**Wines Study Guide for Prelim #1**

**Components, Winemakings 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 murmer "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 ahs 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

* Most red wines are best at cool room temperature. 62-65 degrees F (16-18 degrees C).
* Red served at actual room temperature (70 degrees F) can taste flat, flabby, lifeless, and often too hot with a burning sensation from the alcohol (room temperature in the past use to be much lower, 62-65).
* Red served too cold tastes overly tannic and acidic, decidedly unpleasant.
* Light, fruity red wines are most delightful when served slightly chilled at about 58-60 degrees F.

White Wine

* White wine can be served too cool->the higher quality the wine, the less cold it can be served so you can appreciate its flavor
* Most champagnes and sparkling wines—45F
* Inexpensive sweet wines—50-55F
* Fine, dry white wines—58-62F

**What are the major differences between how white and red wines are made?**

red wines ferment with juice, skins, and pulp; white with just juice

white wines’ pressing stage comes BEFORE fermentation; red wines’ pressing comes AFTER differences in cellar operations:

* red wines require racking to remove suspended particles; whites do not whites require a cold stabilization stage before the ion-exchange; reds do not red wines are aged before cellar operations but in white wines you go straight from fermentation to cellar operations

white wines can be ready soon after bottling but most full bodied reds require bottle aging (binning) for 1-10 years before they are at their peak

(both are aged after cellar operations)

**Which VITICULTURAL (grape growing) and VINICULTURAL (winemaking) practices affect a wine’s concentration, quality, flavor and price?**

Viticulture

* Grape variety (each grape variety has a different price value)
* Age of vine (affects yield, intensity and complexity)
  + In general, the first 2 years do not give much intensity to the fruit.
  + The third year yields the first grape crop—very basic juice.
  + In 5-15yrs, the vines are more prolific with more complex flavors and high yields.
  + 30-50 yr old vines yield decline in yields but flavor concentrations continue to increase.
  + Vines that are 50-100 yrs old have very low yields but a high intensity of flavors.
* Density of Planting
* Yield per Acre: There is a price differential depending on yields; top quality wines usually originate from 1.0-1.5 tons of grapes/acre yields.
* Soil type, topography, and microclimate (water): rain, avg. daily temp, # daylight hours, length of growing season, soil nutrients, slope etc.
  + All affect the quality of the wine. Marginal climates may produce unique wines, but vintage variation is significant.
* Land and Labor costs

Viniculture

* wine making (science and skill)
* equipment (such as fermenters, barrels, etc) and facilities impact the price-value relationship.
* production capacity and demand
* land and labor costs

Addition of sulfur dioxide to must—to prevent development of microbes.

Adding yeast: ferments grape’s sugar and converts it to carbon dioxide and alcohol

*Pressing* wine and pulp to extract liquid

*Fermetitation:* The juice is pumped into a glass-lined or stainless steel tanks where activated yeast is added to start fermentation-it is aged for months or years. Through this process, they extract pigments, giving the wine color, flavor, and body.

*Filtration*: passing wine through a filter to remove sediment that might make wine cloudy and/or to remove yeast, bacteria and other unwanted substances; also to stabilize the wine and to protect it from spoilage.

*Stabilization'.* adding chemicals

*Chaptalization*: a process commonly used in cool growing regions; the addition of sugar to the grape to boost the natural sugar level and produce a slightly higher alcohol level in the finished wine.

*Malolactic Fermentation*: a process in which malic acid can be converted to a softer lactic acid, which contributes to buttery flavors (by-product).

*Acidification*: the addition of acid to a finished wine—a process that is sometimes done in hot climates where natural acidity in the grapes is low.

*Amelioration:* the process where water and sugar are added to the grape to dilute acidity and boost the alcohol in the finished wine (commonly used in New York State’s cooler wine regions).

**What do the various grape components contribute to the finished wine?**

o Skin: white or red/black; gives you tannins (taste), and color

o Stalk: gives you tannins

o Pulp: gives you sugar, fruit acids, water and pectins

o Pips (seeds): gives bitter oils

o Aromatic compounds (Muscat-floral. Sauvignon blanc- herbaceous)

o Grape Sugar:

o -amount of sugar determines potential alcohol (measured in degrees Brix)

• -white grapes: generally 21-23 Brix yields 11-12% alcohol (ferm. dry)

