

Wine:

*7 Easy Steps to EVERYTHING You NEED
to Know about Wine*

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Introduction

I want to thank you and congratulate you for purchasing the “*Wine: 7 Easy Steps to EVERYTHING You NEED to Know about Wine*”.

This book contains proven steps and strategies on how to know wines like a pro.

In this book you will learn the seven steps on how to know all the basic facts and figures of wine. Discover how to distinguish among the various types of wine, purchase your wine in specialty wine stores, serve and taste the wine expertly, and pair your meals with the right wine.

Each chapter is filled to the brim with easy-to-understand information that you can learn and use to WOW your guests.

Thanks again for purchasing this book, I hope you enjoy it!

Denise

Chapter 1 - Wine Categories and Production

Do you like wine? Most people do. But what do you know about wine besides some being red and some being white? If you want to upgrade from simply being an oenophile (a fancy word for one who loves wine) to becoming a connoisseur, there are seven steps that you need to take. Each step will be described in detail throughout this book.

Now, the first step that you need to take is to understand how wines are segregated into different categories and how they are made.

Step 1: Know the Wine Color Categories

As most of you know, wine is primarily sorted based on color, and there are three categories: White, Red, and Rosé.

White Wine

White wine is made from grapes that are not of the deep blue or red variety; these grapes are more of the golden yellow, greenish yellow, greenish or pinkish yellow shades. Some white wines out there are made from the juice of red grapes, with the grape skins separated and discarded. The result is a clear yellowish hue that is characteristic of white wine.

White wine can be enjoyed at any time of the day, and are commonly served before dinner. Most people like to drink it on its own or with light food, such as appetizers. It is especially enjoyable during hot weather and is best served cool, not icy cold.

There are four general types of white wine, namely Aromatic, Earthy, Fresh and unoaked, and Rich and oaky.

Aromatic white wine has an intense flavor and smell, and they can either be dry (not sweet) or off-dry (sweet). Many German wines and flavorful grape wines such as Viognier fall under this type.

Earthy white wine is dry and full-bodied. Many French wines fall under

this type, such as Mâcon.

Fresh and unoaked white wine is light and crisp, and not sweet. Majority of Italian white wines such as the Pinot Grigio are of this variety.

Rich and oaky white wine is full-bodied and dry or fairly dry. Many Chardonnays and wines from Burgundy, France, are described to be in this sub-category.

Red Wine

Red wine is the product of bluish and red grapes (referred to as *black grapes* by wine experts). There are so many varieties of red wine based on the type of black grapes and the wine-making process. The *tannic* red wines are made when the skin and juice of the grapes are fermented together for a long period of time. This *skin contact*, or the time when the skins and juice are in contact with each other, can last from a few days to several weeks.

The impressive number of red wine styles out there will enable you to pick a specific bottle for any kind of occasion and food. People usually drink red wine during a meal, and they are often served cool, because icy cold reds become undesirably bitter because of the tannin.

Red wine can be further classified into four sub-categories: Spicy, Soft and fruity, Powerful, and Mild-mannered.

Spicy reds are fruity and flavorful, with a hint of tannin and spice. The Italian Dolcettos and the French Malbecs are usually of this kind.

Soft and fruity reds are light-bodied, with just a hint of tannin and, it goes without saying, fruitiness. The least expensive Italian red wines typically fall under this sub-category.

Powerful red wines are tannic and full-bodied. They are also the most expensive kind of reds, such as the Italian Barolo and the superior quality California Cabernets.

Mild-mannered reds are subtle, not as fruity, and are medium-bodied. Some inexpensive Italian red wines fall under this group.

Rosé Wine

Pink wines are called the rosé wines. While these are made from red grapes, they do not turn red because the skins and the juice are stored

together for only a few hours, as opposed to several days for the reds.

Rosé wines taste slightly sweet and are prepared and served in just about the same way as whites; of course there are also a number of European rosés that are dry. There is also a certain type of rosé wine is called the blush wine, and it is quite sweet. Rosé and blush wines are essentially the same, but the latter is named so for marketing purposes.

