



MIXOLOGY LEADERSHIP WINE BASICS: Growing and Processing

From Vine to Bottle: Much like our coffee, quality wine only comes into being through the care and hard work of many dedicated and passionate people. Each step of the process impacts the quality and taste.

Growing

Wine is an agricultural product. As grapes ripen, acidity decreases and sugar content increases. The grapes are picked when they reach the acid-to-sugar ratio that is appropriate for the style of wine they will produce.

Terroir (“ter-wahr”) is the environmental factors affecting the qualities of the grapes and production of the wine. Growing conditions influence flavor causing each vintage to produce different results:

- composition of the soil
- slope of the vineyard
- amount and intensity of sunlight/ wind/ rain in the vineyard

Wine grows all around the globe and thrives between 30° and 50° latitude north and south of the equator.

Popular regions include:

Europe: France, Italy, Spain, Germany

North America: United States (California, Oregon, Washington)

South America: Chile, Argentina

Africa: South Africa

Oceania: Australia, New Zealand

Processing

In each and every step of the wine-making process, the vintner determines the method of production, according to the style of the wine they wish to produce.



Wine grapes are cultivated under specific conditions usually harvested by hand.



Once grapes are pressed, yeast is added to the tanks to begin fermentation. The yeast eat the sugar in the juice, converting it to alcohol.



Wine is either aged in stainless steel tanks or in oak barrels creating additional flavor and character.



Wine is poured into bottles and sealed with a cork or screw cap.

What's different about making sparkling wines?

During fermentation, carbon dioxide is produced along with alcohol. In still wines, this carbon dioxide is allowed to dissipate, but in sparkling wine, that carbon dioxide is responsible for the wine's bubbles.



MIXOLOGY LEADERSHIP WINE BASICS: Tasting

Wine Tasting: Tasting wine is a lot like tasting coffee! Here are the tasting steps to wine and some of the tasting terms.

Tasting Steps

1. **See** – Evaluate color and clarity
2. **Swirl** – This action releases the aroma and dissipates the alcohol
3. **Smell** – Raise the glass to your nose and inhale deeply
4. **Taste** – Briefly swirl a mouthful. Evaluate acidity, body, texture/mouth feel, sweetness, flavor and balance.

Glossary of Terms

Aroma/Nose: The way wine smells. Each varietal has distinctive aromas. The winemaking process also contributes to the aroma.

Acidity: The mouth-watering sensation on the sides of your tongue. Acidity contributes to the lively, refreshing quality of wine.

Body: The impression of texture or weight in the mouth. Is the wine light-bodied (thin), full-bodied (well-rounded), or medium-bodied (which ranks in between)? Think of the changes in consistency of milk from 1% to whole.

Bright: Medium to high acidity.

Crisp: High acidity, like green apples.

Dry: In wine terms, not sweet.

Flavor: How the wine tastes. The taste registers in different parts of the mouth.

Glossary of Terms continued.

Finish: The aftertaste, how long the taste lingers.

Herbaceous: Having a grassy flavor.

Mouth feel: The feel of the wine in your mouth.

Oaky: The aroma and flavor of a wine that has been in contact with oak, either during fermentation or in the aging process. Many wines (particularly reds) are aged in oak barrels which influences the aroma and flavor. For example, it can add the aroma of sweet spices or a smoky flavor.

Robust: Having a big or rich flavor.

Rosé: French for “pink”; a category of refreshing wines that are pink in color but are made from red grapes with a small amount of contact with grape skins for color.

Tannic: Tannins are the coating you feel on the front of your teeth. They create an astringent sensation on your tongue. Tannins are derived from the skins, stems and seeds of the grapes, as well as from new oak barrels.

Varietal: A wine that uses the name of the dominant grape from which it is made. Examples include: Pinot Noir, Riesling, Chardonnay.

Vintage: A term that describes both the year of the actual grape harvest and the wine made from those grapes.

- Northern hemisphere, harvest is September-October.
- Southern hemisphere is March-April.



MIXOLOGY LEADERSHIP WINE BASICS: Varietals

Varietals: Common varietals, tasting notes and recommended pairings.

