



WINE FOLLY

WINE

101

Wine 101 Guide

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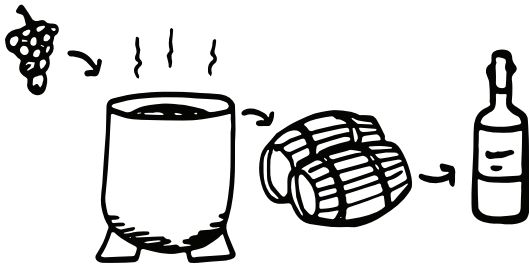
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What is Wine?



Wine is an alcoholic beverage made with fermented grapes.

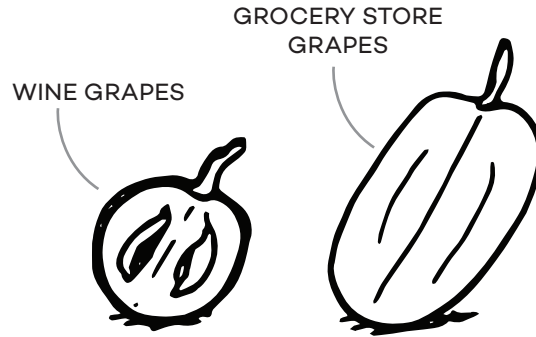
Of course, you can ferment any fruit to make wine. But legally speaking, if it's labeled "wine" then it must be made with grapes. Other fruit wines must append the fruit type to the label (e.g. "cranberry wine.")



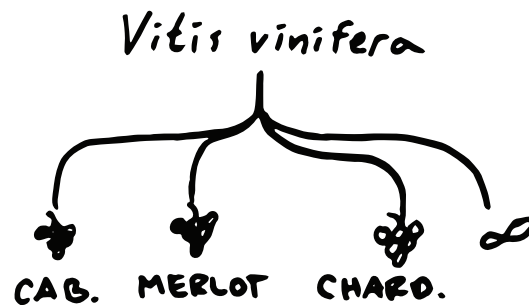
Once a year, grapes are harvested to make wine. This is where we get the term "vintage."

Each vintage is characterized by unique growing conditions (rainfall, wind, frost, hail, fires, etc) that ultimately affect how the wine tastes. This is why you'll find some vintages preferable to others.

It's useful to note that a single vintage can affect red and white wines somewhat differently.



The grapes used for winemaking are not like the ones you'll find in the grocery store. Wine grapes are smaller, sweeter, have thicker skins, and contains seeds. These attributes give wine its unique acquired taste.



What's surprising is most wine is made from grapes of a single species called *Vitis vinifera*. This species originated in the Caucasus Mountains of Eastern Europe. We've made wine with this species for about 10,000 years.



Today, there are about 1,400 grape cultivars used in commercial wine production. That said, only about 100 of these varieties make up 75% of the world's vineyards. This means some wines you'll discover are made with very rare wine grapes.



With so many options out there, how do you hone in on your favorites? Well, as diverse as wine is, most wines can be categorized into 9 styles. Once you try each of the 9 styles, you'll have a pretty good idea of what you like and don't like.

Consider this a homework assignment.

Taste at least one wine from each of the 9 styles over the next month (or so) and take detailed, objective notes. *(Use the tasting method included in this guide!)*

SPARKLING WINE



Sparkling wines are characterized by carbonation caused from a second fermentation. This gives bubbly wines distinct yeasty and bready aromas.

Sparkling wines come in all styles (white, rosé, and red) and sweetness levels. The label terms “Brut,” “Extra Brut,” and “Brut Nature” are the most dry (e.g. not sweet.)

WHAT TO TRY

CAVA
CHAMPAGNE
CRÉMANT
CAP CLASSIQUE
PROSECCO
LAMBRUSCO
SEKT
AMERICAN SPARKLERS

LIGHT-BODIED WHITE WINE



Light-bodied, easy-drinking dry white wines may not command high prices, but are some of the most-sold wines in the world (even if red wines get more attention.)

Light whites have increased acidity and thus, pair with a wide array of cuisines. Aromas range from sweeter stone fruits to savory, herby, and peppery flavors.

WHAT TO TRY

PINOT GRIGIO (AKA PINOT GRIS)
SAUVIGNON BLANC
CHENIN BLANC
MUSCADET*
ALBARIÑO
ASSYRTIKO
GARGANEGA (SOAVE)
GRÜNER VELTLINER
CHASSELAS
VERMENTINO
VERDICCHIO
VINHO VERDE
PICPOUL

**French regional wine made with Melon grapes.*

FULL-BODIED WHITE WINE



Full-bodied white wines are great wines for red wine lovers because of their rich smooth taste and subtle creamy notes.

What makes white wines so rich? Aging white wines in oak barrels causes several interactions to occur that increase body. So, be sure to look up the aging program to ensure the wine has had some barrel aging (usually from 6–12 months.)

WHAT TO TRY

CHARDONNAY
VIOGNIER
MARSANNE
ROUSSANNE
GRENACHE BLANC
SÉMILLON
AGED RIOJA BLANCO

AROMATIC WHITE WINE



Aromatic grapes include some of the oldest wine varieties in the world. In fact, Cleopatra was noted to love of Muscat of Alexandria—a rich, aromatic sweet wine from Greece.

Expect explosive, perfumed aromas that spring out of the glass. Aromatic whites are available in dry or sweet styles, but often taste a touch sweet because of their sweet aromas.

WHAT TO TRY

RIESLING
TORRONTÉS
MOSCATO*
MUSKATELLER*
MOSCATEL*
GEWÜRZTRAMINER
MOSCHOFILERO

*Various regional names for wines made with Muscat Blanc grapes.

ROSÉ WINE



Rosé is made by “dyeing” the wine for a short time with red grape skins. Rosé first became popular in the late 1700’s when French Bordeaux wines imported to England had a pale color and were called *Claret*.

Nearly any red grape can be made into rosé. Also, it’s possible to blend in white wines to add acidity and complexity.

The world’s largest rosé region is Provence, France.

WHAT TO TRY

PROVENCE ROSÉ
SANGIOVESE ROSÉ
GARNACHA ROSÉ
PINOT NOIR ROSÉ
SYRAH ROSÉ
CABERNET FRANC ROSÉ
BEAUJOLAIS ROSÉ
WHITE ZINFANDEL (SWEET)

LIGHT-BODIED RED WINE



Light-bodied red wines are typified by their translucent color, light tannin, increased acidity, and delicate, floral-herbal aromas.

Light-bodied red wines are very versatile food wines – they make a [perfect match with poultry](#).

This style is growing in popularity given that it pairs with a wide variety of cuisines.

