



HOW TO TASTE WINE

THE FOUR STEPS TO EVALUATING WINE

- **Sight** (Look at the wine)
- **Smell** the wine
- **Taste** the wine
- Draw a **conclusion** about the wine

Sight

This may seem elementary, but what you see in the glass can give you some clues about the wine.

- Is it white or red? What shade of color would you call it?
- Is it clear or cloudy?
- Does it have bubbles?
- When you swirl it, does the liquid cling to the glass and have distinctive color?
 - The more “legs” or “tears” that are formed on the side of the glass, the higher the alcohol content in the wine, which will help you to make a conclusion about the body. Higher alcohol wines tend to have a fuller body.

Smell

Smells are such a huge component of taste. Without our sense of smell, we would only be able to detect sweet, sour, bitter and salt.

- Swirl the wine to allow it to “aerate” or mix with the air. The swirling will also force the aromas up and out of the glass towards your nose.
- Place your nose over the glass and sniff.
- Try to identify a few aromas – Use the Aroma Tree as a guide.

Taste

Cleanse your palate with a simple cracker or plain bread before the first sip of wine. If the last thing your tongue tasted was candy, gum, coffee, soda pop, etc., then these lingering flavors will alter (most likely in a bad way) your ability to get the wine’s full taste.

- Take a small sip of wine into your mouth – DON’T swallow.
 - Let it roll over your tongue.
 - What do you taste?
 - Do the flavors confirm what you smelled in the nose?
 - What is the texture of the wine?
 - What is the weight or body of the wine?
- Now slightly open your lips and slurp a bit of air over the wine inside your mouth.



HOW TO TASTE WINE CONTINUED

Note: As the wine warms, you will notice that the flavors may change or become more prevalent.

- Swallow or spit the wine out. Now, notice the finish (or aftertaste).
 - How does your mouth feel?
 - Do any flavors linger? How long do they linger?

Note: If you taste many wines, spitting is beneficial because your senses will become dulled with the more alcohol you consume.

Conclusion

Once you have observed as much about the wine that you can, you can begin to fit the puzzle pieces together to better understand the wine you are drinking (or guess what is in the glass if you are blind tasting). Over time, you will be able to identify KEY characteristics in a wine which will help you to draw accurate conclusions. Practice – Practice – Practice!

*“Age is just a number. It’s totally irrelevant unless,
of course, you happen to be a bottle of wine.”*

–JOAN COLLINS