

HOW TO SERVE

Similar to wine growing and winemaking, how to serve wine in the best manner is the product of some details which can add up to either a spectacular wine experience or a ho-hum glass of wine. Focusing on a few environmental and service factors can make all the difference.

Selecting the Appropriate Stemware



Champagne Flute
Sparkling Wines

Chardonnay/White Wine
Whites

Burgundy Balloon
Medium-Bodied Reds

Bordeaux
Full-Bodied Red

Dessert Wines
Porto

Storage

- Store bottle horizontally to keep the cork moist in a dark, still place with a consistent temperature of 50-55°F.
- Opened bottles with an airtight closure can be stored in a refrigerator for 1-2 days for reds; 2-3 days for whites.

Serving Temperatures

- Put reds in and take whites out of the refrigerator 15 minutes before serving.
- Whites served too cold will have muted aromas and flavors; serve chilled but not freezing. Light-bodied reds benefit from being chilled.
- Served too warm, reds will show "hot" alcohol and acidity; served cooler they will fully express delicate aromas and flavors.
- A bottle cools 4°F for every 10 minutes in the refrigerator and warms at the same rate at room temperature.

Ideal Serving Temperatures

- Sparkling wines: 40°- 45°F
- White wines: 45°-50°F
- Red wines: 50°- 55°F
- Sweet white wines: 40°- 45°F
- Port wines: 60°- 65°F

Glass Placement

- Top right of the place setting, to the right of the water glass.
- If needed, a white wine glass goes right of the red, a champagne flute would go above and between red and white glasses.

Opening the Bottle

- Young or robust red wines: open one hour prior to serving to aerate.
- Mature reds: stand upright for one day to allow sediment to settle before serving.
- White wine: serve immediately.
- Cut the foil under the rim of the neck and remove.
- Use a good quality corkscrew to remove the intact cork. Older bottles require a gentle touch.

Decanting

- Older Wines and Ports: should always be decanted if sediment has developed.
- Young Reds and Full-bodied Whites: may also be decanted to aerate the wine and soften tannins.
- Most wines can sufficiently aerate in their serving glass.

Pouring

- Begin with host. Once the host approves, serve guests clockwise.
- Serve from the right.
- Pour still wine into glass' center and sparkling on the side of the glass to preserve bubbles.
- Fill the glass no more than ¼ to ½ full to allow swirling.

Quantity

- Serving size: 4-5 ounces
- Pours per bottle:
750ml = 5-6 pours
1.5L magnum = 10-12 pours
3L bottle = 22-24 pours

Taste Progression

- Dry before sweet.
- Young before old (unless the young wines are overwhelmingly robust).
- More delicate wines with finesse before bold, structured wines.
- Good before exceptional; more simple wines before more complex.

IDENTIFYING WINE FAULTS

The following are the most common wine faults, along with the aroma profiles that can identify them and their potential causes. It's important to note that sometimes, a small amount of "brett" or oxidation can add to a wine's complexity and is then not a fault in the wine.

Identifying Aromas	Fault	Common Causes	Susceptible Wines
Vinegar	Acetic Acid (a Volatile Acid)	Ullaged barrels or tanks, damaged fruit, poor storage conditions	May afflict any wine and cause a sharp, hot taste. This is the most common volatile acid in young wines.
Band-aid, barnyard	Brettanomyces ("Brett")	Low SO ₂ , low acidity, poor storage or poor winery hygiene.	Prevalent among reds. Can benefit a wine's complexity if subtle.
Cooked fruit	Cooked Wine	Excessive heat during storage or transportation	Can affect any wine.
Nail polish remover	Ethyl Acetate (a Volatile Acid)	Ullaged barrels or tanks, damaged fruit, poor storage conditions.	Can affect all wines, though it is acceptable in reds at low levels and is not considered a fault in botrytis wine styles.
Sherry, brown apple	Oxidation	Low sulfur dioxide and high dissolved oxygen at bottling or faulty cork.	All, particularly light-bodied whites. Can benefit a wine's complexity if subtle
Boiled eggs, garlic, burnt rubber	Hydrogen Sulfide (H ₂ S)	Lack of amino acids at fermentation.	All, particularly reds.
Struck match	Sulfur Dioxide (SO ₂)	Excessive addition of sulfur dioxide, particularly at bottling.	Most prevalent in whites, particularly light-bodied.
Musty or mildewed, wet cardboard	Trichloroanisole (TCA) "corked"	Presence of chlorine during vinification.	Can affect any wine.