WHAT TO TRY

PINOT NOIR
GAMAY
BEAUJOLAIS*
FRAPPATO
CINSAULT
NERELLO MASCALESE
SCHIAVA
ZWEIGELT
LAMBRUSCO**

*A French regional wine of 100% Gamay

**Sparkling style

MEDIUM-BODIED RED WINE



Not too light nor too heavy, this is the “baby bear” red wine style. There are a wide array of choices (and thus, flavors) in this red wine category. Tannin is moderate, and expect most to have slightly higher acidity.

The aforementioned traits make for a wine that can pair with most foods (but avoid super delicate dishes.) Additionally, many of these wines have the structure to age well.

WHAT TO TRY

MERLOT
GRENACHE
SANGIOVESE
TEMPRANILLO
BARBERA
CABERNET FRANC
DOLCETTO
CARMÉNÈRE
BLAUFRÄNKISCH
VALPOLICELLA BLENDS
MENCÍA
MONTEPULCIANO
NEBBIOLO
XINOMAVRO
ZINFANDEL

FULL-BODIED RED WINE



Full-bodied red wines are the deepest, darkest, and highest in tannin of the red wines. Despite what you might have heard about it, tannin is what gives wine antioxidant properties. Additionally, it ensures many of these wines will age for decades.

Bold red wine pairs well with fatty, umami-driven foods because of their high tannin. Truthfully though, you might want to ditch the food altogether – they drink well solo.

WHAT TO TRY

CABERNET SAUVIGNON
SYRAH (AKA SHIRAZ)
BORDEAUX BLEND
MALBEC
MONASTRELL
NERO D'AVOLA
PETITE SIRAH
PETIT VERDOT
PINOTAGE
SAGRANTINO
TANNAT
TOURIGA NACIONAL

DESSERT / OTHER WINE



In the 1800's, sweet wines were more popular than dry wines. In fact, several of the most exalted wines in the world, from Sauternes in Bordeaux to Tokaji Aszú from Hungary, will age just as long as bold red wines (or longer!)

The dessert wine style is actually a catchall for some of the more rare wines of the world. Each is made with a unique method and range from dry to sweet.

WHAT TO TRY

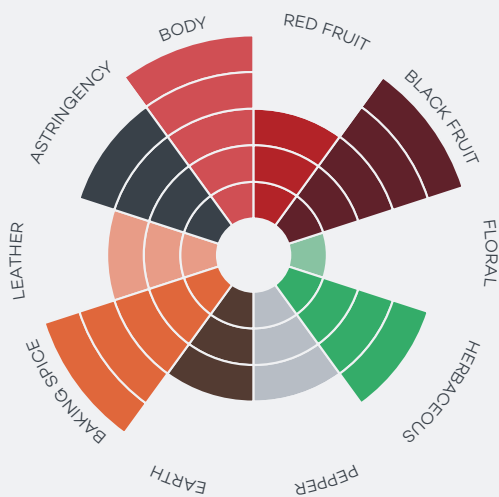
SHERRY
PORT
SAUTERNAIS
ICE WINE
MADEIRA
MARSALA
MOSCATEL DE SETÚBAL
VIN SANTO
MUSCAT OF ALEXANDRIA

The Major Types of Wine

BY THE NUMBERS

Let's zoom out a little to get perspective on what grapes are at the top. The grapes included here are the most planted varieties. They represent a large portion of what's available in the market.

Chances are, you might already be familiar with what's listed here. That said, there are a couple of unfamiliar wine grapes included which are used primarily for brandy (Cognac, etc) or balsamic vinegar production!



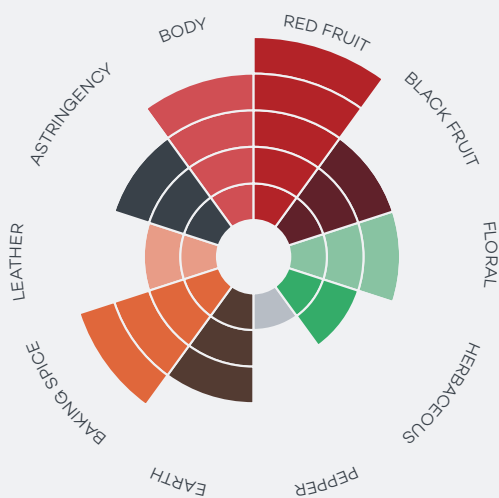
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Cabernet Sauvignon (“cab-err-nay saw-vin-yon”) is the most planted wine variety in the world. Wines are rich, red, and robust. This grape originated in France around the region of Bordeaux.

FLAVORS

BLACK CHERRY, BLACK CURRANT, CEDAR, BAKING SPICES, GRAPHITE

¶ The rich flavor and high tannin content in Cabernet Sauvignon make it a perfect partner to seasoned grilled meats, peppery sauces, and dishes with high flavor.



MERLOT

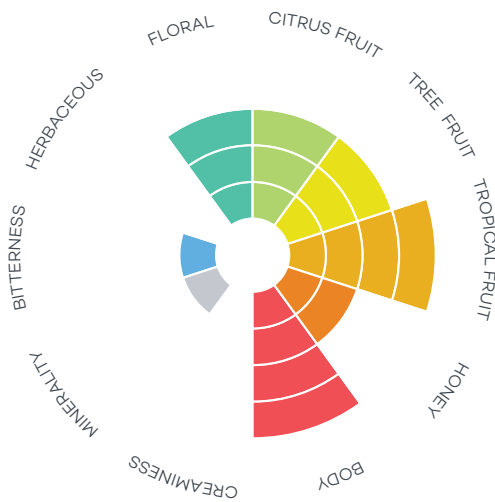
(“murr-low”) Despite what some say, Merlot is actually very closely related to Cabernet Sauvignon. Wines are usually considered slightly more fruity than Cabernet Sauvignon but can age just as long.

FLAVORS

CHERRY, PLUM, CHOCOLATE, BAY LEAF, VANILLA

¶ Merlot tastes great alongside roasted dishes like pork shoulder, broiled mushrooms, or braised short ribs. Try complementing Merlot's fruit flavors with chimichurri sauce.

THE MAJOR TYPES OF WINE

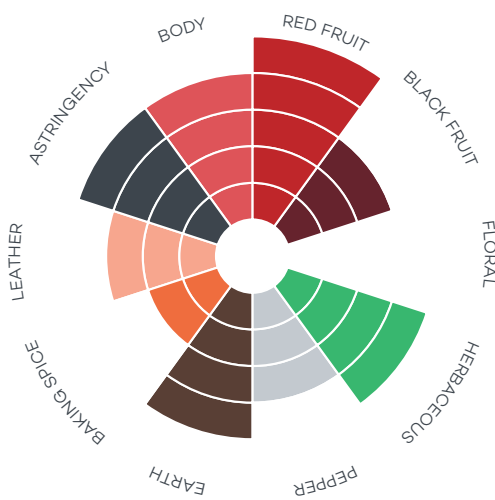


AIRÉN

Spain's most widely planted grape is primarily used for brandy. That said, a few producers have revitalized the old, drought-resistant bush vines for winemaking. Still, it's quite hard to find outside of Spain.

