MASTERCLASS

James Suckling

TEACHES WINE APPRECIATION

TOSCANA

EST.2018

01

INTRODUCTION

"The easiest way to get into wine is to invest in a corkscrew."

James Suckling began his journey as a wine lover tasting bottles of old Bordeaux and Napa Valley wines with his father during his adolescence in Los Angeles, but young James was more interested in surfing than in swirling and sipping. James began to understand his dad's fascination with wine at a dinner during college where they shared a bottle of 1966 Lafite Rothschild.

After getting a graduate degree in journalism, James returned to Los Angeles and started as the assistant editor of *Wine Spectator* magazine in 1981. The magazine sent him to live in Paris a few years later, which in turn led him to follow his passions to London and Italy, where he now resides. James moved on from *Wine Spectator* in 2010 to found his own website. He tastes almost 18,000 wines a year with his team, which includes his son, Jack.

Now with over 40 years of wine tasting experience, James is one of the most influential wine critics in the world, especially in his areas of expertise: Bordeaux and Italian wines. His 100-point scale has become common shorthand for talking about the quality of a wine, and in this class, James will teach you how to use his rating system to enhance your own connoisseurship of fine wine.

Additionally, you will learn how to investigate wine like a journalist, asking questions to understand what's in your glass and the process behind it. You will meet iconic winemakers and see the vineyards where their work begins. You will learn how to taste wine, and how to speak thoughtfully about your preferences so that you can find even more wines you'll love to add to your collection, or drink tonight with family and friends.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- A corkscrew
- Four to eight clear, stemmed, all-purpose wine glasses. The bowl should be large enough to swirl five ounces of wine without spilling.
- A comfortable, distraction-free place to taste.
- A notebook for your tasting notes, or a notetaking application like CellarTracker or Vivino.
- Access to a good local wine shop.
- A friend to taste with.

READING LIST

The World Atlas of Wine, 7th Edition by Hugh Johnson and Jancis Robinson. Mitchell Beazley, 2013.

The Taste of Wine: The Art and Science of Wine Appreciation by Emile Peynaud. Wine Appreciation Guild, 1997.

The Concise Guide to Wine and Blind Tasting by Neel Burton and James Flewellen. Acheron Press, 2014.

The 24-Hour Wine Expert by Jancis Robinson. Penguin, 2016.

NOTE: *For a complete list of wines tasted in this class, refer to the last page of this guide. (Download the complete wine guide on the class overview page.) We recommend that you only view the list after Chapter 3: Tasting Techniques: Conducting a Blind Tasting, so that you can go on the blind tasting journey with James first.*

02

TASTING TECHNIQUES: CONDUCTING A BLIND TASTING

TERMS

Acidity (n.): The sour component in wine, coming mainly from tartaric, malic, and citric acids. Acidity makes wine taste crisp and fresh, and balances sweetness, tannin, and alcohol. Acidity can mask sweetness and this applies vice-versa. Therefore, a good way to evaluate acidity is by gauging how much a wine makes your mouth water since the higher the acid content, the higher the salivary response.

Alcohol (n.): The byproduct of fermentation that differentiates wine from grape juice. Alcohol levels in table wine range from around 7% alcohol by volume (in a Mosel riesling, for example) to 16% (like an Amarone from Northern Italy). Alcohol has a slightly sweet flavor and can be perceived in the back of the throat as a warming sensation.

Concentration (n.): The depth of body and intensity of other components on the palate. The opposite of watery or weak, concentration is usually a desirable quality in a wine, but excessive concentration can be intrusive, especially without other balancing components such as acidity.

Coravin (n.): A wine preservation device for consumers that uses a thin needle to pour one glass of wine at a time, replacing the airspace in the bottle with pure, nonreactive argon gas. Because the wine left in the bottle is not exposed to oxygen, it stays fresh for many months, rather than a day or two. It's a very useful device for an aspiring wine connoisseur as it allows you to compare many wines side by side without the need to throw bottles away afterwards.

Finish (n.): The length of time for which the aftereffects of a wine persist—how long you continue to be aware of a wine after spitting or swallowing. This is primarily to do with the length of the aftertaste, but great wines will also leave footprints of all their other attributes, including tannins and acidity. James believes the finish of the wine to be the single most important factor in determining a wine's quality.

Oxidation (n.): A fault whereby excessive oxygen has reacted with the wine, leading to dull and often "candied" flavors. Aerating the wine by decanting or swirling it in your glass introduces small amounts of oxygen, allowing aromas to become more pronounced. But too much oxygen results in browning of the color and lackluster or vinegary flavors, which you may notice after a bottle has been open for a few days. Oxygen is not always the enemy, though: intentional oxidation in the winemaking process is used to create nutty, bruised apple notes in wines like sherry and Madeira.

02

TASTING TECHNIQUES: CONDUCTING A BLIND TASTING

TERMS

Residual sugar (n.): How much sugar is left in a finished wine, measured in grams per liter. Dry wines have no perceptible R.S., while dessert wines can have upwards of 50g/L. Small amounts (2 to 3 g/L) of R.S. balance acidity and tannin in red wines, making them taste more harmonious without tasting sweet. Higher sugar content increases the body of a wine, which is why dessert wines are rich and luscious in texture.

Structure (n.): The complete picture a wine builds on your palate. A lot has to do with the textural impression the tannins create in your mouth, although the overall harmony between body, tannins, and acidity is also important.

Sulfur (n.): A naturally-occuring chemical element. It is a preservative that has been used in winemaking since Roman times to keep wine from turning to vinegar. In its elemental form, sulfur is sprayed in vineyards to manage powdery mildew. As sulfur dioxide (SO_2), it is used almost universally at many stages of winemaking to slow oxidation and prevent bacterial growth. Governments regulate the maximum amount of SO_2 (measured in parts per million) that can be present in the finished wine, but most wines come in far, far below this level. Certified organic and biodynamic wines have even lower maximum levels. Some claim that wines with added sulfites cause headaches; however, there is no scientific evidence for this.

TASTING TECHNIQUES: CONDUCTING A BLIND TASTING

HOLD YOUR OWN BLIND TASTING

Set a goal: What is the goal of the tasting? Is it to try to identify the wines, or is it to rate their quality? Either way, tasting blind means that your perception is not influenced by the label on the bottle. For a quality tasting, it can be helpful to have some information, like what country the wines are from, to put your tasting in context.

Focus on the wine: Tasting should be in an area that is clean, well-lit, and free of distractions. It can be harder to concentrate on tasting when you're in a cellar, at a large wine dinner or tasting, or at a restaurant. Clean, uniform glasses and a white background help you note the color of the wine.

Hide the labels: Have someone open the wines and pour them out of sight, or put the bottles in bags with a rubber band secured around the neck so you can't see the label.

Taste at the right temperature: White wines should be tasted at 11–14°C (52–57°F); taking the bottles out of your refrigerator about an hour before the tasting will have them cool enough to retain freshness, but not so cold as to mute aromas and hide taste and texture. Red wines should be tasted at 15–18°C (59–64°F), or slightly cooler than room temperature. Twenty minutes in the fridge before your tasting should chill them just enough. Consistency in the temperature of the wines helps you make consistent evaluations across wines.

Swirl the wine: Swirling in the glass brings air to the wine and helps release its aromas. The optimal amount for tasting is 30–50mL (about 1.5 ounces).

Keep your palete fresh: Spitting the wine into a spitoon (which can be made from anything: a jug, a jar, a Champagne bucket) after tasting can keep your palate from getting fatigued as you taste. Keep bread, crackers, or olives on hand to refresh your palate as you taste. James prefers high pH water like that found in Tuscany to restore his palate after tasting high-acid wines. Try buying alkaline bottled water to mimic this effect at home.

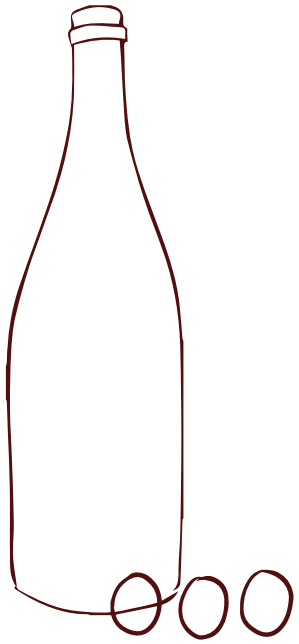
GET TO KNOW THE 100-POINT RATING SYSTEM:

The 100-point scale derives from the traditional school grading format and is an intuitive way to compare wines against each other. A mental shortcut is to assign letter grades as if you were in school. If you rate a wine as less than a B, don't bother with it. After all, "Life's too short to drink bad wine." James used this system at *Wine Spectator* and also for his tasting notes at JamesSuckling.com. Don't just consider intensity, balance, and complexity of individual elements, but also how they interact with one another. For example, if a wine is very full-bodied, does it have enough acidity for it to retain a sense of freshness? If a wine is quite tannic, does it have the flavor depth to back up the muscular structure? The 100-point scale assigns 15 points for the color of the wine, 25 points for aroma, 25 points for the palate or structure, and 35 points for overall quality.

- **100 points (A)** — Wines you fall in love with that touched your heart and soul. You rush to buy a case of these wines and you will remember them for the rest of your life. 100-point wines are perfect wines, with the ideal combination of intensity, balance, and complexity at every level.
- **95–99 points (A)** — Wines that make you "want to drink a bottle of on your own." They are classic wines that rank as the best in the world. They rank extremely highly against all criteria while not quite attaining the level of flawlessness of 100-point wines.
- **90–94 points (A)** — Wines that make you "want to drink the glass right away." These are outstanding wines that have no real shortcomings but could be even more exciting in a few areas.
- **85–89 points (B)** — Wines that are well made and enjoyable, but fall slightly short in a number of areas. Alternatively, they may be excellent otherwise but miss the mark in one respect.
- **80–84 (B)** — Wines that have no technical faults (e.g. bacterial spoilage), but have a number of characteristics that could interfere with one's enjoyment.
- **70–79 (C)** — Wines that are borderline undrinkable and show serious winemaking faults. Best avoided as "life is too short." Fortunately, few wines at this level are made these days!

TASTING TECHNIQUES: CONDUCTING A BLIND TASTING

Wine tasting involves a series of questions. What is the color telling you about the age of the wine? Then think of the aromas of the wine, which may recall fruits, flowers, or perfumes. (Or weirder things, like "wet dog in a phone booth" or "old baseball glove," which might describe faults in a wine from bacterial spoilage.) You don't need to worry too much about whether your strawberries are cherries or your chocolate is actually coffee. The key is to be consistent. Next to consider is body, which is how filling the wine is in your palate or its weight. Texture refers to how the tannin (always present in red wine, sometimes in white) relates to the alcohol, the fruit flavors, and the acidity of the wine. How does the whole wine finish? What's the overall quality? Various components of the wine can tell you when the grapes were picked, where the wine comes from, how the wine was produced, and how it was aged.



PRACTICE

Begin by selecting two or three wines and pour them out into glasses. Try to memorize the aromas and palate of each wine. Then, bag up the wines and pour them blind. Try to identify which is which. This helps to start discerning differences between various wines.

Choose a number of distinct wines and bag them up. Write a tasting note and score for each and then see which tasting note corresponds to which wine. Repeat the process and see if your results are similar a second time. If you're unsure when a wine is full or medium-bodied, high or medium in acidity, gauge your palate from the wines in front of you.

To calibrate your palate, join a tasting group or find a friend whose wine knowledge you trust. Don't be afraid to disagree; sometimes there are no right or wrong answers!

Compare your scores and notes with critics such as James. Don't be afraid if your notes are different. Begin to understand how certain critics differ in their approach to rating and writing about wines.

