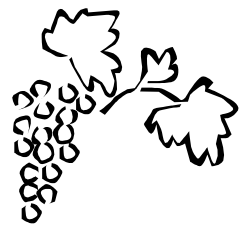




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The Grape Vine Newsletter



The ABC's of Wine Tasting

Last month we discussed "How to Host" a wine tasting party. Now that you have invited everyone to your party, we thought perhaps we would discuss what you are actually looking for in a wine.

Appearance

Pour your wine into a wine glass so that it is about 40% full, you will need room for swirling. Have a good look at the wine. Is it clear, opaque, or cloudy? Does it contain sediments or other solid matter? Tilt the glass away from you at a 45-degree angle against a white background so you can enjoy the range of colors in the wine from the center to the rim.

Wine changes color with age. Whites are at its palest state during their youth, gradually adding stronger color. Red wine, on the other hand, has more vivid color in its youth, slowly fading to brick red.

Smell

Give your glass a vigorous swirl to help release the aromas. The object is to get the wine to move up to around 70% of the glass. Stick your nose right into the glass and inhale steadily and gently, as if you were smelling a flower. Try to detect the smell of fruity or floral notes. Note the presence of spices, such as pepper, cinnamon, vanilla, tea or possibly nuts. Finally, note the presence of other aromas, such as cedar, oak, moist earth, herbs, chocolate, tobacco, toast, or smoke. Always interpret them in terms that mean something to you. Remember, it's your nose that counts here. It does not matter if someone else interprets the smell differently, that is part of the pleasure of wine.

Taste

At last, it is time to drink the wine. The following components that make up the flavor of the wine can be detected by rolling wine around in your mouth and concentrating on what comes to mind as you taste.

Sweetness - This is the fruit flavor tasted at the front of the tongue. If there is no perceived sweetness, a wine is dry.

Acidity - This gives wine freshness and zest. When balanced, it makes for a fresh, crisp, enjoyable wine. On the other end of the spectrum, acidity can lend a negative, vinegary taste to the wine

Tannin - Comes from the stems and skins of the grape. It has a woody taste, similar to flavor released when biting a grape seed. Tannin can be mouth puckering, but it normally mellows with age.

Alcohol - In low concentrations, alcohol portrays itself as somewhat sweet, and in high concentrations, it shows as a warm, pervasive sensation at the back of the mouth.

Fruitiness - The intensity and flavor depends on the grape variety, growing conditions, and wine making techniques.

Balance - For a good wine, there should be a balance of the above flavor components. If any one of the components is overpowering, the experience of drinking the wine can be diminished. This can sometimes mean that the wine is young and will become more balanced with age.

Make sure to rinse your mouth with plain water, and even eat a cracker between wines to cleanse the palate. This allows the next wine you taste to be fresh, without the lingering aftertaste of the last wine.

Now—taste and enjoy!

Wine Quote of the Month

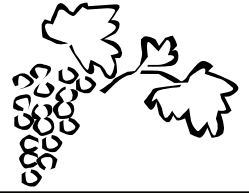
It is well to remember that there are five reasons for drinking: the arrival of a friend; one's present or future thirst; the excellence of the wine; or any other reason.

Old Latin saying



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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!

Adler Fels Winery

Russian River Valley

Sauvignon Blanc '06

Adler Fels Winery was founded in Sonoma Valley in 1979 by David and Ayn Coleman with the aim to produce world class wines from premium appellations. This dedication to quality and excellence in winemaking has been consistently recognized by wine critics, judges, and tasting publications. From its first vintage, the winery received critical acclaim and recognition for its elegant production of Gewurztraminer and Sauvignon Blanc. Once the winery expanded to include production of Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Zinfandel, awards quickly followed for these wines.

David and Ayn Coleman designed and built the original winery and guest house, which are nestled 1,500 feet above Sonoma Valley in the picturesque Mayacamas Mountains. The winery features state-of-the-art fermentation tanks and storage for 700 barrels. Adler Fels also operates a modern production and bottling facility in Santa Rosa.

The grapes for this Sauvignon Blanc were gently pressed immediately after harvesting in late September. Their grapes exhibit great varietal intensity as a result of restrained yields (less than 4 tons per acre). Our Sauvignon Blanc has herbal aromas that are balanced with notes of pineapple and Fuji apple. The palate is juicy with ripe melon flavors and crisp acidity on the finish.

Leaping Lizard Winery

Napa Valley

Cabernet Sauvignon '03

Leaping Lizard has offered exceptional wines from premium vineyards in California's famed Napa Valley since 1997. An entertaining name, easy-drinking wine style, and incomparable value provide a memorable wine experience. You won't find a better deal (steal!) from anywhere in the Napa Valley than Leaping Lizard wines!

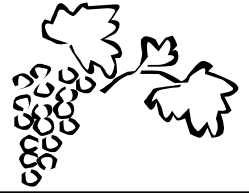
Leaping Lizard Cabernet Sauvignon is a complex wine with layers of aromas and flavors. Cassis and plummy fruit notes are meshed with mint, anise, caramel and spicy oak. This wine is aged for nearly two years in French and American oak barrels giving this wine a velvety, lingering finish with fine-grain tannins and a soft mouthfeel.

From time to time we have excess inventory of our Wine of the Month selection. If you would like to purchase additional quantities of this month's offering, or any of our other fine wine selections, please visit our Online Wine Store at www.winegiftclub.com.



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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!

Kenneth Volk Winery

Carmody McKnight Vineyard, Paso Robles

2003 Cabernet Sauvignon

Paso Robles has a rich history of winemaking and grape growing beginning in 1797 when the first wine grapes were introduced to Paso Robles by the Franciscan missionaries at the historic Mission San Miguel Arcangel, where Father Junipero Serra planted more than a thousand vines. The Padres produced wine for sacramental purposes and made brandy for export.

After Mexico secularized the California missions in the 1840s the vineyards were abandoned until European immigrant farmers started to arrive in the 1860s, following California's independence in 1850. The first was a Frenchman, Pierre Hippolyte Dallidet, who purchased the mission's suffering vines and started new ventures. More Europeans showed up in the 1870s, including Englishman Henry Ditmas who began the area's first vineyard importing Zinfandel and Muscat grapes from France and Spain for his 560 acre Rancho Saucelito in nearby Arroyo Grande.

This Cabernet has been described as brilliant, deep ruby red color and exquisite. Seductive aromas of crushed cherries and dark chocolate play into sumptuous flavors of ripe fruit coursing through this dazzling, sophisticated wine. Remarkable for its depth and complexity and also for its balance and restraint.

Kenneth Volk Winery

Carmody McKnight Vineyard, Paso Robles

2004 Claret

Our 2004 Carmody McKnight Vineyard Claret is a vineyard designated blend of 39% Cabernet Franc, 33% Merlot, 28% Cabernet Sauvignon. The Carmody McKnight Vineyard, a division of Ken Volk Wineries, is located in western Paso Robles on Chinney Rock Road in the rain shadow of the Santa Lucia Coastal mountain range. This dark purple wine had aromas of ripe cherry, blackberries and clove. Rich fruit flavors of cherry and plum are followed by tannins and a long finish. The bright fruit, low pH, and excellent structure of this wine make it a candidate for extended cellaring. This wine can be served with rich cuts of meat, poultry or with pasta.

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