

Six Flights at Home Benchmark wines, four at a time

One flight a month, or one a week. Each flight is four classic wines that teach one idea, in the same order as the Wine 101 chapters. Buy mid-priced, current-release, textbook examples, not the interesting outlier. One bottle each pours four to six people at two ounces. Print a Flight of Four for everyone at the table.

BEFORE YOU POUR

Reds open 30 minutes ahead. Whites out of the fridge 20 minutes ahead. From flight 2 on, bag the bottles and number them so nobody sees the label.

THE ORDER NEVER CHANGES

See, Nose, Palate, BLIC, Call. Commit to a grape and region before the reveal. Wrong is fine. Vague is not.

USE THE CARDS

Put the Mistral WineCards for each wine face up on the table. Every wine here has one.

BUDGET

\$80 to \$160 a flight depending on swaps. Champagne, Barolo, and Right Bank Bordeaux are the three worth spending on.

1 How to Taste

FLIGHT OF FOUR, DESCRIPTORS SHEET

Four wines at the structural corners of the map. Pour them open, work each column of the Flight of Four top to bottom, and count every finish out loud.

WINE	WHAT TO NOTICE	IF YOU CAN'T FIND IT
1. Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough	Pronounced aromatics, high acid, no oak	Swap: Any Marlborough SB under \$20
2. Chardonnay, Sonoma or Napa, barrel-fermented	Full body, oak, butter from malolactic	Swap: Russian River Chardonnay under \$30
3. Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley	Pale color, low tannin, high acid	Swap: Bourgogne Rouge
4. Shiraz, Barossa Valley	Deep color, high tannin, high alcohol, ripe fruit	Swap: McLaren Vale Shiraz

2 The Red Grapes

FLIGHT OF FOUR, DEDUCTIVE SHEET (REDS)

Bag the bottles and taste blind. Use the reds side of the Deductive Sheet: pigment first, then structure, then fruit, then one non-fruit tell.

WINE	WHAT TO NOTICE	IF YOU CAN'T FIND IT
1. Pinot Noir, Burgundy (Bourgogne Rouge)	Same grape as flight 1, earthier and more savory	Swap: Bourgogne Rouge under \$30
2. Sangiovese, Chianti Classico	High acid, medium tannin, cherry and tomato leaf	Swap: Chianti Classico under \$25
3. Tempranillo, Rioja Crianza	Medium everything, oak as the style, dill and leather	Swap: Rioja Crianza under \$20
4. Cabernet Sauvignon, Bordeaux Left Bank	High tannin, cedar, blackcurrant, graphite	Swap: Maipo Valley Cabernet

3 The White Grapes

FLIGHT OF FOUR, DEDUCTIVE SHEET (WHITES)

Blind again, whites side of the Deductive Sheet. Aromatic intensity is the first sort, acid is the backbone, oak and lees are the texture dials.

WINE	WHAT TO NOTICE	IF YOU CAN'T FIND IT
1. Sauvignon Blanc, Sancerre	Same grape as flight 1: flint instead of passion fruit	Swap: Touraine Sauvignon
2. Albariño, Rías Baixas	Saline, stone fruit, high acid	Swap: Any Rías Baixas under \$20
3. Riesling, Mosel Kabinett	Off-dry, low alcohol, petrol and lime	Swap: Washington dry Riesling
4. Chardonnay, Chablis	Same grape as flight 1, no oak: limestone and oyster shell	Swap: Mâcon-Villages

Six Flights at Home continued

4 Terroir

FLIGHT OF FOUR

Two pairs, same grape, two places. Taste 1 and 2 together, then 3 and 4. The comparison is the lesson.

WINE	WHAT TO NOTICE	IF YOU CAN'T FIND IT
1. Syrah, Northern Rhône (Crozes-Hermitage or Saint-Joseph)	Pair A, cool: pepper, olive, savory, medium body	Swap: Any Northern Rhône Syrah under \$30
2. Shiraz, Barossa Valley	Pair A, warm: ripe, plush, smoky	Swap: McLaren Vale Shiraz
3. Malbec, Cahors	Pair B, lowland: dense, earthy, firm	Swap: Any Cahors under \$25
4. Malbec, Mendoza, Uco Valley	Pair B, high altitude: floral, fresh, vertical	Swap: Luján de Cuyo Malbec

5 Winemaking

FLIGHT OF FOUR

Four wines where the winemaker's choice is the whole story. Open the sparkling last and pour it first.

WINE	WHAT TO NOTICE	IF YOU CAN'T FIND IT
1. Muscadet Sèvre et Maine sur lie	Lees: bread dough, salt, texture	Swap: Any Muscadet sur lie under \$18
2. Champagne NV Brut	Traditional method: fine mousse, brioche, high acid	Swap: Cava Reserva or Crémant de Bourgogne
3. Beaujolais-Villages or Cru	Carbonic: banana, bubblegum, violet, almost no tannin	Swap: Beaujolais-Villages under \$20
4. Vouvray demi-sec (Chenin Blanc)	Residual sugar as a decision: honey, quince, wool	Swap: Vouvray sec

6 The Regions, and Your First Blind Flight

FLIGHT OF FOUR, DEDUCTIVE SHEET (BOTH SIDES)

Fully blind. Score yourself: grape family right is half credit, exact grape full credit, region within one major region half credit.

WINE	WHAT TO NOTICE	IF YOU CAN'T FIND IT
1. Pinot Gris, Alsace	Rich, spicy, an off-dry edge	Swap: Oregon Pinot Gris
2. Nebbiolo, Barolo or Langhe	Pale color, huge tannin and acid. Color lies	Swap: Langhe Nebbiolo under \$30
3. Merlot, Bordeaux Right Bank (Fronsac, Côtes de Bordeaux)	Plum, clay, round tannin	Swap: Washington Merlot
4. Zinfandel, Dry Creek Valley	Jammy, brambly, high alcohol	Swap: Lodi Zinfandel

AFTER FLIGHT 6

Go back to flight 1 with the same four wines and taste them blind. The difference between your first sheet and this one is the whole course.

GO DEEPER

Every wine here has a card in Mistral WineCards Deck ONE: Global, \$35 at winewithseth.com/shop. Tasting rooms: winewithseth.com/work-with-seth.