As you become more confident in your personal tastings, begin to commit to memory some of the styles and patterns you notice between grapes, regions, and winemaking techniques.

If you really want to test yourself, get a friend to set up a blind tasting for you where you have to guess the region, grape, and vintage. You may want to start by already having some inkling as to what the wines are e.g. every wine is a cabernet, but you have to guess the region; or every wine is from Europe, but you have to guess the country.

TASTING TECHNIQUES: CONDUCTING A BLIND TASTING

TASTING QUESTIONS:

- Think about the quality of the fruit: is it fresh, overripe, or dried?
- Think about the color of the fruit: is it red, black, or blue (for red wines)?
- Is the wine earthy, or is it driven more by fruit flavors?
- How about herbs or spices, like black pepper?
- Is there any funkiness or barnyard character?
- Note the texture: if there are bubbles, how do they feel? Is the wine lean or dense?
- For red wines, what is the quality of the tannin? Firm, woody, ripe? Is it drying out your mouth?
- Do you smell vanilla or nutmeg? This indicates aging in oak barrels.
- How does the wine's taste on your palate compare to the way it smells?
- Is there any sweetness, or is the wine dry (not sweet)?
- Does the acidity make your mouth water, or does it taste flat?
- Can you feel the alcohol in the back of your mouth? High alcohol can also make a wine taste sweeter.
- Are all the components harmoniously balanced, or does one element overpower the rest?
- How do you think it will change over time? Does it have aging potential?
- How would you score the wine on the 100-point scale?

WHY TASTE BLIND?

Blind tasting helps improve tasting technique and skills without the "external noise" of knowing the grape or producer. Not everything has to be tasted blind, but wherever and whatever you're tasting, make an evaluation along with quick mental or written notes.

"It's all about tasting, enjoying, and thinking about what's in the glass."

For a list of the wines tasted in this chapter, see the final page of this book.

THE TASTING PROCESS · BY JACK SUCKLING

There are many different types of tasting: writing an accurate tasting note, comparing the quality between a number of wines, or simply tasting with friends for fun. Whatever the purpose of your tasting, everything begins with the same process: Approach each wine methodically, investigating each glass in front of you like a journalist, asking the same questions while trying not to be influenced by other distractions and biases. You can use your assessment of each wine to reach a particular conclusion, depending on the purpose of the exercise. While this may sound dry or even daunting, try simply to enjoy the time exploring and deepening your senses and understanding. Do this in the company of a good friend, and you'll begin to see how these fascinating journeys through wine not only sharpen our minds but enrich our lives.

COLOR

Often overlooked, color can tell you a lot about a wine. Having said that, it's the least important element, behind nose and palate. More often than not, you are looking for potential defects or red flags rather than trying to judge a book by its cover. You should consider both a wine's hue in the glass and its intensity. Make sure you make any judgements in good, white lighting—natural sunlight if possible. You can tilt the glass to about 45 degrees for a good look.

While it's useful to have a set of vocabulary for color on hand (purple, ruby, brick-red, etc.), don't get too hung up on whether a pale lemon color might actually be a lightish straw. Look instead for anomalies such as a very garnet or even browning tinge in a red wine or a hint of amber in a white wine, which could be signs of oxidation, depending on the age of a wine. Wine tasting is all about piecing together the evidence: What you notice in the color may be due to one of many factors and you may only be able to make an educated guess after moving on to the nose and palate. For example, a very golden color could be evidence of a wine having undergone lengthy aging in barrel, but it could equally just be the product of a thick-skinned grape that tends to that particular shade.

It's often wrongly thought that intensity of color is an indication of quality. Pale-colored wines may simply be wines from grapes that don't have a lot of pigmentation such as pinot noir or nebbiolo. Conversely, it's not true that if a wine has a deep color it couldn't possibly be from a grape with thin skins—the wine may simply have spent a long time in barrel or it may contain small amounts of another grape variety, masking the expected color. On the other hand, if the wine is very pale and also has very fresh aromas, it might well be from a marginal climate; or if a wine has a very deep color and also dominating wood aromas, it's a first clue it may have been overworked in the cellar.

There are other elements to appearance that may give first indications about aspects of a wine. Don't be afraid if you notice sediment or a haziness in the glass, for instance. This could either suggest a choice not to filter the wine, or it may just be an older wine—tannins join together as wine ages and fall to the bottom of a bottle. It can be useful to inspect the size and aggressiveness of bubbles in a sparkling wine, as it often predicts how they will be sensed on the palate later. However, don't read too much into the "legs," which say very little about a wine apart from a crude indication of alcohol content.

NOSE

Sometimes, it can seem unnecessary or even pretentious to spend a lot of time sniffing and snorting into your glass! However, almost all the flavors of a wine are continuations of its aromas, which are channeled up by the mouth into the nose when we swallow. Clearly, there can be a lot of jargon and hyperbole when it comes to describing aromas, so the most important thing is to be honest and only pick up on what you can actually smell. It's normal for everything just to smell like "grapes" when you get started. Take the time to find your voice and confidence and don't be intimidated by others who might merely be trying to impress!

Swirl the glass before each sniff and don't take another sniff until around 10 seconds afterwards, as your nose needs time before it can process new sensations. To start out with, it can be helpful to put your nose as close as possible to the wine or even cover your hand over the glass

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to contain the evaporating compounds. Keep alternating between different wines as after a while you can get odor fatigue and coming back to the same wine can give you a different perspective you didn't have previously.

Conventional descriptors can be good rules of thumb, but don't shy away from what the wine evokes in your own memory—exotic spices from a recent holiday abroad, the herbs from your grandmother's garden, a fruit particular to your area. Do remember though that it will be difficult to compare notes with others if your descriptors are too unusual.

Instead of trying to identify aromas all at once, it can be helpful to group them into primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary aromas are derived directly from the fermenting grapes and are what relate to the primary factors of influence in the vineyard, such as grape variety, soil, climate, et cetera (see Chapter 2: Primary Factors of Influence). They are comprised mostly of fruits, flowers, and herbs. Secondary aromas come from the compounds obtained in cellar processes after fermentation, including malolactic fermentation (e.g. yoghurt, milky aromas in white wines), and aging in oak (e.g. vanilla, cloves, coconut). Tertiary aromas apply only to older wines and appear after aging in bottle, beginning usually a few years after purchase (e.g. mushrooms, tobacco).

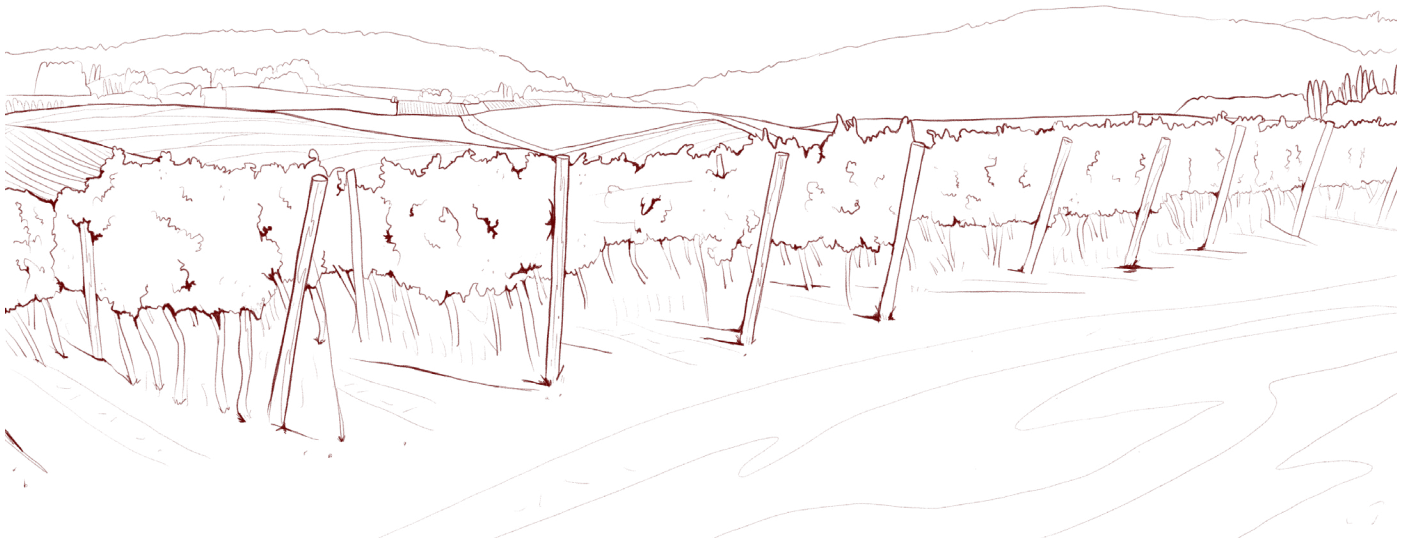
Focus on a different category of aromas with each sniff and don't only try to describe what they remind you of. Ask other questions such as whether the bouquet is pronounced, medium, or light in intensity. A subtle nose does not necessarily mean the wine is below par if the palate then impresses—it may simply be a young wine that needs air to open up or a few more years in bottle.

In addition to intensity, balance and complexity are the most important factors by which James assesses quality in a wine. These apply just as much to the nose as they do the palate. Look to see if the aromas verge on underripeness or overripeness. Are they fresh or slightly stale like fruit that was left too long in your fridge? Or are there medicinal or asparagus notes that interfere with your enjoyment of the wine? In considering complexity, see how many individual descriptors you ascribe to one wine—do the aromas sit together in a beautiful, ornate pattern, or is the wine rather one-dimensional with one smell overpowering everything else. Badly made wines often only taste like oak.

PALATE

While aromas are often the most revealing of a wine's origin, the palate is the fundamental key both to understanding quality and, of course, enjoying any wine! A good wine can't have a lackluster palate. The palate is also the most difficult aspect of a wine to grasp as it combines not only taste but also touch and smell.

There is no set order to decipher the various components of a wine on the palate, but this is James's usual preference: sweetness (where applicable), body, tannins (mostly for red wine), acidity, finish, and flavors. When you first begin your adventure as a wine taster, it can be



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difficult to pick up on all of these at the same time. It's therefore a good idea to focus on one or two aspects at a time with each sip.

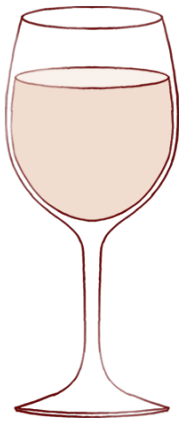
As long as the wine covers most of your tongue, a sip doesn't have to be a huge amount. Spend some time swirling the wine around your mouth and introduce some extra oxygen by opening your lips slightly and breathing in; if done right, you should produce a somewhat unpalatable gurgling sound. Around five to six seconds is a good time frame in which to swirl the wine around on your palate.

SWEETNESS

Most wines are dry, which means they contain no sugar or at least less than perceptible by humans which is, in general, anything under 3g/L. That's why James doesn't usually mention a wine's sweetness in his tasting notes unless the wine actually has a degree of sweetness. The sweetness scale runs from dry to off-dry (very slightly sweet) to medium-sweet to sweet to luscious. High alcohol and low acidity often make a wine appear sweeter than it is, while high acidity can mask sweetness, so this needs accounting for in any judgment of sweetness. Sweetness can be easily confused with fruitiness, which is a perception of flavors not of sugar. Fruity wines are not necessarily sweet and sweet wines are not necessarily fruity. This is why when most new wine drinkers ask for a dry wine, what they are really after is a wine that's not particularly fruity—rather than a wine with no sugar, which is true of most wines.