It is clear that, among the three colors, rosé wine is the least favorite. However, if you get a taste of a quality rosé during the summer, you will surely appreciate it.

The Wine Alcohol Content Categories

Aside from color, wines are also classified as sparkling wines, dessert wines, and table wines.

Sparkling wines are those which have carbon dioxide bubbles, which is natural in the fermenting process. Champagne is originally certain type of sparkling wine that came from Champagne, France, but because of its popularity, the name is often used synonymously with sparkling wines in countries outside of Europe.

Dessert wines are usually drunk in place of dessert because of their sweetness. Keep in mind, though, that not all dessert wines are sweet nor are they enjoyed after dinner. Some dessert wines that are labelled as so are actually quite dry and are best consumed before having dinner.

Table wines are not bubbly and are the most popularly consumed kind around the world. In America, table wines have a maximum alcohol content of 14 percent, while in Europe, where it is referred to as light wine, it is between 8.5 to 14 percent alcohol by volume.

Chapter 2 - Popular Wine Grapes and Flavors

It is impossible to describe all of the wine grapes in the world as they run up to the thousands, but you can explore the most popular red and white varieties.

Step 2: Get Acquainted with Wine Grapes

Familiarity with the names of the wine grape varieties will give you an overview of the different types of wines out there.

Red Wine Grapes

Some of the most significant red grapes that you should be acquainted with are the Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah or Shiraz, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Tempranillo, Sangiovese, Zinfandel, and Nebbiolo.

Cabernet Sauvignon is an age-worthy red that originated from the Médoc district of Bordeaux. It is notably high in tannin and are medium- to full-bodied. The most expensive Cabernet Sauvignon wines have a rich flavor that can age for at least 15 years. The less-expensive variety are fruity, medium-bodied, and soft.

Syrah or Shiraz makes deep colored wines that have firm tannin and with full body. The aroma and flavor of different varieties range from berries and black pepper to smoked meat.

Merlot is characterized as having a high alcohol content, is full-bodied, has low tannin, and is deep in color. The flavor and aroma are sometimes likened to chocolate or plum.

Pinot Noir is a challenging wine to make, but it is arguably one of the best. Pinot Noir wine is not as deep colored as Merlot or Cabernet, and it has low to medium tannin. It has high alcohol content with medium to high acidity. It is described to have a fruity, red berry-like aroma and flavor, sometimes woody and earthy, too.

Tempranillo is a lauded Spanish red wine grape variety that is low in acidity, with moderate alcohol, and has a deep color.

Sangiovese makes wines that are firmly tannic and have medium to high acidity. The flavor and aroma are often described as cherry-like, with a hint of nutty and floral.

Zinfandel is an old grape that actually originated from Croatia. Its

wines can be described as rich and dark, with medium to high tannin and high alcohol. The flavor and aroma are likened to raspberries and blackberries, with a spicy aftertaste.

Nebbiolo is a grape that is highly acidic and tannic, producing wines that are tough. The aroma of the wines is difficult to describe, with some believing it to be herbaceous, earthy and woody, while with others mention fruity and floral.

Other varieties of red wine grapes are the Barbera of Italy; Gamay of the Beaujolais in France; Aglianico of southern Italy; Cabernet Franc of the Loire Valley, France; and the Grenache of Spain.

White Wine Grapes

The white grape varieties that you are popularly consumed are the Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Riesling, and Pinot.

Sauvignon Blanc is often described as having a fresh and herbaceous flavor with a hint of fruit. The wines are normally dry and are light- to medium-bodied. The most popular Sauvignon wine is the Pouilly-Fumé or Sancerre:

Chardonnay is known for producing the best dry white wines, called the white Burgundies. Chardonnay wine is typically oaky or fruity and is usually dry, full-bodied, earthy, and with medium to high acidity.

Riesling wines are from Germany and are of a noble variety. It is light-bodied, refreshing, and usually described as sweet. However some of these can be quite dry. Riesling has the characteristics of having low to medium levels of alcohol and high acidity.

