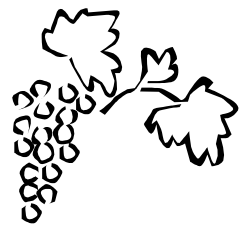




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The Grape Vine Newsletter



How to Host a Wine Tasting Party

Those who enjoy wine want to know how they can learn more about the wines they drink. Our suggestion is to taste several wines in a sitting instead of just one, and sample them with your friends. Throwing a wine tasting party will allow you to do just that, while also enhancing your thoughts by hearing what others have to say!

To throw a productive wine-tasting party, invite a group of 6-10 people that enjoy wine as much as you.

Choose a theme. You could, for example, taste wines from one grape variety such as Merlot, and compare Merlots from different areas. Or choose a type of wine or a wine region you don't yet know very much about. How about Barbera, Sangiovese or Pinot Grigio?

Give everyone an assignment. Ask each friend to bring one bottle of wine that fits the theme. So that everyone will bring wines of similar quality, set a price range. You can get good wines for around \$10 to \$20 about anywhere. If you've chosen a white wine theme, don't forget to have everyone bring their bottles already chilled.

Get ready for the tasting. Have a few good corkscrews on hand. Also, every person will need a napkin, a pencil and paper to take notes, a water glass, and a spit cup. "Spit cups?" you might be wondering. Yes, in the beginning of the evening, when everyone is forming opinions, it's best not to swallow as you taste. Later on, abandon the cups and just enjoy.

As for the wine glasses, each person will need one. If you don't have that many glasses, ask tasters to bring their own. Don't worry about having properly shaped glasses for white wine versus red. Just make sure the glasses have generous sized bowls so you can swirl the wines.

Wine tasting requires you to use your senses intensely to pick up flavor differences, so it's best not to make the task difficult by distracting your palate with food or cheese. During the tasting itself, all you'll need are some plain crackers or bread (not sourdough), just in case someone wants to nibble something neutral between wines. Of course, by the end of the tasting, everyone will be starving, so by all means have some cheese or appetizers ready to serve.

Pour the wines. Pour about a half inch of the first wine into each glass. If you plan to pour different types of wine, begin with light white wines and move toward the heartier ones in order to preserve your palate. As the first wine is sampled, take notes and talk with each other about what you are smelling and tasting. At first you may be at a loss for words, but by wine six, everyone should be talking away!

Taste the wines. First swirl the wine in your glass to aerate it and release its aromas. Then stick your nose right into the glass as far as you can get it and inhale the aromas. Next, take a small sip and let it flow everywhere, to all corners of your mouth so all flavors can be sensed. If you leave the wine in your mouth long enough, you may taste changing flavors as the wine goes from serving temperature to your body temperature.

Remember that wine tasting is a fun thing to do and should be enjoyed light heartedly. And best of all, it is completely subjective - everyone is always right!

Merlot Mouth Wash?

Recent studies show that wine is actually good for your teeth and throat! The compounds found in both red and white wines can fight plaque and cure a sore throat. Now that wine tasting party sounds really good doesn't it?

Quote of the Month

"Good wine is a necessity of life for me." - Thomas Jefferson



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This Month's **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!

Cedar Mountain Winery - Livermore Valley

Nestled in the beautiful Livermore Valley, Cedar Mountain Winery is in the ideal place to grow grapes and make excellent tasting wines. Located about 40 miles inland from the San Francisco Bay, the Livermore Valley is known for its lush vineyards, olive groves, cattle ranching, pistachio groves and mild climate. The Livermore Valley has all the ingredients you need for a relaxed Mediterranean lifestyle.

The first known grapes planted in the Livermore Valley were done so in 1846, by an English salesman named Robert Livermore. By 1882, over 1000 acres of grapes had been planted, and some wondered if Livermore or Napa would become the pre-eminent grape growing region in California. The Livermore Valley has a varying climate, which is neither too hot, nor too cold, proving a perfect balance for grape growing.

Cedar Mountain Winery was established in 1990 by Linda and Earl Ault. The winery is surrounded by the Ault's 14 acre vineyard, Blanches Vineyard. Their first release was the 1990 Estate Chardonnay, but that same year they also made a small lot of Cabernet Sauvignon, 160 cases, which was released for sale in 1993 and rapidly gained national attention.

Cedar Mountain Winery combines the many creative interests of Linda and Earl - wine, food, and art. Earl is an accomplished sculptor, watercolorist, and large format photographer while Linda is a recognized amateur gourmet chef.

Linda and Earl farm their vineyard using sustainable growing practices. The Ault's believe that quality wines begin with the grapes in their vineyard. They specialize primarily in Livermore grown and produced wine whose full potential is realized with fine oak cooperage and focus on their estate wines as well as Port wines from their vineyards and from the Sierra Foot Hills.

