

Wine 101 Workbook

Everything you need to taste like you mean it: the tasting sheet, the vocabulary, the deductive grids, and six flights to run at home. Print it, keep it by the glasses, and work through it in the order below.

1 Tasting Sheet, Flight of Four

2 PAGES · PRINT DOUBLE-SIDED

The working sheet. Four wines, one page. See, Nose, Palate, BLIC, Call. The descriptor bank and scoring key are on the back.

2 Descriptors Sheet

1 PAGE

The words. Primary from the grape, secondary from winemaking, tertiary from age, and the faults to name before you score.

3 Deductive Sheet, Whites and Reds

2 PAGES · PRINT DOUBLE-SIDED

For blind tasting. Circle down the funnel, then scan the table. The pink dot marks grapes with a Mistral WineCard.

4 Six Flights at Home

2 PAGES

Twenty-four benchmark wines in six flights, one per Wine 101 chapter, with swaps for what the shop has.

HOW TO USE IT

Read a Wine 101 chapter online, then run the matching flight with the sheets. Six chapters, six flights, six sheets filled in.

TRADE

Tasting rooms run the same six flights as a staff series. Details at winewithseth.com/work-with-seth.

THE CARDS

The sheets use the same vocabulary as Mistral WineCards Deck ONE: Global. The deck is optional; the sheets stand alone.

WRITTEN BY

Seth Cysewski, WSET Level 3 with Distinction. Twenty years in the wine trade.

Tasting Sheet Flight of Four

TASTER _____ DATE _____ SESSION _____ BLIND yes · no

WINE Name if poured open	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____
SEE Circle depth, then the color word	DEPTH pale · medium · deep WHITE straw · lemon · gold RED purple · ruby · garnet	DEPTH pale · medium · deep WHITE straw · lemon · gold RED purple · ruby · garnet	DEPTH pale · medium · deep WHITE straw · lemon · gold RED purple · ruby · garnet	DEPTH pale · medium · deep WHITE straw · lemon · gold RED purple · ruby · garnet
NOSE Intensity, the tier that leads, then three descriptors	LEVEL low · medium · pronounced LEADS grape · winemaking · age _____ _____ _____	LEVEL low · medium · pronounced LEADS grape · winemaking · age _____ _____ _____	LEVEL low · medium · pronounced LEADS grape · winemaking · age _____ _____ _____	LEVEL low · medium · pronounced LEADS grape · winemaking · age _____ _____ _____
PALATE Circle one word per line	SWEET dry · off-dry · sweet ACIDITY low · medium · high TANNIN low · medium · high ALCOHOL low · medium · high BODY light · medium · full FINISH short · medium · long	SWEET dry · off-dry · sweet ACIDITY low · medium · high TANNIN low · medium · high ALCOHOL low · medium · high BODY light · medium · full FINISH short · medium · long	SWEET dry · off-dry · sweet ACIDITY low · medium · high TANNIN low · medium · high ALCOHOL low · medium · high BODY light · medium · full FINISH short · medium · long	SWEET dry · off-dry · sweet ACIDITY low · medium · high TANNIN low · medium · high ALCOHOL low · medium · high BODY light · medium · full FINISH short · medium · long
BLIC Balance, Length, Intensity, Complexity. 0, ½ or 1 each. Sum for quality	B L I C = I4	B L I C = I4	B L I C = I4	B L I C = I4
THE CALL Commit before the reveal. How sure are you?	GRAPE _____ REGION _____ SURE? low · medium · high ----- REVEAL _____ NOTES _____	GRAPE _____ REGION _____ SURE? low · medium · high ----- REVEAL _____ NOTES _____	GRAPE _____ REGION _____ SURE? low · medium · high ----- REVEAL _____ NOTES _____	GRAPE _____ REGION _____ SURE? low · medium · high ----- REVEAL _____ NOTES _____

Descriptor Bank and Scoring Key

Use the words on this page. "Nice" tells no one anything.

PRIMARY · FROM THE GRAPE

Floral	blossom, elderflower, honeysuckle, jasmine, rose, violet
Orchard	apple, pear, quince, gooseberry, grape
Citrus	grapefruit, lemon, lime, orange
Stone fruit	peach, apricot, nectarine
Tropical	banana, lychee, mango, melon, passion fruit, pineapple
Red fruit	cranberry, raspberry, strawberry, red cherry, red plum
Black fruit	blackcurrant, blackberry, blueberry, black cherry, black plum
Herbaceous	bell pepper, grass, tomato leaf, asparagus
Herbal	eucalyptus, mint, fennel, dill, dried thyme, oregano
Spice	black pepper, white pepper, liquorice, cinnamon
Ripeness	unripe, ripe, dried, cooked, jammy
Color, aged	whites move toward amber; reds toward tawny and brown at the rim
Mineral	wet stone, chalk, flint, slate, saline