Pinot Gris or Pinot Grigio (gray Pinot) produce wines that are the deepest colored of the whites. They are typically not oaky, have low acidity, are medium- to full-bodied, and with an aroma and flavor that are likened to orange or peach skins.

Other white wine grapes worth noting are the Albariño from Rias Baixas, Spain; the Gewurztraminer from Alsace, France; Muscat; Chenin Blanc from Loire Valley, France; and Gruner Veltliner from Austria.

Chapter 3 - Purchasing Wine

The idea of buying wine might be intimidating, but once you become more familiar with the process, everything will go smoothly. If you are new to the whole wine-buying concept and are looking for a bottle just for personal consumption, then you can never go wrong with purchasing your first bottle in a supermarket. Discount stores are also a great place for purchasing brand name wines. However, if you are planning to buy wine for company or if you want to explore varieties beyond the supermarket brands, then you can visit the wine specialty shops.

Step 3: Shop in Wine Specialty Shops

Wine specialty shops have wine-savvy personnel who can walk you through the different labels and help you pick from a wide selection based on your preference and budget (or lack thereof). Oftentimes, the wines are organized based on their country of origin, with the reds separated from the whites. Other stores prefer to display their selections based on style, such as Powerful, Aromatic, and so on. You can also expect a different section for dessert wines and another for sparkling wines. The most expensive wines, if not displayed in a separate area of their own, are often locked securely at the back of the store; you may need to request for them to gain access.

Upon entering the store, you might chance upon boxes of wines on sale, which are often stocks that have been on the shelf for longer than what was expected. While these can be bought at a discount, it is best to have a taste from one bottle before you decide to purchase more for your event.

If you do not know everything there is to know about wine, do not fret; new vintages, brands, and wineries are introduced every year, which means you should not feel embarrassed for asking questions while out shopping for a couple of bottles.

Understanding Bottle Labels

When you pick up a bottle of wine, you will notice that it has two labels. The label on the front gives the wine its name and brand, while the back label offers more details, such as what type of wine it is, some suggestions on how best to enjoy it, and what the pH and total acidity

are.

It is mandatory for certain details to be included in wine labels as imposed by the U.S. Federal government. These are: the name of the brand, the class or type (sparkling, table, or dessert wine); the amount of alcohol by volume (expressed in percentage or degrees; some table wines in the U.S. Do not have an alcohol percentage, but it should have less than 14 percent); the location and name of the bottler; the net contents (expressed in milliliters); the standard government warning; and the words *Contains Sulfites*.

Upon reading the name of the wine, you can tell whether it is named after one of the following: the winery brand name, the wine grape from which it was made, the region or even the vineyard property where the wine grape was grown, or the proprietary name (a special name given to the wine). Whenever oenophiles start talking about a wine, they usually refer to it by its name and the name of its winery.

Besides these government mandated details, wine labels may also contain additional words that could be confusing for some. These are: Vintage, Vineyard Name, Reserve, Estate-bottled, Old Vines, Classico, and Superior.

When you see the word *vintage* on the label, you will also see the specific year in which the wine grapes were grown. Sometimes the word itself is omitted and you will only see the year. Some people think that vintage wine is better, but in truth there is not always the case. The antithesis of vintage is the *non-vintage*, which are wines whose grapes were harvested in varying years.

Vineyard Names can be found on the labels of wines from the more expensive variety. The vineyard name is there to let you know the specific vineyard from which the grapes were cultivated and harvested.

Reserve on the bottle labels in the U.S. Is simply a marketing term that is supposed to mean that the wine contained within the bottle is *special*. However, in Spain and Italy, it means that the wine has gone through extra aging before it was released.

Estate-bottled means that the wine was grown, made, and packaged within the same farm. Other terms that you might encounter but actually mean the same are *domaine-bottled* and *château-bottled*.

