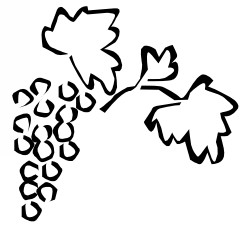




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The Grape Vine Newsletter



Wine Tasting 101 - The Basics

We believe that the main purpose of wine tasting is to find wines that you enjoy drinking, and not necessarily to dissect them - unless, of course, you are the judge of a wine competition. The most important thing to keep in mind when wine tasting is to keep the mood light and fun, and remember, the true beauty of wine tasting is that nobody is ever wrong! You are deciding what *you like* and everyone else is doing the same for themselves.

Following are a few of the basic techniques that are commonly used by connoisseurs and novices alike:

First, notice the color of the wine as you tilt your glass over a light colored surface to see the wine from its very thinnest and lightest to its deepest color. A deeper and darker purple usually means an older wine.

Second, gently swirl the wine to aerate it and release its aromas. Then stick your nose as far into the glass as you can to inhale the aroma and take note of the first scent you recognize. This is called the "nose" of the wine.

Third, take a drink and slosh the wine throughout your mouth. This method helps to bring the wine to all parts of the mouth and tongue, allowing all of your taste senses to work in harmony. Before swallowing, you should take air in through your mouth which will further intensify the flavors. Your perception here is called the "mouth".

Lastly, before you take another drink, see how long the flavor of the wine stays in your mouth. This is called the "finish," and has a lot to do with which wines go best with which foods.

Red wines are best served between 65° to 70° Fahrenheit (about 15 minutes in the fridge prior to serving), while white wines demonstrate their full flavor at temperatures between 50° and 60° (about 45 minutes in the fridge prior to serving).

An Easy Sangria Recipe

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Bottle of an inexpensive red wine that you know you like (Cabernet, Merlot, Zinfandel, Syrah, etc.)
- 1 Lemon cut into wedges
- 1 Orange cut into wedges
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- 1 Shot brandy
- 2 Cups ginger ale or club soda

PREPARATION: Pour wine in the pitcher and squeeze the juice wedges from the lemon and orange into the wine. Toss in the fruit wedges (leaving out seeds if possible) and add sugar and brandy to taste. Chill overnight. If you'd like to serve right away, use chilled red wine and serve over ice. Add a splash of ginger ale or club soda just before serving. You may also add any combination of sliced strawberries, peaches, fresh blueberries, raspberries, kiwi or lime juice.

Wine Fun Facts

- Merlot is more heavily planted in the Bordeaux region than Cabernet Sauvignon.
- According to scientist Bill Lembeck there are approximately 49 million bubbles in a bottle of Champagne.
- The word Alcohol is derived from the Arabic language (al kohl or alkuhl). Consider the fact that a large proportion of the Arabic population is forbidden from consuming alcohol for religious reasons.
- The first commercial U.S. winery, established in 1823, was located in Missouri.
- Robert Mondavi started the Mondavi winery at the age of 52.
- A morbid, irrational fear of or aversion to wine is called Oenophobia. Lets just hope that no one reading this suffers from this condition.

Quote of the Month

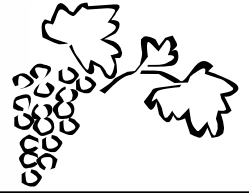
If your heart is warm with happiness, you'll need a glass - if sorrow chills your heart, have two!

Bob Hope



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Wine Gift Baskets

Our wonderful collection of Wine Gift Baskets, Corporate Gift Baskets and Gourmet Food Gift Baskets are perfect for any occasion. **Customizable** - You can choose to include only reds, only whites, or a combination of red and white wines. You can even substitute bottles of our fine Private Label Wine (see below) with any wine gift basket we offer. We are definitely the most unique and complete Wine Gift Shop online!

Wine of the Month Club

Because California is widely regarded as the finest wine growing region in America and one of the best wine producing regions in the world, the vast majority of our featured wines are from **California's finest, boutique wineries**. Now and then, when our wine experts find an outstanding selection, we may feature wines from some of the best growing regions of Washington and Oregon. However, the vast majority of our featured wines are California wines - arguably the best wines in the world.

