

Why dive into this book?

Have you ever wondered why, in North America, we typically reserve our wine for the weekend? It's practical, really—if a headache or other side effects ensue, Sunday provides a day to recover before the workweek resumes. This contrasts sharply with French culture, where drinking wine is part of everyday life, valued for its ability to enhance meal flavors, aid digestion, and even contribute to hospital patient care. What can you learn from these different behaviors toward wine?

If you have traveled in Europe, you may have experienced the freedom to enjoy wine without the fear of next-day regrets. Yet, in North America, a single glass can leave you with a headache or feeling groggy. Is it merely the vacation effect, or is there something deeper at play?

It's a myth that sulfites are to blame. One piece of evidence is that wine contains fewer sulfites than many foods we eat daily. So why is wine the only product that requires a [Contains

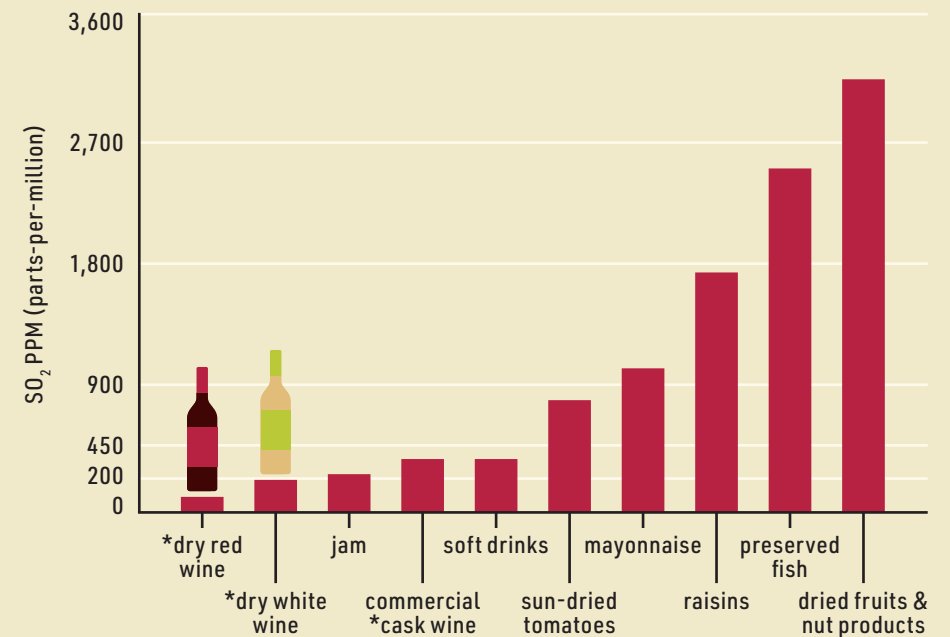
Sulfites] warning label, as if sulfites were its only ingredient?

Unlike most food products, wine lacks an ingredient list, a curious omission when even bottled water details its components. Why this lack of transparency?

Consider Morley Safer's 60 Minutes feature on the French Paradox. This 90s report, which highlighted the health benefits of red wine, was so convincing that it led to a tripling of its sales in North America. This paradox, which we will expand on in this book, highlights the complex relationship we have with wine. But beyond the buzz—how does wine truly affect you after a couple of glasses?

If you've ever suffered from headaches, redness, or fatigue after drinking wine, you're not alone. An overwhelming 95% of participants across my wine tastings answered "Yes" to the question about unwelcome side effects. As for the 5% "unaffected", they have grown so

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accustomed that their bodies no longer signal the underlying danger, potentially exposing them to serious health risks. These symptoms are critical warnings from your body, hinting at an overload of chemicals akin to blood poisoning—a condition too often trivialized.

Welcome to my wine-tasting!

My intention is not to discourage you from enjoying wine, but to demystify it, enabling you to appreciate its benefits, free from risks and discomforts.