BODY

The body of a wine is best understood as the perception of "weight" a wine gives on the palate. Another way to understand this is how "viscous" a wine is on your mouth—is it thick, offering plenty of resistance like an oil or cream, or does it flow easily, unhindered, like water would? Since whether a wine is light, medium, or full-bodied largely depends on its ABV, alcohol is not usually given separate treatment by James in his tastings. However, very high alcohol (15%+), especially when not in balance with other components, can be a problem, as can very low alcohol if there is nothing much else to it (although this is less common). High alcohol levels may produce a burning sensation on the palate. A fuller body is associated with higher quality as it adds to intensity and a sense of completeness, but lighter-bodied wines are not necessarily poorer wines. Each wine needs to be assessed individually as some grapes and styles tend to lighter bodies.



TANNINS

Tannins, the class of long molecules from grape skins, seeds, and stems, are probably the worst understood components of wine. Often confused with acidity, tannins are what cause the drying or puckering sensation in most red wines. Tannins are not usually mentioned in tasting notes with respect to white wines, as whites are generally fermented without their skins. Although the amount of tannin (light, medium, and high) in a wine is of importance, quality rather than quantity is the most important assessment to make. Carefully extracted and matured tannins create mouthfeel, texture, and structure (the textural and complete picture a wine builds on your palate).

The first question to ask is whether the tannins are ripe or underripe. Underripe tannins are coarse and often bitter. The second question is whether the tannins are integrated, i.e. don't stick out and fold well into the rest of the wine, or coat the palate rather aggressively, which could be a sign of overextraction during the winemaking process. Finally, ask yourself what kind of textural feeling do they evoke. Are they velvety, fine-grained, soft? Are they linear and compact—prevalent but focused at the center of the palate? Do they add to a sense of complexity and structure? Or are they quite simple, one-dimensional? Do they immediately dry your mouth out, leaving you loath to sample more? Poorly crafted tannins often coat the entire mouth quickly but remain hollow in the center palate and lose their focus.

As a wine gets older, the tannins soften and become more integrated. This is why any assessment of tannins should always be considered in the context of a wine's age. An older wine with particularly firm

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tannin will likely never come around, but a young wine with some bite may simply need a few years in bottle. Interpreting tannins is among the most difficult concepts in wine tasting, and needs years of experience to master. A good starting point is tasting a wine and coming back to it in a few years or doing as many vertical tastings as possible to see how the same or similar wine evolves through the years.

ACIDITY

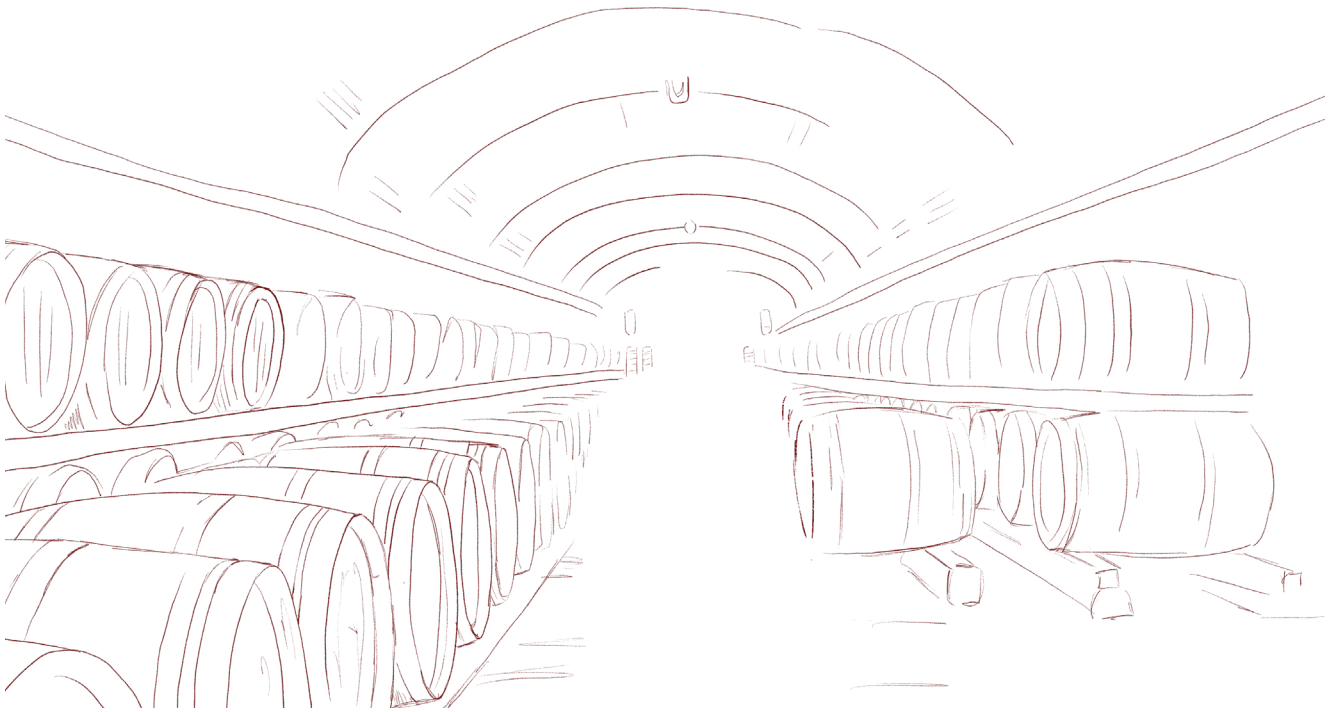
Acidity is what determines how sour a wine tastes. As previously mentioned, acidity can mask sweetness and this applies vice-versa. Therefore, a good way to evaluate acidity is by gauging how much a wine makes your mouth water since the higher the acid content, the higher the salivary response. The level of acidity should be enough to provide freshness in a wine—otherwise the wine could appear "flabby"—but not too much as to make it "tart." Balance is key. White wines tend to have higher acidities than red wines.

FINISH

The finish of a wine is the single most important point when determining the quality of a wine. In a nutshell, the finish is how long the aftereffects of a wine persist—how long you continue to be aware of a wine after spitting or swallowing. This is primarily to do with the length of the aftertaste, but great wines will also leave footprints of all their other attributes, including tannins and acidity. An exceptional finish should leave the taster coming back for more; it shouldn't dry the mouth out, as an overly tannic finish might, nor should it leave unpalatable flavors in the mouth such as excessive bitterness.

FLAVORS

As already mentioned, most flavors are simply another expression of aromas due to the anatomical connection between the nose and the mouth. This is why professional wine critics such as James usually only reference particular flavors in notes (e.g. strawberries, wet earth, hot stones) if they were not already recognizable on the nose. The human tongue itself can only differentiate between five tastes: sweetness, sourness, bitterness, saltiness, and umami. The first three have already been covered in some detail. Saltiness is sometimes touched on as wines do contain trace elements of sodium ions as well as other substances that give saline notes. However, this is usually relevant only to a small number of wines, often whites from coastal areas. Umami, which is the perception of savoriness, is rarely used in tasting notes.



wine brand _____ vintage _____ year _____

COLOR

White	straw	yellow	gold	pale	medium	deep
Red	purple	ruby	garnet	pale	medium	deep
Bubbles	delicate	medium	strong			

AROMAS

FRUIT

White	lemon	pineapple	tangerine	nectarine	apple	pear
	quince	peach	apricot	grapefruit	mango	
Red	blackberry	blackcurrant	blueberry	raspberry	strawberry	cranberry
	plum	fig	raisin	cherry	pomegranate	olive

NON FRUIT

Herb/ Spice	black pepper	licorice	thyme	basil	rosemary	bacon	
Flowers	honeysuckle	gardenia	chamomile	rose	violet		
Earth	rock	chalk	dry soil	wet soil	barnyard		
Age	nutty	mushroom	leather	leaves			
Winemaking	vanilla	cloves	coconut	yoghurt	cheese	bread crust	pastry

PALATE

Sweetness	dry	off-dry	sweet
Body	light	medium	full
Tannin (quantity)	low	medium	high
Tannin (quality)	ripe	underripe	integrated
Acidity	low	medium	high
Finish	short	medium	long

Flavors	sweet	sour	salty	bitter	umami

OVERALL

Color score (1–15)

Aroma score (1–25)

Palate score (1–25)

Overall quality (1–35)

Total score

03

DISCERNING FLAVORS AND AROMAS: STUDENT TASTING EXPERIENCE

TERMS

Amphora (n.): A large, ceramic vessel first used by the Romans and Greeks to make wines but coming back into fashion. The material is porous, allowing some oxygen in, but the wine is often left on the skins to prevent too much oxidation.

TCA "cork taint" (n.): A wine fault that comes from natural corks (made from the bark of cork trees), and makes the wine smell like wet newspaper or damp basement. In decades past, 7–8% of cork-sealed bottles were affected, but that has dropped to about 1% today. Reputable retailers will accept a return or exchange of a corked bottle. As with all such flaws, a corked bottle doesn't mean the wine itself is bad. Most likely another bottle will be perfectly fine in this regard.

Decant (v.): To pour wine into a glass or crystal container for aeration and/or to separate sediment.

Minerality (n.): Chalky, rocky, or wet stone aromas that are most often found in terroir-driven wines from the old world, like Chablis or Muscadet from France, or German riesling. A concept that has not been fully explained by science, and a useful though somewhat overused tasting note. Try to be specific about what kind of "mineral" aromas you smell: a wine may remind you of flint, chalk, or wet concrete.

Natural wine (n.): Wine made with as little intervention as possible, often organic or biodynamic and without sulfur. Because little or no sulfur is used, the likelihood of bacterial spoilage is increased, but proponents of natural wine say that when made well, it can express the grape and terroir in a purer way.

Polyphenol (n.): A large class of substances which includes tannins, responsible for mouthfeel, and anthocyanins, responsible for color.

DISCERNING FLAVORS AND AROMAS: STUDENT TASTING EXPERIENCE

WINES TASTED

Prosecco Superiore Dry Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze 2017 — Nino Franco (Veneto, Italy)

Common characteristics of prosecco: Fruity with apple, pear, and floral aromas; light body; medium acidity. More spritzy than Champagne. Sometimes medium-sweet to sweet.

Brut Premier Champagne NV — Louis Roederer (Champagne, France)

Common characteristics of Champagne: Subtle, complex aromas of bread crust, grilled nuts, and citrus; medium body; high acidity; fine bubbles.

Riesling Kirchenstück Kabinett Trocken 2016 — Kunstler Common (Rheingau, Germany)

Common characteristics of riesling: Aromas of stones, citrus, stone fruit, white flowers, and petrol; light body; high acidity.

Pouilly-Fuissé 2016 — Louis Latour (Burgundy, France)

Common characteristics of white burgundy: Aromas of cooked apples, citrus fruit, straw, minerals; light to medium body; high acidity.

Pinot Grigio 2017 — Schiopetto (Friuli, Italy)

Common characteristics of pinot grigio: Aromas of apples and pears; light to medium body; medium acidity. Best examples have fuller texture and mineral undertones.

Rock Angel Rosé 2017 — Château d'Esclans (Provence, France)

What to look for in a great rosé: Pale, pink color; vibrant, fresh aromas; light to medium body; high acidity and freshness; drinkability.

> "A great wine is always great. It's great from the barrel, it's great from the bottle."

TASTING TIPS:

SEQUENCING: If you're tasting many different kinds of wine, start with sparkling, then move to still white, rosé, and red, and finish with sweet or fortified wine. If tasting wines from different vintages, move from the oldest to the youngest. This way, your palate will be less easily fatigued.

