



'confidence for front line staff'

**WSET® Level 1
Award
in Wines**

Study Guide

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WSET® Level 1 Award in Wines



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Introduction

Welcome to the WSET® Level 1 Award in Wines

This qualification will provide a basic introduction to the main styles of wines available to front-line staff involved in the service of wine. This qualification aims to provide the basic product knowledge and skills in the storage and service of wines required to prepare a person for their first job in wine hospitality or retail.

Your Learning Objectives

By the time you have completed this programme you will be better able to:

- Display an understanding of the main types and styles of wines available.
- Display an understanding of how to store wines.
- Display an understanding of how to serve wines to customers.
- Display an understanding of the issues relating to the safe consumption of wine.
- Display an understanding of the basic principles of food and wine pairing.

Throughout this course you will use this study guide, with the help of your assigned educator to achieve the knowledge required for the WSET® Level 1 examination. It will usually take between six to nine hours to cover all the requirements for the qualification, but you may wish to take more of your own time for study or tasting, especially if you have an extensive range of wines for sale.

The Assessment

The assessment will test your knowledge and understanding of wines, and will consist of 30 multiple choice questions. You will need to answer at least **21** questions correctly to pass and obtain the **WSET® Level 1 Award in Wines**.



Element 1: An Introduction to Wine

Wine is made in many different types and styles, and sells at a vast range of prices.

The **WSET® Level 1 Award in Wines** has been designed by the WSET® to help you make sense of this diversity, and to give an insight into what wine is, what it tastes like and how to pair it to food. By the end of the course you will be able to use this knowledge to confidently advise your customers on the wines you work with. By knowing more about wines, you will also get more enjoyment from the wines you try.

Throughout this study guide there are activities, exercises and tastings that you will be asked to perform before you move on to the next stage. The exercises are designed to help you progress through the course and they will help you check your own understanding on the subject.



Let us start by looking at what varieties of wine you may see on a wine list.

Activity



You will be given a copy of a wine list. Take a few moments now to look through it and see how the wines are listed. Think about the following questions before you go on to the next stage:

- Approximately how many wines are listed?
- What is the range of prices?



Now look at the layout of the list.

- What categories or headings are used?
- Are these divisions useful?
- Why?



This programme is divided up according to the style of the wine, rather than price or country of origin. This may not match the layout of the list you are looking at, but it means in effect that the flavour, structure and texture of the wines within each section are similar, so once you have discovered a taste you like, you will be able to find suitable wines.



What is Wine?

Put very simply, wine is a drink made from the fermented juice of freshly-picked grapes. As such it is often described as one of the most natural of all alcoholic drinks.

Fermentation is a natural process caused by yeast. Yeast are microscopic organisms that live naturally alongside grapes in the vineyard and winery. To live, yeast feed on sugar, as found in grape juice, converting it into alcohol and carbon dioxide gas.

However, wine is more than just alcoholic grape juice. There are many influences on how a wine looks, smells and tastes, which give a wide variety of styles. That variety will give a wide selection of wines to choose from in a bar, restaurant or shop.

Wine Types / Wine Styles

First let's think about some basics. There are three **types** of wine.

They are:

- Light Wine
- Sparkling Wine
- Fortified Wine



Light Wines



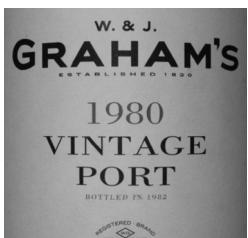
The majority of wines fall into this category. These are what you would normally think of when someone says “wine”. They are still, that is not sparkling, or fizzy, and are between 8–15% alcohol, with the majority containing 11.5 - 14% alcohol. Many light wines are named after the region they are produced in. Examples include Bordeaux and Burgundy from France, Rioja from Spain and Chianti from Italy. Wines from New World countries such as Australia are often labelled with the name of the grape used, such as Chardonnay or Shiraz.

Sparkling Wines



These are wines where bubbles of carbon dioxide gas have been trapped in the wine. Often seen as the wine for celebration, its best known (and usually most expensive) example is Champagne from France. Another example is Cava from Spain, but sparkling wine is made all over the world.

Fortified Wines



These wines have had extra alcohol added to them and therefore have higher alcohol levels of 15–22%. Examples of fortified wines include Sherry from Spain and Port from Portugal.

Activity



Think back to the exercise you did earlier, when you looked at your wine list. Were the three different wine types listed separately?



Styles of Wine

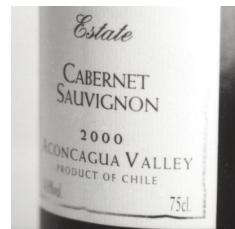
Each of the three types of wine can be made in a variety of styles according to colour and taste.

Colour

The colour of a wine can be determined by the type of grapes used and/or the way the wine is made:

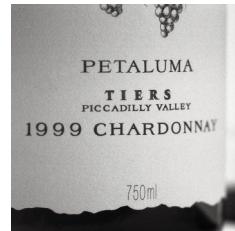
Red

The colour of red wine comes from using black grapes to make the wine as the colour comes from the grape skins. The juice is fermented in contact with the grape skin, colouring the juice.



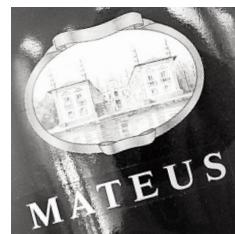
White

White wine is usually made from the juice of white grapes, but because all of the colour in black grapes is in the skin, it is possible to make white wine from black grapes if you remove the skins before fermentation. White wines are often seen as the lighter, refreshing, alternative to red wines.



Rosé

These wines are made from black grapes where the wine has had less contact with the skins. Rosé wines are usually not as full as red wines but offer more body than white. Rosé tends to be a very seasonal drink, selling mostly in summer.



Activity



Look at the wine list.