SECONDARY · FROM WINEMAKING

Yeast / lees	bread, biscuit, brioche, dough, cheese rind, yogurt
Malolactic	butter, cream, cheese
Oak	vanilla, clove, coconut, cedar, toast, smoke, chocolate, coffee
Whole-cluster	stems, forest floor, dried herbs, spice
Carbonic	banana, bubblegum, candy, violet

TERTIARY · FROM AGE

Red, aged	dried fruit, prune, fig, leather, earth, mushroom, tobacco, wet leaves, meat, caramel
White, aged	dried apricot, marmalade, petrol, ginger, nutmeg, almond, hazelnut, honey
Oxidative	almond, hazelnut, walnut, caramel, coffee

FAULTS · FAULTS CARD

TCA	wet cardboard, musty cellar
Brett	barnyard, band-aid, horse
VA	nail polish, vinegar
Oxidation	bruised apple, sherry, flat color
Reduction	struck match, rubber, egg
Heat / light	cooked fruit, stewed, wet wool

THE METHOD, EVERY TIME

1. See	Tilt against white. Depth first, then the color word. Pale does not mean light.
2. Nose	Short sniffs. Name the tier that leads, then three descriptors. No judging yet.
3. Palate	Six scales, one word each. Acid makes you salivate. Tannin grips the gums.
4. BLIC	Four scores, then quality out of 4.
5. Call	Commit to a grape and region before the reveal. Wrong is fine. Vague is not.

BLIC SCORING KEY

Balance	Do acid, fruit, tannin, alcohol and oak sit together? Nothing sticks out: 1.
Length	Count after you swallow. Under 10 sec short: 0. 15 to 30 medium: ½. Over 30 long: 1.
Intensity	Flavor on the palate. Faint: 0. Clear: ½. Pronounced: 1.
Complexity	How many distinct things can you name? One or two: 0. Three or four: ½. Five plus, across tiers: 1.
Quality	Sum the four. 0 to 1 acceptable · 2 good · 3 very good · 4 outstanding

CARD MAP · DECK ONE: GLOBAL

See, Nose	Red Wine Tasting Guide, White Wine Tasting Guide
Palate	Structure card: acid, sugar, alcohol, tannin, body, finish
Secondary tier	Oak Aging, Stainless Steel, Malolactic, Lees Aging, Whole-Cluster, Carbonic
The Call	Grape cards for structure profiles. Region cards for the home of each grape.
Faults	Faults card. If you smell one, say so before you score.

Descriptors Sheet

Say what you smell. Use these words.

Three tiers: Primary from the grape,
Secondary from winemaking, Tertiary from
age.

PRIMARY • FRUIT, WHITES

Citrus	lemon, lime, grapefruit, orange, blood orange, tangerine, peel, pith
Orchard	green apple, yellow apple, red apple, baked apple, quince, pear, overripe pear, fig
Stone	peach, nectarine, apricot, yellow plum
Tropical	banana, passion fruit, mango, guava, lychee, pineapple, kiwi
Other	gooseberry, grape, melon, honeydew

PRIMARY • FRUIT, REDS AND ROSÉ

Red	strawberry, cherry, raspberry, cranberry, redcurrant, pomegranate, red plum, cola
Black	blackberry, blackcurrant, black cherry, black plum
Blue	blueberry, boysenberry
Dried	dates, figs, raisin, prune, fruitcake
Rosé	wild strawberry, watermelon, red plum, raspberry, pink grapefruit
Condition	tart, fresh, ripe, baked, stewed, jammy, dried, candied

PRIMARY • NON-FRUIT

Flower	apple blossom, orange blossom, acacia, lily, honeysuckle, jasmine, chamomile, rose, violet
Herb	rosemary, thyme, basil, lemongrass, eucalyptus, mint, lavender, dill, fennel, oregano
Vegetal	tomato leaf, asparagus, green pepper, celery, radish, olive, pea shoot, beetroot
Earth	compost, forest floor, dust, soil, truffle, blackcurrant leaf
Mineral	slate, chalk, limestone, river pebble, seashell, oyster shell, wet rock, flint
Spice from the grape	black pepper, white pepper, liquorice, juniper

SECONDARY • FROM WINEMAKING

Oak	vanilla, toast, smoke, caramel, chocolate, coffee, cedar, coconut, dill
Baking spice	allspice, cinnamon, aniseed, clove, ginger, nutmeg
Malolactic	butter, cream, custard, yogurt, brioche
Lees	bread dough, biscuit, yeast, stale beer, cheese rind
Whole-cluster	stems, forest floor, dried herbs, crunchy spice
Carbonic	banana, bubblegum, candy, strawberry
Botrytis	ginger, saffron, spice bread, beeswax, honey, marmalade

TERTIARY • FROM AGE

Whites	nutty, honey, chamomile, petrol, straw, hay, mushroom, truffle, olive oil, marmalade
Reds	damp earth, forest floor, truffle, leather, game, prune, dried fruit, beetroot, tobacco, sun-dried tomato, balsamic, black tea
Oxidative styles	almond, hazelnut, walnut, caramel, coffee, bruised apple

FAULTS • SAY IT BEFORE YOU SCORE

TCA: wet cardboard, musty cellar. **Brett:** barnyard, band-aid, horse. **VA:** nail polish, vinegar.