Here are some questions, that might interest you:

- Why is it so awkward when a waiter or sommelier asks you to “taste” the wine? Could it be a mutual uncertainty about the process?
- If wine is “supposedly” beneficial for our health, why do authorities advise limiting consumption to avoid negative health issues?
- What is the truth behind pairing white wine with fish and red wine with meat?
- Are your favorite wines any good? And what defines a good wine anyway?
- Should you decant or carafe wine?
- Why do you tend to stick to the same wines?

These and many other questions have been addressed in my wine-tasting workshops, attended by over 15,000 participants since 2011. While this book cannot replicate the vibrancy of a live experience, it is deeply inspired by its

success and continuous refinement. I also source the information from my four decades of international experience in every facet of the wine industry. Fluent in both North America culture, being French-Canadian, but lived most of my life in Europe, I have a deep appreciation of the cultural misunderstanding that keep both wine cultures an ocean apart. A unique insights and perspectives designed to captivate wine enthusiasts of all levels, from novices to master sommeliers.

“WINE A BEE™” is not just a book; it’s an immersive experience, blending practical advice, storytelling, and hands-on activities. To ensure you grasp the material, I’ve maintained the proven workshop structure and teaching style while infusing additional details, graphics, links, and even QR codes to access short video tutorials on the topics. As you turn the pages, I encourage you to engage actively with this extensive content.

Together, we’ll explore how to select, pair, and enjoy wine, while preparing the perfect wine-pairing dinner for your family and friends. I will guide you through each course, from the apéritif to the dessert wine, with motivating goals along the way. Imagine captivating your guests with your expertise, turning every gathering into an unforgettable experience.

I encourage you to dive into this book with a bottle of wine ready, embarking not just on a reading adventure but on a comprehensive, educational journey.

You’ll acquire practical skills to:

- Make informed wine selections
- Prepare and serve wine effectively
- Navigate wine conversations with confidence
- Become a sought-after source of wine knowledge

Join me in “WINE A BEE™” as we embark on this unique and invaluable exploration, marrying discovery with gastronomy and health. This guide is indispensable for anyone seeking a deeper, more enlightened appreciation of wine.

WINE A BEE™ mirrors the elements of success of my wine-tasting workshops—educational, evidence-based, and irresistibly engaging.



A few testimonials from my wine-tasting workshops

“What an exceptional evening! Dany is a sommelier who is passionate not only about wines, but about everything that revolves around this divine beverage. It’s an experience to live and relive! I highly recommend it. Thanks to Dany for having shared some of your knowledge with us. This evening made me want to learn more, not only about wines, but also about food and wine pairings!”

Paula from Caisse Desjardins

“WOW! Thank you for bringing our ignorance to light with simplicity, and imparting the best skills with passion. Very interesting, memorable!”

Mélanie Tremblay

“I would like to share my experience at Vin & Wine. My lack of knowledge and appreciation of wine is what first interested me in this event. My expectations were simple: at the end of the evening, to leave knowing a little more about how to appreciate wine. Not only did the whole experience exceed my expectations, but I came away learning not only to appreciate certain aspects of wine, but more importantly, to use wine to complement your way of life. I am very grateful to have been able to participate in the event, I would recommend it to everyone, from beginners to advanced, and I am certainly interested in attending another similar event. Thank you Dany”

Nadyne

“Excellent workshop. I learned more in 2 hours than in 25 years about the diversity of wines and their qualities.”

Ludovic M.

“It was such a rewarding evening. The explanations were clear and very precise. I loved my evening.”

Orphée Desjardins Montpetit

“A rewarding and exciting evening that made me see wine in another way, in addition to excellent local food. Thank you Dany”

Gilles Lachapelle

“I have NEVER witnessed anyone explain wine, with such a practical and hands-on approach, before my wine tasting with Dany. His passion is contagious!”

Alison Logee

“Dany is an expert and above all offers the feeling of passion for his profession.”

Dava Pomerleau

“A wonderful new body of knowledge about wine and how to buy and drink it.”

Danny Dalpe

“Destabilizing experience that changes our vision of the world of wine.”

Claudia Jomphe

“It is the best investment one can make to truly learn how to dive into the world of wine. Very professional.”