FLAVORS
APPLE, PINEAPPLE, GRAPEFRUIT, BANANA, ROSE

|| Madrid-inspired tapas and warm weather.

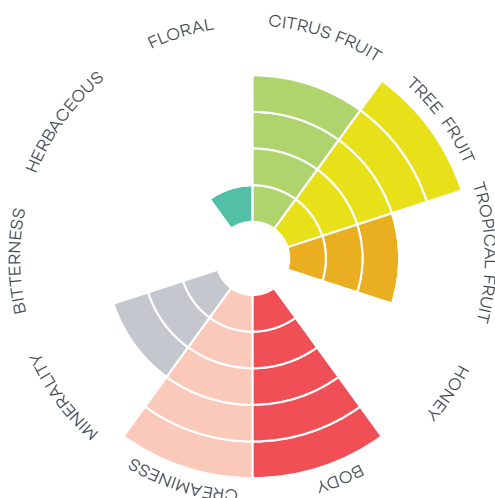


TEMPRANILLO

Spain's top variety, made famous by the region of Rioja, where wines are classified by how long they age in oak. A well-made [Tempranillo](#) will age over 20 years.

FLAVORS
CHERRY, DRIED FIG, CEDAR, TOBACCO, DILL

|| Bolder, aged Tempranillo wines pair nicely with steak, gourmet burgers, and rack of lamb. Fresher styles match well with Mexican street food and even tomato dishes.



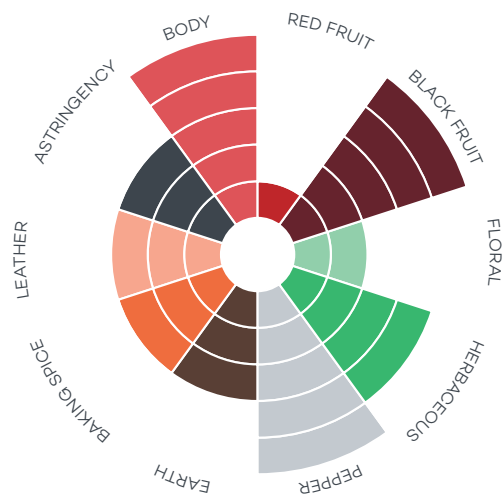
CHARDONNAY

[Chardonnay](#) originated from the Burgundy region of France and produces a wide range of styles from bold, buttery, oak-aged still wines to lean, Blanc de Blancs sparkling wines.

FLAVORS
YELLOW APPLE, STARFRUIT, PINEAPPLE, VANILLA, BUTTER, LEMON

|| If you keep spice and flavor intensity slightly lower and choose dishes with creamy, buttery flavors then you will be delighted. This is a wine worthy of lobster.

THE MAJOR TYPES OF WINE



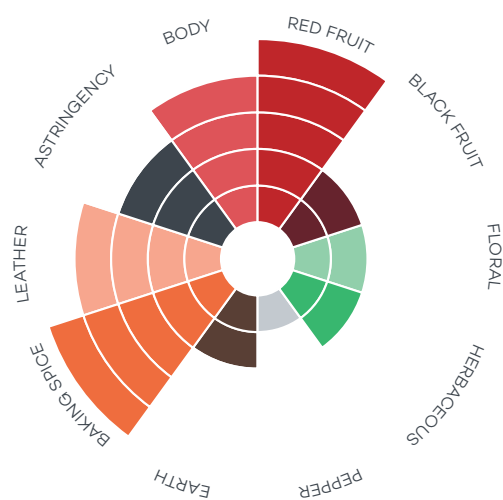
SYRAH

Also known as Shiraz in Australia, this grape produces boisterous, rich, and peppery reds. [Syrah](#) originated close to the Northern Rhône of France.

FLAVORS

TART BLUEBERRY, BLACK PLUM, CHOCOLATE, TOBACCO, GREEN PEPPERCORN

🍷 Darker meats and exotic spices bring out the fruit notes of Syrah. Try it with lamb shawarma, gyros, Asian five-spice pork, and even Indian tandoori meats.



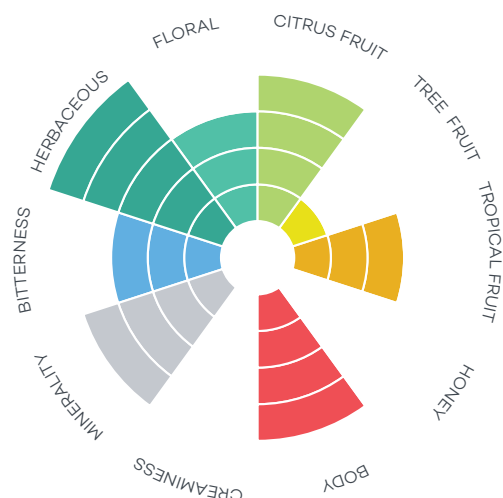
GRENACHE

Also known as [Garnacha](#) in Spain, this grape produces juicy, spice-driven, medium-bodied red wines with red berry flavors and elevated alcohol. Evidence suggests Grenache is originally of Spanish origin.

FLAVORS

STEWED STRAWBERRY, GRILLED PLUM, LEATHER, DRIED HERBS, RUBY RED GRAPEFRUIT

🍷 The high intensity flavors of Grenache match well with roasted meats and vegetables spiced with Asian five-spice and cumin.



SAUVIGNON BLANC

A popular and unmistakable white that's loved for its "green" herbal flavors and sky high acidity. This French origin grape turns out to be one of the parents of Cabernet Sauvignon.

FLAVORS

GOOSEBERRY, HONEYDEW MELON, GRAPEFRUIT, WHITE PEACH, PASSION FRUIT

🍷 A wonderful choice with herb-driven sauces over chicken, tofu, or fish dishes. Try matching [Sauvignon Blanc](#) with Thai and Vietnamese cuisine.

THE MAJOR TYPES OF WINE



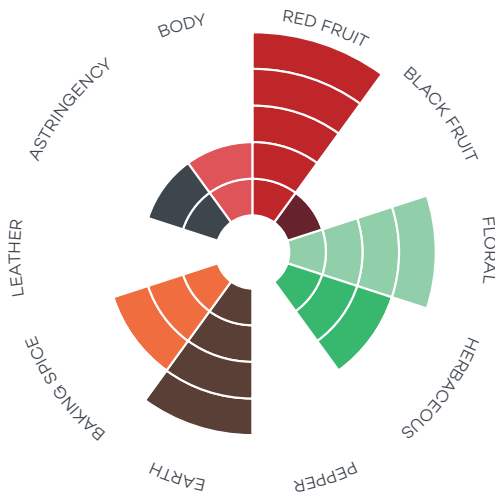
TREBBIANO TOSCANO (AKA UGNI BLANC)

Also known as Ugni Blanc in France, this grape is primarily used in the production of Cognac, Armignac, and balsamic vinegar in Italy.