SWIRL AND AERATE: Swirling the glass slightly oxidizes and aromatizes the wine. Aerating the wine in your mouth breaks up the flavor components, allowing you to taste more.

DECANTING: Young wine can be shy, not giving you a lot: decanting can help bring out the flavors of a young wine.

FOR WHITE WINES: Wine ages more slowly under screw cap, which is fine for white wine that will be drunk young. Don't be afraid to serve white wine slightly warmer, around 14°C: this amplifies the aromas.

FOR ALL WINES: Always look for balance, where acid, tannin, and fruit are all in harmony. An energetic finish of acid or tannin gives the wine momentum.

DISCERNING FLAVORS AND AROMAS: STUDENT TASTING EXPERIENCE

WINES TASTED *CONTINUED*

Cabernet Sauvignon Antica 2014 — Antinori Family Estates (Napa Valley, California)

Characteristics of cabernet sauvignon: Aromas of fresh herbs, currants; full body; medium to high acidity; chewy tannins.

Petruna 2016 — Il Borro (Tuscany, Italy)

Common characteristics of natural wines: Hard to generalize, but the best examples often combine "reductive" and "oxidative" aromas. Wines often have an earthy, silty texture from minimal fining/filtration.

Pinot Noir Laurène 2013 — Domaine Drouhin (Oregon, USA)

What makes a great pinot noir? Complexity, elaborate aromas, refined texture, freshness, silky tannins, and finesse.

Haut-Médoc 2015 and 2000 — Château Sociando-Mallet (Bordeaux, France)

Common characteristics of bordeaux: Bordeaux red wines show firm, structured tannins and high acidity. Wines from the Right Bank usually have less cabernet and are softer and richer. Bordeaux's trademark aromas of fresh herbs and blackcurrants mature to cedar, tobacco, and earth over time.

PRACTICE:

Compare and contrast related wines side by side using the previous chapter's tasting worksheet as a guide. For each pairing, think about what features define the wine and examine those elements more closely. If fruit flavors jump out of the glass, focus your description on kinds of fruit. If the wine is more earthy or herbaceous, try to be more specific in describing those aspects.

- Two different sparkling wines like prosecco and Champagne. How do the bubbles compare? Which wine is sweeter? Toastier?
- Pinot grigio from Northern Italy and pinot gris from Alsace in France. Which wine has more color? More fruit flavors? How does the acidity compare?
- Pinot noir from Oregon and pinot noir from Burgundy. Which wine has riper fruit? Is one more earthy or tart than the other?
- Sweet riesling and dry (not sweet) riesling. How do the alcohol levels differ? Does the sugar change the way you perceive the wine's acidity?
- Cabernet sauvignon from Napa and a Bordeaux cabernet. Can you taste green bell pepper in either wine? Earthiness? Is one higher in alcohol, and how does the ripeness of fruit compare?
- Two different vintages of the same wine. How similar are the wines: like siblings, or like cousins? Is the tannin smoother in one wine? Does the concentration differ?

04

MEET THE MAKER: AN INTRODUCTION

TERMS

Barrique (n.): A relatively small oak wine barrel that holds 225 liters, popular in Bordeaux. When they're new, smaller barrels like this impart more oak flavors to wine than larger barrels. Their use in Italy in the 1970s and '80s ushered in a new era of "modern" winemaking. In the last decade, there has been a move away from barriques by some producers who see their effect on wine as too aggressive.

Declassification (n.): The Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC) wine classification system in Italy is both an appellation and quality control system, with strict rules about viticulture and winemaking for wines with a DOC or DOCG (the G stands for "Garantita," for the highest quality wines) label on the bottle. In many places the DOC regulates what grapes can be in the wine, and if the winemaker uses anything outside of these parameters, such as the high percentage of cabernet sauvignon used in Tignanello, the wine cannot qualify for the DOC and must be labeled IGT, for Indicazione Geografica Tipica. Since the requirements for IGT-labelled wines are less stringent than corresponding DOC/DOCG regulations, such wines can be of a lower quality. However, many producers choose to bottle their wines under the IGT designation simply so they can use other grapes and winemaking techniques for their wines. Super Tuscans, wines that command a high reputation, are one example.

Sharecropping (n.): A labor system derived from feudalism where grape growers who do not own their land turn over some portion of their harvest to their landlord. It was abolished in Italy in 1964 but is still in use in some parts of France, although standard rental agreements for vineyards are more common.

Super Tuscan (n.): A term for wines made in Tuscany that use Bordeaux grapes instead of, or in addition to, the traditional grapes of the region. The first and most famous of this style is Sassicaia, created by Antinori in 1971. Tignanello was the second Super Tuscan. The "Super Tuscan" nickname was adopted because the wines, not conforming to local DOC(G) regulations, were not allowed to carry the label of their region's DOC(G).

MEET THE MAKER: AN INTRODUCTION

Albiera Antinori is the president and winemaker at the wine estate of Tenuta Tignanello in the Chianti wine region in Tuscany, near Florence, Italy. The family has been making wine there for 600 years. She attributes their success to "passion, values, interest, respect for the land, and a little bit of luck." Their flagship wine is Tignanello, first produced in 1971, a time when the region was known more for quantity than for quality wines. Albiera sees the responsibility of the winemaker as recognizing the potential of a place, watching over the grapes in the vineyard, and interpreting the climate in each vintage. It is the combination of the soil and the winemaking that makes great wine.

For Tignanello, the Antinori family wanted to supplement sangiovese (the traditional grape of the Chianti region, which makes medium-bodied, tartly-juicy wines with flavors of cherry and earth) with cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc, grapes that they thought would grow well on their site and bring distinction to their new blend. These "international varieties," which were associated more with France than with Italy, gave the wine more depth and tannin. The Antinoris also aged the wine in Bordeaux-style barriques with the goal of proving that Chianti could make wines that appealed to consumers of the serious, age-worthy wines of Bordeaux. When it was released, Tignanello was not allowed to carry the DOC label of the region because of the inclusion of 20% cabernet grapes in the blend. Despite this declassification, Tignanello's strong brand and high quality made it a hit in the global marketplace, and kicked off a decades-long craze for premium Super Tuscan wines.

The family also makes a complementary wine, Solaia, which is 80% cabernet and 20% sangiovese.

PRACTICE:

- Ask for a Super Tuscan wine like Tignanello at your wine shop. Taste the bottle side by side with single-varietal wines made from the components of the Super Tuscan, like a bottle of sangiovese from Chianti and an Italian cabernet sauvignon. Can you taste the elements that each of the single grapes bring to the Super Tuscan blend?
- Organize your own horizontal tasting to get to know certain grapes or understand the effects of a certain vintage. Try, for instance, three or four Chiantis from the same vintage but different producers side by side and compare their similarities and differences. Ask your friends to each bring a bottle of a specific vintage and type of wine: this will guarantee that you get a variety of wines without having to make the trip to many different wine shops!

05

APPRECIATION ON LOCATION, PART 1: A VERTICAL TASTING

TERMS

Drinkable (adj.): A highly-drinkable wine is both enjoyable and easy to drink. Highly-drinkable wines usually have softer tannins, fairly high acidity (which makes your mouth water), and lower alcohol.

Extraction (n.): The depth of color and tannin obtained from the grape's skins during maceration, usually appearing alongside intense fruit flavors in the finished wine. Highly-extracted wines are rich and bold, but can be unpleasantly bitter or lacking in subtlety, depending on your taste.

Horizontal tasting (n.): A tasting of different wines from the same vintage. The goal is to compare the winemaking styles of different winemakers and see how they dealt with the circumstances of the vintage.

Malolactic fermentation (n.): Secondary winemaking process in which harsh malic acid becomes softer lactic acid. Now common to almost all red wines and sometimes whites.

Organic viticulture (n.): To be certified organic in the US, the vines must be farmed organically (with no use of herbicide, pesticide, or fungicide) and have no added sulfites (see Chapter 3: Tasting Techniques: Conducting a Blind Tasting). The label "Wine made with organic grapes" is for wine made from organic grapes with fewer than 100mg/L of added sulfites. Sulfites are allowed in European wine that is labeled organic, though maximum levels apply.

Terroir (n.): French term for a wine's "sense of place," roughly how much you can tell about the soil and climate from the way a wine tastes. Usually, wines made from smaller areas (down to a single small parcel in a vineyard) have more "sense of place" than wines made from grapes from all over a large region. Some grapes, like riesling and pinot noir, are said to express terroir well because they taste very different when grown in different areas.

Vertical tasting (n.): A side by side tasting of various vintages of the same wine. A vertical tasting can help you understand the influence of the climate in different years, see how techniques change over time, and familiarize you with the essence of the wine.

APPRECIATION ON LOCATION, PART 1: A VERTICAL TASTING

Vertical tasting is like travelling back in time to see what changed in each vintage. The soil is always the same, but the climate is different every year. Vines may be replanted, winemaking techniques change, prevailing tastes change, and the wines change in the bottle over time.

THINGS TO CONSIDER IN A VERTICAL TASTING:

- Start with the oldest wine, which will be more delicate, and finish with the newest, which will be more lively.
- There is variation in older bottles based on how well they have been stored. Buy older wine from reputable sellers that use temperature control, or better yet, buy straight from the winery, where the bottles will have aged undisturbed.
- What can you infer about the vintage conditions from the wine in your glass? In a hot vintage, notice higher alcohol and riper fruit. In a very cold vintage, the wine may be thin, acidic, or have green/underripe tannins.
- If you see very little wine from a particular year on the shelves of your wine shop, it may point to a difficult vintage, but that doesn't necessarily mean the wines are poor quality. A reputable producer will make smaller quantities of wine from the best fruit they harvested.
- Wine goes through various phases over its lifespan and doesn't necessarily age in a predictable way. A wine may taste well when young but then go through less-expressive phases before showing well again years later. However, James's view is that great wines are always great.

PRACTICE:

- Getting your hands on older and newer vintages of the same wine can be both expensive and difficult, so a good option is to visit a tasting room at a winery that offers vertical tastings of their wines. Seeing the vineyards while tasting the wines is also a great way to understand the wine's "sense of place," and the pourer (who may also grow or make the wines) can give you a history of the wines.
- As you begin refining your palate, it's important not just to build up your tasting memory of grape varieties, countries, and regions, but also vintages. Certain vintages represent turning points in the wine world, such as 1997 in Tuscany, which proved to everyone the region could truly compete with the likes of Burgundy or Bordeaux. The latter's watershed moment came in 1982, which could be considered the world's first modern vintage. Of course, it's difficult to sample all of these greats, as a high price tag invariably comes with significance. To get a taste of turning points in wine history, one strategy is to focus on lesser-known labels in these seminal years. For example, 1961 is probably still Bordeaux's greatest vintage, and while the likes of Château Latour or Pétrus are totally inaccessible, small, undiscovered chateaux delivered exceptional wines. Such is the nature of truly great vintages!
- Check out vintage charts online, which tell you about the weather and climatic conditions in different regions during each year. They also tell you what to expect from the flavors of each year's wines in specific regions, and when the wines should be tasting their best. Try a vertical tasting of the same wine from different years, and see what differences in flavor the vintage conditions give the wine.

APPRECIATION ON LOCATION, PART 1: A VERTICAL TASTING

WINES TASTED

Tignanello 1983 — Marchesi Antinori (Tuscany, Italy)

Characteristics of the '83 Tignanello: Moderate year with some rain; medium body; medium, dry tannins; medium to high acidity.

Tignanello 1999 — Marchesi Antinori (Tuscany, Italy)

Characteristics of the '99 Tignanello: Warm vintage; full body; more firm tannins; more freshness and precision.