- **You pick the number of bottles** - Monthly Wine Club memberships can be either 1-bottle per month or 2-bottles per month.
- **You pick the Wines** - all red, all white, or a mixture of both red and white wines. **You pick the Frequency** - Wine Club deliveries can be Every Month or you can Skip Months between deliveries.
- **You pick the Duration** - Wine Club memberships range from 2 to 12 months in duration.
- **You choose how to pay** - you can pay monthly or prepay the wine club membership up front - it's totally up to you.

We give you all the choices - **You make all the decisions!** No other clubs can compare.

Personalized Label Wines

We have a great selection of wine label templates available on our website that you can use to create your very own Private Label Wine. Simply click your favorite label template and change the words. You can also take a digital photo, or create your own label design and email it to us. Either way, we will print professional quality labels and apply them to your choice of our fine private wine selections. **Minimum order - only 1 bottle!**

Our private label wines come in either red or white varieties and you can mix and match them as you please. You can even choose to substitute private label wines in any of our wine gift baskets!

Private Label Wines are perfect for Birthdays, all Holidays, Thank You, Congratulations, House Warming, Corporate Gifts and Promotional Items.

The Wine Store

We always purchase a few extra cases of the fine wines we send our Wine Club members, and the wines we include with our Wine Gift Baskets. While these fine wines last, we make them available to you in our Wine Store, at discount prices that you won't be able to resist. As a bonus, our Wine Club members can buy more of the wines they really enjoyed at these discount prices, while they are available. **Check it out NOW!**

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February 2006 Classic Wine Club Selections

Every month our **Classic Wine Club** members receive one or two bottles of our featured wines. The wines you get depend on the membership you are enrolled in. If you're not yet a member, we invite you to join the fun. Happy wine tasting!

Madroña Vineyards

Madroña Vineyards takes its name from a majestic old madrone tree which still stands in the middle of the vineyard. The warm days and cool nights of the historic El Dorado grape-growing region have proven to produce fruit with excellent balance and intense varietal character. At an elevation of 3,000 feet, Madrone Vineyards can truly claim the distinction of offering mountain-grown wines.

Early in the 1970's, Dick Bush was convinced that the combination of climate, soil and topography found in the foothills of El Dorado County held great promise for producing outstanding wine. In 1973, Dick and his wife Leslie, along with their children, parents and friends, planted 35 acres of vines as the first step toward demonstrating this fact. More than two decades of experimentation and production, coupled with personal family attention to every part of the winemaking process, has helped fulfill the promise of this re-emerging region. The initial excitement Dick and Leslie felt for the potential of El Dorado County is now passed on to the next generation. With the latter's planting of new vineyards and varieties and their leadership at the winery, the tradition and commitment continue.

The Madroña Vineyards estate wines come from some of the highest elevation vineyards in El Dorado, with awesome views of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Paul Bush manages the vineyards himself, adding to the family's knowledge of grape varieties, clones within a variety, and microclimates. "Intensive hands-on vineyard practices make wines that are frankly exceeding what we thought possible at these high elevations" says Paul. "And we're going to keep on improving over the next 30 years.

Over twenty years old, the 35-acre estate vineyards are now in their prime. Originally planted to Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Zinfandel, Chardonnay, and Johannesburg Riesling, the family has since added Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Petite Sirah and Gewürztraminer. An old-world philosophy prevails at Madroña with nearly all aspects of vineyard production still done by hand. This intensive handwork coupled with an integrated-pest-management system fosters low-impact agriculture while producing wine grapes of the highest quality.

2003 Gewürztraminer

Modeled after the dry, full-bodied Gewürztraminers of Alsace, this wine exhibits an intense rose-petal character, accented by hints of citrus and spice. Many wineries produce their Gewürztraminer to be a sweet, over-powering sipping wine, however, Madroña allows their Gewürztraminer to be what it wants to be, a serious wine destined to be served with food. As you will soon see, the nose is incredibly complex and the palate is equally enticing.

Serve this wine ever-so-slightly chilled, and enjoy how it opens up and changes over the course of the meal. Not only is Gewürztraminer a preferred wine with spicy Thai and Jamaican dishes, it is the quintessential wine for smoked salmon and a traditional Thanksgiving turkey.

