applies to wines that may last and evolve gracefully over a long period of time, but taste as if they are aging quickly because of their tastiness and soft, early charms.

pruney: Wines produced from grapes that are overripe take on the character of prunes. Pruney wines are flawed wines.

raisiny: Late-harvest wines that are meant to be drunk at the end of a meal can often be slightly raisiny, which in some ports and sherries is desirable. However, a raisiny quality is a major flaw in a dinner wine.

rich: Wines that are high in extract, flavour, and intensity of fruit.

ripe: A wine is ripe when its grapes have reached the optimum level of maturity. Less than fully mature grapes produce wines that are under-ripe, and overly mature grapes produce wines that are overripe.

round: A very desirable character of wines, roundness occurs in fully mature wines that have lost their youthful, astringent tannins, and also in young wines that have soft tannins and low acidity.

savoury: A general descriptive term that denotes that the wine is round, flavourful, and interesting to drink. shallow: A weak, feeble, watery or diluted wine lacking concentration is said to be shallow.

sharp: An undesirable trait, sharp wines are bitter and unpleasant with hard, pointed edges.

silky: A synonym for velvety or lush, silky wines are soft, sometimes fat, but never hard or angular.

smoky: Some wines, either because of the soil or because of the barrels used to age the wine, have a distinctive smoky character. Côte Rôtie and Hermitage often have a roasted or smoky quality.

soft: A soft wine is one that is round and fruity, low in acidity, and has an absence of aggressive, hard tannins.

spicy: Wines often smell quite spicy with aromas of pepper, cinnamon, and other well-known spices. These pungent aromas are usually lumped together and called spicy.

stale: Dull, heavy wines that are oxidized or lack balancing acidity for freshness are called stale.

stalky: A synonym for vegetal, but used more frequently to denote that the wine has probably had too much contact with the stems, resulting in a green, vegetal, or stalky character to the wine.

supple: A supple wine is one that is soft, lush, velvety, and very attractively round and tasty. It is a highly desirable characteristic because it suggests that the wine is harmonious.

tannic: The tannins of a wine, which are extracted from the grape skins and stems, are, along with a wine's acidity and alcohol, its lifeline. Tannins give a wine firmness and some roughness when young, but gradually fall away and dissipate. A tannic wine is one that is young and unready to drink.

tart: Sharp, acidic, lean, unripe wines are called tart. In general, a wine that is tart is not pleasurable.

thick: Rich, ripe, concentrated wines that are low in acidity are often said to be thick.

thin: A synonym for shallow; it is an undesirable characteristic for a wine to be thin, meaning that it is watery, lacking in body, and just diluted.

tightly knit: Young wines that have good acidity levels, good tannin levels, and are well made are called tightly knit, meaning they have yet to open up and develop.

toasty: A smell of grilled toast can often be found in wines because the barrels the wines are aged in are charred or toasted on the inside.

tobacco: Some red wines have the scent of fresh tobacco. It is a distinctive and wonderful smell in wine.

troncais oak: This type of oak comes from the forest of Troncais in central France.

unctuous: Rich, lush, intense wines with layers of concentrated, soft, velvety fruit are said to be unctuous.

vegetal: An undesirable characteristic, wines that smell and taste vegetal are usually made from unripe grapes. In some wines, a subtle vegetable garden smell is pleasant and adds complexity, but if it is the predominant character, it is a major flaw.

velvety: A textural description and synonym for lush or silky, a velvety wine is a rich, soft, smooth wine to taste. It is a very desirable characteristic.

viscous: Viscous wines tend to be relatively concentrated, fat, almost thick wines with a great density of fruit extract, plenty of glycerine, and high alcohol content. If they have balancing acidity, they can be tremendously flavourful and exciting wines. If they lack acidity, they are often flabby and heavy.

volatile: A volatile wine is one that smells of vinegar as a result of an excessive amount of acetic bacteria present. It is a seriously flawed wine.

woody: When a wine is overly oaky it is often said to be woody. Oakiness in a wine's bouquet and taste is good up to a point. Once past that point, the wine is woody and its fruity qualities are masked by excessive oak aging.

Author's Note

Any healthy, mature human can enjoy the sensual and psychic pleasures of moderate wine drinking. It is no great mystery. It does not require extensive levels of knowledge or skills other than bringing a glass to the lips, inhaling, and swallowing. However, with just a little bit of knowledge, I hope you can experience the elaborate symphony in wine, and hopefully, the overall sensory experience will be transformed from a simple act of drinking to one of profound pleasure.

Wine appreciation and consumption is growing by leaps and bounds in India. I hope this booklet serves as a valuable guide to the hospitality industry, in their constant quest for self-improvement.

Expertise in any subject is earned through a diligent combination of study and practice. Wine appreciation is no exception. It certainly is, however, a far more enjoyable journey, than mere study or work. I have written this introduction, in an effort to bring you, that little bit of knowledge, to help you get jump-started on this wonderful journey of discovery; a journey, that I am still on, myself. So, keep on studying, keep on tasting, keep on discovering, and keep on enjoying.

I express my deepest thanks to my dear friends and fellow members at the Bangalore Wine Club – Anthony Corbaz, for sharing his tremendous knowledge on European and South American wines and the wine industry, and for sparing his valuable time to edit and correct this booklet; Abhay Kewadkar and Alok Chandra for sharing their treasure trove of information and knowledge on Indian wines and wine industry.

About the author



Devesh R. Agarwal, is a wine enthusiast based in Bangalore. A member of the Bangalore Wine Club, he has served on its Managing Committee. He is also the founder of the Rotarian's Wine Fellowship of India.

Having spent over 15 years in the United States and Singapore, Devesh's primary expertise is North American wines. He also has a passion for Rioja, Chianti, Gavi, Rieslings, and Ice-Wines, in addition to Single Malt whiskies, Scottish, Irish and Welsh, and well aged Caribbean Rums.

He has travelled extensively in many wine growing areas of North America, including much of California's Napa Valley, Sonoma County, and Santa Barbara County; Washington's Columbia and Yakima valleys; Canada's British Columbia, Pelee Island, and Niagara Peninsula; and the Comanche area in his home state of Texas, USA.

He can be reached by e-mail devesh_agarwal@hotmail.com