

Wines Study Guide for Prelim #1

Components, Winemaking, Viticulture, Wine Service, Wine Buying

What information on the wine label is important to review before accepting a wine in a restaurant?

who made the wine

location of grape/winery (where it was made)

when it was made/the year the grapes for that wine grew (vintage year)

what is in the bottle/the type of grape from which the wine was made (grape variety)

some indication of special handling, ranking or classification (such as AOC)

type of wine

alcohol content

year harvested

year produced

Varietal wine: a wine that is named after either the principal or the sole grape variety that makes up the wine.

Most California (and other American) wines carry varietal names.

Most European wines are named for the region/place where their grapes grow rather than for the grape variety itself.

For example, the labels say Burgundy, Bordeaux, etc.

The name of a place where grapes are grown in Europe automatically connotes the grape (or grapes) used to make the wine of that place.

Terroir (unique combination of natural factors that a particular vineyard site has) is the guiding principle behind the European concept that wines should be named after the place they come from.

Branded wines: most wines have brand names, including those wines that are named after their grape variety—like Cakebread (brand name) Sauvignon Blanc (grape) and those that are named after their region of origin—like Masi (brand name) Valpolicella (place).

These brand names are usually the name of the company that made the wine, called a winery.

Proprietary names are trademarked names that producers create for special wines.

In America, the bottles with proprietary names usually contain wines made from a blend of grapes.

European wines with proprietary names—the grapes used to make the wine were probably not the approved grapes for that region.

What are steps in the ritual of wine service in a restaurant and how should one proceed before accepting a wine?

1. The waiter or sommelier presents the bottle to you (assuming that you are the person who ordered the wine) for inspection. Eg. Check the label, feel temperature of bottle, nod approval
2. The server then removes the cork and places it in front of you. You should determine, by smelling and visually inspecting the cork, whether the cork is in good condition, and whether the cork seems to be the legit cork for that bottle
3. If your wine needs decanting, the server will decant it at this point
4. The server pours a small amount of wine into your glass and waits. Take a sniff of the wine, perhaps a little sip, and then either nod your approval or murmur "it's fine." If there is something wrong with your wine, now is the time to return it. Describe to the server what you found wrong: it smells musty and dank.
5. If you do accept the wine, the waiter will pour the wine into your guests' glasses and then finally into yours. Now you're allowed to relax.

What are generally accepted reasons for sending a bottle of wine back in a restaurant?

Defective Odors-

- Sulfur Dioxide- stinging sensation (in the nasal passage)
- Hydrogen Sulfide- Rotten eggs
- Mercaptans - Essence of skunk and rotten cabbage
- Oxidized - Bland (loss of flavor)
- Maderized - Cooked-Sherry like with nutty flavors
- Corked (TCA) - musty, moldy
- Dekka/Brettanomyces - horsey smell/bitter metallic taste
- Sorbate-Bubble gum smell
- Pediococcus - dirty socks smell
- Acetobacter can produce ethyl acetate aromas (nail polish remover)

Amber or brown color

If the wine is corky (cork has unpleasant odor) or if the cork is wet and shriveled or dry and crumbly (air has gotten into the wine and spoiled it).

When serving wine what is the proper sequence if more than one wine is being served?

- White before red
- Light before heavy
- Dry before sweet
- Simple before complex

How does the temperature of a wine affect its taste?

Red Wine