2003 Cabernet Franc

One of the few wineries in California who bottles Cabernet Franc as a varietal, Madroña has created a very beautiful wine, bursting with cherry, raspberry and violet ...the way Cabernet Franc should be. The nose is brilliant with an intertwining of spice, fruit and earthy components. Medium-bodied with an incredibly even balance, the palate has the hallmark dryness that is typically Cabernet Franc. This wine showcases the cranberry and cherry fruit and balances the young tannins while still letting the spice characters shine.

It is an incredibly versatile food wine, pairing well with everything from grilled chicken to gamey, spicy meats, and every red-sauced pasta in between. This wine drinks superb right now, but don't be afraid to age this vintage for another 5 years.



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February 2006 Epic Reds Wine Club Selections

Every month our **Epic Reds Wine Club** members receive two bottles of our featured red wines. These wines are some of California's boutique winery's finest offerings. If you're not yet a member, we invite you to join the fun. Happy wine tasting!

Terra Valentine, Napa Valley

Terra Valentine takes winemaking to a new level-about 2,100 feet above the Napa Valley. Visitors to the Terra Valentine Winery know they've arrived in an extraordinary place even before setting foot inside. A Greco-Romanesque statue greets them from his perch above the enormous copper-plated double door that serves as the winery entrance. The doors' metal knobs are designed to look like large fish, graciously arching their backs into convenient handles. And that's just the front door.

Terra Valentine is distinguished by more than an intriguing past. The winemaker's goal is to make exceptional Spring Mountain District estate-produced cabernet sauvignon. Equipped with 15 automated punch-down fermentation tanks, Terra Valentine is able to achieve high-quality, gentle extraction of their red grapes in an efficient and controlled environment.

State-of-the-art technology enables Winemaker Sam Baxter to take cabernet production to the next level. But his modern approach is tempered with respect for tradition. "I feel strongly that the old way of making wine could in some ways be better than trying to over-think too much of the process," he said.

Terra Valentine is blessed with two vineyards that capture the best of Spring Mountain District winegrowing. The vineyards are distinguished by a diversity of mountain terrain and vines that are well-adapted to the environment. While a mountainside vineyard presents challenges-including accessibility, diversity of soils and ripening, and hand labor-the reward is a wine filled with intense flavor and color.

2001 Cabernet Sauvignon, Spring Mountain District

Established as a named AVA in 1991, Spring Mountain was described 25 years ago by a prominent wine writer as "probably more responsible than any other Napa hillside for creating the mystique of mountain grapes." Spring Mountain is red grape country, with red varieties accounting for 81 percent of vineyard acres. Of these, cabernet sauvignon makes up the lion's share.

The appellation, which lies above the town of St. Helena, is defined by small, often hand-tilled vineyards on terraces and sloping meadows. The region's 20 wineries are hidden from view, nestled among forests and steep winding roads. But despite the remoteness of the region, Spring Mountain has produced an abundance of wines acclaimed worldwide for unmistakable intense flavor and delicate, balanced tannins.

This wine is 100% Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon whose nose opens with a rich core of dark, ripe fruits followed by notes of bing cherry, blackberry jam, black licorice, cocoa, caramel, and hints of toast and spice. The mouth of this wonderful wine is a bright fruit entry with balanced acidity and rich creamy cocoa tannins.

2002 Cabernet Sauvignon, Wurtele Vineyard

This 35-acre vineyard, planted to cabernet sauvignon in 1991, rests at an average elevation of 1,000 feet. Wurtele Vineyard is unusual in that exposures are circular around a crested knoll of the mountain. This formation provides a variety of vine orientations with varying intensities of tannin. Two-thirds of the vineyard is terraced. The trellises are three-quarters Vertical Shoot Positioning, and one-quarter Geneva Double Curtain.

This 100% estate Cabernet Sauvignon from the Wurtele Vineyard is the finest wine produced by Terra Valentine and will only get better with age. The nose opens with notes of black currant and cassis followed by subtle hints of mint, anise, black spice and dark earthy chocolate tones backed by huge, black, jammy fruits. Rich black fruit balanced with full bodied tannins fill the mouth and chocolate espresso tones back the long fruit finish.

This wine was rated a very prestigious 96 points by the Wine Enthusiast - 750 Cases Produced