FLAVORS

LEMON, HONEYDEW MELON, GOOSEBERRY, CRUSHED ROCKS, LIME PEEL

|| As a dry white wine, [Trebbiano](#) pairs well with hard Italian cheeses, seafood pastas, white pizza, roast chicken, and pesto.



PINOT NOIR

The world's most popular light-bodied red is loved for its red fruit and spice flavors that are accentuated by a long, smooth, soft-tannin finish.

FLAVORS

CHERRY, RASPBERRY, MUSHROOM, ALLSPICE, HIBISCUS

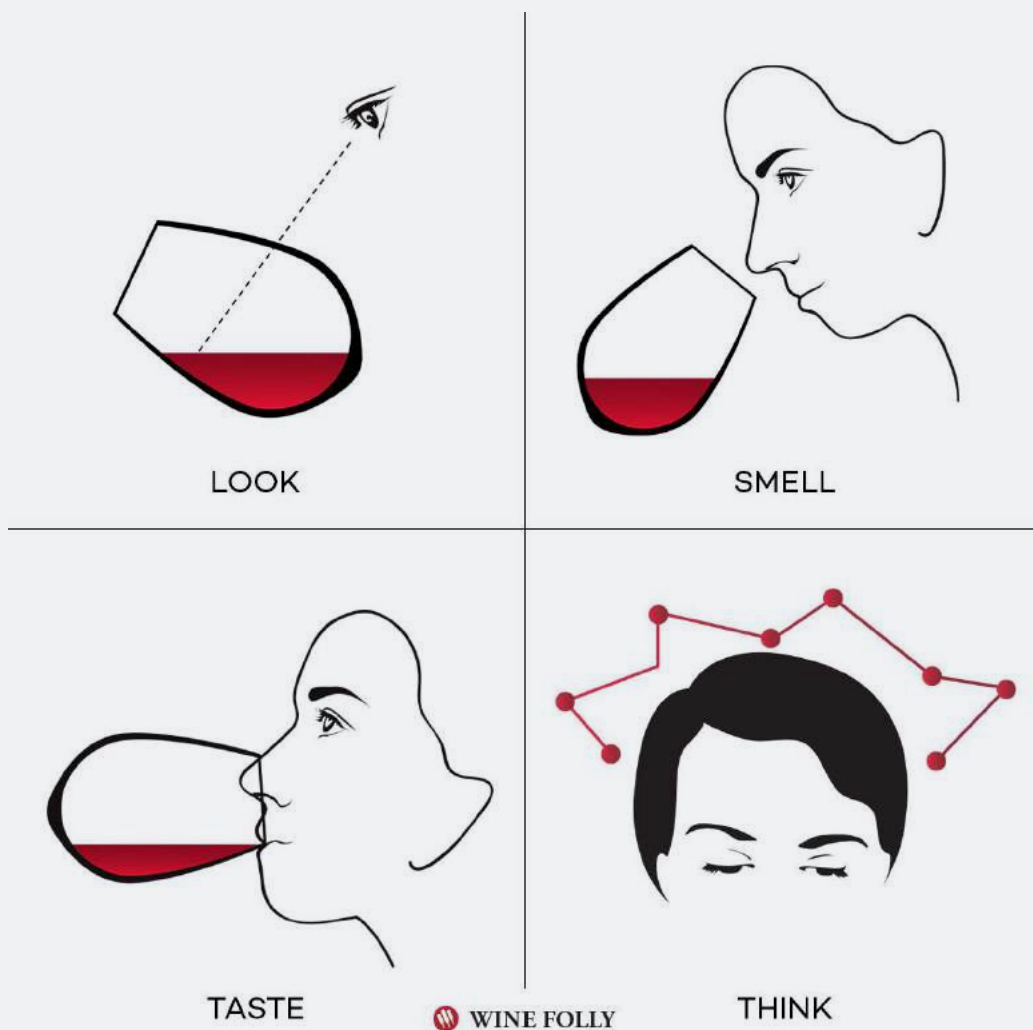
|| A very versatile food pairing wine given it's higher acidity and lower tannin. [Pinot Noir](#) pairs particularly well with duck, chicken, pork, and mushrooms.



Need information on a specific wine or grape variety? Search our free infobase!

[SEARCH GRAPE DATABASE](#)

How to Taste Wine



The single most important step towards improving your palate.

Active tasting is a learned skill. This method will give you the framework to improve your ability to assess wine quality. Practice makes perfect! Be sure to [use this method](#) each time you taste a new wine.

LOOK

A visual inspection of the wine under neutral lighting

SMELL

Identify aromas through orthonasal olfaction (e.g. breathing through your nose)

TASTE

Assess both the taste structure (sour, bitter, sweet, etc) and flavors derived from retronasal olfaction (e.g. breathing with the *back* of your nose)

THINK

Take a pause to solidify the taste profile of the wine into your long term memory

HOW TO TASTE | STEP 1: LOOK



Hold a glass of wine over a white background under neutral lighting and observe.

1. Identify the hue
2. Inspect intensity (how opaque is it?)
3. Check viscosity (watery or viscous?)

HUE

Here are some common hints you can look for in the color and rim variation –

Often Nebbiolo and Grenache-based wines will have a translucent garnet or orange color on their rim, even in their youth.

Pinot Noir will often have a true-red or true-ruby color, especially from cooler climates.

Malbec will often have a magenta-pink rim.

INTENSITY

How intense and opaque is the color in the glass? Can you see sediment in the wine? These are general clues that can help you identify the variety and concentration of the wine.

VISCOSITY

The tears that form on the side of the glass (“wine legs”) can tell us if the wine has high or low alcohol and/or high or low sugar. The thicker and more viscous the legs, the more alcohol or residual sugar in the wine.



[VIEW “COLOR OF WINE” POSTER >](#)

HELPFUL TIPS

As white wines age they oxidize and change color, becoming deeper yellow. A fully oxidized white wine is brown.

As red wines age, they lose color, becoming more transparent and faded with a more orange or tawny-colored rim.

If you see sediment in the wine, it’s not bad for you! It’s just a sign of an unfiltered wine. Most consider this a highly desirable trait.



Grab a glass and taste with Madeline P.

[WATCH VIDEO >](#)

HOW TO TASTE | STEP 2: SMELL



Aromas in wine can reveal almost everything about a wine including grape variety(ies) used, oak or aging regime, region, and even vintage. A well-trained nose can pick out each of these details. In fact, it's one of the primary challenges to becoming a Master Sommelier.

Your goal with this step is to isolate a wine's individual aromas so that you can use them as clues to define what the wine is, how it was made, and where it came from.