Which of the wines on the list would fit in the categories in the grid below?

Fill in as many of the category boxes as you can with wines from the wine list. Don't worry if your wine list doesn't fill all the categories, you can ask your educator to give you some suitable suggestions.

	Light Wine	Fortified Wine	Sparkling Wine
Red			
White			
Rosé			

Sweetness



Grape juice is naturally sweet but as yeast feeds on the grape sugars during fermentation, the juice becomes less sweet. The yeast will die once the alcohol reaches 15% or when all the sugars have been used. Once the yeast is dead, any sugar remaining in the wine will determine how sweet a wine is.

Dry

The majority of wine you will taste will be dry because the yeast will have turned all the sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide gas. Most red wines and the majority of white are dry, although some are drier than others. Examples of dry white wines are Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand, Fino Sherry from Spain and Brut Champagne. Dry red wines include Châteauneuf-du-Pape from France, Chianti from Italy and Cabernet Sauvignon from California.

Medium

The wines you will taste that are medium will usually be white or rosé. To make a medium wine the winemaker either removes the yeast from the juice before all the sugar has been consumed or adds unfermented, sweet grape juice to dry wine. A medium wine should have sweetness but not be cloying or sickly. Many popular wines from Germany are in this style, as are many rosé wines such as White Zinfandel from California.

Sweet

The amount of sugar in sweet wines makes them feel thicker and richer. Sweet wines can be made from grapes so rich in sugar that the yeast dies before all the sugar is consumed. The sweetness should be balanced with a refreshing acidity to prevent these wines from being cloying. Alternatively the yeast can die through the addition of extra alcohol. Examples of sweet wines are Sauternes from France, and Port from Portugal.



Body

This is the general feel of the wine in the mouth when you taste.

Light Bodied

Wines light in body are usually refreshing and easy to drink. An example of a light-bodied white is Pinot Grigio from Italy and for red wine, Beaujolais from France.

Medium Bodied

The wine will feel richer and more substantial, this may be because of the grapes used or because the wine may have been in oak barrels, thereby giving an extra texture to the wine. Examples of medium-bodied wines are white Burgundy from France and Merlot from Chile.

Full Bodied

The wine will be powerful and will seem more concentrated and heavy. This is usually due to the ripeness of the grape and for some wines the use of oak. Examples of full-bodied wines are oaked Chardonnay from California and Shiraz from Australia.



Other Factors

The other considerations you should take into account when describing a wine style are:

Oak

You may have noticed the word *oak* on wine labels. This means that the wine has been fermented or matured in oak and will have gained flavours, tannin and texture from contact with the wood. White wines can become buttery and gain vanilla flavours. Red wines can become smoother, with added spicy character.



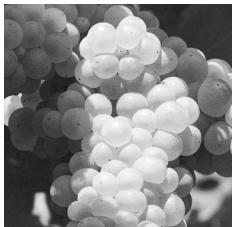
Tannin

Tannin is a substance found in black grape skins. Tannin is felt on the teeth, gums and tongue and makes the mouth feel dry. It is the same substance that makes cold black tea feel dry. It can make a young red wine seem harsh. It doesn't sound good to have tannin in wines but they do bring positive qualities to wines. They can give structure and complexity to a wine, as well as helping it to mature.

Acidity

Acidity comes from grape juice and is very important to wine, it gives the wine its refreshing qualities. You can detect acidity by a mouth watering sensation. Too much acidity can make the wine tart. With too little, the wine will be flabby and seem flat. Acidity can help a wine mature such as the white wines made from Riesling from Germany. It can also stop sweet wines from being cloying and sickly by cleansing the palate and giving balance.

Activity



You will need two grapes with some stalk attached for the next task.

Firstly, peel one of the grapes so you have the skin separate from the flesh of the grape. If your peeled grape has pips (many table grapes don't) separate the pips from flesh and set aside.

Now you are ready to undertake your first tasting task.

- First taste the flesh only, what are you tasting and where in your mouth are you tasting it? Write down what you have tasted in the box below.

Flesh



Did your mouth water?

That's acidity.

Can you taste sweetness on the tip of your tongue?

That's the sugars in the grape juice.

- Next chew the skin. What has happened to your mouth? Describe what has happened in your mouth in the box below.

Skin



Did your mouth dry out?

That's the effect of the tannin in the skins.

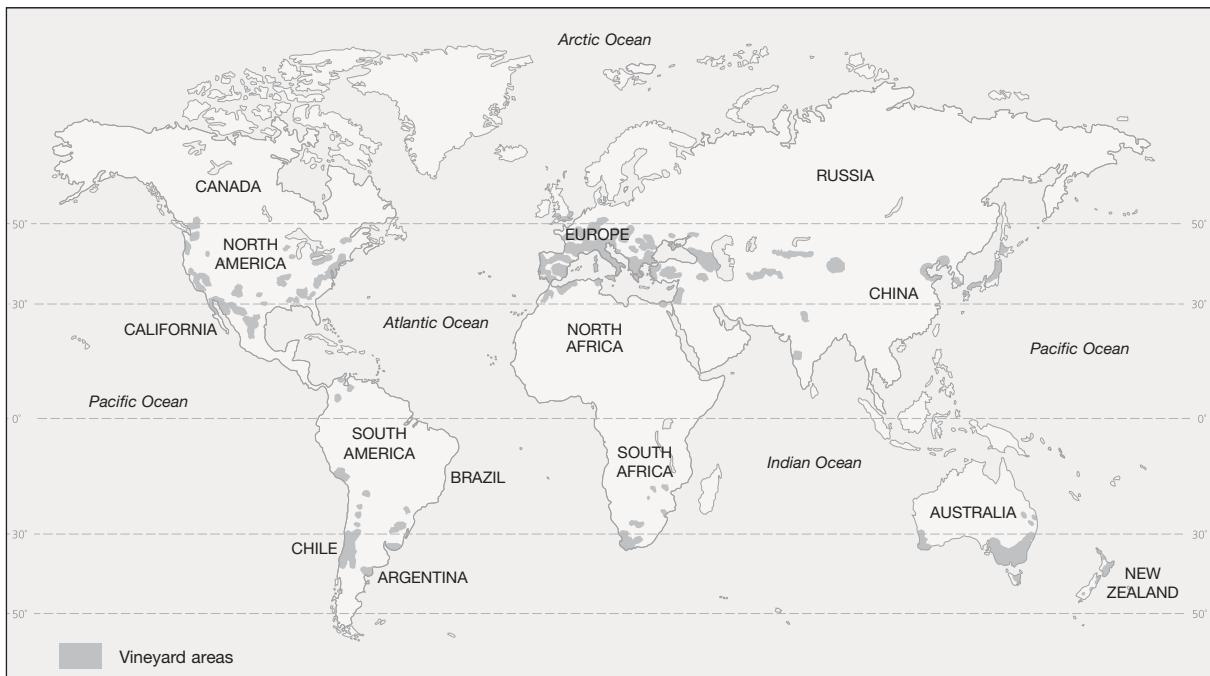
- Now taste the second grape. Note how the taste is different from the separate parts – not as sweet, not as acidic and not so tannic – more balanced, in fact.



