



WINE SERVICE 101

OVERVIEW: A seminar covering suggestive selling and proper service techniques

WHY DO GUESTS DINE OUT?

- To unwind
- For nourishment
- For entertainment
- For pleasure

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN YOUR GUESTS' DINING EXPERIENCE?

1. Greet and Get to Know Your Guest and Their Needs

- Don't pre-judge or intimidate the guest
- Provide a warm greeting as soon as possible
- Smile and make eye contact with your guests
- Ask questions to know their expectations for the evening:
 - Are you celebrating a special occasion?
 - Have you dined with us before?
- Make your guest feel like you are providing them with special attention
- Offer and serve wines promptly

2. Suggestively Sell at Every Opportunity

- Don't be pushy
- Don't state prices out loud (point to the price on the list if needed)
- Do offer the wine list to every guest
- Do answer any questions about the menu or wine list
- Don't make up an answer if you don't know it...find out the answer
- Do present guests with all of their options – Starting with the BEST

Beverage sales opportunities during a typical dining experience are:

- Pre-dinner cocktail/Champagne/wine
- Wine with dinner (glass/bottle/pairing for each course)
- Port/Cognac or After-Dinner Cordial
- Coffee or Tea
- Bottled water throughout the meal



WINE SERVICE 101 Continued

Wine Enhances a Guest's Experience:

Restaurant shopper scores are generally higher when a guest consumes wine or alcohol.

Typically, guests report their food is hotter, the service is better, and the overall experience is improved!

MANAGING YOUR TABLE

How do I provide the best experience for my guest and add TIPS to my pocket?

Tools Needed for Wine Service

- Wine opener
- Apron or uniform with pockets
- Linen napkin
- Glassware
- Wine bucket
- Some knowledge of wine and your wine list
- Great attitude and enthusiasm, remember you are on stage!

Be Prepared

- Check your table to ensure cleanliness, proper accessories (wine glasses, napkins, silverware).
- Have a wine list and after dinner list nearby.
- Carry your wine opener – this should be part of your everyday uniform just like carrying a pen!
- Have a linen napkin available for wine service.

Know Your Wine List

You don't have to be a Master Sommelier to offer exceptional wine service.

- Know how your wine list is arranged (progressive format/by price?).
- Know the main grape varietals and what menu items they go well with.
 - What do the major grapes taste like?
 - What are the body styles of the major grapes?
 - What are some key descriptors for wine?
- Know the top selling wines on your list and their popular food pairings.
- Know something special about your favorite wines.
- Continue to learn by asking questions and TASTING!



THREE STEPS TO SERVING WINE ONCE YOU HAVE THE ORDER:

1. Present the Wine

- Approach the table to the right of the guest who ordered the wine (if possible).
- With a linen napkin folded and draped over your arm and the wine cradled in your arm on top of the linen (label facing up), show the label to the host and state the name and vintage aloud allowing them the opportunity to confirm their choice.

2a. Open the Bottle – Still Wine

- Once the host has approved their choice, place the wine bottle on a solid surface and cut the foil just below the thick lip of the bottle. Remove the foil and place it in your pocket.
- Wipe the top of the bottle with your clean linen napkin.
- Place the tip of the wine opener worm into the center of the cork and with steady pressure, twist into the cork until there is only about 1/2 to 1 rung exposed on the worm. Place the hinge against the lip of the bottle and hold securely with your opposite hand. Slowly leverage the cork out of the bottle. Concentrate on pulling the cork straight out of the bottle. Be careful not to “pop” the cork out of the bottle – patience and finesse are key to avoid spills!
- Remove cork from the wine opener and place the cork on the table to the right of the host.
- Wipe the top of the bottle again.