For example, knowing that the smell of vanilla indicates a higher presence of vanillin suggests the wine was likely aged in oak.

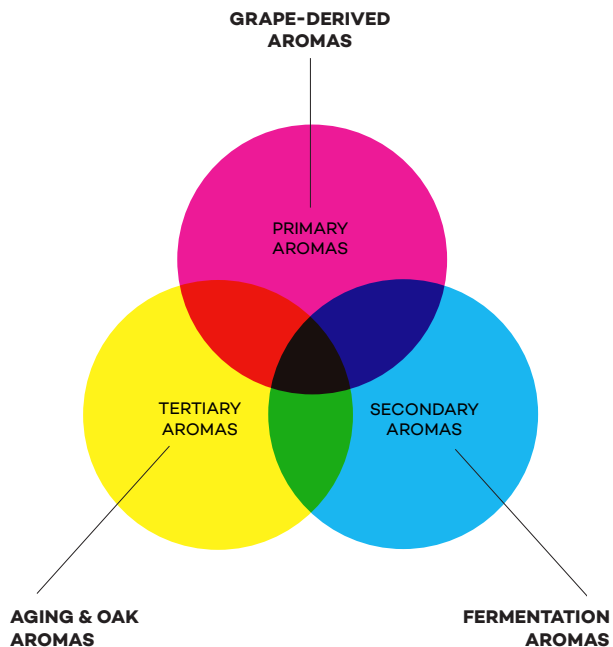
HELPFUL TIPS

Find Your Position Hold your glass right under your nose and slowly move it away (while sniffing) until you can pick out individual aromas

Swirling Wine in your glass concentrates the aromas and can help you pick out flavors more easily

Overloaded? If your nose is overloaded, smell your forearm. It helps reset your nose. Tasting is generally more about the texture than flavor, so pay attention to that first.

All aromas found in wine are derived from chemical interactions between the grape juice, the yeast fermentation, and the aging method.



To simplify this incredibly complex interrelationship (unless you're studying fermentation science), we can sort aromas into three categories:

- **Primary Aromas** are derived from the interaction between the grape and yeast and can include fruit, flower, and herb-like flavors.
- **Secondary Aromas** are derived primarily from yeast and other microbes and may include aromas like yeast, cheese, cream, sourdough, or beer-like smells.
- **Tertiary Aromas** are derived from aging and oxidation (including aging in oak barrels) and may include vanilla, maple, browned butter, and nut-like aromas.

HOW TO TASTE | STEP 3: TASTE



When we taste we're essentially touching wine and sensing how it *feels*.

Thus, a large part of the tasting portion is dedicated to texture. This step ultimately reveals a wine's physical traits including sweetness, acid level, tannin, and alcohol.

The moment you taste wine the flavor evolves on your palate until it's no longer present.

Some wines will continue to deliver taste sensations on your palate long after you've swallowed.



■ [VIEW WINE FLAVOR CHART >](#)

Sweetness: The first thing to look for. Is the wine sweet or is it dry? Most people taste sweetness towards the front of the tongue where they have the highest proportion of tastebuds.

Acidity: How sour is the wine? Does it make your mouth water? All wines lie on the acidic side of the pH spectrum. A wine with a low pH (e.g. high acidity) will cause your mouth to salivate and tingle more than a wine with a high pH.

Tannin: How astringent or mouth-drying is the wine? This is a trait found in most red wines and less so in white wines. You can feel tannins on the middle and sides of your tongue as a mouth-drying, bitter sensation. As negative as these taste traits may sound, tannins in wine are one of the few wine traits that are actually good for you!

Alcohol: When you swallow, pay attention to the warming sensation in your throat. This is how most of us sense the alcohol level in wine. High alcohol wines often have a burning sensation and because of this are often described as tasting "hot."

Body: How "big" is the wine on your palate? Does it fill your mouth with flavor and richness or is it lean and lithe? While body is not a scientific term, it can really help describe what we like/dislike in wine.

Finish: What flavor or taste does the wine finish with? Is it bitter? sweet? smoky? oily? salty? It's interesting to note that the finish is one of the deciding factors behind what consumers like.

Length: How long does it take until you can't taste the wine on your palate? Even a very light-weight wine can have a long length.

Layers: Does the wine's flavors and textures change over the course of a single taste? If so, the wine is "layered."

HOW TO TASTE | STEP 4: THINK



Developing a highly tuned wine palate takes time.

You can accelerate the process by thinking carefully after tasting a new wine. The goal is to pick out the key characteristics of a wine in the way it looks, smells, and tastes. What makes this wine different than others?

Your wine repertoire is as big as you choose to make it.

By continually trying new wines, new vintages, and new wine regions you'll create a diverse wine repertoire. What's cool is that it really doesn't matter if you spend a lot or a little on a bottle of wine. What's more important is that you're actively tasting new wines.

BALANCE

Does the wine's taste characteristics of acidity, alcohol, and tannin work in balance with one another? Or does the wine have a trait that tends to dominate the others?

While balance is not necessarily an indicator of quality, you'll find many highly rated wines are noted for being balanced.

COMPLEXITY

Does the wine have an endless number of flavors and textures to identify? Or does the wine only have one or two major flavors?

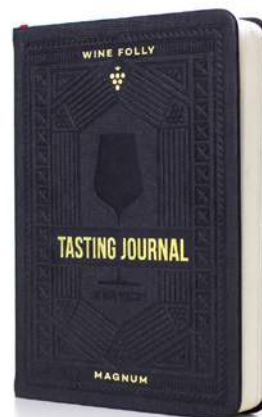
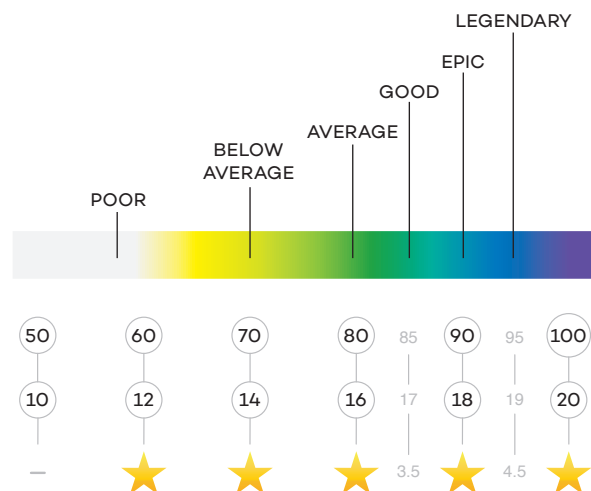
Generally speaking, wines with high complexity are considered higher quality.

READING WINE RATINGS

Often times you'll find a point-score associated with a bottle of wine. The most common rating scale is the 100-point system (developed by Robert Parker). Additionally, there is a 5-star system (used on Vivino) and a 20-point scale (more common in the UK).

