

HOSTING A WINE TASTING PARTY

Below are some helpful steps to get you on your way to planning your wine tasting:

The Guest List and Wine Buying

Determine who you want to invite and then how you're getting the wines. You do not need to do all the buying yourself, especially if you want your friends to contribute their ideas to the party. A good suggestion is to send an e-mail or invitation two weeks in advance that outlines the theme of the party and encourages guests to bring wine as well.

Your invitation might also include any price sets that will help anyone on a budget. You will also want to include any type of food or cheese pairings so that guests can choose wines that are best served with the dishes. As the host, you will want to purchase more than your guests, for those "just in case" moments.

Selecting the Wine

What kind of wine tasting party do you wish to host? You will want to decide what you want to taste during your party. Perhaps you want to sample different varietals or wines from a specific region. One of the key things to remember is to be adventuresome yet practical.

Many local groceries are now offering a wide selection of fine wines from around the world. However, you may want to visit a wine store with a knowledgeable staff to answer any questions you might have. Consider selecting wine you would not normally purchase.

Setting Up

Wine tasting parties can be casual or formal – whatever suites your fancy. Some basic supplies include:

- Plain bread or crackers: Something light that will help "clean the palate" and pairs with all types of wines.
- Wine glasses: At least one per guests
- Pitcher of water: For cleaning out the glasses between each tasting.
- Dump bucket: For discarding wine before next pouring or spitting out
- Tasting cards & pens/pencils: For describing and recording each wine tasted
- Paper bags: To cover the labels for blind tastings

If possible, serve the wines on a large table with good lighting. A cheap white tablecloth is recommended as solid background to assess the color of the wines.

Atmosphere & Education

Set the atmosphere and decorate! Add candles, pillows, vintage bottles, artwork, and table linens. Keep the feeling light and casual, with lots of comfort. Atmosphere is key to the enjoyment of wine, so make sure and have the right mood. Candles should be unscented so they won't interfere when smelling the wine. We recommend cheap table linens so that, if stained, it won't hurt the bank to throw them away.

You may want to do a little research about wine, winemaking and wine regions before the party or purchase a book offering information about wines and wine tasting. This knowledge can help when questions arise about a specific wine, varietal or region and add to the experience.

The Tasting

It's what you've been waiting for! People taste wines in all different ways, but typically you want to work from sweet to dry with white wines and progress from light to full-bodied with red wines. Note unique color, smells, and flavors — but above all, have fun. This is not a professional wine tasting, it's education, so enjoy.

A simple tasting card to write down your observations and thoughts is always a good idea, especially if you find a wine you want to purchase yourself.

You may also want to send an email or note after the party that includes a list of the wines served and where they were purchased so that guests can buy a bottle of their own.

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PARTY THEMES

Same Color, Different Varietals

Select wines that are the same color but different varietals then compare and learn how different varietals can vary.

Red: Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc

White: Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Viognier

Same Varietal

Select wines of the same varietal and compare how different winemaking techniques can create subtle differences in the same varietals.

Same Region, Same Varietal, Different Wineries

Select wines of the same varietal from a specific wine region and compare how the winemaking techniques can affect the same varietals from the same region.

Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc

Tuscany Sangiovese

Australian Shiraz

Same Varietal, Different Regions

Select wines of the same varietal from different wine regions and compare the differences that make the wines unique to that region.

Blind Wine Tasting

Select one of the above themes and cover all labels before serving. By doing so, all pre-conceptions about the wine based on maker and price are removed. Enjoy the fun of trying to determine the varietal and region and discovering the many aromas and flavors.

Personal Favorites

Guests bring their own personal favorites to share.

Wine & Cheese

A wine tasting and cheese pairing party offers an array of possibilities. Pair wines with the cheeses from that region. Encourage guests to bring their personal favorites. Or compare how producers same varietal and kind of cheese can offer unique differences.

Wine & Food

A bite of food is the perfect companion to a glass of wine. From simple hors'dourves to 3-course meals, a food and wine-pairing event will always be full of laughs and discovery. Serve wines with favorite appetizers or cultural cuisines. Pair wines from a specific region with the dishes that country is best known for. (Create Food Pairing Chart)

Vertical Tasting

Different vintages of the same wine are tasted. Discover how the aging of a wine can affect flavors and aromas as well as the differences in the vintage growing seasons.

Visit www.tuscanytonight.com for more about Frescobaldi wines, cheese pairings and Italian recipes.