Old Vines is a label that is usually found on labels of Californian and Australian wines. This means that the grapes come from old vines that produce few fruits of a higher quality. Unfortunately, the term is not regulated, therefore anybody can claim that their wine came from old

vines.

Classico is a term added to show that the wine grapes were harvested from the central region of the specified place on the label. It is commonly found on Italian DOC and DOCG wines. DOC stands for *Denominazione di Origine Controllata*, while DOCG is short for *Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita* (Controlled Designation of Origin [Guaranteed]). These are placed on Italian food product label to guarantee quality from the specified region.

Superior is added to the label of a wine that has achieved a high alcohol level. Some labels show its French and Italian translations, *Supérieure* and *Superiore*, respectively.

Chapter 4 - Serving Wine

There is no complicated science behind using a cork screw to open a bottle of *vino*, but there is more to the art of serving wine than what most people would think. Impress your friends by mastering the following steps:

Step 4: Learn How to Use the Corkscrew

The moment you have a bottle of wine in your hands, you might notice that it has a cheery-looking covering surrounding the cork called the *capsule*. This is to maintain cork quality and to hide its rather rustic look. It is advised that you should remove the capsule for the sake of cleanliness upon pouring the wine. Use the tip of a sharp knife to remove it, and then wipe the bottle's top thoroughly with a damp cloth, especially if you notice mold (which is a good thing because it means the wine has been stored properly).

To remove the cork without breaking it, you will need to use screw-pull corkscrew. It looks like the Goliath of clothespins and could cost a bit more than the Wing Type corkscrew (which is not recommended by most wine enthusiasts, by the way). However, it is much easier to use and will save you from the embarrassment of cutting the cork and letting it fall into your precious wine.

If you find yourself holding the Waiter's corkscrew (the kind that you would find in a Swiss Army Knife), follow these steps: hold the bottle firmly by the neck, then spin the corkscrew slowly but firmly through the center of the cork. Ensure that the screw does not move to the side as you turn or it will break the cork.

Releasing the Cork

Once the corkscrew is firmly entrenched, the best way to open the wine would be to wrap it with a towel (to keep it from slipping) and then hold it at a 45-degree angle with the base placed firmly on the hip. After that, hold onto the cork firmly as you twist the bottle. As soon as you are starting feel the cork coming out, push it down and hold firmly to slowly release the pressure from inside the bottle and keep it from popping. Of course, if you want to make it pop, you can skip the last step and simply pull the cork out. Make sure to keep it pointed away from the anybody and expect to lose some of the wine from the froth.

Letting the wine breathe

Wine enthusiasts used the word *breathing* and *aeration* to refer to the process of exposing the wine to air. Dessert wines, most reds, and some whites need to *breathe* to improve the flavor and aroma. The more tannin a wine has, the more it needs to breathe. The best way to do this is by pouring the wine into a special wide-mouthed glass container called a *decanter*. You can also pour the wine into goblets about 12 minutes before serving.

Wines that are exempted from this process are the inexpensive reds, and the light- and medium-bodied, less tannic ones. All ports, except the Vintage Ports, do not need to breathe as well. Avoid aerating older wines because their flavor quickly fades within 12 minutes of air exposure.

Step 5: Perfect the Wine Temperature

No matter what type of wine you have, it will not be as enjoyable to consume if it is not served at the ideal temperature. If you want to get serious on this, then get a digital thermometer and tape it on the bottle to check. Then, compare the type of wine you have with the temperature it reads and adjust accordingly:

Sparkling wines: 45 degrees F

Expensive Champagnes: 52 to 54 degrees F

Rosés, blush, simple, inexpensive whites, and sweet wines : 50 to 55 degrees F

Dry Sherry: 55 to 56 degrees F

Fine dessert wines and dry whites: 58 to 62 degrees F

Fruity, light reds: 58 to 60 degrees F

Most reds, Sherry (not dry), and Port: 62 to 65 degrees F

Choosing the right Glass

On special events, choosing the right stemware is crucial. Red wines, for instance, should be served in glasses that can hold from 12 to 24 ounces. For white wines, it should be at least 10 to 12 ounces. In the case of sparkling wines, the glass should have an 8 to 12 ounce capacity.