What Makes Wines Different?

Climate

To understand what makes wines different we will first need to look at how grapes ripen. It is important that grapes, like other fruit, have enough sunlight and heat to ripen. If there is enough sunlight and heat the grapes ripen properly, the level of acid drops and the level of sugar increases. In the case of black grapes the skins change colour too from green to red and then deep purple. If there is not enough sunlight and heat then the grapes remain too acidic and they do not become sweet enough. A wine made from these grapes tastes thin and sour. If there is too much sunlight and heat then the grapes do not keep enough acid and become too sweet. A wine made from these grapes tastes overly alcoholic, flabby and lacks balance.



The amount of sunlight and heat that a region normally gets is known as its climate. Knowledge of a region's climate gives us an idea of the expected temperature and weather conditions the grapes experience and the style of wine likely to be made.

Cool Climate

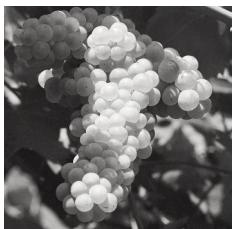
Examples include regions in Northern France and Germany. Cool climate regions will give wines that are:

- Mainly white
- High in acidity
- Lower in alcohol
- Refreshing

Hot Climate

Examples include regions in Southern France, Central Spain and Australia. Hot climate regions will give wines that are:

- Mainly red because black grapes need more heat to ripen
- High in alcohol
- Rich in flavour



Principal Grape Varieties

The variety or blend of varieties used to make a wine has the biggest influence on the style of wine produced. There are hundreds of grape varieties suitable for winemaking but only a small number of varieties have established a reputation for making outstanding wines. The seven grape varieties you will study as part of this unit are known as 'noble' varieties. Each variety has a distinctive character or flavour which is recognisable wherever the grape is grown.

White Grapes

Chardonnay

Say it - Shar-don-nay

Probably the best known grape in the world, Chardonnay is planted in many wine regions and produces dry wines of great variety. In cool regions, it can develop flavours of green fruits (apple), citrus notes and high acidity, characteristic of classic wines such as Chablis and Champagne from France. In warmer regions, the wines can develop flavours of stone fruit (peach) and tropical fruits (pineapple, banana) like those from the New World.

Chardonnay wines tend to be full-bodied, with a rich creamy texture. Many of the best Chardonnays spend some time in oak barrels, developing flavours of spice and vanilla.

Activity



Note some of the wines on your list that are made from Chardonnay.



Sauvignon Blanc

Say it - Sew-vin-yon-Blonk

Sauvignon Blanc produces wines that are intense fruity and light to medium-bodied wines with refreshingly high acidity. They are almost always dry. They can have strong aromas of green fruit, citrus (grapefruit, lime) and herbaceous notes (cut grass, green bell pepper, asparagus). New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, and Sancerre and Pouilly Fumé from France are popular wines made from this variety.

**Activity**

Note some of the wines on your list that are made from Sauvignon Blanc.

**Riesling**

Say it - Rees-ling

The Riesling grape produces wines that range from dry through to sweet, and from light to medium-bodied, but above all, they are intensely fruity with high levels of acidity. They can range in flavours from stone fruits (peach, apricot), to citrus (lime) and floral notes. They can age well, developing aromas of petrol and dried apricot. Riesling is the classic grape of Germany producing a range of dry to sweet wines. Alsace in France and Australia are producing some very distinctive dry wines.

**Activity**

Note some of the wines on your list that are made from Riesling.





Black Grapes

The black grape varieties covered in this section all have the ability to age. This helps to soften the tannins and allow the wines to gain complexity. Aromas of leaves and mushroom can develop.

Cabernet Sauvignon

Say it - Ca-bur-ney-Sew-vin-yon

Widely planted around the world, Cabernet Sauvignon produces deeply coloured wines with lots of tannins and acidity, and intense aromas. It can range between medium and full-bodied, with typical flavours of black fruits (blackcurrant, black cherry) and herbaceous notes (bell pepper, mint). Oak is frequently used to soften tannins and add flavours of spice and vanilla. Due to its high levels of tannins, Cabernet Sauvignon is often blended with other grape varieties, such as Merlot in Bordeaux, which adds softness and body to the blend. It is grown widely in California and Australia too, where it is sometimes blended with Shiraz which adds richness and spice to the wines character.

Activity



Note some of the wines on your list that are made from Cabernet Sauvignon.