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TASTING NOTES & SCORE CARD

Wine Name: _____ Varietal: _____

Vintage: _____ Date: _____ Final Score: _____

APPEARANCE

What is the density of the wine? (Heavy? Light?) _____

What is the color of the wine? _____

Does it have legs? What is the swirl like? _____

Rate the appearance:

1	2	3	4	5
Cloudy, off colors				Clear, appropriate colors

AROMA

Describe the bouquet. What aromas do you pick up? _____

Is the smell powerful? Can you detect any fruit? _____

Rate the aroma:

1	2	3	4	5
Little/no aroma				Complex, intense

BODY & TASTE

Is the wine sweet, dry or more neutral? _____

Is it tannic or smooth? _____

Is the taste light, or strong and heavy? _____

What flavors do you taste? (Fruity? Earthy?) _____

Rate the body & taste:

1	2	3	4	5
Too much or little body/taste				Good balance with flavors

FINISH

Describe the finish. Is it strong and lasting? _____

How well does the after taste match the initial flavors? _____

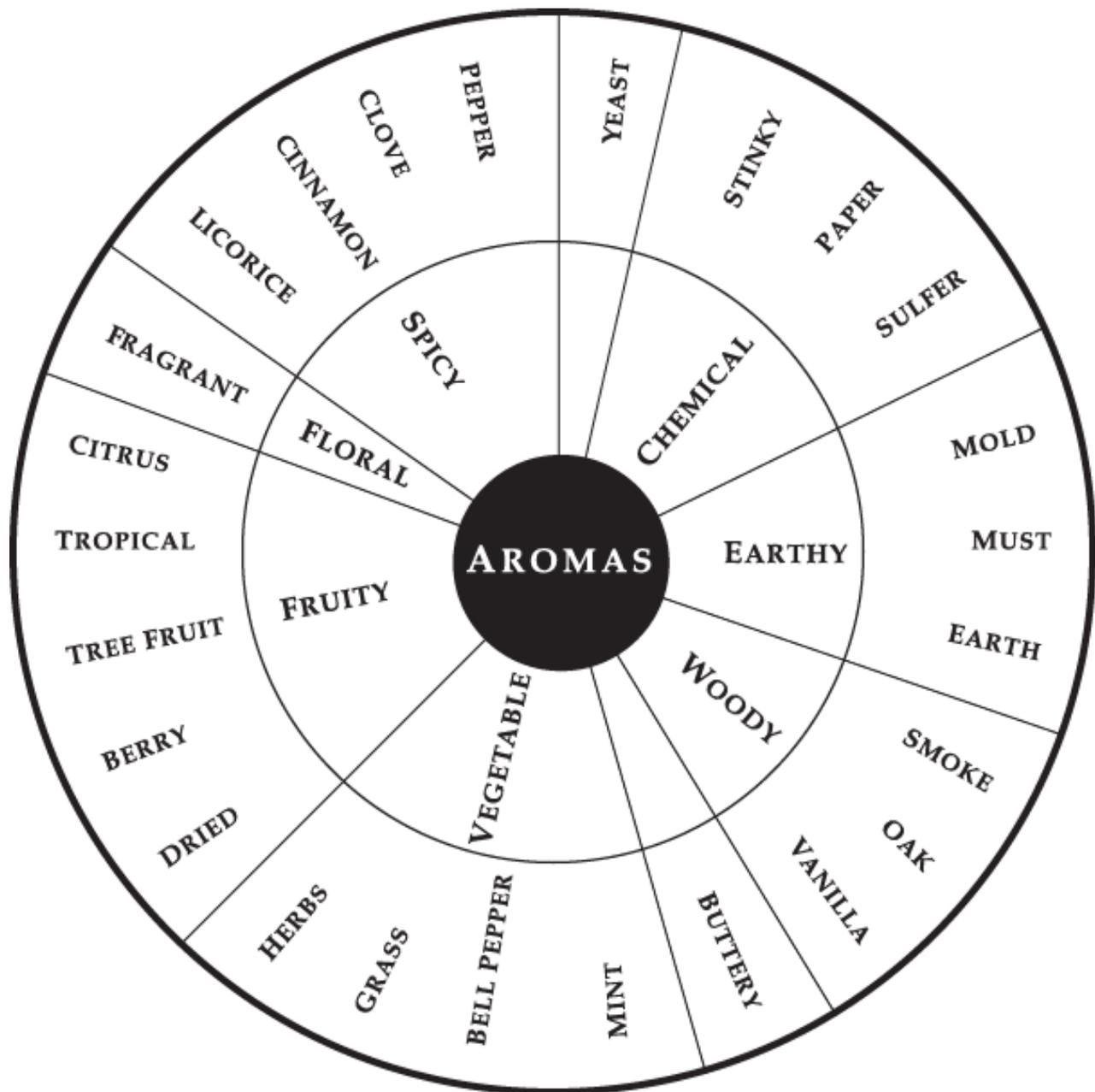
Rate the finish

1	2	3	4	5
No aftertaste				Flavors linger, smooth

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The Aroma Wheel is a common tool to assist in distinguishing and describing the various aromas and flavors of the wine. The Aroma Wheel was developed at the University of California, Davis in 1984 as a standard tool used to describe wine in uniform, non-judgmental terms.

The inner-circular sections describe the broader aroma categories while the outer edges describe individual, more precise aromas, grouped by category. These aromas can be detected by smell or taste but are not always present in both forms. To use the wheel, begin in the center when smelling the wine, working your way out as you try to identify individual aromas.

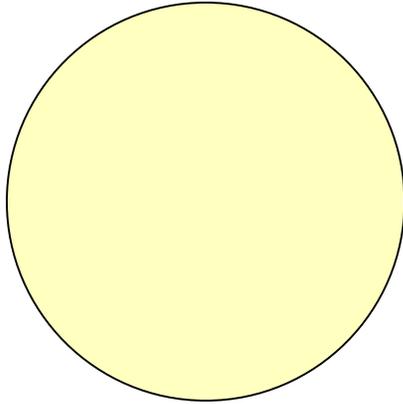




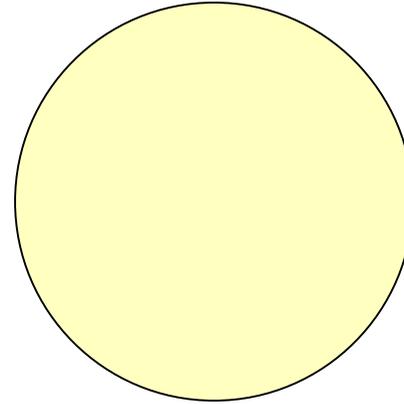
FOOD PAIRING CHART

Varietals	Seafood	Poultry	Meat	Cheese	Herbs
Cabernet Sauvignon	Seared Tuna, Cioppino	Duck, Quail, Squab	Beef, Lamb, Venison	Aged Cheddar, Aged Gouda	Thyme, Italian Parsley, Bay Leaf, Rosemary