Sparkling wines should be served in trumpets, tulips (especially for Champagne), and flutes. Non-sparkling wines should be served in glasses that are apple-shaped (especially for Barolos, Burgundies, Noirs, and Pinots) and oval-shaped (for Cabernet Sauvignon, Chiantis, Bordeaux, Zinfandels, and Merlots).

Do not fill up the glass entirely so that you and your guests can swirl your wine and enjoy the aroma to your heart's content. It is advised that you should fill it only up to a third for reds, halfway for whites, and three-quarters for sparkling wines.

Chapter 5 - Wine Tasting Techniques

This is the part that you are probably waiting for: wine tasting. It can be taken as an art form, not unlike how the Japanese treat their tea, and perfecting it will impress your friends into thinking you are truly a wine connoisseur.

Step 6: Taste Wine like a Pro

Right before you savor the aroma and flavor of the wine, you must adapt an attitude of being in the present moment. You need to clear your thoughts first, then bring it to focus solely on the glass of wine that is in front of you.

Once you are ready to *experience* your wine, the first thing to notice would be its appearance. Note the color of the wine, whether it is deep and rich or pale and light. Bring the glass of wine against a white colored backdrop and tilt it away from you. Check if the color is deeper in the center and paler around the edges. Observe if it is clear or cloudy. Deeper colored red wines are younger, while unfiltered wines are a bit cloudy. You can take it to the next level by swirling the wine around the glass. Observe the phenomenon called *wine tears* which should flow gradually down if the wine is said to be of high quality.

After observing the wine with your eyes, the next step would be to breathe in its aroma. To sniff the wine, swirl it around the glass first by rotating it four times. This allows the air to combine with the wine and help oxidize it to unleash the aroma. Then, take a whiff from your glass and enjoy the scent. If you like, you can describe the aroma to your friends. Simply say the first thing that comes into your mind. Some oenophiles even describe certain aromas as *grassy* and *like a burnt candle*. If you are in doubt, simply stick to the basics, such as *woody*, *floral*, *fruity*, or *herbaceous*. However, if the smell of the wine is quite bad, it could be flawed and should not be consumed. Sometimes it is not in the wine, and instead may be due to a bad cork.

Finally, you are ready to taste the flavor of the wine. Wine connoisseurs are often seen taking a sip and then gurgling and swishing the drink inside their mouth. To be able to do that, you should first take a sip. Once the wine is inside your mouth, purse the lips and slowly breathe in a bit of air through the tiny opening from your mouth. Then, slosh the wine around inside your mouth before you swallow it. Throughout this entire process you should concentrate on the first

impressions your tongue takes in from the wine.

The Different Tastes

In kindergarten, you were taught the basic tastes, such as sour, sweet, bitter, salty, and sometimes even *umami*. In wine, the most prominent flavors are sweet, bitter, and sour. As you savor the taste of the wine, note which tastes stand out the most. You could also observe the *acidity* of the wine, which some would describe as *sour*.

If someone asks you what your opinion is on the flavor of the wine, you can use the following words to express your thoughts: Sweet, Body, Tannin, and Acid.

You can immediately tell whether a wine is sweet, dry (not sweet), or off-dry (semi-sweet). Be careful not to describe a fruity, dry wine flavor with sweetness; fruitiness can only be observed through scent.

Tannin levels in reds are higher than in whites. If you notice a *dry mouth* feeling after taking a sip of your wine, you are actually experiencing the tannin in it. You can describe the wine that has high tannin levels are rich and firm. You can also say it is astringent.

Acid is often confused with the tannin in the wine, but you would know the difference based on how it affects your mouth. The acidity in the wine triggers you to salivate, but the tannin simply makes your mouth feel dry.

The *body* of the wine is the overall impression that you got from tasting it. It is a combination of the fullness and the weight of the wine. Think of the tongue as a little weighing scale and then use your instinct to tell whether the wine is full-, medium-, or light-bodied.