• -red grapes: generally 22-24 Brix yields 12-13% alcohol

**What are the major components in wine and how do these influence taste, texture, and shelf life?**

* Water- dilutes other components (can be good or bad); makes up 85% of table wines
* Alcohol
  + TABLE WINES: affects mouth-feel, storage life, body (7-10%= light, 10-12%= medium. 12-14.5%= full)
    - Wines too high in alcohol will taste "hot" and give a burning sensation.
  + FORTIFIED WINES: have alcohol added (brandy) to boost levels to 20% Grape sugar yields alcohol
    - The amount of sugar (potential alcohol) depends on ripeness of grape at harvest (measured in degrees Brix)
    - Chaptalizaiton: the addition of sugar to the grape to boost the natural sugar level and produce a slightly higher alcohol level in the finished wine (common in cool growing regions)
* Acids- affect taste: contribute to crispness, structure, and balance
  + Tartaric, malic, lactic, citric
  + Malolactic Fermentation: high levels of Malic acid can be converted to a softer Lactic acid (but byproducts. like buttery flavors)
  + Acidification: the addition of acid (usually Tartaric) to the unfinished wine (sometimes done in hot climates where the natural acidity in the grapes is low).
  + Amelioration: the addition of water and sugar to the grape must to dilute acidity and to boost the alcohol in the finished wine.
    - low = flabby, flat taste
    - correct = crisp, fresh, lively taste
    - excess = green, harsh, sour taste
* Residual Sugar (sweetness)- wines with less than .4% sugar are technically dry residual sugar balances high acidity wines with high acidity can appear dry to the taste even though they have residual sugar
* From the grape skin
  + anthocyanins - provide color in the red wine (comes from the skin)
  + tannins: provide structure and aging potential; causes the mouth drying sensation and bitterness
  + Resveretrol: antioxidant in wine believed to be effective in lowering cholesterol levels.
  + Phenols, grape solids, sulfites and undesirable elements
* Smell/Taste
  + Flaws in the wine:
    - Oxidized
    - Maderized
    - Color changing
      * Red wines lose color as they age; white wines gain color (more yellow)
  + Aroma: the fragrance associated with the grape variety (Chardonnay: green aple, Sauvignon Blanc: grassy, herbal, citrus)
  + Bouquet: fragrances developed in the wine making and aging process.

**How does the winemaker shape or adjust various components in wine?**

* Chaptalization - the addition of sugar to the grape must to boost the natural sugar level and produce a slightly higher alcohol level in the finished wine. A common practice in cool growing regions.
* Acidification - the addition of acid (usually tartaric) to the finished wine. Makes the wine more stable, more palatable. This is sometimes done in hot climates where the natural acidity in the grapes is low.
* Amelioration - the addition of water and sugar to the grape must to dilute acidity and boost the alcohol in the finished wine. A practice used in New York State’s cooler wine regions.
* Malolactic Fermentation - a process in which malic acid can be converted to a softer lactic acid, which contributes to buttery flavors (by-product).

**How do we evaluate wines? What are the stages of taste?**

* Sight, smell, and taste
* Our sense of taste is dependent on our sense of smell
* Appearance
  + Brilliant: wines free of any visible solids and having a sparkling clarity.
  + Clear: wines free of any solids but lacking the sparkling clarity of brilliant wines.
  + Dull: wines having an easily seen, distinct colloidal haze, but are free of visible suspended material.
  + Cloudy: wines containing large amounts of colloidal material or of suspended particles.
  + Precipitated: wines containing non-colloidal material of crystalline or amorphous nature which may settle out as a visible deposit leaving the wine relatively clear.
* Color
  + white- almost colorless or very light straw, light yellow or straw with or without a greenish tint, medium yellow, light gold, medium gold.
  + red- young immature: purple red, youthful: ruby/garnet, mature: brick red (rusty edges), declining: tawny (brown edges), over the hill- brown/muddy
    - Pink or rose (small amount of anthocyanins; orange tint from over aging or over oxidation)
  + Light red
  + Medium red (applies to most California standard red wines)
  + Dark red (used mainly for blending purposes; they frequently have a blue or purple tint)
  + Tawny color: red wines when aged for a long time, when heated or over- oxidized, acquire a color that is a mixture of brown with the red of the original (characteristic of tawny ports).
* Smell/Odors
  + Aroma- fragrance associated with grape variety
    - aromas can be closed, distinctive, very distinctive
    - Example: Pinot Noir—cherries (ripe or tart, berries, strawberries. violets)
  + Bouquet- fragrances developed in winemaking and aging process With bottle age the bouquet changes
    - Wood (vat) influence: vanilla, toasty, smoky, spice
    - bouquets can be closed, distinctive, very distinctive
    - The bouquet is influenced by esters formed during fermentation and developed during barrel and bottle aging.
* Stages of taste:
  + Attack (Introduction) - occurs within the first 5 seconds
  + Evolution (around palette) - sensations, occur within the next 5 seconds
  + Finish (as swallowing) - stage ends when it is spit or swallowed
  + Aftertaste (after swallowing) - how long does it last?
* Flavors-intensity and persistence off and aftertaste
* Acidity
  + Flat
  + Crisp
  + Tart
* Sweetness
  + Sugar/Acid Balance: balanced/unbalanced