Pinot Noir /PEE'-noh NWAHR'/

Aroma: Cherry, raspberry **Acidity:** High, bright **Body:** Medium
Flavor: Fruity (cherry), earthy, spicy **Other:** Smooth, elegant
Best known origins: France, Oregon (U.S.), California (U.S.)
Pairing: Almost anything

Merlot /mehr-LOH'/

Aroma: Black cherry, plum, herbal, chocolate **Acidity:** Medium, low
Body: Medium **Flavor:** Soft red fruit, cocoa, black pepper
Other: Soft **Best known origins:** Almost all wine growing regions
Pairing: Almost anything

Malbec /MAHL'-bek/

Aroma: Blackberry, dark cherry, clove **Acidity:** Medium, low
Body: Medium, full **Flavor:** Rich, ripe fruit like in jam (plum, blackberry), spicy **Other:** Aromatic **Best known origins:** Argentina
Pairing: Red meat, tomato products

Syrah/Shiraz /see-RAH'/shee-RAHZ'/

Aroma: Pepper, berry, currant **Acidity:** Medium, low **Body:** Full
Flavor: Rich, ripe fruit (blackberry, black currant), spicy, pepper
Other: Intense **Best known origins:** France, Washington (U.S.), Australia
Pairing: Cheese, roasted meats

Cabernet Sauvignon /ka-ber-NAY' soh-vee-NYAWN'/

Aroma: Blackberry, plum, currant **Acidity:** Medium, low **Body:** Full
Flavor: Blackberry, currant, cedar, tannic **Other:** Rich
Best known origins: Almost all wine growing regions
Pairing: Strong flavored cheese, roasted meats, chocolate

Sparkling: Prosecco /preh-SEHK'-koh/

Aroma: Fruity, floral, sweet **Acidity:** High, bright
Body: Light **Flavor:** Slightly sweet, fruity **Other:** Refreshing
Best known origins: Italy
Pairing: Nuts, creamy foods

Moscato /mo-SCAH'-toh

Aroma: Apricot, Peach, Orange, Honey **Acidity:** Medium
Body: Light, medium **Flavor:** Sweet, Fruity **Best known origins:** Italy
Pairings: Sweet desserts

Pinot Grigio/Pinot Gris /PEE'-noh GREE'-jee-oh/ PEE'-noh GREE'/

Aroma: Sweet, tart candy, apricot **Acidity:** High, crisp **Body:** Light
Flavor: Tart fruit (apple, pear), floral **Other:** Delicate
Best known origins: Italy
Pairing: Salumi, light foods

Sauvignon Blanc /soh-vee-NYAWN' BLAWNK'/

Aroma: Herbal, passion fruit, lemon **Acidity:** High, crisp **Body:** Light
Flavor: Tart citrus fruit, herbal **Other:** Aromatic **Best known origins:** France, New Zealand, California (U.S.)
Pairing: Appetizers, salad, fish

Chardonnay /shar-duhn-AY'/

Aroma: Fruity, vanilla **Acidity:** Medium, light
Body: Full **Flavor:** Oaky, ripe fruits, vanilla **Other:** Rich
Best known origins: Almost all wine growing regions
Pairing: Creamy foods, chicken, fish



MIXOLOGY LEADERSHIP WINE BASICS: Italian Wines

Italian Wines: Common varietals, tasting notes and recommended pairings.

Barbera/ bar-BEH-rah /

Aroma: Red fruit, black cherry **Acidity:** High

Body: Medium **Flavor:** Jammy and spicy with raspberry and plum

Best known origins: Italy, Argentina, California (U.S.)

Pairing: Sausage, pizza, roasted meats

Vermentino / ver-mehn-TEE-noh/

Aroma: Pear, white peach, lime, pink grapefruit **Acidity:** Medium

Body: Medium **Flavor:** Dry, grapefruit, citrus

Best known origins: Italy

Pairings: Dishes with herbs and spices, pesto, sausage, fish

Sangiovese/ san-joe-VAY-seh /

Aroma: Vanilla, wild berries, anise **Acidity:** High

Body: Medium **Flavor:** Savory, rich fruit, notes of cherry and tomato

Best known origins: Tuscany (central Italy)

Pairing: Pizza, tomato-based dishes

Nero d'Avola / ne:ro 'da:vola' /

Aroma: Cherry, raspberry, spice **Acidity:** Medium

Body: Full **Flavor:** Plum, chocolate, dark raspberry

Best known origins: Sicily

Pairing: Hearty meats