Merlot

Say it - Mer-low

Merlot is a popular, softer, alternative to Cabernet Sauvignon. Its wines are generally full-bodied with low to medium tannins. Merlot has an intense fruit flavour, ranging between aromas of red fruits (strawberry, plum) to black fruits (blackberry, black cherry). St Emilion is a Merlot based wine from Bordeaux. In the New World, Chile makes good value rich and fruity examples. Merlot can gain added richness from maturing in oak, giving extra aromas of spice and vanilla. It is also commonly blended with Cabernet Sauvignon which adds tannin, acidity and aromatic fruit to its character.

Activity



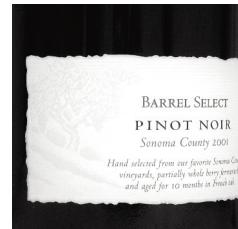
Note some of the wines on your list that are made from Merlot.



Pinot Noir

Say it - Pee-no N-wa

Compared to other black varieties, Pinot Noir tends to be lighter in colour and body with low to medium tannins and high acidity. It produces wines with flavours of red fruit (strawberry, raspberry, red cherry) Pinot Noir is the grape used for red Burgundy. In the New World, New Zealand makes fuller bodied wines using this grape. It can also be used in the making of Champagne.

**Activity**

Note some of the wines on your list that are made from Pinot Noir.

**Syrah or Shiraz**

Say it - Si-rah, Shi-razz

This grape variety is known as Syrah in France and Shiraz in Australia. It produces rich, powerful, peppery deeply coloured wines, that are usually full-bodied, with medium to high tannins. Typical flavours are of black fruits (cherry, blackberry), with spice (black pepper, cloves) and herbaceous notes (mint). Many undergo oak ageing giving flavours of vanilla and spice to the wine.

The Northern Rhône in France can produce wines that are medium-bodied with high tannins and black fruit aromas. In comparison, Australia can produce full-bodied, spicy wines with softer tannins.

**Activity**

Note some of the wines on your list that are made from Syrah or Shiraz.





Named Wines made from Principal Grape Varieties

In Europe many wines are named after the region they are produced in. Famous examples are:

- **Chablis** is a light-bodied French dry wine. It is unoaked with high acidity, green fruit (apple) and citrus aromas that is made from Chardonnay.
- **Champagne** is a French sparkling wine that can be made from a blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. It has high acidity.
- **Sancerre** is a medium-bodied French wine with high acidity, medium to pronounced flavours of green fruit and herbaceous notes. It is made from Sauvignon Blanc.
- **Red Bordeaux** is a medium-bodied and high tannin French wine that is typically a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. It often has oak aromas and flavours.

Other Popular Grape Varieties

As well as the seven noble varieties listed above, there are hundreds of other grape varieties in use today. One of particular note is:

- **Pinot Grigio** is a grape variety that is grown in Italy and used for dry white wines that are light in body and flavour, with a high acidity.

Other Popular Named Wines

In Europe many wines are named after the region they are produced in. Famous examples are:

- **Sauternes** is a sweet white wine made in Bordeaux. It is full-bodied with stone fruit (apricot) and honey flavours but balanced with acidity.
- **Soave** is a light-bodied, Italian wine with citrus and apple flavours and high acidity.
- **Cava** is a popular light-bodied sparkling wine from Spain which is less expensive than Champagne.
- **Châteauneuf-du-Pape** from France is a full-bodied red wine with red fruits and spicy flavours.
- **Rioja** from Spain is a medium to full-bodied red wine that often has red fruit and spicy oak flavours.
- **Chianti** from Italy is a medium-bodied red wine, with high tannin and acidity.
- **Beaujolais** is a red wine from France that is unoaked, light-bodied with fresh and fruity flavours of red fruit and low tannins.



How Wine is Made

Grapes are harvested in the Autumn.

Black grapes for red wine are crushed and their stems are removed, the juice is kept in contact with the skins during fermentation to give colour to the wine and add tannin, both of which are found in the skin.



For rosé wines the time spent in contact with the skin is shorter so that the wine is lighter in colour, pink rather than red.

For white wine, only the juice is used. The tannins and any colour in the skins are not desired. White wines are usually made from white grapes, but because the juice in black grapes is uncoloured, white wine can also be made from black grapes.

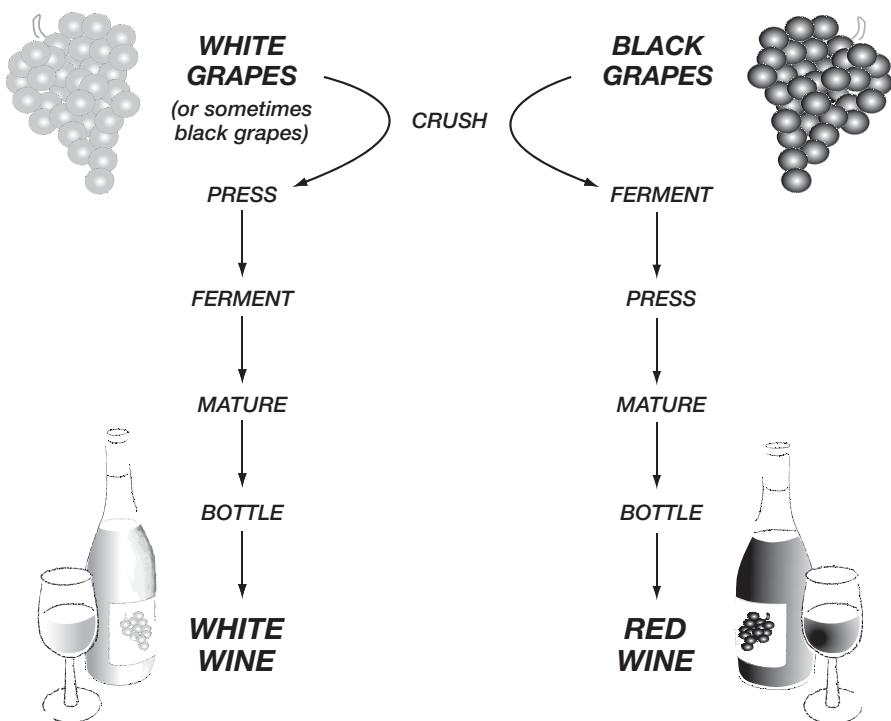
The juice is then fermented, the winemaker will have a choice of wooden vats or stainless steel tanks, this can influence the final style of wine by either adding flavours or not.