They believe that wine is made in the vineyard and that minimal manipulation in the winery emphasizes fruit character. They strive to make well-balanced, natural wines representative of the land where the grapes are grown. The Ault's passion for the land, the wine, and food shape their lifestyle.

Cedar Mountain's hand made wines are available only in limited quantities and can be found at the winery and in local specialty shops and restaurants. Cedar Mountain produces only 4000 cases of wine per year.

Cedar Mountain Merlot, 1999 Thatcher Bay Vineyard

Only 371 Cases Produced

With a beautiful deep ruby-red color and a fruity aroma this unfiltered merlot is truly impressive, and after 7 years is still a big, strong fruit forward bomb with a pleasant and easy finish. The taste of this wine is clearly Californian with lots of ripe fruit, dry mellowed tannins, and a nice finish with hints of spice. Persistent on the palate with an extended finish this will quickly become one of your favorite Merlot experiences. We recommend decanting to remove any residual sediment in this mature wine. Pairs wonderfully with grilled lamb chops or your favorite blackened seafood dish.

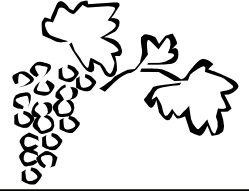
Cedar Mountain Pinot Grigio, 2005 Del Arroyo Vineyard

Their 2005 Pinot Grigio from the Del Arroyo Vineyard is produced from the only Pinot Grigio vineyard in the Livermore Valley. This refreshing wine is full of crisp melon & honeysuckle aromas and flavors with a long finish, that is well balanced with crispy acidity.



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This Month's **Epic Reds Wine Club** Selections

Every month our **Epic Reds Wine Club** members receive two bottles of our featured red wines. These wines are among 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!

Niner Wine Estates

Founded in 2001, Niner Wine Estates is dedicated to making the highest quality wines possible in the Paso Robles appellation, using only estate-grown fruit. Owner Dick Niner's attachment to Paso Robles and the bounty of its land came from his early upbringing on a rural farm in West Virginia.

Niner followed a somewhat unusual path from farm to vineyard; out of Princeton University and Harvard Business School, he spent over 30 years successfully investing in small businesses, most of them turn-arounds. It was, in fact, a business deal that first brought him to San Luis Obispo County in 1996. That deal led him to spend large amounts of time in the county, and re-kindled his interest in farming and the wine industry. Bootjack Ranch, a 224 acre property on Highway 46 East in Paso Robles, became the foundation of Niner Wine Estates in February, 2001. It was followed two years later by the acquisition of 139 acre Heart Hill Vineyard, which gets its name from a natural oak-tree filled depression on the hillside near the road in the perfect shape of a heart.

Gaining worldwide attention for its distinctive wines, Paso Robles is emerging as a leader in Californian viticulture. The largest AVA in San Luis Obispo County, Paso Robles has 18,500 acres under vine. Aside from a small gap near the town of Templeton, the Santa Lucia range shelters the region from the fog that cools the southern San Luis Obispo AVA's. Paso Robles is famous for its structured Cabernet Sauvignon and much of its acreage is planted with this grape. Vineyards in the western section feature a mixture of both calcareous and siliceous rocky soils and daytime summer temperatures often top 90 F. In the evening, vines are cooled by ocean breezes cascading down the eastern mountain slopes, which maintain the grapes' acidity.

Made up of diverse individuals, the Niner Wine Estates team has a singular mission: make exemplary Paso Robles wines from grapes grown in carefully managed vineyards. Each member brings a different skill set to the table. With their combined talents, they produce exceptional Paso Robles fruit and make world-class wines.

Bootjack Ranch Cabernet Sauvignon, 2003 Paso Robles

San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition - Silver Medal

San Diego International Wine Competition - Bronze Medal

Only 1290 handcrafted cases produced

The wine begins with aromas of blueberry, blackberry, cherry, chocolate mint, and cinnamon spice. A slight earthiness, and a bit of vanilla and toasty oak follows. In the mouth, a soft approach, with some up-front tannin, a solid middle, great structure, and a lasting fruitful finish.

Bootjack Ranch Cabernet Franc, 2003 Paso Robles

Orange County Fair Wine Competition - Bronze Medal

Only 190 handcrafted cases produced

In the glass, this wine presents a pleasing purple color. Complex aromas include cola in the foreground, blueberry in the background, and side-notes of toasty oak, dark coffee, cedar, and ginger. In the mouth, the blueberry is pronounced, and framed by flavors of fig and clove. It has good structure and noticeable tannins on the finish.