Tignanello 2007 — Marchesi Antinori (Tuscany, Italy)

Characteristics of the '07 Tignanello: Warm vintage; full body; juicy, chewy tannins; low acidity; lots of fruit.

Tignanello 2015 — Marchesi Antinori (Tuscany, Italy)

Characteristics of the '15 Tignanello: Warm yet balanced vintage; full body; structured but fine tannins; medium acidity; intense but elegant.

THE CHANGING FACE OF ITALIAN WINE:

To many, Italy is practically synonymous with wine. Wine has certainly been part of Italian culture at least since the peninsula was colonized by the Ancient Greeks—and thousands of years even before that, if recent research is to be believed.

However, up until the mid-twentieth century, the focus was very much on cheap table wines produced by farmers around the country. The wines were generally light, and in many cases would be regarded today as being flawed. Oxidation was almost a given.

The first seeds of change were planted in the '60s when the Italian government introduced the DOC appellation system we know today. This also coincided with the introduction of various modern winemaking techniques such as fermentation in stainless steel vats.

Nevertheless, the real quantum leap in quality came in the '70s. Winemakers in Tuscany were inspired by their visits to Bordeaux to start experimenting with international varieties as well as barriques and extended macerations. They began to believe that Italy could also produce fine wine, and so the Super Tuscan phenomenon was born.

Mario Incisa della Rocchetta, the creator of Sassicaia, was the first of these pioneers. His nephew, Piero Antinori, the father of our own Albiera Antinori, was next with Tignanello.

By the 1990s, such was the demand for Super Tuscans that many attracted higher prices than the wines labelled within DOC regulations.

Despite the huge advancements in technology and know-how, many believe the trend of making more concentrated, international-style wines went too far. Some felt that the essence of Italian wines had been lost in an attempt to pander to certain wine drinkers.

In the last decade or so, producers have moved away from making these higher-alcohol, "jammy" wines. Indigenous grape varieties have seen a resurgence, and winemakers have sought to rediscover their lost wine heritage while capitalizing on modern innovation.

06

APPRECIATION ON LOCATION, PART 2: BARREL TASTING

TERMS

Balance (n.): The interplay of the structural components of a wine. An unbalanced wine is one where one element, like tannin, acidity, or alcohol, is higher than the others in a distracting or unpleasant way. A very tannic wine, like Barolo, could be in balance if the acidity and alcohol are also high, giving it the sense of power for which it is known. Very acidic grape varietals, like riesling, are often made into wines with a touch of sweetness to balance their natural acidity. But note that balance is also about the components in and of themselves—a really tart wine is always going to be unbalanced in that regard, even if the other components are balanced.

To buy en primeur (v.): The process of purchasing wine while it is still in the barrel, before it has been released from the winery. The benefit for the consumer is the opportunity to buy wine for a lower price that may appreciate in value over time. Some very exclusive wines may be sold almost entirely en primeur, and be effectively unavailable on the retail market by their release date. This method of buying is not as popular as it once was, but is still a widespread practice especially for the wines of Bordeaux, and to a lesser extent, Burgundy and Rhône.

Élevage (n.): French term for "bringing up" a wine, or aging it after fermentation but before bottling. More important for serious, ageworthy red and white wines than for simple rosés or whites, which may age for just a few months in stainless steel vessels to preserve their bright fruit flavors. The winemaker tastes the wine every few months to determine how much longer it should age before release. Élevage also includes winemaking choices such as what style of wood should be used for aging and how many times to rack the wine.

Racking (n.): The process of siphoning off wine from a barrel, leaving behind the sediment. In addition to clarifying the wine and making it more stable, racking introduces small amounts of oxygen, which improves its flavor.

Texture (n.): Also called "mouthfeel" for the way the wine feels in your mouth and throat. The main contributor to texture is tannin. However, body, alcohol, and sweetness also have a part to play. Tannin may be velvety, silky, firm, or astringent.

Wood (n.): Usually refers to the oak barrels used to age the wine, but chestnut or other wood can be used. Two types of oak predominate: French oak, which is used for most French and some American wine, and American oak, which is most popular for Spanish wines. French oak gives the wine subtle flavors of vanilla and baking spices, while American oak is known for imparting bolder coconut aromas, and even the signature dill note of some Riojas. The other choice a winemaker needs to make about wood is how old it is. New oak gives more flavor to the wine, but new barrels are expensive and can overwhelm the flavor of the grapes themselves. Oak barrels that have been previously used offer the benefit of letting in small amounts of oxygen as the wine ages without imparting as much oak flavor as new barrels. This oxygen exchange allows the wine's flavors to develop and also softens the tannins, making the finished wine smoother and more harmonious. Many winemakers use a mix of new and old barrels to age their wines over a period of a few months to a few years, then blend these parts to create a complete and well-balanced whole.

APPRECIATION ON LOCATION, PART 2: BARREL TASTING

In the barrel-aging room at Tenuta Tignanello, James tastes 2017 Solaia from the barrel. A barrel sample is a taste of young wine before it has been bottled. After fermentation, fine wines undergo élevage, a process of refinement and aging that will shape the flavors of the finished product. If you get an opportunity to taste a barrel sample, notice the same elements you would look for in any wine: the balance of the acid, tannin, fruit, and alcohol components, as well as texture and length, or how long the flavor lasts after you spit or swallow the wine. Focus less on aroma or perfume, which will develop later on in the aging process. As always, the finish is the most important factor in judging the quality of wines from barrel.

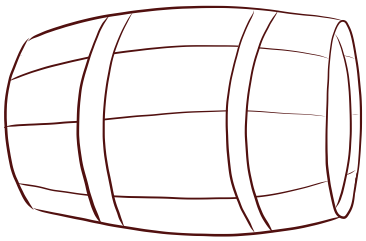
Barrel samples are the key to buying wine "futures" (called buying en primeur) based on wine critics' or merchants' notes when the wine is still in barrel at the winery. Regular consumers will not usually get a chance to taste from the barrel as winemakers prefer to show their finished product.

It's important to remember that barrel samples are not finished wines. To a novice taster, they can taste quite unusual. Whites often have a particularly yeasty aroma which will be gone by bottling, while the tannins of reds are often grainy and in some cases very astringent. Both will be unfiltered and contain a lot of sediment and possibly spritz left over from the fermentation. Don't judge a barrel sample based on whether you enjoy the wine now; think ahead to how it might develop in bottle. Always use a spittoon when tasting from barrel—barrel samples aren't for drinking!

PRACTICE

Do a side-by-side tasting of two similar wines with different aging regimens.

- Ask your local wine shop for two pinot noirs, one aged in stainless steel and one aged in French oak barrels. How are the aromas of these wines different? How are the textures different? Many wineries offer technical information about their wines online, so you can find out the specifics of the winemaking methods they used.
- Buy two bottles of red Rioja, a Spanish wine made primarily from the tempranillo grape, one labeled "Crianza" (a wine which has been aged for two years), and one labeled "Gran Reserva" (a wine which has been aged for at least five years). Compare the flavors and textures of the young versus the older wine. Do you smell dill or coconut from the American oak?



07

PRIMARY FACTORS OF INFLUENCE: IN THE VINEYARD

TERMS

Alberese soil (n.): Rocky, hardened limestone, composed of fossilized calcium carbonate.

Bordeaux blend (n.): Grapes traditionally vinified together in Bordeaux such as cabernet, merlot, and petit verdot. The term can refer to this combination used around the world.

Canopy management (n.): The ways in which winemakers train and prune their vines in order to produce the effect that is best for the grapes. This can include shading the grapes from sunburn, encouraging airflow to prevent disease, and creating a balance between foliage and grape bunches. In general, more leaves mean more photosynthesis and riper grapes. However, vigorous vines with excessive foliage can take away vital nutrients and sugars from the grapes. This is why a balanced approach is so important.

Clonal selection (n.): A planting process in which all vines are selected from a single, best-performing parent vine. (Commercial grapevines aren't planted from seeds. Cuttings from existing vines are taken and planted into the soil. These small branches soon form their own root system.) One drawback to clonal selection is that since every vine in a given plot is genetically identical, they are all susceptible to the same diseases.

Diurnal temperature variation (n.): The difference between daytime and nighttime temperatures in the vineyard.

Filtering (n.): The last step of the winemaking process before bottling. The finished wine is passed through a membrane to remove sediment, yeast, and bacteria, leaving a wine that is clear and stable in the bottle, although aggressive filtering can diminish flavor and character as well.

Fining (n.): A delicate process in which wine is clarified by adding a precipitating agent like egg white or bentonite, which binds to large particles in the wine and settles them to the bottom of the vessel, where they can be removed. Used in conjunction with or as an alternative to filtering.

Indigenous grapes (n.): These are varieties native to a particular country or area. For example, sangiovese is an indigenous grape in Italy.

International grapes (n.): These are widespread varieties used all over the world and not confined to their place of origin. Cabernet sauvignon is one example.

Linear (adj.): Compact with firmer tannins, higher acidity, and less overt fruit and alcohol.

07

PRIMARY FACTORS OF INFLUENCE: IN THE VINEYARD

TERMS

Maceration (n.): The soaking of the grape skins with the juice or "must," which extracts tannins, color, and flavors. This step gives the finished wine deeper color and tannin, and increases its ability to age.

Microclimate (n.): The atmospheric conditions that affect a small area (as opposed to the climate of a larger area), including wind, precipitation, and temperature. The slope of a vineyard or its position near water or forest can change its microclimate enough to affect the grapes' growth.

Must (n.): Crushed grapes and their juice before they have been fermented into wine.

Tannins (n.): Substances found mainly in grape skins, seeds, and stems that create a drying, rubbing sensation on your tongue. Ripe, well-judged tannins create a sense of structure and depth.

Vinification (n.): Winemaking.

Vigneron (n.): French term for "vinegrower," a person who both grows grapes and makes wine.

PRIMARY FACTORS OF INFLUENCE: IN THE VINEYARD

Wine is first and foremost an agricultural product whose birthplace is the vineyard. Fine winemakers start with the highest quality grapes and try to maintain that quality through the winemaking process all the way into the bottle, making decisions based on science, their own taste, and historical traditions.

Certain grapes are better suited to certain areas. What we think of as classic regions are simply places where grapes have been growing for hundreds of years. Some areas make their best wine from single grapes grown in specific vineyards: regions like Barolo in Northern Italy, and Burgundy and the Northern Rhône Valley in France. Some areas, like Bordeaux and the Southern Rhône, specialize in blended wines. In Bordeaux, the unpredictable Atlantic climate means that some grapes won't ripen fully or will be damaged each year. Blending means winemakers can use the best grapes from a vintage to create consistent wines.

The basis of great wine is in the soil: grapes need just enough nutrition, but not too much. Vines that suffer during the year and older vines may produce smaller amounts of good quality fruit. Vignerons are always looking for a balance between the soil and microclimate, hoping for enough rain to keep the vines alive but not so much that it could dilute the grapes or encourage disease.

Winemakers choose their vineyard site for the soil best suited to help grapes grow in their climate. In a vineyard at Tenuta Tignanello, for example, alberese soil (a high calcium soil made up of fossils) contains light-colored stones that reflect sunlight to the vines, encouraging photosynthesis. These stones also retain heat at night, keeping the vines warm. The aspect of a vineyard (a combination of its slope and which direction it faces) also determines how much sunlight the vines receive and how protected they are from cold and frost. In addition to choosing a site with good soil and favorable aspect, vignerons can train and prune the vines in various way to produce the effect that is best for the grapes.