The newly fermented wine is removed from its fermentation vessel, and in the case of red wine it will be pressed first to remove the wine from the skins.

The wine is then matured. Some wines mature for longer than others according to the style of wine required. Wines matured in oak barrels take on oak flavours and aromas.

Finally the wine is bottled. Some wines are ready to drink straight away. Others, in particular tannic red wines, are matured further in bottle.

THE WINEMAKING PROCESS





Activity

Let's check what we have learnt so far by completing the word search...

What type of wine has extra alcohol added?

The name of a famous sparkling wine?

As the grape ripens, what increases in the grape?

What can make your mouth water when tasting wine?

A red wine from Spain?

A substance found in the skins of grapes?

Another name for the black grape Syrah?

Well known German white grape variety?

The material used to make barrels for maturing wine?

C	H	A	M	P	A	G	N	E	K
O	T	R	D	D	R	W	O	V	K
P	R	I	E	S	L	I	N	G	O
S	H	I	R	A	Z	M	B	T	A
A	O	D	G	D	M	T	O	R	C
F	E	A	K	L	O	A	O	I	I
G	E	M	K	M	T	N	P	O	D
O	A	W	R	O	C	N	N	J	I
P	R	E	D	I	V	I	T	A	T
Z	U	X	L	Y	A	N	I	O	Y
O	U	Y	S	U	G	A	R	P	P
Z	F	O	R	T	I	F	I	E	D



Wine Tasting

How to Taste like the Professionals

Wines are often described in terms of various characteristics of taste. You will probably have heard people talking about dry or sweet wines, light-bodied or full-bodied wines, wines with ‘hints of oak’, or wines reminiscent of any number of different fruits. Before we go any further we need to look at how professionals taste and describe wine.



Tasting Technique

Anyone can become an expert if they follow this simple three-point plan:

Look

First look at the wine in your glass over a piece of white paper such as your tasting sheet.

Classify your wine as red, white or rosé, you may wish to add more to your notes, such as pale lemon, or deep purple. Your educator will help you recognise some of the colours, but what is important is that you know which of the wines on the wine list are reds, whites or rosé.

Smell

Sniff the wine then swirl the wine around the glass and sniff again.

Notice how this releases the aromas. The smell of the wine should be clean, you don’t want to drink faulty wines. The aromas will give you an idea of the wine’s character.



Faulty aromas are easy to spot. If you detect a musty smell (like damp cardboard), or the wine has a vinegary or nail varnish smell, or any smell equally unpleasant, the wine will more than likely have a fault and not be good to drink.



Taste

Take a sip of wine and, without dribbling, draw the wine and some air over your taste buds. You will make a slurping noise. This helps to release flavour and aromas.

Tasting the wine you can detect the:

Sweetness Dry, medium or sweet

Flavour characteristics Fruits, flowers, spices, vegetables, oak, other

- **Fruits and Flowers** – These flavours often indicate the presence of a certain grape variety. For example Cabernet Sauvignon can have a blackcurrant flavour and some Rieslings can have aromas of flowers.
- **Spices and Oak** – Sweet spices, such as vanilla can indicate the use of oak. Some grape varieties such as Shiraz can give spicy, peppery aromas.
- **Vegetables** – The most important of these are the herbaceous flavours such as green bell pepper, asparagus and cut grass. These are characteristic of fresh young wines. The most important of these is Sauvignon Blanc.
- **Other flavours** – Some wines that have been matured for a long time in bottle can develop unique flavours such as wet leaves and mushrooms.

Body Light, medium or full bodied

Other characteristics Tannin, acidity

Don't forget, all professional wine tasters spit, to avoid consuming excess alcohol and in order to keep their palate fresh for the next wine.

Activity

Tasting



Now let's taste some wines.



Element 2: The Storage and Service of Wine**Storing and Serving Wine****The Storage of Wine**

Let's first look at the storage of wine. If a wine is incorrectly stored it can affect the flavour of the wine and in severe cases the wine will become faulty.

The following general points should be followed when storing wine:

- For long-term storage, wines should be kept at a cool and constant temperature. Extremes of cold and heat can damage wines.
- Store wine on its side to ensure the cork remains in contact with the wine. If the cork dries out it can let in air and the air will make the wine taste stale and old.
- Keep wines away from strong sunshine and bright artificial light. These can heat the wine and make it become stale and old before its time.



Preparation of Wine

Let's look at the preparation of wines that need chilling. White, rosé and sparkling wines need to be chilled before serving. Enough wine for the occasion should be placed in the refrigerator well in advance. Stock rotation is important – you should always move the old stock to the front when replenishing the wine chiller, so that the wine that has already been chilled is served first.

White, Rosé and Sparkling Wines

Style of Wine	Example of Style of Wine	Service Temperature
Medium/full-bodied oaked white	Oaked Chardonnay	Lightly chilled 10-13°C (50-55°F)
Light/medium-bodied white and rosé	Pinot Grigio	Chilled 7-10°C (45-50°F)
Sweet wines	Sauternes	Well chilled 6-8°C (43-45°F)
Sparkling wines	Champagne, Cava	Well chilled 6-10°C (43-50°F)

Remember over chilling can mask the flavours in white wines.



Red wines should also be prepared and available at the correct temperature. This could mean bringing supplies out of a cool cellar to ensure they are not too cool, or some red wines may need to be lightly chilled before service.

