

How to Taste

A repeatable method and a shared vocabulary.

TONIGHT

The plan

1. Learn the method
2. Taste four wines, top to bottom on the sheet
3. Sort the cards
4. Take it to the table

Tasting is a skill, not a gift.

THE METHOD

The order never changes

1. See: how clear, how deep, what color
2. Nose: does it smell clean? How strong? What do you smell?
3. Palate: sweetness, acidity, tannin, alcohol, body, flavor
4. Score: the WWS 10. Can Love Be Complex?
5. Call: your best guess at what it is, and how good it is

SCORE IT

Can Love Be Complex?

1. Concentration: fully expressed, or dilute? (1 point)
2. Length: does the flavor stay? (2 points)
3. Balance: does anything stick out? (3 points)
4. Complexity: how many layers, and do they change? (4 points)

Taste first. Fill the dots. Count to ten.

THE FLIGHT • POURED OPEN

Light to full, white and red

1 Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough

Light white: loud smell, mouthwatering, made in steel tanks (no oak)

2 Chardonnay Sonoma or Napa

Full white: rich and round, oak (vanilla, toast), buttery

3 Pinot Noir Willamette Valley

Light red: pale, soft tannin, mouthwatering

4 Shiraz (Syrah) Barossa Valley

Full red: deep color, ripe black fruit, big but soft tannin, high alcohol

AROMA

Three layers

- Primary: from the grape. Fruit, flowers, herbs
- Secondary: from winemaking. Oak, butter, bread, vanilla
- Tertiary: from age. Leather, earth, nuts, dried fruit

AROMA

Name the fruit family first

- Whites: citrus (lemon), orchard (apple, pear), stone (peach), tropical (pineapple)
- Reds: red (cherry), black (blackberry), blue (blueberry), dried (raisin)
- Then get specific: lime, not just citrus

STRUCTURE

What you feel, not what you smell

- Sweetness: dry means not sweet
- Acidity: makes your mouth water
- Tannin: dries your gums, like strong black tea
- Alcohol: warmth at the back of the throat
- Body: weight, like skim milk to whole milk
- Finish: how long the taste lasts. Count the seconds.

CARDS • THE SORT

Read the gauges

- ☐ Take any eight grape cards
- ☐ Find the strip at the bottom: alcohol, acidity, tannins
- ☐ Line them up from lowest to highest alcohol. The % range is printed.
- ☐ Re-sort by the Tannins gauge: one, two, or three bars
- ☐ Which grapes moved the most?

TAKE IT TO THE TABLE

Which one is it like?

Think of a wine you pour every day. Is it most like the light white, the full white, the light red, or the full red?

Guest: "I just know I like it." You: "Is it more like a light white, a full white, a light red, or a full red?"

The goal is not to sound smart. The goal is to help the guest understand what is in their glass.

Tonight's cards

From *Mistral WineCards*, Deck ONE: Global.

GRAPES



Sauvignon Blanc



Chardonnay



Pinot Noir



Syrah / Shiraz

REGIONS



Marlborough



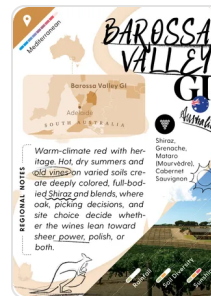
Sonoma County



Napa Valley



Willamette Valley



Barossa Valley

TASTING



White Wine Tasting Guide



Red Wine Tasting Guide



Structure

Study this week

Pull these from your deck. Read two a day. Before next week, find one of these wines on a shelf.

NOTES