

## Blind Tasting

- Refresher: What is wine? How is it made?
- Grapes, Climate and Terroir:  
How do different grapes and where they are grown influence a wine's taste and structure?
- The Language of Wine:  
How do we describe a wine?  
What types of things do we talk about?
- Blind Tasting Process:  
using a common language and deductive tasting process to assess and guess a wine.

## How wine is made

Sugar + Yeast = Alcohol

- When grape juice is left in an environment with yeast, the yeast eat the sugar
- → CO<sub>2</sub> and alcohol

Cool Climate v. Warm Climate

- Warmer weather → riper grapes → more sugar → higher potential alcohol

“Old World” v. “New World”

- Temperature, humidity or rainfall, sun exposure, grape and soil type
- Winemaking techniques

## The Language of Wine

What kinds of words do we use to describe wine?

- |           |                 |              |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------|
| • Fruits  | • Intensity     | • Tannin     |
| • Flowers | • Concentration | • Alcohol    |
| • Spices  | • Weight        | • Complexity |
| • Herbs   | • Body          | • Balance    |
| • Earth   | • Texture       | • Finish     |
| • Mineral | • Sweetness     |              |
| • Oak     | • Acidity       |              |

## Why Taste Blind?

- Taste with a purpose: to learn
- Form taste references
- Recognize what's being tasted
- Develop scent and taste memory
- Improve your palate and ability to taste
- Improve your ability to describe a wine
- Understand classic wines and their regions

## Sight: Visual Clues

### Brightness in Whites

- More brilliant white wine = lower alcohol
- Dull white wine = higher in alcohol

### Viscosity or Tears

- Slow to form, slow to fall = high viscosity = higher alcohol or, in some cases, residual sugar
- Quick to form, quick to fall = low viscosity = lower alcohol

### Color

- Green in whites = youthful or cool climate
- Gold/Orange in whites = age
- Pink/Purple in reds = youthful
- Orange/Brick in reds = age

## Classic White Grape Markers

- **Riesling:** stone fruit, petrol, can be dry or sweet, high acidity
- **Sauvignon Blanc:** citrus fruit, herbaceous, usually medium-bodied, straw, hay, jalapeño
- **Chardonnay:** orchard fruit, neutral on its own, usually full-bodied, usually oaked
- **Albariño:** stone fruit and citrus, medium-bodied, salty, floral
- **Gruener Veltliner:** citrus and stone fruit, white pepper, vegetal, celery
- **Pinot Grigio/Pinot Gris:** melon, light-bodied, almond or slightly bitter, very simple, sometimes slightly pink or grey in color

## Classic Red Grape Markers

- **Pinot Noir:** red fruit, high acid, light-bodied, light tannins
- **Cabernet Sauvignon:** black fruit, usually full-bodied, high tannins
- **Syrah:** black fruit, medium-plus tannins, pepper, gamey, dark opaque color
- **Tempranillo (from Rioja):** red and black fruit, usually aged in American oak so flavors of coconut and dill, medium tannins and acidity
- **Nebbiolo:** neon orange rim, deceptively light but high in acid and tannins, rose petals, tar, red fruit, potpourri
- **Sangiovese:** medium garnet, red fruit, savory herbs, tarragon, tomato water, high acid and medium plus tannins
- **Malbec:** vibrant purple rim, black fruit, violets, medium tannins and full-bodied
- **Zinfandel:** red fruit, jammy, raisins, figs, soft tannins and higher alcohol
- **Cabernet Franc:** red fruit, herbal, bell pepper, medium-bodied and medium tannins, earthy-funky

