

WINE BASICS

-Varietals

-How to Taste a Wine

-Food & Wine Pairing

-Using What You Know to Help Your
Guest (open discussion)

Cabernet Sauvignon: (Kabernay Sov-in-yone)
More robust tannins, dark fruits and great with more fatty pieces of meat.

Merlot: (Mare-low)
Juicier and softer with dark fruits and 'earthiness', but good tannins. Great with red meats, and mushrooms.

Pinot Noir: (Pee-no No-war (soft R))
Lighter body and delicate with cherry fruits, gentle acid and fine tannins. Excellent with fowl, salmon or delicate meats.

Zinfandel: (Zin-fan-dell)
Juicy, lively and bold, great with barbeque sauce or grilled foods.

Syrah / Shiraz: (Suh-rah / Shir-oz(az))
Australians are juicier and bold with bright red and black fruits. Domestic are more focused and with a little more pepper.

Malbec: (Mall-beck)
Dark and bold from France, but usually softer and more 'Cabernet' like when from Argentina. Dark fruits with (sometimes) a nice high tone and decent tannin. A wonderful pairing with beef.

Mourvedre: (More-ved-rah) soft & dark

Meritage: (Mare-i-tedge) blend

Chateauf: (Shat-en-oof) French blend

Chardonnay: (Shar-don-yae)
Can be crisp or buttery. Traditional styles include rich and oaky, soft and easy and crisp (Chablis).

Pinot Grigio / Gris: (Pee-no Gree-geo / Gree)
Fair acid with softer citrus fruits. Great with most lighter dishes. Gris usually means more floral and heavier.

Moscato (Muscat Blanc): (Mo-ska-tow)
Exceedingly fresh with floral and summer fruit aromas. Sometimes made with a light sparkle. Lower in alcohol, which translates to higher in sweetness, which makes it pair well for day time foods including fruits, salads and light cheeses.

Sauvignon Blanc: (Sove-in-yone Blonk)
Fresh and lively with bright acids and sharp citrus fruits. New Zealand is more acidic. Serve with salads, some soups and lighter chicken dishes.

Riesling / Gewurztraminer: (Rees-ling / Guh-vertz-tra-meener)
Sweeter. The Gewurz has a hint of cooking spices. Excellent with spicy dishes or white meats.

Viognier: (Vee-o-neay) Floral

Torrontes: (Tore-o-ntes) Floral, acid

Gruner Veltliner: (Grew-ner Velt-leener) richer mouthfeel with good acid and delicate citrus – pairs with asparagus and morel mushrooms.

Sparkling Wines:

Prosecco: (Pro-sek-o) Italian - just a hint of sweetness.

Cava: (Ka-Va) Spanish, dry and minerally

Champagne: (Sham-pain) From Champagne in France, elegant and austere comparatively.

Ice Wine: white winegrapes harvested late in season with A LOT of sugar – super sweet, excellent for after dinner sipping.

Late Harvest: same as the ice wine, but with any grapes. We have a zinfandel, treat as a port but much sweeter.

Port: Grape spirits infused wine. Rich and great with blue cheeses and/or chocolates.

Some Descriptive Words:

Rich

Soft

Sharp

Focused

Bright

Racy

Silky

Smooth

Dark

Red

Blue

Black

Lean

Tangy

Tingly

Effervescent

Sweet

Juicy

Bold

Sweet Fruit

Fruity

Earthy

Wet

Dusty

Mocha

Tannic

Fine

Leathery

Meaty

Smokey

Buttery

Minerally

Stone Fruit

Vibrant

Wine Tasting: The 5 S's – See, Swirl, Smell, Sip, Savor.

See – it might seem natural to fill a glass with wine the way we do with other beverages, but that robs us a chance to appreciate the aromas and color. In reality, the perfect pour (about 5 ounces) leaves about twice as much open space as there is wine. This allows the wine to breathe and reach its full flavor potential.

Swirl & Smell – Now that you have the perfect amount of wine in your glass, give it a swirl or two. This 'aerates' the wine and helps release its aromas. Next, bring the glass to your nose and take a deep 'sniff'; your sense of smell is the most receptive with the first try, so take a moment and identify the aromas in the wine. Your mind will catalogue the aromas, which has more to do with our perception of flavor than our sense of taste.

Sip & Savor – Good wine grabs your taste buds from the first sip. Now that it's captured your attention, the body of the wine picks up where the first taste stops. The body can be light, medium or full, depending on the varietal (type of wine grape(s)), origin (terroir) and style. Wine (especially red wine to most people), is a very complex beverage, so take a moment before you swallow to let the wine fill your mouth. Pucker your lips and inhale to bring more air through your mouth and carry the aromas and flavors to the back of your throat; let your taste buds search for flavors and textures. Sometimes the difference between just drinking wine and truly enjoying it is just that brief moment when we let ourselves become aware of what's in our glass and how it's affecting our palate. After each taste, take a moment to recall your impressions of the wine, its specific features, and file these away in your 'taste memory'. As this taste memory grows, so will your ability to evaluate and enjoy wine.

Wine & Food Basics:

Matching the right wine with the right food will make both more enjoyable, and the taste of one will affect the way we perceive the taste of the other. Remember that just five basic taste components determine what we taste: **Salt, Sweet, Bitter, Sour, Umami (Savory).**

IF YOU LIKE IT – DRINK IT.

IF IT GROWS TOGETHER IT GOES TOGETHER.

Make sure your wine is sweeter than your food.

Lower alcohol wines with spicier foods.

Remember: **ACID, MOUTH FEEL & then TASTE.**

Good **red** wines tend to be dry and rich, sometimes with a tart or astringent quality. They go well with hearty or highly seasoned foods such as beef, port, game, duck, goose and pasta dishes. The 'red with red' rule works well with beef because the tannin in red wine 'scrubs' the rich beef flavors off of the palate. Reach for a tannic Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinotage, Petite Syrah or Zinfandel especially if the meat is served with a heavy sauce. Rare prime rib tastes almost sweet – so it's perfect with a lighter bodied Merlot or Beaujolais.

White wines are usually lighter in body and flavor and can range from dry and crisp to sweet and fragrant. Serve these wines with foods such as chicken, turkey, fish, shellfish, ham and veal. Frequently served with appetizers or as a cocktail before a meal, white wines can also include dry (white) vermouth or dry sherry. Pair a honey or brown sugar glazed ham with a white wine that's not too dry – a Chenin Blanc, Gewürztraminer or Riesling.

Champagne & Sparkling. Not all sparkling wines may be called champagne – which can be made in the region of France by the same name. Never the less, the other wine making regions of the world make some great bubbly. Spain, Australia, Italy and California make some notably great bubbles. Many Americans don't know that sparkling wines make excellent table wines – especially with salads, hors d'oeuvres, and also with any main course.

Rose' wines are in fact pale red wines; their lighter color is due to the shorter period of time the skins are left with the juice during fermentation or maceration. Rose' or blush wines can range from dry to sweet. These wines compliment ham, fried chicken, shellfish, cold beef and picnic foods.