Sebastien Corbeil

*“What an evening we experienced... a little destabilizing but how rewarding! A completely different vision of the world of wine! A special mention to the surprising choice of wines and the wine-food pairing that I would describe as *almost perfect*!”*

Ghislaine Bastien

“Excellent Wine Coach! He comes with 40 years of experience and knows exactly what he is talking about when it comes to wine and the art of pairing it with food. He is also deeply committed to improving the health of fellow wine drinkers and has even gone out of his way to make an app improve the accessibility to proper wine that is organized and less chemically induced! Love the guy and love his hairstyle too!”

Krithy

“A very nice educational approach to better distinguish the types of wine that we drink. I had the impression of learning a lot about a subject that has interested me for many years. The animation by Dany was masterfully done.”

David B

“Despite his visibly very advanced knowledge and his experience in wine and viticulture matters, Dany knows how to popularize these concepts very well and shares them with great passion. He is also an excellent entertainer – I highly recommend him for any group event at home or any corporate event!”

Samuel Julien

“Just wow! A unique experience to learn to better understand wines and what we drink. To do ABSOLUTELY!”

Nicolas Turcotte

“Hi Dany, I like to personally thank you for an unforgettable evening. Your passion for wine was on display from start to finish. Thank you also for sharing your knowledge on the wine industry. It was definitely an eye-opener for all of us. I would definitely recommend your services to anyone who wants to enjoy something different. Amazing!”

Tony Pasquale

“The tasting was wonderful! I have never enjoyed different wines so much. I also had the pleasure of learning a lot of information about wine and how to taste it. Excellent experience, whether for novices or more experienced people.”

Annie-Laurie Beebe

“Exceptional experience both in terms of learning and accompaniment for tastings and carefully selected food and wine pairings. Dany is an outstanding, most attentive and passionate host, with whom we definitely want to follow his other workshops.”

Julie Dagenais

Introduction



Foreword



w i n e n o t ?

I always start with a simple yet profound question in every workshop I lead: “What interests you about wine?” This curiosity often leaves many pondering and reflecting on the vast and sometimes intimidating world of wine. This sense of wonder is natural and serves as an ideal starting point for exploration.

With its rich history and complex flavors, the world of wine can feel exclusive and elusive. Take the Master Sommelier exam, known for its rigor, with only 262 individuals passing since 1969, highlighting the elite nature of this world.

So, it’s no surprise when my attendees often struggle to articulate what they wish to learn about wine. Where do we begin?!

Choosing your path starts with knowing your starting point

To ascertain your starting point in the intricate world of wine, consider how you express yourself when tasting a less conventional wine. Many may simply say, “I don’t like it!” Thus situating themselves at the beginning of their understanding of wine. Conversely, acknowledging, “My palate is not yet ready for this type of wine,” represents a significant milestone. This shift in perspective not only deepens your wine experience but also has the potential to interest and inspire those around you.

How you approach wine also defines your level of understanding and appreciation. For example, while most people limit themselves to bringing one choice of wine to a BYOB restaurant, I brought, in a discreet cooler, 14 different wines to my daughter’s 28th birthday dinner. This selection, composed exclusively of opened bottles of wine, that have reached their peak in my fridge, was perfect to accompany every dish she fancied, from apéritif to dessert. This

simple, yet elegant gesture demonstrates a deep knowledge of wine.

Similar to complex concepts like “success” or “love”, our understanding of wine evolves through knowledge and experience, reflected in our actions and behaviors. A true appreciation of wine requires starting with basic knowledge and common sense without requiring expertise on all wine regions and grape varieties, especially for casual drinkers. The ability to recognize and enjoy safe and pleasurable wines for yourself and your guests is the first important step.



How to get around your current environment

In the aisles of wine shops or restaurants, choosing a wine is not easy: you have to try several times to find the right one, and deal with the avalanche of contradictory opinions and conflicting advice. This complexity can lead to dependence on baseless recommendations, leaving you vulnerable. A vulnerability fully exploited by the industry - the less you know, the easier it is to manipulate and influence you. Recognizing the influence of commercial practices on your wine choices is vital for informed decisions.