Red Wines

Style of Wine	Example of Style of Wine	Service Temperature
Light-bodied red	Beaujolais	Lightly chilled 13°C (55°F)
Medium/full-bodied red	Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Châteauneuf-du-Pape	Room temperature 15-18°C (59-64°F)

Remember the average room temperature will vary due to the time of year, heating or air conditioning. Be careful that red wines don't get too warm or too cold.



Glassware

An enormous range of glass shapes and sizes are used for the service of wine, with each designed to emphasise a particular wine's characteristics. The use of the correct glass enhances the drinking experience. Although most restaurants and bars only have a few different shaped glasses, it is important that you know which is the correct glass to use.



Red Wine

Red wines are best served in larger-sized glasses. This will allow air to come into contact with an enlarged wine surface and develop the aromas and flavours – remember when you tasted wine earlier, how the aromas were easier to smell when you swirled the wine.



White and Rosé Wine

White and rosé wines require medium sized glasses so that the fresh, fruit characteristics are gathered and directed towards the top of the glass.



Sparkling Wine

Sparkling wines are served in flute glasses. This shape enhances the effect of the bubbles (and thus the wine's aroma) allowing them to travel through larger areas of the wine before bursting at the top of the glass. For this reason the saucer-shaped glasses are completely inappropriate because the bubbles are very quickly lost.



Fortified Wine

Fortified wines should be served in small glasses to emphasise the fruit characteristics rather than the alcohol.

Activity



Using a selection of glasses, select the ones you would use for which type and style of wine. Write down your findings.





Preparing Glasses

Clean glassware is of the uppermost importance, as even the slightest taint can ruin the flavour of the wine. This can also apply to 'clean' glasses from a glass washing machine. It is worth checking the glasses to make sure no detergent residues remain in the glass as they can give strange flavours to wines. In the case of sparkling wine, it will make it lose its sparkle more quickly.

The best way to prepare glasses is to polish them before each use. This will make sure the glasses are clean and free of finger marks and dust.

Corkscrews

Types of Corkscrews



Ice Buckets

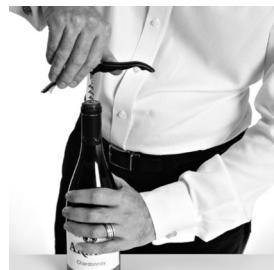
When serving a bottle of sparkling or white wine at the table you can use an ice bucket to keep the wine chilled. There are different forms of ice bucket available. Some require ice to be placed in the bucket, some have a built in chilled sleeve and others have thick insulating walls to keep the wine chilled.

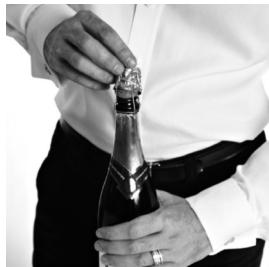


Opening a Bottle of Light Wine

Remove the top of the capsule by cutting round below the lip of the bottle.
This can be done either with a capsule remover or knife.

- Clean the neck of the bottle with a clean cloth.
- Draw the cork as gently and cleanly as possible using your selected corkscrew.
- Give the neck of the bottle a final clean inside and out.





Opening a Bottle of Sparkling Wine

Danger – It is important to remember that there is considerable pressure in a bottle of sparkling wine. Chilling to the correct temperature helps to reduce this pressure. Even when a wine is chilled, it is possible for the cork to spring violently from the bottle and injure someone. You may wish to use a linen cloth to cover the cork and neck of the bottle while opening, to reduce the risk of this happening.



The following is an example of how to open a sparkling wine.

- Remove the foil and the loosen the wire cage. Do not remove the wire cage.
- The cork must be kept securely in place from the moment the wire cage is loosened.
- Tilt the bottle at an angle of about 30 degrees, gripping the cork, and use the other hand to grip the base of the bottle.
- Turn the bottle, not the cork.
- Hold the cork steady, resisting its tendency to fly out, and ease it slowly out of the bottle.
- The gas pressure should be released with a quiet “phut” not an explosion and flying corks.



Serving Wine by the Glass

What to look for:

- Wine should be bright. Any dullness in the colour could mean the wine is spoiled.
- There should not be any debris floating in the wine.
- It should smell fresh. When a wine comes into contact with air (which happens as soon as you pull the cork) it starts to lose its freshness and flavours. A wine that has been in contact with air for too long can be dull and lack flavour.
- Check the nose of the wine. It should not smell unpleasant.



Once you have opened or checked the wine the next stage is to pour it.

When serving wine by the glass it is important that you use the correct measure.

Glasses may be marked with a line to show you how much to pour in the glass.

It is useful to know how many measures you can get from a standard 75 cL bottle. The diagram below shows how many glasses of wine you can get from a standard 75 cL bottle.

6 x 125 mL glasses



4 x 175 mL glasses



3 x 250 mL glasses





Methods used to Preserve Wine

Once you have served a glass of wine it is important that you store the wine correctly as this prolongs the wine's life and prevent wastage.

In many cases wines used for serving by the glass are kept in the fridge with nothing more for protection than the original cork. A wine kept this way will only stay fresh for a short period of time. In this case stock rotation is very important, as is keeping a record of when the bottle was opened. There are some methods that can be used which preserve the wine and its flavour for an extended period of time.

Vacuum Systems

These are systems where the oxygen is removed from the bottle and the bottle is sealed.

Blanket Systems

These systems work on the principal of blanketing the wine with a gas heavier than oxygen to form a protective layer between the wine and air.



Social Responsibility

Alcohol is enjoyed in moderation by the majority of adults. Most countries have legislation to control its misuse due to the harmful effects of excessive alcohol consumption. The legislation falls into four areas.