Chardonnay	Crab, Shrimp, Lobster, Sea Bass	Chicken, Turkey, Guinea Hen	Pork, Chicken, Veal	Jarlsberg, Brie, Camembert, Munster	Tarragon, Chervil, Italian Parsley, Dill
Gewurztraminer	Scallops, Crab, Smoked Salmon	Turkey, Chicken	Pork, Ham, Prosciutto	Smoked Gouda, Goat Cheese, Boursin	Ginger, Curry, Cilantro
Grüner Veltliner	Halibut, Sea Bass, Sole	Chicken, Turkey, Game Hen	Pork, Veal	Brie, Gouda, Feta	Coriander, Caraway, Dill
Merlot	Tuna, Salmon	Quail, Duck, Squab	Beef, Lamb, Venison	Aged Cheddar, Parmesan, Provolone, Aged Gouda	Basil, Italian Parsley, Mint, Thyme
Petite Sirah	Salmon, Tuna, Red Snapper	Chicken, Game Hens, Duck, Quail	Beef, Italian Sausage, Lamb	Asiago, Aged Cheddar, Aged Goat Cheese	Thyme, Basil, Italian Parsley, Bay Leaf
Pinot Grigio	Trout, Swordfish, Crab, Calamari	Chicken, Turkey, Game Hen	Pork, Prosciutto	Ricotta, Fontina, Provolone	Basil, Chervil, Italian Parsley
Pinot Noir	Salmon, Tuna, Swordfish	Duck, Quail, Squab	Lamb, Italian Sausage, Pork, Boar	Parmesan, Asiago, Fontina, Cambozola	Thyme, Fennel, Basil, Italian Parsley
Primitivo	Cioppino, Tuna, Bouillabaise	Quail, Duck, Game Hens	Italian Sausage, Lamb, Beef	Parmesan, Fontina, Asiago, Ricotta Salata	Basil, Oregano, Thyme, Italian Parsley
Rosé	Salmon, Shellfish, Grilled Sea Bass, Trout	Chicken, Chicken-apple Sausage, Game Hens	Pork, Prosciutto, Ham	Goat Cheese, Parmesan, Feta, Gouda, Munster	Italian Parsley, Basil, Chervil, Chives, Curry
Sangiovese	Swordfish, Tuna	Duck, Quail, Squab	Lamb, Pork, Beef	Asiago, Parmesan, Fontina, Ricotta Salata	Basil, Thyme, Bay Leaf, Fennel
Sauvignon Blanc	Oysters, Crab, Sole, Trout	Chicken, turkey, Game Hens	Pork, Veal	Goat Cheese, Boursin, Feta, Fresh Mozzarella, Ricotta	Dill, Chervil, Chives, Italian Parsley, Cilantro
Tocai	Monkfish, Calamari, Swordfish	Chicken, Guinea Hen, Pheasant	Veal, Pork	Taleggio, Gorgonzola, Fontina	Basil, Oregano, Italian Parsley, Chives
Zinfandel	Tuna, Cioppino, Bouillabaise	duck, Quail, Pheasant, Chicken	Beef, Lamb, Italian Sausage, Barbecue Ribs	Parmesan, Aged Cheddar, Aged Gouda, Asiago, Dry Jack	Black Pepper, Basil, Thyme, Italian Parsley, Bay Leaf, Fennel