Once you have gotten a grasp of the wine's body, it is up to you whether you like the wine or not. Do not worry if your friends didn't like it but you genuinely did, because at the end of the day, it is still wine.

Chapter 6 - Food and Wine

Whenever you experience consuming wine and food together, a lot of things can take place. Sometimes the food makes the wine taste even better, and sometimes it diminishes the flavor. For example, protein chemically reduces the effects of tannin in your mouth, which is why roast beef is often paired with highly tannic reds.

There are times when the flavor of the food itself changes because of the wine. For instance, if you eat roasted poultry and drink red wine at the same time, the result would be a slightly metallic taste in the mouth.

As you can see, choosing the right wine for your food (or vice versa) plays a crucial role in ensuring a delightful dining experience.

Step 7: Pair Wine with the Right Food

There are certain elements in wine and in food that can clash or complement each other. The acidity, level of alcohol, tannin, and sweetness need to be balanced carefully with the sour, sweet, bitter, salty, and *umami* flavors of food. The following are some general recommendations to achieve this balance:

Acidic wines, such as the Chablis, dry Rieslings, Sauvignon Blanc dry wines, and majority of the Italian whites, are great for fatty and oily foods as these can help offset the grease. Take note that they strengthen the salty flavor of foods, but become less acidic when served with salty and sweet foods.

High alcohol wines, such as the Barolo, Port, Sherry, and California reds and whites, are best paired with sweet foods, but can be overpowering when paired with foods that are delicate and only slightly flavored.

Wines high in tannin, such as aged wines, those made from Cabernet Sauvignon, and the Barbaresco, should be paired with high protein and oily foods. The bitterness in the wine is also reduced if served with salty dishes. Avoid serving with sweet foods because it reduces the flavor of the food. You should also avoid serving them with spicy foods, because the flavor will become astringent.

The most common technique for pairing food and wine is called the complementary principle, that is to say, choosing light wine with light

dishes, medium-bodied wine with a more savory dish, and fully-bodied wine with a dish that is heavy. Aside from this technique, you can also pair food and wine based on their texture. For example, rich and smooth wines will go perfectly with foods that are equally creamy.

The exact opposite, which is the contrast principle, is also applicable if your goal is to enhance the flavor of a dish. For example, a crisp, dry white wine will do well with a buttered seafood dish. Also, a fruity wine will give herbaceous and earthy flavored dishes such as mushrooms and potatoes a refreshing spin.

Evidently, you will need to have clear knowledge of how the food tastes so as to find the right type of wine to serve it with. If you are not yet confident on your ability to distinguish flavors among different foods, then you may peruse this list of popular food and wine combinations for your next dinner:

Appetizers or Snacks

Port wine and Walnuts and cheese

Amarone and Gorgonzola cheese

Dry amontillado Sherry with soup

Late-harvest Gewurztraminer or Sauternes with Foie gras

Fino or manzanilla Sherry with green olives or toasted almonds

Seafood

Unoaked Chablis and Oysters

Vinho Verde and Grilled fish

Pinot Noir and Salmon

California Chardonnay with lobster

Meat and Poultry

Red Bordeaux or Chianti and Lamb

Barolo and Braised beef

Beaujolais and Grilled chicken

When in doubt, simply serve a Chianti Classico or any other medium-bodied and very dry red, as this can be paired with almost any dish. Nevertheless, experimenting on the different combination of flavors among wines and food can be a fun experience, and once you have found the perfect matches, you will also find it to be quite rewarding.

Conclusion

Thank you again for reading this book!

I hope this book was able to help you to understand the what's, how's, and why's of wine.

The next step is to go out there and share a bottle with some friends, and maybe even impress them with your new knowledge on everyone's favorite beverage.



Finally, if you enjoyed this book, then I'd like to ask you for a favor, would you be kind enough to leave a review for this book? It'd be greatly appreciated!

Thank you and good luck!

Denise