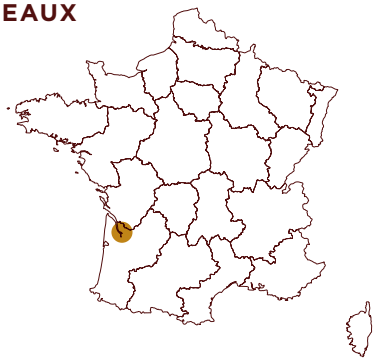
CHIANTI

GRAPE: Sangiovese. Thin skins, light color, medium to full body, fine tannins, high acidity, fruity.

TERROIR: Likes hot, dry climate and limestone soils.

KNOWN FOR: Chianti Classico, Brunello di Montalcino.

BORDEAUX



GRAPE: Cabernet sauvignon. Thick skins, dark color, full body, chewy tannins, medium to high acidity, flavorful.

TERROIR: This hardy, late-ripening grape is grown successfully around the world with a preference for gravelly soils.

KNOWN FOR: Bordeaux blends, Napa Valley.

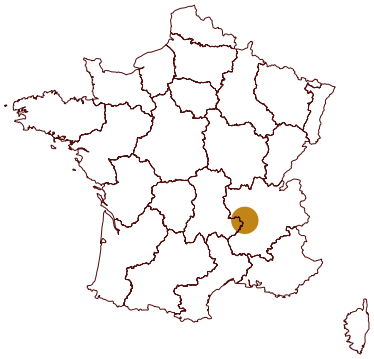
PRIMARY FACTORS OF INFLUENCE: IN THE VINEYARD

Climate is of paramount importance. In very cool climates, grapes may not ripen sufficiently, whereas in hot climates, the grapes can lose their natural acidities and the wines may appear flabby. This is one reason why particular grape varieties perform better in certain areas. Early-ripening varieties such as pinot noir and chardonnay tend to perform better in cool climates, whereas late-ripening varieties such as cabernet sauvignon and sangiovese are preferable in hot climates.

During the growing season, vignerons hope for sunshine and very little rain. If it rains or gets too cold before full ripeness, the tannins could be aggressive or the wines could have underripe "green" flavors. Too much rainfall at harvest time can also lead to dilution in the grapes. Harvest happens around August or September in the northern hemisphere, and six months ahead in the southern hemisphere. Heavy rain or hail before harvest is catastrophic because it can knock the grapes off the vines, causing loss of part or all of the harvest.

After the bunches of grapes are harvested by hand or machine, the grapes are taken into the winery. Most grapes get put into a crusher/destemmer, a machine that separates the stems from the grapes and breaks the grapes open. The must is then fermented in stainless steel or wooden vats. Fermentation is the transformation of sugar by yeast into alcohol, or how grape juice becomes wine. There are many variables for the winemaker to consider during the vinification: the length of maceration, or how long to leave the juice with the skins, which affects color and tannin extraction; temperature of the fermentation, which changes the flavor of the finished wine; and then various finishing touches, like fining and filtering, and finally, barrel aging.

NORTHERN RHÔNE



GRAPE: Syrah. Meaty, black pepper, dark fruit and violets. Well-balanced body, acid, and tannin.

TERROIR: Grows in moderate to warm climates, likes granite soils.

KNOWN FOR: Hermitage and Côte-Rôtie in the Northern Rhône. Also grown as "shiraz" in Australia in a sometimes riper style.

RHINE RIVER

GRAPE: Riesling. Aromas of stones, citrus, stone fruit, white flowers, and sometimes petrol. Light body, high acidity.

TERROIR: Likes cool climate and slate soils.

KNOWN FOR: Mosel, Rheingau, and Pfalz examples, but also gaining traction in Australia.

PRIMARY FACTORS OF INFLUENCE: IN THE VINEYARD

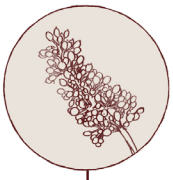
GRAPES TO BOTTLE PROCESS

START

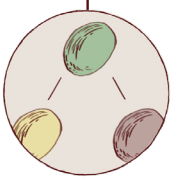
1. Budburst

2. Flowering

3. Fruit set

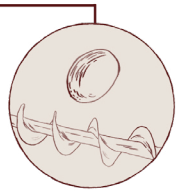


4. Veraison

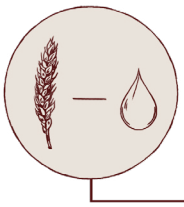


5. Harvest

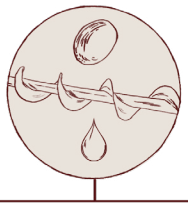
6. Crushing



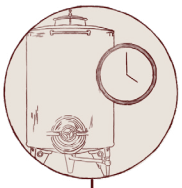
7. Fermentation



8. Pressing

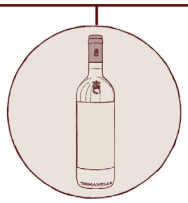


9. Aging

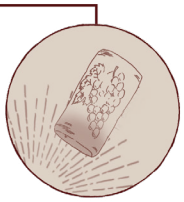


END

10. Bottling



11. Enjoy



08

STORING AND CURATING: A HOME CELLAR

TERMS

Botrytis (n.): A type of fungus that causes grapes to shrivel and decay, yet intensifies sweetness and adds flavor complexity to the wine.

Cooked (adj.): Way of describing wine that has been exposed to high temperatures, either during shipment or storage. The flavors of the wine will taste like baked or stewed fruit, rather than fresh. If you notice that the color of the wine is more brick-like or brown than you expect or there is sticky residue leaking out under the foil capsule, your wine might be cooked.

EuroCave (n.): A well-known brand of stand-alone wine fridge. A wine fridge keeps your collection at the ideal temperature and humidity for aging. Wine fridges can cost in the thousands of dollars when new, but are easy to find second-hand online.

Primary aromas (n.): The aromas that are derived directly from the fermenting grapes and are what relate to the primary factors of influence in the vineyard, such as grape variety, soil, climate, et cetera. They are comprised mostly of fruits, flowers, and herbs.

Secondary aromas (n.): The aromas that come from the compounds obtained in cellar processes after fermentation, including malolactic fermentation (e.g. yoghurt, milky aromas in white wines), and aging in oak (e.g. vanilla, cloves, coconut).

Tertiary aromas (n.): The more complex aromas that appear after aging in bottle, beginning usually a few years after purchase (e.g. mushrooms, tobacco). These apply only to older wines.

STORING AND CURATING: A HOME CELLAR

Your personal cellar doesn't have to be large, and all of the wines in your collection do not have to be intended for aging. It's just as meaningful to have a collection for drinking and enjoying! Pick wines that commemorate trips you've taken or restaurants you've enjoyed, or that mark memories you'd like to revisit. Consider also leaving bottles at the homes of friends or family so you can look forward to drinking them together.

STORAGE

Storage 101: Keep bottles horizontal so the corks don't dry out, which can cause seepage and premature aging.

Temperature: Storage temperature should be stable, because changes in temperature can cause the cork to expand and contract, letting wine seep out around it. The ideal temperature should be under 20°C (68°F). The natural aging process of wine is slowed at lower temperatures.

Refrigeration: Don't put wine in your regular refrigerator unless you're chilling it for immediate consumption. If you don't have a wine cellar, you can use a EuroCave or wine fridge to keep your bottles at the right temperature.

Humidity: Humidity should be between 60 and 68 percent. At higher humidity, labels will peel off the bottles, while at lower humidity, your corks can dry out, leaving the wine vulnerable to the effects of oxygen.

Labels: Note the condition of the label to see if the bottle has been stored well. Labels cannot be expected to be perfect on very old bottles, and a pristine label on a very old bottle may lead you to question its authenticity!

The Neck: Wine is very sensitive to heat and humidity so you're looking at the bottle for signs that it has been exposed to extremes of climate. High fill level (ullage) of wine at the neck of the bottle is a positive indication, while a lower level of wine may point to problems, and decreases the value of old bottles.

HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR CELLAR:

Organizing your wine cellar is a personal endeavor, and the method you choose depends on how much wine you have, how much time and space you have to devote to it, and your own preferences.

James's cellar is organized intuitively: first loosely by region, and by vintage within that region. He spends a lot of time in his cellar so he knows where the bottles are without using a more specific method.

Alternately, a simple way to make a roadmap to your cellar is to number your wine racks and use a spreadsheet to keep track of which bottle lives in each slot. You can organize the spreadsheet by vintage, region, or producer, and then when you open each bottle, you can use the spreadsheet to record your tasting notes.

The most high-tech option is to use an app like CellarTracker, which connects your home collection to an online database of reviews and other users' tasting notes. It's a great way to keep track of wines you have in your cellar and get guidance about how those wines are tasting as they evolve with age. You can use it to record wines you've had before as well as make a wishlist of wines you may want to purchase.

STORING AND CURATING: A HOME CELLAR

AGING

Both red and white wines can be aged. Look for complex red wines with high acidity and tannin that will mellow with age, like nebbiolo, cabernet sauvignon, or syrah. Age-worthy white wines include chardonnay, riesling, and chenin blanc, which have the body and acidity to hold up over time.

Age the classics: Choose wines from classic areas in Italy or France, or Napa Valley for the New World. Premium wines from established winemaking regions are often made with the intention that they will be aged before consumption. Inexpensive wines, whose pleasures are found in their refreshing fruit flavors, are best enjoyed immediately, as those flavors do not improve with age and grow tired after about a year. Wines from great vintages, where the weather has given them a balance of fruit flavors, tannin, and acidity, can age longer than wines from lesser vintages, which may not have the structure to preserve them over time.

Buy by the case (if you can): If possible, buy a case or two of a wine you like and taste a bottle every couple of years to see how it's evolving. Be sure to take notes!

Cork vs. screw cap: Cork finish is most common in Old World wine regions, but screw cap is almost universal in New Zealand and Australia. Wines with screw caps age more slowly, so cork is a better solution for fine wine where you're looking for an evolution of flavor through the aging process. One advantage of screw cap is that wines under screw cap can't be corked.

Flavor: With age, the primary fruit flavors of red wine transform into tertiary flavors of earth, leaves, bark, and mushroom, and the tannins become more integrated. White wines get deeper and gain notes of honey, butterscotch, or white truffles. It's personal perference whether you prefer the characteristics of older or younger wines.

Don't wait too long: It's better to drink wine too young than risk waiting until it's past its prime. For premium reds, 10–15 years of age are a safe bet, unless it's a wine you know can age longer.

WINES MENTIONED

- *Brunello di Montalcino 2004 — Eredi Fuligni (Tuscany, Italy)*. 100% sangiovese, aged five years (two in oak) before release; full body; velvety tannins; medium to high acidity; ages for decades.
- *Sassicaia 2004 — Tenuta San Guido (Tuscany, Italy)*. The first Super Tuscan, made from cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc on Italy's coast. Very Bordeaux-like, elegant and iconic wine.
- *Rocche dell'Annunziata Barolo Riserva 1998 — Paolo Scavino (Piedmont, Italy)*. From one of the top vineyards in Barolo, this is an example of a "modern" Barolo that leans towards chewy tannins and ripe fruit while maintaining precision.
- *Barolo 1958 — Marchesi di Barolo (Piedmont, Italy)*. Barolos can age for decades thanks to their prevalent tannins. Very old Barolos are light-colored with a pink tinge and very fine, resolved tannins.
- *Blanc 1994 —Château Olivier (Bordeaux, France)*. Whites from Bordeaux are made mainly from sauvignon blanc and semillon. They show guava fruit and often a tropical hint. Medium to full body. High acidity. Oily texture.
- *Sauternes 2000 —Château de Myrat (Bordeaux, France)*. Sauternes is France's top sweet wine and made from grapes affected by a fungus called botrytis. While this may sound unappealing, the fungus breaks the skin of the grapes, allowing water to evaporate and the flavors, sugars, and acid to increase.