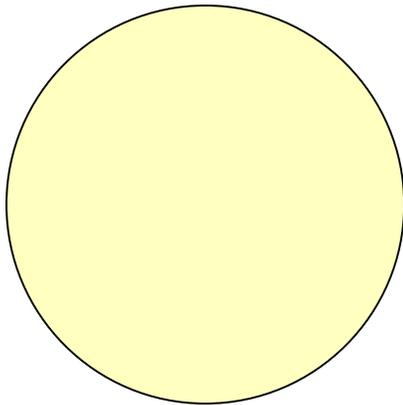
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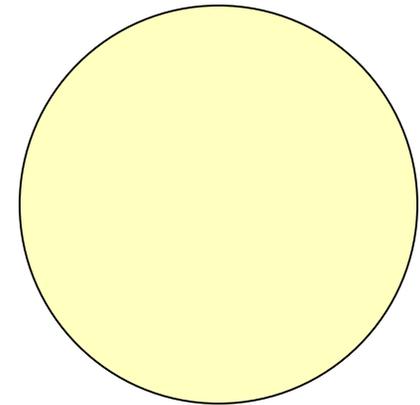
Wine #1 _____



Wine #2 _____



Wine #3 _____



Wine #4 _____



WINE TASTING TERMS

BASIC

Acidity: Describes a tart or sour taste in the mouth when total acidity of the wine is high.

Aftertaste: The taste or flavors that linger in the mouth after the wine is tasted. May be "harsh," "hot," "soft," "lingering," "short," "smooth," or nonexistent. See also 'Finish.'

Aroma: Refers to the particular smell of the grape variety, i.e. "appley," "raisiny," "fresh" or "floral."

Body: The weight or viscosity of wine in your mouth, commonly expressed as full-bodied, medium-bodied or light-bodied.

Bouquet: A tasting term used to describe the smell of the wine as it matures in the bottle.

Finish: The taste that remains in the mouth after swallowing. A long finish indicates a wine of good quality.

Legs: The viscous droplets that form and ease down the sides of the glass when the wine is swirled. This is an indication of the alcohol present in the wine.

Length: The amount of time the sensations of taste and aroma persist after swallowing.

Mouth feel: The texture of the wine, how it feels in the mouth and against the tongue.

Nose: See 'Aroma'

Palate: The feel and taste of wine in the mouth.

CHARACTER

Acrid: Describes a wine with overly pronounced acidity. This is often apparent in cheap red wines.

Assertive: Upfront, forward.

Attractive: A lighter style. Fresh, easy to drink wine.

Balanced: Indicates that the fruit, acid, and wood flavors are in the right proportion. A wine is well balanced when none of those characteristics dominates. Wine not in balance may be "acidic," "cloying," "flat" or "harsh."

Big: A wine that is full-bodied, rich and slightly alcoholic tasting.

Character: A wine with top-notch distinguishing qualities.

Crisp: Denotes a fresh, young wine with good acidity.