For instance, the importance to understand that the main reason in North America wine is often consumed on weekends is the risk of side effects. IE. "I'd rather wait till Friday to open this bottle of wine, as I'm working tomorrow." Making wine the only product whose consumption habit is based on its mediocrity. This perfectly aligns with the 70% of you who view wine as an unhealthy choice.

Another interesting trend to note is that since World War II, per capita wine sales have steadily declined. This trend has been accentuated by the growing popularity of healthy eating. In fact, the healthier you eat, the less your body is able to tolerate lower quality food products, such as highly processed foods and in particular conventional wine which contains excessive amount of chemicals. So it's no wonder that many of you have reduced your wine consumption or given up certain types, like white or red, due to persistent discomfort and side effects.

If you continue to drink wine despite an improvement in the quality of your diet, it may indicate that the confusion surrounding the benefits of wine is holding back a change in behavior. As long as there's uncertainty, with conflicting opinions about whether wine is beneficial, it can be challenging to decide what action to take.

If you continue to drink wine despite an improvement in the quality of your diet, it may indicate that uncertainty surrounding the benefits of wine is holding back a change in behavior. Ambiguity and differing opinions make it difficult to make an informed decision.

In January 2023, the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA) issued a stark warning, urging alcohol consumers to moderate their consumption—capping it at one glass per week for women and two for men. This advisory wasn't arbitrary; it was anchored in disturbing findings linking alcohol consumption to 14,000 fatalities and numerous cancer diagnoses across Canada. The United States confronts its sobering reality, with 95,000 alcohol-related deaths each year, as reported by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCDAS). These alarming figures underline the critical need for a cautious and informed approach to alcohol consumption.

On a side note, why do these recommendations broadly address 'alcohol' consumption without distinguishing the varied side effects specific to different beverages, such as cider, vodka, whiskey, and beer? Why such a generalization? Have you ever suffered headaches from a reasonable consumption of other alcohol besides wine?

The wine industry is quietly increasing its profit margins from your ignorance, selling you a food product worth a staggering \$340 billion of sales annually whose composition remains obscure. This lack of transparency gives them "carte blanche" to use all the additives they wish. And while they're distracting you with the sulfites, adding 500 other chemicals goes unnoticed.

Ignorance could cost you more than you think.

Never let others profit from your lack of knowledge.

The practices of the tobacco industry in the mid-20th century, prioritizing profits over public health, correspond perfectly to the failings of today's wine industry.

As you can see, there's a lot at stake in wine, and it's not as flattering as it seems. Thus, the importance to recognize your current environment before fully reaping the benefits of the vast and varied wine world.

As for your destination, it could look like France, where wine is seen as a condiment to enhance food flavors. This perspective shifts wine from a mere weekend beverage to a daily culinary enhancer. There are also the health benefits of wine, supported by extensive research and my own findings from thousands of my workshop attendees, providing a solid foundation for understanding wine's role in a healthy lifestyle.

As for your destination, it might look like France, where wine is consumed as a culinary condiment, a vision that transforms wine consumption from an occasional habit to a daily meal enrichment. There are also the health benefits of wine, which are supported by extensive research as well as my own findings from thousands of participants in my workshops. These results form a solid basis for understanding the role of wine in a healthy lifestyle.