STORING AND CURATING: A HOME CELLAR

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR EXPLORING AND BUYING WINE:

LOOKING AT PRODUCERS, REGIONS, AND STYLES

There are various approaches to exploring wine. James looks at the producer first, seeking out wineries he's heard of but hasn't tasted yet. You can also look at region first, seeking out the most well-known producers in a region you're interested in exploring, and then delving into lesser-known producers from that region.

Reliable values can be found in Southern Italy, Chile, Rioja in Spain, and the Languedoc in Southern France.

Some of James's favorite values are wines from Campania in Italy, Argentine malbec and cabernet franc, and the fresher styles of Australian wine made in the Adelaide Hills and Margaret River regions.

2015 and 2016 were good vintages in most of Europe and the US. Many good vintages recently means there has never been a better time to drink wine!

FINDING AND BUYING

Buy with intention: Before you go to the store, determine if you are looking for wine for your cellar, or wine to drink with dinner tonight.

Check ratings: Cross-check ratings from different wine critics. For wines you're not familiar with, start with those rated in the low 90s before you jump into the most expensive, highest-rated bottles.

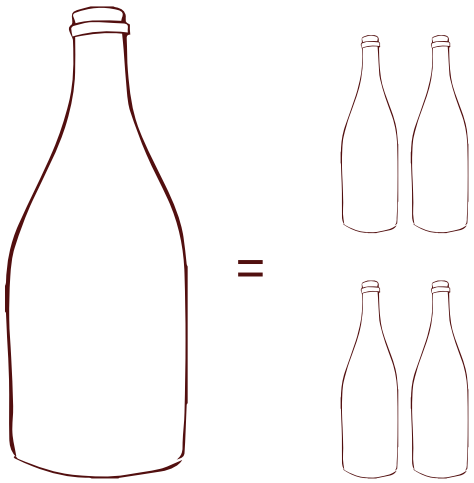
Research first: Use wine-searcher.com to look up prices and retailers for wines you may want to buy. You can easily spot if you are getting a good bargain or not.

Auctions: The best way to get wine that is not available in stores or at restaurants is at auction. Buying wine at auction is complicated but rewarding. You have to do your homework, reading auction catalogs online and comparing prices, but you can be assured that the bottles are in good shape and have been stored properly.

If you are likely to drink a great bottle you bought in great company, consider buying a larger size of bottle. The larger the volume, the smaller the surface area to volume ratio and the neck will be proportionally smaller. Larger bottles therefore age more slowly. Depending on when you decide on drinking a wine, the magnum size could be your best bet.

STANDARD (750 ML)

MAGNUM (1.5 ML) *equivalent to 2 standard bottles*



DOUBLE MAGNUM OR JEROBOAM (3 L)
equivalent to 2 magnums or 4 standard bottles

09

EDUCATION AND ETIQUETTE: READING A WINE LIST

TERMS

Corkage fee (n.): The fee charged when you bring your own wine to a restaurant.

Flawed/faulty (adj.): Wine is a living agricultural product, and sometimes reaches the consumer in less-than-perfect condition. Common flaws you may encounter include cork taint, oxidation, maderization, or volatile acidity (VA), which smells like vinegar or nail polish remover. In some styles of wine, low levels of these characteristics are acceptable (except for cork taint), but you should always have a conversation with your sommelier if you think the wine doesn't taste right to you. It's important to understand that most of these problems are only relevant to the particular bottle you have open. A different bottle of the same wine may well be excellent.

Sommelier (n.): A restaurant's wine steward. They will know what wines the restaurant has both on and off the wine list and can help you find the right wine for your occasion. Many sommeliers are accredited through professional organizations like the Court of Master Sommeliers or the Wine and Spirit Education Trust.

EDUCATION AND ETIQUETTE: READING A WINE LIST

Where do you start when you're looking at a massive wine list, or one where the wines you recognize are not wines you want to drink? Order a few glasses of wine (sparkling is always a great apéritif) or cocktails your dining companions can enjoy while you peruse the list. Then ask to talk to the sommelier or beverage director. If the restaurant doesn't have a specialist to guide you, find a region or grape you like, and choose a wine from a good recent vintage if you're not familiar with the producer. The wine from a given region usually pairs well with the cuisine of that region, so if you're at a Neapolitan pizza place, try a fiano or aglianico from Campania. However, don't be bound by regional customs. A Spanish paella goes really well with minerally Sonoma chardonnay!

PRO TIPS:

Research in advance: Preview the restaurant's wine list online before your visit to find out what they specialize in and think of a few bottles you may want to try.

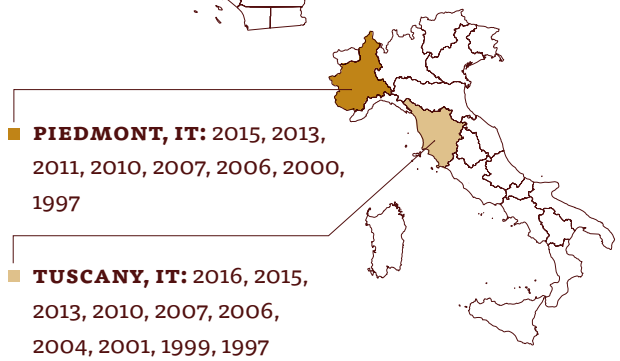
Determine your budget: Be clear with the sommelier what your budget is. Ask for a few suggestions in your price range based on a description of what style of wine you want, like "a full-bodied red from Italy with some oak between $70 and $90," or "an aromatic white with lower acidity, for under $50."

Look for value: The markup for a bottle of wine in a restaurant is anywhere from two to four times the cost of the same bottle at retail, and the highest margins are made on wines offered by the glass and the lowest priced bottles. The best comparative values are found in the mid-priced and more expensive bottles. In countries with high taxes on wines, such as the Middle East or Southeast Asia, the reverse is usually true as duties are often based on value. In these cases, it's best to stick with more affordable bottles.

If you go by the glass: Be aware of where you are: a restaurant with a good wine list will usually have a good glass selection, but a bad restaurant may not have a good selection or take care of those wines well. Be particularly wary of oxidation with wines by the glass as they could have been open for many days.

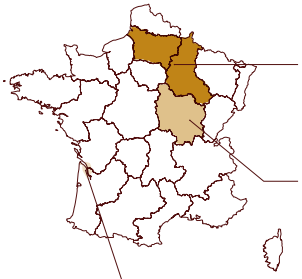
BEST RECENT VINTAGES

NAPA, CA: 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012, 2007, 2006, 1994



PIEDMONT, IT: 2015, 2013, 2011, 2010, 2007, 2006, 2000, 1997

TUSCANY, IT: 2016, 2015, 2013, 2010, 2007, 2006, 2004, 2001, 1999, 1997

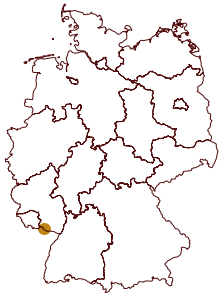


CHAMPAGNE, FR: 2016, 2015, 2012, 2008, 2006, 2004, 2002, 1996, 1995, 1990

BURGUNDY, FR: 2016, 2015, 2010, 2009, 2005, 2002, 1999, 1990

BORDEAUX, FR: 2015, 2010, 2009, 2005, 2000, 1998 (RIGHT BANK), 1989, 1982

RIOJA, SP: 2016, 2015, 2011, 2010, 2005, 2004, 2001, 1995, 1991



MOSEL, GR: 2016, 2015, 2012, 2007, 2005, 2001, 1999, 1990

EDUCATION AND ETIQUETTE: READING A WINE LIST

Make a connection: Endeavor to connect with and learn from your sommelier or wine server. They can tell you what the restaurant specializes in, and help you find good values on the list, or even recommend special wines that are not printed on the menu. You also want to be able to have a conversation with them if there is a problem with the bottle you order.

Focus on the first taste: When the bottle is opened and you are poured a taste, focus on the wine to see if it's faulty, because you can't send a wine back after you've drank half the bottle! If the characteristics are hard to discern at first because the wine is so cold, don't be afraid to ask the sommelier to warm the bottle up first.

Focus on what you know: If you're buying to impress, a good idea is to buy within your comfort zone. For example, if you know a lot about Spanish wines, choose wines from this category. But don't be afraid to explore other possibilities to widen your wine horizons. After all, wine is about enjoyment and new experiences! Start out by sampling unfamiliar grapes or regions that could be similar in taste to your usual preferences.

Buy exclusive bottles: Some very prestigious restaurants have bottles you can only find through them or at other fine dining establishments. Budget permitting, it can be a treat to explore these kinds of exclusive wines.

Be aware of the environment: Only buy expensive wines at restaurants where you can be assured they were kept in good condition, and will be served in appropriate glassware and at the right temperature. There's no use splurging in an environment where you can't properly enjoy your prized bottle.

If you bring your own: Call the restaurant beforehand to see if they allow you to bring in your own wine, and how much the corkage fee will be. Don't bring a wine that the restaurant already has on the list, or a very inexpensive bottle.

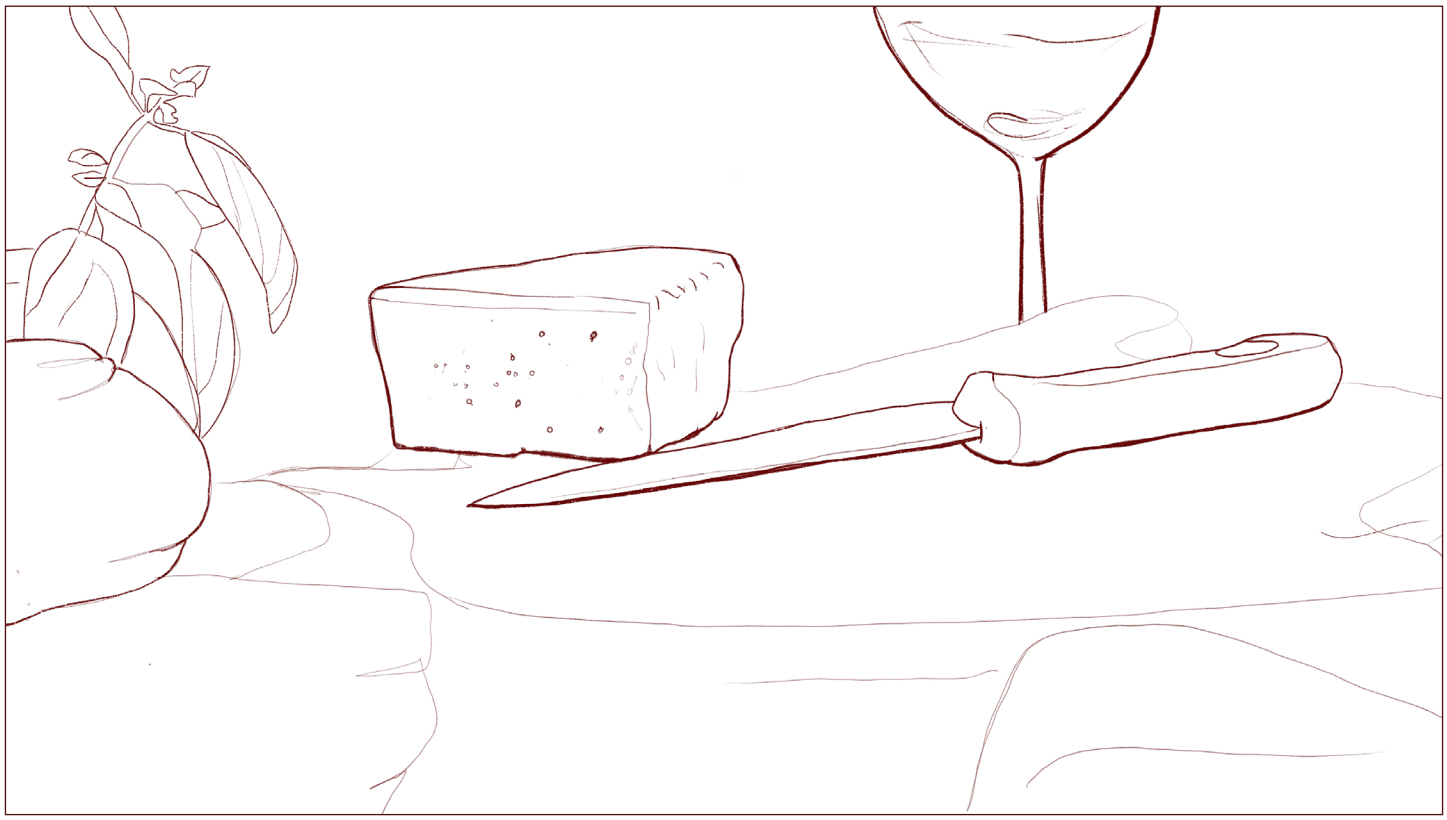
Practice good etiquette: It's polite to order a bottle off the restaurant's list as well for every bottle you bring in of your own, and to offer a taste of your wine to your sommelier. Don't forget to tip for the wine service whether you brought the bottle or not.