- minimum legal age to purchase or consume alcohol (LDA).
- maximum blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) for drivers and operators of other dangerous machinery.
- guidelines for sensible drinking.
- restrictions covering the marketing, packaging and sale of alcohol.

The first three elements are discussed in the following text, which has been supplied by AIM-Alcohol in Moderation. For further details about these topics, please consult the AIM website www.alcoholinmoderation.com

There is relatively little international standardisation relating to alcohol legislation, and in some cases there are differences between states within a country.

Legal Age to Purchase and Legal Drinking Age (LDA)

In many countries, a minimum age is set at which it becomes legal to drink or purchase alcohol. These laws help in preventing access to alcohol by those under a certain age on or off premise. The minimum drinking age may be different from the minimum legal age at which a person may purchase alcohol.

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)

A person's BAC level measures the amount of alcohol in the blood. Most countries around the world have legal BAC limits for drivers, with different penalties applied for breaking the law. BAC levels are affected by many factors hence the recommendation to nominate a non-drinking 'designated driver' or to plan other ways of getting home safely when drinking.

Sensible Drinking Guidelines

Recommendations on drinking levels considered "minimum risk" for men and women exist in many countries globally. Official drinking guidelines are issued by many governments and public health entities to advise on levels of alcohol consumption considered "safe", "responsible," or "low-risk". Some guidelines suggest one or two alcohol free days a week. It is also socially responsible to stop serving a drunken customer.

Standard Drinks

Official “drinks” or “units” generally contain about 12 mL of alcohol, although the measure varies among countries - there is no consensus internationally on a single standard drink size.

For the many countries where there are no official Government guidelines, it is recommended that the internationally recognised World Health Organisation low risk responsible drinking guidelines are followed. Taking a drink as 12 mL, these are:

- Women should not drink more than two units a day on average
- For men, not more than three units a day on average
- Try not to exceed four units on any one occasion
- Don’t drink alcohol in some situations, such as when driving, if pregnant or in certain work situations and abstain from drinking at least once a week.

Men or women who consistently drink more than these recommended levels may increase risks to their health.

Drinking to Drunkenness

If you drink faster than one standard drink an hour, alcohol will start to flood the brain. Depending on how much and how fast you’re drinking, it can affect the brain stem (even cause it to shut down) and this can interfere with vital body functions. Getting drunk impairs your judgement and can increase risky behaviour, which could result in:

- An increased risk of sustaining injuries and accidents
- A greater risk of engaging in unsafe sex
- An increased risk of fights, arguments and relationship problems
- In extreme cases, alcoholic poisoning, coma, brain damage and death.

Health Risks of Excess Drinking

Getting drunk or drinking heavily on a regular basis increases the risks of:

- Alcohol dependence or alcoholism
- Cirrhosis of the liver and alcoholic fatty liver
- Cardiac arrest and stroke
- Stomach disorders, such as ulcers
- Certain types of cancer
- Family and job related difficulties.



Element 3: An Introduction to Food and Wine Pairing

Food that is consumed with wine has an effect on the way a wine tastes, and wine can also have an effect on the taste of food. The purpose of food and wine pairing is to take advantage of these effects, so that ideally both the food and wine provide more pleasure than either would when consumed separately. Knowledge of these effects will also help avoid negative or unpleasant interactions.



In addition to understanding the basic taste interactions between food and wine, it is important to remember that people have different sensitivities to various flavour and aroma components, meaning that the same level of bitterness, for example, can affect one person much more strongly than another (this is different from a personal preference – some people like strong reactions while others find them unpleasant). Pairings should therefore take into account the preferences of the individual, as well as the basic interactions between food and wine.

Primary Food and Wine Taste Interactions

When you place food in your mouth, your taste buds adapt so that the perception of levels of sugar, salt, acid etc. of the next item to be tasted can be altered. An extreme example is when orange juice becomes unpleasantly acidic when consumed immediately after using toothpaste. In addition to this, some foods such as chocolate or thick creamy dishes can have a mouthcoating effect that impairs the sense of taste.

In simple terms there are two components in food (sweetness and umami) that tend to make wines taste ‘harder’ (more drying and bitter, more acidic, less sweet and less fruity), and two components (salt and acid) whose presence in food tends to make wines taste ‘softer’ (less drying and bitter, less acidic; sweeter, and more fruity). Generally, food has more impact on the way a wine will taste than the other way round, and in particular is more likely to have a negative impact.

Sweetness in Food

- Increases the perception of bitterness, acidity and the burning effect of the alcohol in the wine
- Decreases the perception of body, sweetness, and fruitiness in the wine.

Sweetness in a dish can make a dry wine seem to lose its fruit and be unpleasantly acidic. With any dishes containing sugar, a good general rule is to select a wine that has a higher level of sweetness.

Umami in Food

- Increases the perception of bitterness, acidity and alcohol burn in the wine
- Decreases the perception of body, sweetness and fruitiness in the wine.

Umami is a savoury taste, and is distinct from the other primary tastes, although it can be difficult to isolate. Whereas sweetness can be illustrated in isolation with sugar, salt with sodium chloride and acidity with a number of acids (e.g. tartaric acid); umami tends to be present with other tastes (with saltiness in Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) or with other flavours (e.g. in cooked or dried mushrooms). One of the simplest ways to experience it is to compare the taste of a raw button mushroom with one that has been microwaved for 30 seconds. The umami taste of the mushroom is greatly increased by the cooking. Umami can also be experienced by tasting MSG – either by eating a few grains, or in a weak solution. Note, however, that in this form, the umami taste is combined with a salt taste.

Many foods that are considered difficult to pair contain high levels of umami without salt to counteract the hardening effects on wine. These include asparagus, eggs, mushrooms and ripe soft cheeses. Other foods that are high in umami also tend to be high in salt, which can counteract the impact of umami on the wine (see below). These include cured or smoked seafood and meats, and hard cheeses (especially Parmesan).



