

**THE POCKET SOMMELIER
WINE TASTING GUIDE & JOURNAL**



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The Pocket Sommelier, 2008

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For a copy of the real version, contact Chris at pocketsommelier@yahoo.ca.

INTRODUCTION

The experience of tasting wine can be divided into multiple stages of analysis. This publication will guide you through each stage and help you to develop your wine tasting skills until they become second nature.

The first stage of wine tasting begins with describing the appearance, or “eye” of the wine, and is followed by an analysis of the aromas, or “nose”. The aromas noted by the nose are confirmed by a sensory evaluation in the mouth. Once in the mouth, the taster can evaluate the flavours, mouth feel (texture), as well as the body (weight), balance and ultimately the finish.

When tasting, a tulip-shaped glass is preferable. The shape is important, as the glass begins to narrow towards the rim, the aromas become concentrated.

Notes regarding your tasting experience should be taken in the wine journal, which follows the guide portion of this book. The journal is comprised of blank tasting sheets that guide the taster through each stage of the tasting process.

Anyone can taste and evaluate wine – all it takes is a little practice. In the end, it is your opinion that counts. Do not be swayed by what others say. Only you know what you like and what you do not.

For starters, break out a bottle of wine, pour a couple of ounces in a glass and follow along the next few pages!

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1 - APPEARANCE

The first step is to assess the wine's colour and clarity.

With 1 to 2 ounces of wine in the glass, place the glass on a sheet of plain white paper. From above, look down the glass while noting the wine's clarity. Next tilt the glass on an angle and note the colour shade of the wine, while paying attention to the rim of the wine.

A list of common terms and descriptors for wine clarity and colour follow.

WHITE WINES

Clarity

Clear, Bright, Translucent - *indication of a well-made wine*

Mistiness, Cloudy - *may indicate a fault in the wine*

The rim - *should also be bright and clear*

Colour Spectrum

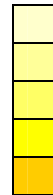
Lightest - Watery, almost colourless

Yellow, with green reflections

Straw

Gold

Darkest - Amber



Lighter coloured white wines tend to be younger and fermented in stainless steel tanks.

White wines will darken as they age. As well, white wines fermented in barrels will exhibit deeper colours.

2 - AROMA

Assessing a wine's aroma is the most important stage in wine tasting.

When conducting a tasting, a wine should be at a temperature range between 59 to 68 degrees F (15 to 20 degrees C).

Place your nose near the rim and inhale. Note the aromas. Now agitate the wine by swirling the glass. The action of agitation aerates the wine. Aeration brings out the aromas. Inhale again and analyze the bouquet of aromas. Jot down a few descriptors that describe what you smell.

Wine aromas are generally categorized as either:

Primary – aromas from the grape itself, such as fresh fruit, floral, herbaceous and mineral;

Secondary – aromas from fermentation, such as yeast and cream; and,

Tertiary – aromas from aging, such as dried fruit, dried flowers, nuts, spice and earth.

You will also want to make some conclusions as to the wine's bouquet, such as on its intensity (concentration) of aromas. As well you may want to note its complexity (layers of various aromas). Both are indicators of quality. If you notice that a wine does not exhibit much in the way of aromas, you may want to note it as being "closed".

An in exhaustive list of common wine aroma descriptors follow, including indicators of wine faults, categorized for convenience. Feel free to add your own to this guide.

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RED WINES

Fruit

Tree Fruit

Cherry, Plum

Red Berries

Raspberry, Strawberry

Dark Berries

Blackberry, Black Currant, Black Cherry, Blueberries

Dried Fruit

Strawberry Jam, Raisin, Fig, Prune, Stewed Fruit, Fruit Cake

Spice

Sweet

Cinnamon, Nutmeg, Allspice, Ginger

Savory

White Pepper, Black Pepper, Clove, Anise, Licorice

Earthy

Mushroom, Gamy, Forest Floor, Pine

Bacon

Floral

Violet, Rose, Iris, Peonies

**8 - CHARACTERISTICS OF SOME OF THE MOST
COMMONLY KNOWN GRAPE VARIETIES**

The world's most famous wine grape varieties are of the genus *Vitis Vinifera* originating from the region around the Black Sea. All European wine grapes belong to this family.

A few of the most commonly known grape varieties include:

WHITE WINES

Chardonnay
Gewurztraminer
Pinot Grigio/Pinot Gris
Riesling
Sauvignon Blanc

RED WINES

Cabernet Sauvignon
Gamay Noir
Merlot
Pinot Noir
Sangiovese
Shiraz
Zinfandel

In the following pages, we will explore each wine's benchmark area(s), typical tasting profile, and suggested food pairings.

As a general rule, white wines should be served between 10°C and 14°C (50°F to 57°F) and red wines between 16°C and 20°C (61°F to 68°F).

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Merlot

Merlot wines usually have a medium body with hints of berry, plum, and currant. Merlot's softness is highly valued when blended with more tannic grapes.

Benchmark Area(s)

Second most important variety in the Bordeaux region of France after Cabernet Sauvignon, its typical blending partner
“Cult” wines of California

Typical tasting profile

<i>Colour</i>	ruby
<i>Aromas/Flavours</i>	lots of fruit, raspberry, blackberry, plum, earthy, spice
<i>Mouth Feel</i>	low acid, low tannin results in a soft wine, supple
<i>Body</i>	full, high alcohol, dry
<i>Sweetness</i>	dry

Food Pairings

<i>Vegetables</i>	roasted
<i>Other</i>	pizza, pasta with meat sauce
<i>Seafood</i>	grilled tuna, grilled salmon
<i>Meat</i>	lamb
<i>Poultry</i>	grilled chicken
<i>Pork</i>	roasted
<i>Beef</i>	stewed, steak
<i>Cheeses</i>	soft (Brie), hard

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Date:	Place:
Producer/Varietals/Region/Vintage/Alcohol Content/Price	
Appearance	/10
Aromas	/20
Mouth Feel	/10
Body	/10
Balance	/20
Finish	/20
Overall	/10
Score:	Taster's Initials:

Date:	Place:
Producer/Varietals/Region/Vintage/Alcohol Content/Price	
Appearance	/10
Aromas	/20
Mouth Feel	/10
Body	/10
Balance	/20
Finish	/20
Overall	/10
Score:	Taster's Initials:

Thank you for previewing this abridged version of The Pocket Sommelier – Wine Tasting Guide & Journal - an easy to read, unpretentious guide to tasting wine like a pro. The full version is an attractive 5.5 x 8.5 inch booklet that contains 40 pages of wine appreciation instruction and reference. A tasting journal completes the guide, with enough sheets to evaluate over 30 wines.

The Pocket Sommelier makes a great:

- resale item
- item for promotional distribution

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