2b. Open the Bottle – Sparkling Wine

- Once the host has approved their choice, wipe the bottle in case there is any condensation and remove the foil from the top of the bottle. There is usually a pull-tab or you can cut it with your wine opener blade. Place the foil in your pocket.
- Place your linen napkin over the top of the bottle for safety reasons.
(There are 6 atmospheres of pressure inside a sparkling wine bottle and if the cork shoots out prematurely, you could really injure someone!)
- Holding the top of the bottle with your thumb over the napkin and cork, reach under the napkin and loosen the wire cage (it usually takes 6 turns for the cage to be loose). **DO NOT LET GO OF THE CORK!**
- With one hand still on the cork/top of the bottle, grip the body of the bottle firmly and begin to twist the bottle one way and the cork the other to loosen it. Ease the cork out of the bottle – as you feel the pressure pushing the cork out, hold firmly so that the cork does not “pop”.
- Place the cork on the table to the right of the host.
- Wipe the top of the bottle again.



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3. Serve the Wine

- Pour 1oz. of wine into the host's glass for approval.
- Once the host approves, serve the other guests in a clockwise fashion, serving ladies first, then men and the host last. (If the party is very large, it is acceptable to pour clockwise without preference for ladies or men, however, the host is always served last).
- FILL LEVELS: Depending on the size of the glass and the size of the party at your table, fill each glass approximately 1/2 full. Beware, if there are 5 people at the table and the host only ordered one bottle, you need to ensure you have enough wine to serve everyone, so pour lightly.
 - If the host orders a second bottle of the same wine, bring a fresh glass for the host to taste and approve. Once the host has approved, it is appropriate to serve the rest of the party in their original glass.
- Place the wine on the table or in a wine bucket, whichever the guest prefers.
 - Ice buckets should be filled about 2/3 full with ice and water.

OTHER WINE SERVICE ISSUES

When Do You Decant Wines?

- When a wine is old or may have sediment in the bottle
- When a wine is under-developed and would benefit from "aeration"
- For show and to add to the guest experience

The Steps for Decanting Are:

- Stand the bottle upright for a day or so to allow the sediment to settle; if this is not possible, use extra care in following the remaining steps.
- Remove the capsule (or chip off the wax, if the bottle is sealed with wax) and wipe the neck and lip of the bottle with a hot, damp towel to remove dirt and debris.
- Uncork carefully, as the cork of an old wine will crumble and break more easily than that of a young wine.
- Place a decanting funnel or ordinary kitchen funnel in the neck of a clean, dry decanter or carafe; if a kitchen funnel is used, line it with cheesecloth. Place a bright light (candle or flashlight) behind the neck of the bottle as you decant the wine into the decanter.
- Agitating the wine as little as possible, slowly pour the wine through the funnel, allowing it to drain into the decanter. Observe the wine through the bottle neck. As you near the end of the bottle, sediment will begin to be seen in the neck. Stop decanting at this point.
- The wine may be served from the decanter or returned to its bottle for service. If the latter is preferred, wash the bottle thoroughly in hot water, briefly drip it as dry as possible, and return the decanted wine from the decanter to its original bottle. Be sure to re-cork the bottle until you are ready to serve your guest.



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HANDLING CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

A Guest Wants To Return a Wine

- A guest can return wine because it is “bad” (corked or spoiled) or they don’t like it.
- Graciously accept the returned bottle and offer a different bottle/different wine.

Responsible Service

- We all have an obligation to serve responsibly. If you feel that a guest has had too much to drink, inform your manager so that the situation can be addressed.

PROPER WINE SERVING TEMPERATURES

Sparkling wines: 40°-45°F

Light white wines: 45°-50°F

Full-bodied white wines: 50°- 55°F

Light red wines: 50°- 55°F

Full-bodied red wines: 55°- 65°F

Sweet white wines: 40°- 45°F

Port wines: 60°- 65°F

Note that the guest preference is important, though these are the guidelines, if a guest wants you to chill a red wine in an ice bucket, do it!

According to Nations Restaurant News:

76% of guests walking into a restaurant want a wine suggested to them.

11% of guests had wine recommended.

Sell wine and offer them a choice!

The Most Important Rule of all is to HAVE FUN! Your guests are expecting an enjoyable experience. Selling wine adds to that experience and adds dollars to your pocket!

“Wine makes daily living easier, less hurried, with fewer tensions and more tolerance.”

– BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



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