PRACTICE:

- Many restaurants have their wine list posted online. Browse the lists at the best restaurants in your city and familiarize yourself with the producers whose names you see on multiple lists: These may be established producers of classic styles of wine or new, trendy producers, but either way, they are wines you will want to try. Reading wine lists online will help you understand what wine regions are important from a commercial perspective as well as learn about what wines are available in your city or state.
- Next time you go out to dinner, speak with the sommelier and give a specific brief for the type of wine you'd like. If your description resulted in a wine you like, ask the somm for recommendations for similar wines you might also explore. If you didn't enjoy the wine, consider what about it was unappealing so you can describe next time what you don't like, which can be equally as useful as knowing what you do like.
- Alternately, go into a restaurant with a completely open mind and ask the somm to bring you whatever they're most excited about in a given price range. Whether you love the wine or not, it will start a conversation and expand your wine experience.

10

BREAKING THE RULES OF PAIRINGS: A TUSCAN LUNCHEON



BREAKING THE RULES OF PAIRINGS: A TUSCAN LUNCHEON

Chardonnay with smoked salmon. Pinot noir with chicken. Grilled meat and a bold cabernet. These classic combinations are undeniably delicious, but James likes to be more dynamic and unconventional in his approach to pairing. A meal with a variety of dishes, like James's Tuscan lunch, offers opportunities to pair with many types of wine and taste around the table to see which combinations please your palate. There is no "wrong" pairing, but some will stand out as more harmonious to your taste. Think in terms of general guidelines, rather than specific rules.

JAMES'S PAIRING TIPS:

- Texture is more important to consider than color in food and wine pairing. You can successfully pair with wine that either complements or contrasts with the dish.
- The wine should refresh your palate, not coat it. Choose well-balanced wines that will combine with the dish's flavors rather than high-alcohol blockbusters that will overwhelm the food.
- Cook with high-quality wines you would want to drink.
- Champagne pairs with almost everything, and it is a great apéritif before a meal.
- If you'd like to drink red wine with fish, choose reds that act like white wines. Fruity wines with fresh acidity and low tannin like pinot noir and gamay work well.
- Asian food that has spicy, sour, sweet, and salty elements can pair with most wines, but those with good acidity or a touch of sweetness tend to match especially well.
- Older wines go best with simple foods like cheese or grilled meat so the wine's complexity can take center stage.
- Pair desserts with wines that have a similar level of sweetness, like gelato with Sauternes, the famous sweet wine of Bordeaux, made from semillon and sauvignon blanc grapes affected by noble rot.
- Tailor the wine to your occasion and moment, rather than focusing too much on pairing the wine perfectly with the food.

WINES TASTED:

- *Comtes de Champagne Grands Crus Blancs de Blancs 2007 — Taittinger (Champagne, France)*. A very structured and complex Champagne; one of James's all-time favorite sparkling wines.
- *Pinot Grigio Punggl 2017 — Nals Margreid (Alto Adige, Italy)*. Not your average pinot grigio. A flavorful, delightful bottle from one of Alto Adige's top producers in Northeastern Italy.
- *Pinot Bianco Sirmian 2017 — Nals Margreid (Alto Adige, Italy)*. Pinot bianco is closely related to pinot grigio, but often more exciting. From one of Italy's top white wine producers.
- *Gorgona 2017 — Marchesi de Frescobaldi (Tuscany, Italy)*. This mineral-flavored blend of vermentino and ansonica is made by prisoners on a small island off the Tuscan coast.
- *Brunello di Montalcino Castelgiocondo 2010 — Frescobaldi Brunello di Montalcino Castelgiocondo (Tuscany, Italy)*. A juicy yet balanced sangiovese that was James's Wine of the Year in 2015. Excellent quality and great value.
- *Oreno 2013 — Tenuta Sette Ponti (Tuscany, Italy) Blend: merlot, cabernet sauvignon, and petit verdot*. One of Italy's top Super Tuscan reds made next door to James's house in Tuscany. Mouth-filling but mineral-driven.
- *Seña Blend 2015 — (Valle De Aconcagua, Chile). Blend: 57% cabernet sauvignon, 21% carmenere, 12% malbec, 7% petit verdot, and 3% cabernet franc*. One of the first wines to be scored 100 points in Chile, Seña is a deep, refined expression of cabernet where the carmenere adds a distinct spicy, peppery edge.
- *Sauternes 2001 — Château Clos Haut-Peyraguey (Bordeaux, France)*. Sauternes is one of the world's top sweet wines from Bordeaux, France. This example is dense but with laser-sharp acidity.

BREAKING THE RULES OF PAIRINGS: A TUSCAN LUNCHEON

FOOD	WINE 1: *Complement*	WINE 2: *Contrast*
Buttery pasta	**Pinot Bianco, Northern Italy** High acidity cuts through acidity	**Vermentino, Tuscany** Oiliness matches with butteriness
Kimchi pancake	**Brunello di Montalcino Sangiovese** Matching intensity via acidity	**Pinot Bianco, Northern Italy** Acidity lifts the spiciness
Grilled fish	**Vermentino, Tuscany** Savory, oily texture	**Pinot noir or gamay** Contrasting fruitiness, low tannin
Fresh mozzarella	**Pinot Bianco, Northern Italy** High acidity cuts through acidity	**Cabernet blend, Chile** Cheese reduces the effects of tannins

PRACTICE:

The key flavor components of wine and food interact in predictable ways, but how you respond to these interactions is dependent on your individual taste. In general, tannin and acidity in wine are balanced by fat in a dish. Spicy heat in a dish can be tamed by sweetness in the paired wine, as can salt or sourness. Try two different wines like a rich California chardonnay and a grassy, fresh French Sancerre with the same dish (something simple like white fish in beurre blanc) and see how a sip of each wine after a bite changes the way you perceive the food. Then try a heavy red wine like cabernet sauvignon with the same dish and see if you like this unconventional pairing.

The discovery of how different cuisines from around the world pair with different wines is an exciting one. However, because wine is not a tradition in many cultures, the wine list may not be exciting in, say, Chinese or Korean restaurants. Don't let this discourage you! Wines pair very well with Asian, Middle Eastern, and South American dishes. If in doubt, bring your own bottles and turbocharge your developing palate!

As you add to your taste memory of different grapes, regions, and wine styles, imagine how they might taste with certain dishes. Then put your theories into practice by trying the pairings out. Soon enough, you'll be matching food and wine like a pro!

Try your wines at different temperatures with food. Lower temperatures reduce the perception of alcohol, and can make the wines easier to pair with food. Conversely, higher temperatures could help bring out more aromas to match with stronger-flavored dishes.

While desserts don't generally work with dry wines, don't be afraid of trying things the other way around: pairing off-dry or sweet wines with savory dishes. You may find you enjoy the combination even if sweet wines aren't usually your thing.

Indexed below are all of the wines tasted in the class.
Note: Wines that did not score at least 90 points are not included.

CHAPTER 3:

Tasting Techniques: Conducting a Blind Tasting

Sauvignon Blanc Piere 2016 — Vie di Romans (Friuli, Italy)

Tascante Buonora 2016 — Tasca D'almerita (Sicily, Italy)

Rosé di Neré 2017 — Feudo Maccari (Sicily, Italy)

Radici Taurasi 2014 — Mastroberardino (Campania, Italy)

Crognolo Super Tuscan Blend, 2016 — Tenuta Sette Ponti (Tuscany, Italy)

CHAPTER 4:

Discerning Flavors and Aromas: Student Tasting Experience

Prosecco Superiore Dry Valdobbiadene Superiore di Cartizze 2017 — Nino Franco (Italy, Veneto)

Brut Premier Champagne NV — Louis Roederer (Champagne, France)

Riesling Kirchenstück Kabinett Trocken 2016 — Kunstler Common (Rheingau, Germany)

Pouilly-Fuissé 2016 — Louis Latour (Burgundy, France)

Pinot Grigio 2017 — Schiopetto (Friuli, Italy)

Rock Angel Rosé 2017 — Château d'Esclans (Provence, France)

Cabernet Sauvignon Antica 2014 — Antinori Family Estates (Napa Valley, California)

Petruna 2016 — Il Borro (Tuscany, Italy)

Pinot Noir Laurène 2013 — Domaine Drouhin (Oregon, USA)

Haut-Médoc 2015 and 2000 — Château Sociando-Mallet (Bordeaux, France)

CHAPTER 6:

Appreciation On Location, Part 1: A Vertical Tasting

Tignanello 1983 — Marchesi Antinori (Tuscany, Italy)

Tignanello 1999 — Marchesi Antinori (Tuscany, Italy)

Tignanello 2007 — Marchesi Antinori (Tuscany, Italy)

Tignanello 2015 — Marchesi Antinori (Tuscany, Italy)

CHAPTER 8:

Storing and Curating: A Home Cellar

Brunello di Montalcino 2004 — Eredi Fuligni (Tuscany, Italy)

Rocche dell'Annunziata Barolo Riserva 1998 — Paolo Scavino (Piedmont, Italy)

Barolo 1958 — Marchesi di Barolo (Piedmont, Italy)

Blanc 1994 —Château Olivier (Bordeaux, France)

Sauternes 2000 —Château de Myrat (Bordeaux, France)

CHAPTER 10:

Breaking the Rules of Pairings: A Tuscan Luncheon

Comtes de Champagne Grands Crus Blancs de Blancs 2007 — Taittinger (Champagne, France)

Pinot Grigio Punggl 2017 — Nals Margreid (Alto Adige, Italy)

Pinot Bianco Sirmian 2017 — Nals Margreid (Alto Adige, Italy)

Gorgona 2017 — Marchesi de Frescobaldi (Tuscany, Italy)

Brunello di Montalcino Castelgiocondo 2010 — Frescobaldi Brunello di Montalcino Castelgiocondo (Tuscany, Italy)

Oreno 2013 — Tenuta Sette Ponti (Tuscany, Italy)

Seña Blend 2015 — (Valle De Aconcagua, Chile)

Sauternes 2001 — Château Clos Haut-Peyraguey (Bordeaux, France)