Closed: Describes wines that are concentrated and have character, but are shy in aroma or flavor.

Complete: A full-bodied wine rich in extracts with a pronounced finish.

Complex: Describes a wine that combines all flavor and taste components in harmony.

Delicate: Used to describe light-to-medium weight wines with good flavors.

Dense: Describes a wine that has concentrated aromas on the nose and palate, desirable in young wines.

Depth: Describes the complexity and concentration of flavors in a wine. Generally refers to a quality wine with subtle layers of flavor that go "deep." Opposite of 'Shallow.'

Developed: Refers to the maturity of a wine.

Elegant: Describes a wine of grace, balance and beauty.

Empty: Flavorless and uninteresting.

Fading: Describes a wine that is losing color, fruit, or flavor, usually as a result of age.

Flabby: Lacking acidity on the palate.

Flat: Having low acidity; the next stage after flabby; or refers to a sparkling wine that has lost its bubbles.

Full-Bodied: Fills the mouth. Opposite of 'thin-bodied.'

Graceful: Describes a wine that is subtly harmonious and pleasing.

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Neutral: Describes a wine without outstanding characteristics, good or bad.

Potent: Describes a strong, intense, powerful wine.

Robust: Describes a full-bodied, intense and vigorous wine.

Round: Describes a well-balanced wine in fruit, tannins and body.

Seductive: A wine that is appealing.

Short: Describes a wine that does not remain on the palate after swallowing. Common in inexpensive wines, but not necessarily a fault.

Simple: Describes a wine with few characteristics that follow the initial impression. Not necessarily unfavorable; often describes an inexpensive, young wine.

Soft: Describes a wine with low acid/tannin, or alcohol content with little impact on the palate.

Supple: Describes a wine with well-balanced tannins and fruit characteristics.

Thin: Lacking body and depth.

TASTE:

Barn-yardy: Smell of earth, truffle, and wet leaves.

Bite: A marked degree of acidity or tannin. An acid grip in the finish should be more like a zestful tang and is tolerable only in a rich, full-bodied wine.

Bitter: Considered a fault if the bitterness dominates the flavor or aftertaste. A trace in sweet wines may complement the flavors. A fine, mature wine should not be bitter on the palate.

Buttery: It refers to both flavor and texture or mouth feel. Common among chardonnay, especially new world.

Chewy: Describes rich, heavy, tannic wines that are full-bodied.

Corked: The wine smells of cork, it is unpleasant to smell and taste, slightly musty. The flavor of the wine will typically be flat and dull.

Dirty: Covers any and all foul, rank, off-putting smells that can occur in a wine, including those caused by bad barrels or corks. A sign of poor winemaking.

Earthy: Describes a wine that tastes of soil, most common in red wines. Can be used both positively (pleasant, clean quality adding complexity to aroma and flavor) and negatively (barnyardy character bordering on dirtiness).

Flinty: Describe the aroma or taste of some white wines, like the odor of flint striking steel. Often used to describe Riesling.

Fruity: Describes any quality referring to the body and richness of a wine, i.e. "appley," "berrylike," or "herbaceous." Usually implies a little extra sweetness.

Grapey: Describes simple flavors and aromas associated with fresh table grapes.

Green: Tasting of un-ripe fruit. Not necessarily a bad thing, especially in a Riesling.

Heady: Used to describe the smell of a wine high in alcohol.

Herbaceous: The taste and smell of herbs.

Murky: Lacking brightness; turbid or swampy.

Musty: Having a moldy smell.

Oaky: Describes the aroma and taste of oak.

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Peppery: Describes the taste of pepper in a wine; sharper than 'Spicy.' Good zinfandel often has a black pepper aroma, while Rhone Valley Syrah can have white pepper aromas.

Perfumed: Refers to a delicate bouquet.

Smoky: Describes a subtle wood-smoke aroma. Attributable to barrel fermenting or aging.

Spicy: Describes the presence of spice flavors such as anise, cinnamon, cloves, mint and pepper, often present in complex wines.

Sweet: One of the four basic tastes. Describes the presence of residual sugar and/or glycerin.

Tannin: Describes a dry sensation, with flavors of leather and tea.

Tart: Sharp-tasting because of acidity. See also 'Acidic.'

Toasty: Describes a hint of the wooden barrel. Usually associated with dry white wines.

Velvety: Having rich flavor and a silky texture.

Zesty: A wine that's invigorating.