A high rating doesn't guarantee that you'll love a wine. Instead, a good rating is a general indication of quality within a style or a good quality-to-price ratio.

Thus, make sure you like the style of wine first before using ratings to hone in on a purchase choice.



Keep track of your tasting notes with this custom **Wine Tasting Journal**.

[VIEW](#)

Tips on Serving & Storing Wine



SPARKLING WINES

Serve **“Ice Cold”** (38–45 °F / 3–7 °C)
Store open **1–3 days*** (store in fridge)



LIGHT WHITE & ROSÉ WINES

Serve **“Cold”** (45–55 °F / 7–13 °C)
Store open **5–7 days*** (store in fridge)



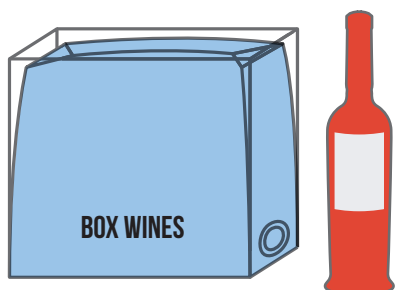
FULL-BODIED WHITE WINES

Serve **“Cold”** (45–55 °F / 7–13 °C)
Store open **3–5 days*** (store in fridge)



RED WINES

Serve **“Cellar Temp”** (55–68 °F / 13–20 °C)
Store open **3–5 days*** (in cool, dark place)
Decant for at least **30 minutes**

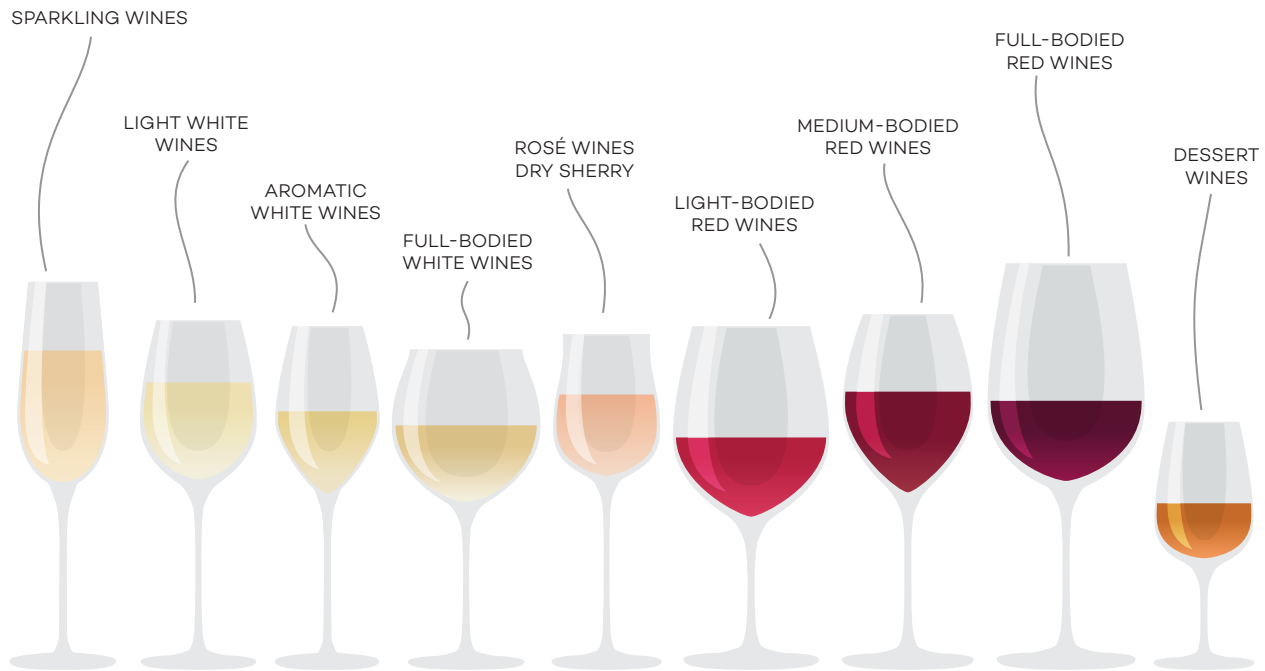


FORTIFIED & BOX WINES

Serve **“Cellar Temp”** (55–68 °F / 13–20 °C)
Store open **28 days*** (in cool, dark place)

**Freshness varies, some wines last open longer.*

CHOOSING GLASSWARE



In a perfect world, you can have one glass for every style of wine. In a pragmatic world, owning 1–2 glass types is sufficient.

You can drink wine from whatever vessel you want, be it a wine glass, coffee mug, mason jar, or dixie cup! That said, certain glasses do work better than others on certain wines.

Here are the major things to consider when choosing glassware:

Most importantly, in order to sense the different aromas in wine, you'll need added space in the glass above the liquid. You'll find that most quality glasses have increased volume capacity ranging from about 11 to 22 ounces. (325 ml to 620 ml)

For most white wines, a slightly smaller bowled glass with a smaller diameter opening is preferred. Here's how these two traits affect aromas:

- Preserves floral aromas
- Maintains a cooler temperature
- Better expresses acidity in wine
- Delivers more concentrated aromas

Conversely, full-bodied white wines like oak-aged Chardonnay, Viognier, White Rioja, and orange wines are better with a larger bowl.

The choice of a red wine glass has a lot to

do with mitigating the bitterness of tannin or spicy flavors to deliver a smoother tasting wine. We've observed red wine glasses tend to have a larger bowl shape and larger diameter opening. Here are a few pointers:

A globe-shaped glass is ideal for more aromatic, light-bodied red wines such as Pinot Noir or Gamay.