Oxidation: bruised apple, sherry, flat color. **Reduction:** struck match, rubber, egg. **Heat or light:** cooked fruit, stewed, wet wool.

Deductive Sheet Whites

WINE NO. _____ DATE _____

1 AROMATIC INTENSITY

low · medium · high

2 STRUCTURE

Acidity low · medium · high | Alcohol low · medium · high |
Sugar dry · off-dry · sweet

3 FRUIT

citrus · orchard · stone · tropical

4 NON-FRUIT

_____ one, maybe two

i

INSTINCT

Two candidates: _____ The call: _____

Circle from the top. Each band removes rows from the table. Stop at two candidates, then let instinct pick.

WHITE WINE DEDUCTIVE TABLE

GRAPE	AROMATICS	ACIDITY	ALCOHOL	OFF-DRY?	FRUIT	TYPICAL FRUIT	NON-FRUIT TELLS
• Riesling	high	high	low	often	stone, citrus	peach, lime	petrol, beeswax, wet slate
• Sauvignon Blanc	high	high	medium	no	citrus	grapefruit, passion fruit	grass, bell pepper, flint
Gewürztraminer	high	low	high	often	tropical	lychee	rose, ginger
Viognier	high	low	high	no	stone	apricot, peach	honeysuckle, oak
Muscat	high	medium	medium	often	citrus, tropical	orange, grape	orange blossom, honey
Torrontés	high	medium	medium	no	tropical, stone	peach, grape	lily, soap
• Albariño	medium	high	medium	no	stone, citrus	peach, orange peel	saline, sea spray
• Chenin Blanc	medium	high	medium	sometimes	orchard	apple, quince	wool, honey, chamomile
Grüner Veltliner	medium	high	medium	no	orchard	green apple	white pepper, arugula, radish
• Chardonnay	low	medium	medium	no	orchard, citrus	apple, lemon	butter, oak, struck match
• Pinot Gris / Grigio	low	medium	medium	sometimes	orchard, stone	pear	almond, apple blossom
Melon de Bourgogne	low	high	low	no	citrus	lemon	yeast, salt
Marsanne	low	low	high	no	orchard	apple, melon	almond, wax, marshmallow

• has a card in Deck ONE: Global

Deductive Sheet

Reds

WINE NO. _____ DATE _____

1 PIGMENT	low · medium · high
2 STRUCTURE	Tannin low · medium · high Acidity low · medium · high Alcohol low · medium · high
3 FRUIT	red · black · blue · dried Condition tart · ripe · baked · jammy
4 NON-FRUIT	_____ one, maybe two

i INSTINCT Two candidates: _____ The call: _____

Circle from the top. Each band removes rows from the table. Stop at two candidates, then let instinct pick.

RED WINE DEDUCTIVE TABLE

GRAPE	PIGMENT	TANNIN	ACIDITY	ALCOHOL	FRUIT	CONDITION	TYPICAL FRUIT	NON-FRUIT TELLS
• Pinot Noir	low	low	high	medium	red	tart	cherry, cranberry	mushroom, forest floor, spice
Gamay	low	low	high	low	red	tart	raspberry	violet, bubblegum, banana
• Nebbiolo	low	high	high	high	red	dried	cranberry, sour cherry	tar, rose, leather
• Sangiovese	low	medium	high	medium	red	tart	cherry	tomato leaf, dried herbs, earth
• Grenache	low	low	low	high	red	baked	strawberry	oregano, white pepper, warm spice
• Tempranillo	medium	medium	medium	medium	red	baked	strawberry, cherry	leather, tobacco, dill
• Zinfandel	medium	medium	medium	high	red, black, blue	jammy	raspberry, blackberry	black pepper, bramble, heat
• Merlot	medium	medium	medium	medium	red, black	ripe	plum	chocolate, vanilla, softness
Cabernet Franc	medium	medium	high	medium	red, black	tart	raspberry, plum	bell pepper, graphite, ash
Corvina	medium	low	high	medium	red	tart or dried	sour cherry, prune	almond, dried herbs, tar
• Syrah / Shiraz	high	medium	medium	high	black	ripe	blackberry, blueberry	black pepper, smoked meat, olive
• Cabernet Sauvignon	high	high	medium	high	black	ripe	blackcurrant	cedar, bell pepper, graphite
• Malbec	high	medium	medium	high	black, blue	ripe	plum, blueberry	violet, cocoa
Carménère	high	medium	medium	high	black	ripe	blackberry	green pepper, smoke, soy

• has a card in Deck ONE: Global

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.