## Deductive Tasting Process



WHITE WINES			
Appearance	Nose	Palate	Initial Conclusion
<b>Clarity:</b> Clear / Cloudy / Opaque <b>Color:</b> Green / Straw / Gold / Amber <b>Film Variation:</b> Clear / Browning <b>Gas Evidence:</b> Yes / No <b>Sediment / Crystals:</b> Yes / No <b>Viscosity:</b> Low / Med- / Med / Med+ / High  <i>Wine is:</i>	<b>Flaws:</b> None / Brett / Oxidized / TCA <b>Intensity:</b> Low / Med- / Med / Med+ / High <b>Fruit:</b> Citrus / Orchard / Stone Fruit / Tropical Underripe / Ripe / Overripe / Cooked / Dried <i>specific descriptors:</i>  <b>Non-Fruit:</b> Floral / Spice / Herbs / Mineral <i>specific descriptors:</i>  <b>Wood:</b> None / Used Oak / New Oak <b>Age:</b> Youthful / Some Age / Aged	<b>Fruit:</b> Citrus / Orchard / Stone Fruit / Tropical Underripe / Ripe / Overripe / Cooked / Dried <i>specific descriptors:</i>  <b>Non-Fruit:</b> Floral / Spice / Herbs / Mineral <i>specific descriptors:</i>  <b>Wood:</b> None / Used Oak / New Oak <b>Sweetness:</b> Dry / Off-Dry / Sweet <b>Body:</b> Low / Med- / Med / Med+ / High <b>Acidity:</b> Low / Med- / Med / Med+ / High <b>Alcohol:</b> Low / Med- / Med / Med+ / High <b>Finish:</b> Short / Med- / Med / Med+ / Long	<b>Style:</b> New World / Old World <b>Climate:</b> Cool / Moderate / Warm <b>Possible Grape Varieties / Regions:</b> <b>Age:</b> 1-3 years / 3-5 / 5-10 / 10+  <b>Final Conclusion</b> <b>Vintage:</b> <b>Grape Variety / Blend:</b> <b>Country:</b> <b>Region:</b> <b>Sub-Region:</b> <b>Quality Level:</b>
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### RED WINES

Appearance	Nose	Palate	Initial Conclusion
<b>Clarity:</b> Clear / Cloudy / Opaque <b>Color:</b> Pink / Ruby / Purple / Garnet / Orange <b>Firm Variation:</b> Clear / Browning <b>Gas Evidence:</b> Yes / No <b>Sediment / Crystals:</b> Yes / No <b>Viscosity:</b> Low / Med- / Med / Med+ / High  <b>Wine is:</b>	<b>Flaws:</b> None / Brett / Oxidized / TCA <b>Intensity:</b> Low / Med- / Med / Med+ / High <b>Fruit:</b> Red / Purple / Blue / Black Underripe / Ripe / Overripe / Cooked / Dried <i>specific descriptors:</i>  <b>Non-Fruit:</b> Floral / Spice / Herbs / Mineral <i>specific descriptors:</i>  <b>Wood:</b> None / Used Oak / New Oak <b>Age:</b> Youthful / Some Age / Aged	<b>Fruit:</b> Red / Purple / Blue / Black Underripe / Ripe / Overripe / Cooked / Dried <i>specific descriptors:</i>  <b>Non-Fruit:</b> Floral / Spice / Herbs / Mineral <i>specific descriptors:</i> <b>Wood:</b> None / Used Oak / New Oak <b>Sweetness:</b> Dry / Off-Dry / Sweet <b>Body:</b> Low / Med- / Med / Med+ / High <b>Acidity:</b> Low / Med- / Med / Med+ / High <b>Tannin:</b> Low / Med- / Med / Med+ / High <b>Alcohol:</b> Low / Med- / Med / Med+ / High <b>Finish:</b> Short / Med- / Med / Med+ / Long	<b>Style:</b> New World / Old World <b>Climate:</b> Cool / Moderate / Warm <b>Possible Grape Varieties / Regions:</b> <b>Age:</b> 1-3 years / 3-5 / 5-10 / 10+  <b>Final Conclusion</b> <b>Vintage:</b> <b>Grape Variety / Blend:</b> <b>Country:</b> <b>Region:</b> <b>Sub-Region:</b> <b>Quality Level:</b>
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## Tips for Practicing

- Seek out “classic” wines from “classic” regions
- Identify key markers for different types of wine
- Work through the deductive tasting process on each wine you taste
- Taste with friends
- Record your work
- Listen to your calls, use the clues
- Come to Blind Tasting Happy Hours!  
Fridays from 5:00-6:00pm at the Wine Bar