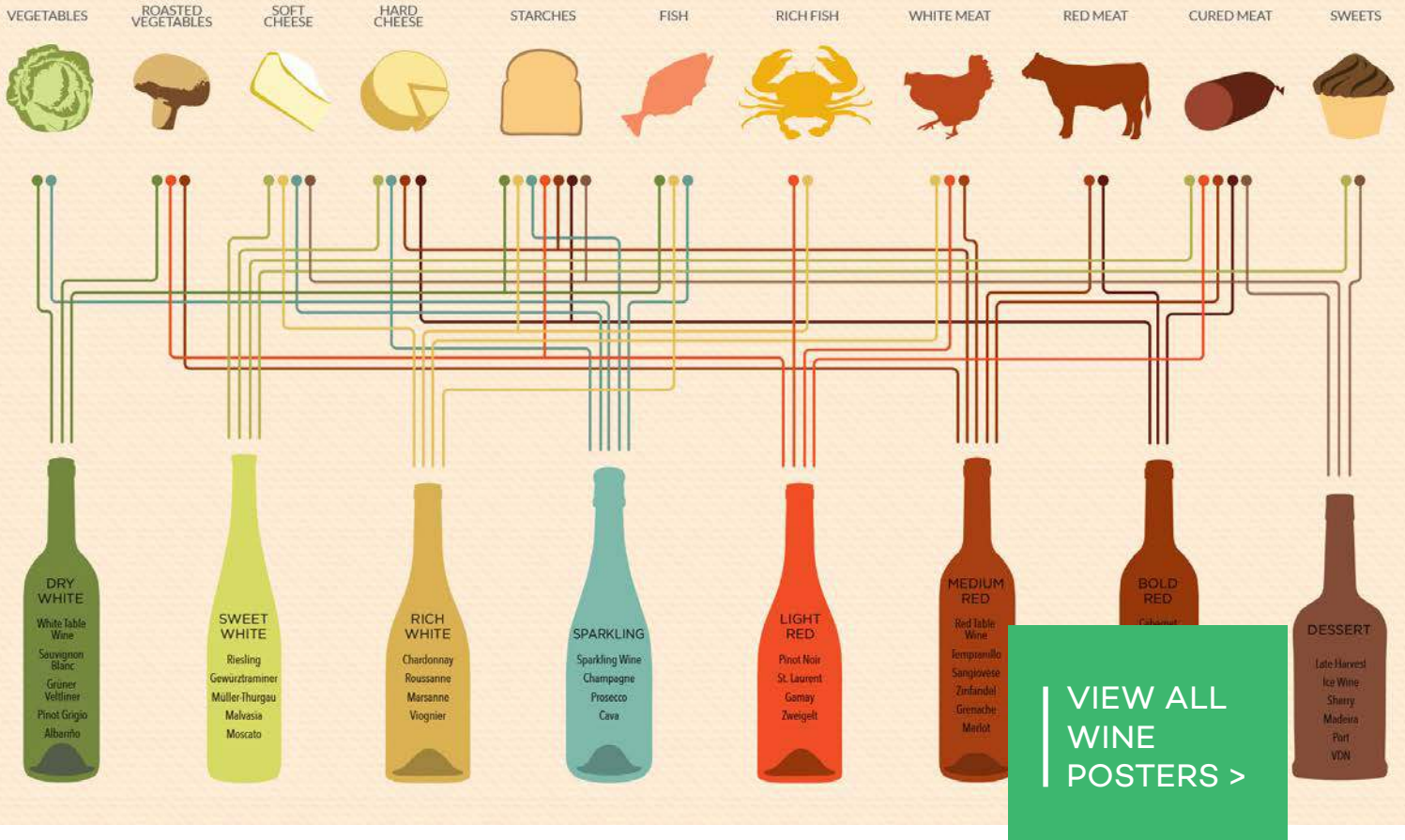
A large glass with a wider diameter opening is better for big, bold, red wines with high tannin such as Cabernet Sauvignon.

A large glass with a smaller diameter opening is generally better for spicy and peppery red wines such as Syrah, Zinfandel, or Sangiovese.

Related Study: In 2015, a study came out by a Japanese group that developed a special camera to record evaporating ethanol. The study recorded the density and position of ethanol vapors in different glass shapes.

The vapor patterns revealed that wine glasses are the most effective at delivering aromatic compounds to our noses.

PAIRING WINE & FOOD



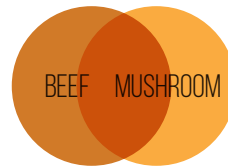
Even though the science of flavor pairing is complex, anyone can learn the fundamentals and make great wine pairings.

The goal with a great pairing is to create harmony between food and wine. The first thing to do to achieve this is to start thinking of wine more like an ingredient.

CONGRUENT PAIRING

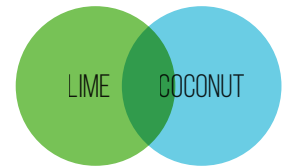
A congruent pairing amplifies shared flavor compounds found in both the wine and the food. For example, Syrah and black pepper have a shared compound called rotundone. Thus, a pairing of Syrah with peppered steak would be a good example of a congruent pairing.

- Buttered Popcorn** and oaked **Chardonnay** (both are “buttery”)
- Barbecue Pork** and **Zinfandel** (both have rich, smokey, “spiced” flavors)
- Bresaola** and **Chianti Classico** (both have meaty, earthy notes)



CONGRUENT PAIRING

Many shared compounds



COMPLEMENTARY PAIRING

Few shared compounds

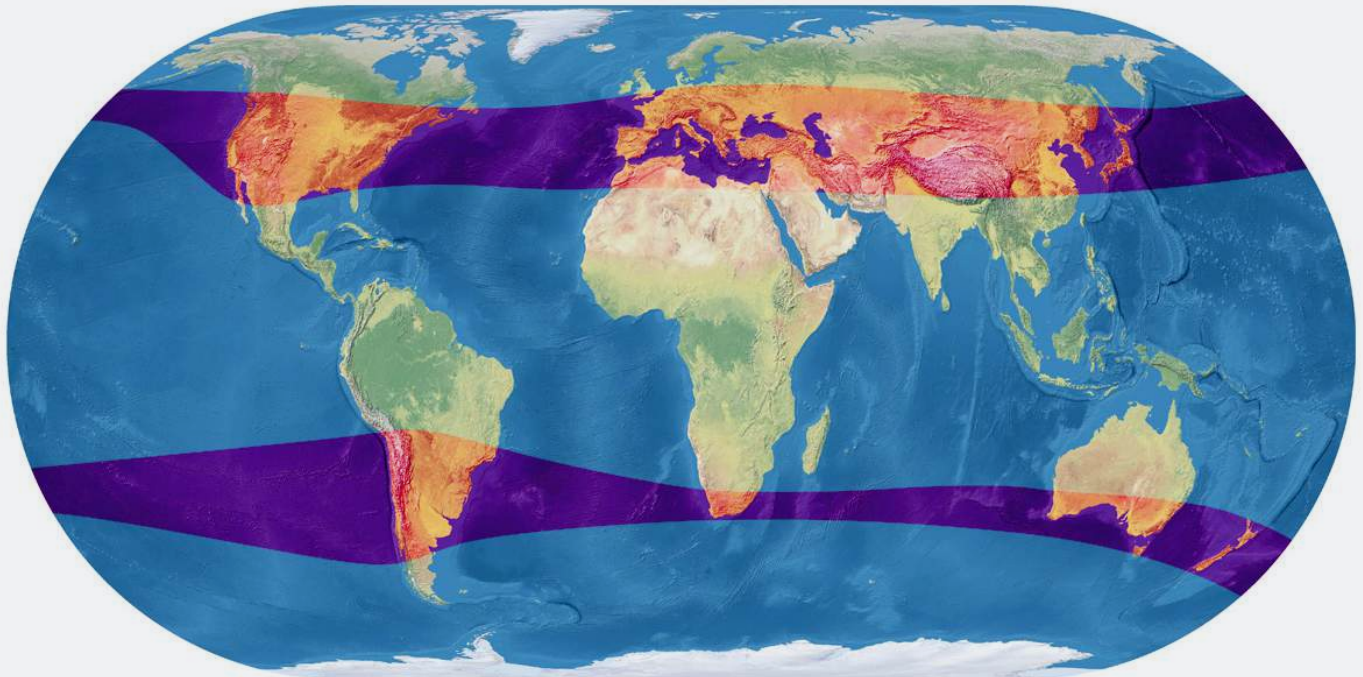
CONTRASTING PAIRING

A contrasting pairing creates balance with extreme opposites. In most cases, the wine acts as a palate cleanser to the food. For example, a rich, creamy, gooey, mac and cheese can be contrasted by a high acidity sparkling white wine.