Acidity in Food

- Increases the perception of body, sweetness and fruitiness in the wine
- Decreases the perception of acidity in the wine.

Some acidity in food is generally a good thing for food and wine pairing as it can bring a very high acid wine into balance and enhance the fruitiness. However, if the level of acidity in the wine is low, high levels of acidity in foods can make wines seem flat, flabby and lacking focus.

Salt in Food

- Increases the perception of body in the wine
- Decreases the perception of bitterness and acidity in the wine.

Salt is another wine-friendly component of food which can help soften some of the harder elements.

Bitterness in Food

- Increases bitterness in wine

Sensitivity to bitter tastes varies greatly from person to person. Generally, bitter flavours add to each other, so bitterness in the food alone may be at a pleasant level, and the bitterness in the wine may be balanced, but together the bitter elements can combine to reach an unpleasant level.

Chili Heat in Food

This is a tactile (touch) sensation rather than one of taste and levels of sensitivity can vary greatly from person to person. Not only are some people more sensitive than others, but there is also huge variation in how pleasant or unpleasant this effect feels to the individual. Chili heat in food:

- Increases the perception of bitterness, acidity, and alcohol burn
- Decreases the perception of body, richness, sweetness and fruitiness in the wine.

The intensity of the reaction increases with the level of alcohol in the wine. Alcohol also increases the burning sensation of the chili; some people enjoy this effect..

Other Considerations

Flavour intensity: It is usually desirable for the flavour intensities of the food and wine to be matched so that one does not overpower the other. However, in some circumstances, an intensely flavoured food (such as a curry) can be successfully partnered with a lightly flavoured wine – such as a simple, unoaked, light white. Equally, some lightly flavoured desserts can be successfully partnered with intensely flavoured sweet wines.

Acid and Fat: Most people find the combination of acidic wines with fatty or oily foods to be very satisfying. The pairing provides a pleasant sensation of the acidic wine ‘cutting through’ the richness of the food, and cleaning up the palate. This is a subjective effect.

Sweet and Salty: Also subjective is the pleasure of combining sweet and salty flavours, but this is a combination many people enjoy, and leads to some very successful food and wine pairings, such as sweet wine and blue cheese.



Applying the Principles

Because people vary in their sensitivities and preferences, there is no simple answer to the questions about which wines go best with which dishes and the host or sommelier should accept that their guests may not agree about which pairings work.

When selecting wines to partner dishes it can be helpful to divide dishes and wines into high risk and low risk. Of course, most foods and wines contain more than one of the structural components listed below so there are many possible permutations.



High risk foods

- **Sugar** – dishes high in sugar should be paired with a wine that has at least as much sugar
- **Umami** – dishes high in umami should be paired with wines that are more fruity than tannic as the umami in the food will emphasise the bitterness of the tannins.
- Umami** – high levels of umami in a dish can be balanced by the addition of acid or salt. However the amount added should not alter the basic character of the dish.
- **Bitterness** – dishes high in bitterness will emphasise bitterness in wine. Consider white wines or low-tannin reds.
- **Chili heat** – dishes high in chilli heat should be paired with white wines or low-tannin reds, both with low alcohol (as bitterness and alcohol burn can be highlighted for sensitive tasters). Fruitness and sweetness can also be reduced so think about wines with higher levels of these qualities to mitigate this effect.

Low risk foods – dishes high in **salt** and/or **acid**

Note, however:

- High-acid foods should generally be matched with high-acid wines, otherwise the wines can taste too soft and flabby.

High-risk wines

The more structural components in the wine (and food), the more possible taste interactions there will be. This makes pairing more complicated but also provides potential for more interesting results. The most problematic wines are those that have high levels of bitterness from oak and skin tannins, combined with high levels of acidity and alcohol, and complex flavours. However, these wines can undergo the most interesting changes when partnered with food and can reveal flavours that are hard to detect when the wines are consumed on their own.

Low-risk wines

Simple, unoaked wines with a little residual sugar are unlikely to be made unpleasant by any dishes. However, these kinds of wines change relatively little when partnered with food, so the food and wine pairing experiences can be less interesting.

One of the most productive ways of applying the principles identified above is to examine well established successful pairings, and analyse the reasons for the success. If these reasons are understood, then other wines can be identified that can also provide successful pairings. For example, Champagne works well with oysters because it is unoaked (so there is no bitter component to be spoiled by the umami taste of the oyster), relatively light in flavour (so as not to overwhelm the delicate flavour of oysters) and high in acid (so it still seems vibrant and refreshing when oysters are eaten with lemon juice, for example). Other wines that satisfy these criteria should also be successful pairings.



Activity

WINE TASTING EXERCISE

You should taste at least four styles of wines to see how they react with the foods listed below.

In each box, write down how the food and wine interacts. What works and what clashes.

Give each wine a rating from 1 to 5.

1 to be given for the best pair, 5 for the worst pair.

Wine	Dish 1	Dish 2	Dish 3	Dish 4	Dish 5



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Colour	red – rosé – white
Condition	clean – unclean
Sweetness	dry – medium – sweet
Body	light – medium – full
Flavour characteristics	e.g. fruits, flowers, spices, vegetables, oak, other
Other	acidity – tannin

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Wine	Kangaroo Leap Riesling	Price	£9.95
Colour	White		
Condition	Clean		
Sweetness	Dry		
Body	Medium-bodied		
Flavour Characteristics	Fruity – lime, tropical fruit		
Other	High Acidity	sample	

Wine	Price
Colour	
Condition	
Sweetness	
Body	
Flavour Characteristics	
Other	

Wine	Price
Colour	
Condition	
Sweetness	
Body	
Flavour Characteristics	
Other	





Wine	Price
Colour	
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Flavour Characteristics	
Other	



Wine	Price
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Wine	Price
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Body	
Flavour Characteristics	
Other	

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