



HOW TO TASTE WINE

The deductive tasting method

PART 1: SIGHT



Tilt glass at a 45° angle away from you against a white paper background

CLARITY/VISIBLE SEDIMENT

- is the wine clear, does it have sediment or appear hazy or unfiltered
 - clear – hazy - turbid

CONCENTRATION

- How deep is the color
 - Pale – Medium – Deep

PRIMARY COLOR

- Color is indication of age, climate and storage conditions.
 - White wines: Straw - Yellow - Gold – Brown
 - Red Wines: Purple - Ruby (red) - Garnet (brown or yellow) – Brown



SECONDARY COLORS

- Secondary colors can give clues to climate and age
 - White: silver – green – copper
 - Red: ruby – garnet – orange – brown – blue

RIM VARIATION

- With red wines, the older the wine, the more variation in color. is there a difference between the center to the edge? Yes or No?



Examples of rim variation in an older and younger red wine

EXTRACT/STAINING OF TEARS (RED WINE)

- Are the tears pink or red?
 - none – light – medium – heavy

TEARING/LEGS

- indication of alcohol and residual sugar



Example of legs

EVIDENCE OF GAS

- are there bubbles?

PART 2: NOSE

CLEAN/FAULTY: does it smell sound?

INTENSITY: Do you have to go hunting around for aromas or is it really obvious?

- delicate – moderate – powerful

AGE ASSESSMENT: Does it smell fresh and young or developing and older?

- youthful – developing – vinous

FRUIT: Imagine yourself in a grocery store. Do you smell green or yellow produce? Red or Black?

- White: citrus, apple/pear, stone/pit, tropical, melon
- Red: red, black, blue

FRUIT CHARACTER: what type of fruit is it? Condition of the fruit.

- Ripe, fresh, tart, baked, stewed, dried, dessicated, bruised, jammy

NON-FRUIT: What else do you smell?

- floral, vegetal, herbal, spice, animal, barn, petrol, fermentation

EARTH: earthy smells

- forest floor, compost, mushrooms, potting soil,

MINERAL: can give clues to growing region

- wet stone, limestone, chalk, slate, flint

WOOD: smells like baking spices, Bourbon (American Oak) vs. Cognac (French Oak)

- nutmeg, vanilla, coconut, cloves, cinnamon, toast, caramel, dill
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PART 3: PALATE

SWEETNESS: is there residual sugar in the wine? Very different from fruitiness. Perceived at tip of the tongue.

- bone dry, dry, off-dry, medium-sweet, sweet, lusciously sweet

F.E.W: Confirm the nose. Anything new?

TANNIN (RED WINE): dry astringent effect, grippy, chewy

- Low, med -, medium, med +, high

ACID: does it make you salivate? Tartness. Cool climate wines have more acid.

- Low, med -, medium, med +, high

ALCOHOL: does it take your breath away, warm sensation in the chest, fullness in the mouth. Refer to the legs.

- Low, med -, medium, med +, high

BODY: how does it feel in the mouth? Use the milk scale.

- Light, medium, full

TEXTURE: feel of the wine on the palate

- Creamy, round, lean, other textures

BALANCE: does anything seem out of place or too dominant?

LENGTH/FINISH: how long does the flavor linger in the mouth?

- short, med-, medium, med+, long

COMPLEXITY: does it make you think about it? A lot going on?

- short, med-, medium, med+, long
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PART 4: CONCLUSION

INITIAL CONCLUSION: narrow it down

- Old World vs. New World
- Climate
- Possible Grape Varieties
- Possible Countries
- Age Range

FINAL CONCLUSION: Bring it home

- Vintage
- Grape Variety
- Country of origin
- Region/Appellation
- Quality Level