- Blue Cheese** and **Ruby Port** (pungent and creamy vs. sweet and bitter)
- Pork Chop** and **Riesling** (umami and rich vs. sweet and acidic)
- Maple Bacon** and **Champagne** (sweet and umami vs. sour and carbonated)

Wine Regions of the World

Wine is made in 90+ countries around the world.



The wine belt. This map is far from accurate but does show general locations of where wine grapes grow.

ITALY

SANGIOVESE, MONTEPULCIANO, TREBBIANO TOSCANO, BARBERA, PROSECCO, PINOT GRIGIO, NERO D'AVOLA, VERMENTINO, NEBBIOLO

FRANCE

MERLOT, GRENACHE (AKA GARNACHA), CABERNET SAUVIGNON, SYRAH, CARIGNAN, CHARDONNAY, CABERNET FRANC, PINOT NOIR, GAMAY, AND SAUVIGNON BLANC

SPAIN

TEMPRANILLO, AIRÉN, MONASTRELL (AKA MOURVEDRE), GARNACHA, VERDEJO, ALBARIÑO, CAVA

UNITED STATES

CHARDONNAY, CABERNET SAUVIGNON, MERLOT, PINOT NOIR, SYRAH, ZINFANDEL

ARGENTINA

MALBEC, CABERNET SAUVIGNON, TORRONTÉS, SYRAH, CHARDONNAY

AUSTRALIA

SHIRAZ (AKA SYRAH), CHARDONNAY, CABERNET SAUVIGNON, MERLOT, SAUVIGNON BLANC, MERLOT, SÉMILLON, PINOT NOIR, RIESLING

CHILE

CHILE'S UNIQUE VARIETY IS DEFINITELY CARMÉNÈRE. CABERNET GROWS WELL HERE TOO

GERMANY

GERMANY IS MOST KNOWN FOR RIESLING AND SPARKLING WINES

PORTUGAL

PORTUGAL HAS MANY AMAZING, LESSER KNOWN GRAPES

HUNGARY

HUNGARY IS A VERY OLD, CLASSIC WINE REGION OF THE WORLD KNOWN FOR UNIQUE VARIETIES

BRAZIL

BRAZIL IS AN UP-AND-COMING WINE REGION OF THE WORLD

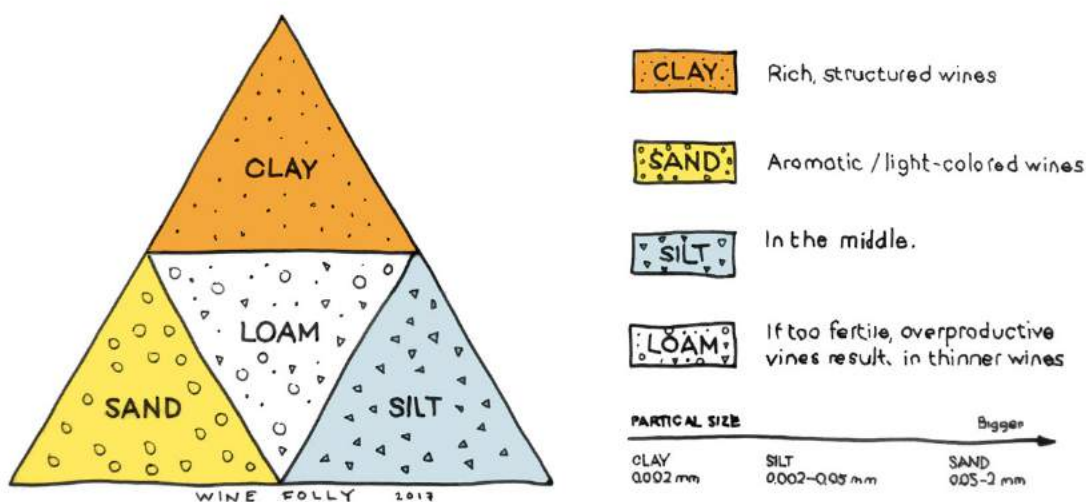
GREECE

GREECE IS A VERY ANCIENT WINE REGION THAT SPECIALIZES IN RARE INDIGENOUS VARIETIES

NEW ZEALAND

KNOWN MOSTLY FOR SAUVIGNON BLANC AND A HIGH PREVALENCE OF SUSTAINABLE AND ORGANIC WINES

Going Deeper: Climate & Soils



The soil particle size provides a clue towards the quality of a wine produced from a vineyard.

CLIMATE TYPES AND WINE

Beyond average temperature, climate takes into account the weather patterns and atmospheric conditions that can help – or hurt – wine grapes. These factors include rainfall, humidity, wind, frost, hail, and quality of sunlight. Each attribute can affect everything from a grape's skin thickness (**tannins!**) to whether or not grapes will mold before harvest.

Depending on who you talk to, there are dozens of ways to classify climate: by average temperature (warm/cool), by scale (macroclimate, mesoclimate, microclimate), or by general climate groups (Mediterranean, Maritime, or Continental, etc).

In general, warmer climates allow grapes to fully ripen and mature, developing deep pigments, bold fruit flavors, greater sweetness, and higher alcohol content. On the flip side, cooler climates show a softer side, accentuating white wines' minerality, maintaining juicy acidity, and ensuring a delicate dance of flavors across the palate.

SOILS AND WINE

Soil type – including sand, clay, dirt, pebbles, rocks, and dozens of combinations in between – plays a big role in how vines grow and the kinds of wine that they make.

Soil type determines the availability of nutrients, water drainage, water retention, and can even moderate temperature in a vine's immediate microclimate.

Far from the nutrient-rich potting soil you use for house plants, grape vines actually perform better when nutrients are scarce and roots aren't swampy.

In general, more sandy, grainy soils produce wines with more aromatic intensity and more delicate body.

Conversely, soils with more clay (and those with additional limestone content!) tend to produce wines with more body, tannin, and stronger fruit flavors.

Learn more about how location, weather, and soils affect different wines.

[READ MORE](#)