Dr. Jean-Pierre Rifler's work, mainly focusing on red wine's polyphenols and

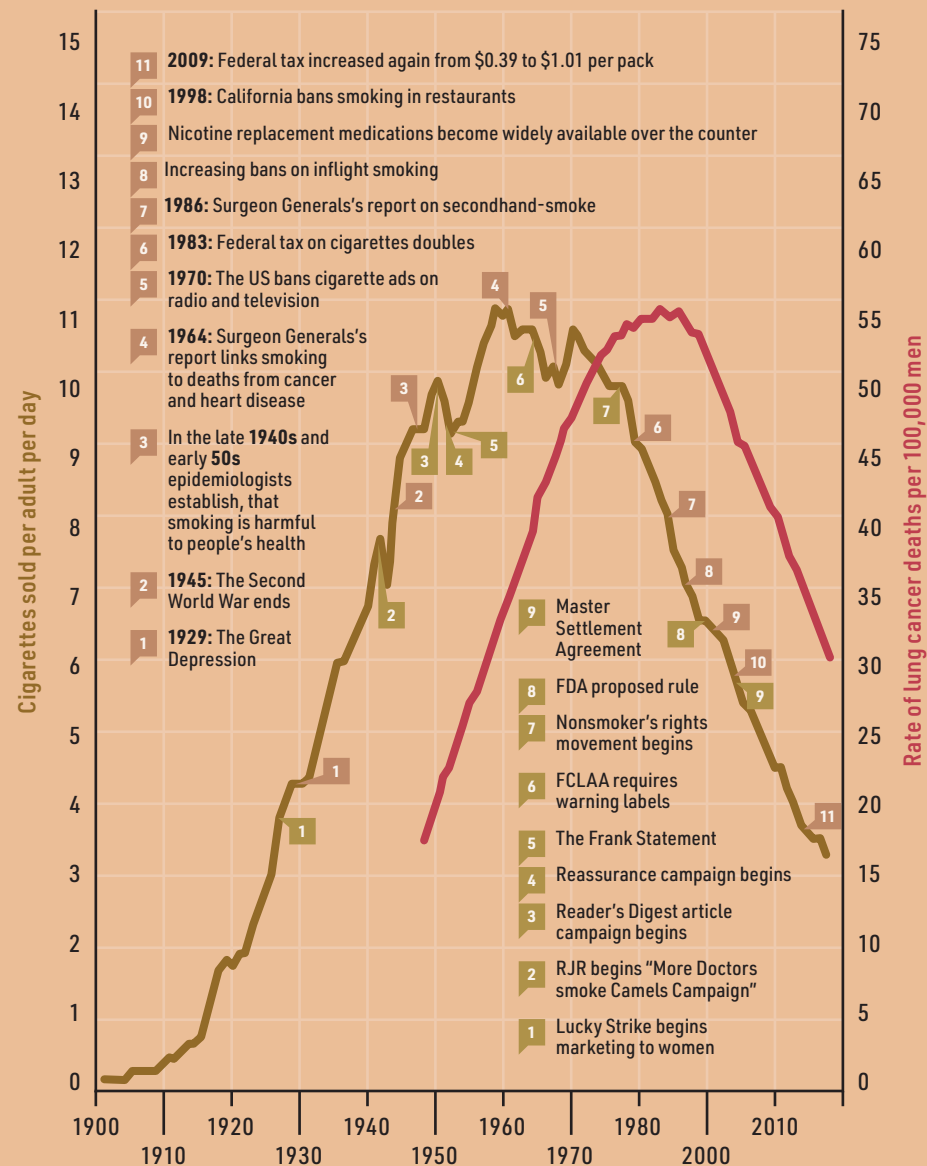
cardiovascular benefits, bridges the gap between wine and wellness. Dr. Rifler is a dedicated emergency physician in Burgundy, with a background as an oenologist technician and a medical career that began with a thesis on the health benefits of wine in 1994. His latest book, VERTUS DU VIN (LES) Paperback – Nov. 21, 2022, offers unique insights grounded in actual data and firsthand experiences, that will probably never be translated into English, unfortunately.

The richness of wine literature, predominantly in French, reflects wine's deep-rooted history in French culture since the Roman Empire over 2,000 years ago. The lack of English versions and misunderstandings in translations illustrate the importance of a bilingual approach for complete understanding. For example, the use of "decanting" instead of "carafiging" and "test" instead of "taste" are just a few examples of meanings lost in translation that have contributed to the decline of the wine appreciation in North America. A gap "WINE A BEE™" aims to bridge.

Being perfectly bilingual, I write back and forth from French to English, from the source of the information to a relatable delivery. This approach, coupled with added definitions and the etymology of wine words, ensures that the essence of wine appreciation is captured and enriches your wine journey.

Let the story begin!

Cigarette sales and lung cancer mortality in the US





Your Apéritif

Let's set the table

The ideal setting for wine tastings isn't a classroom; it's the dining room. That's why all my wine events naturally take place in dining rooms or kitchens. What better way to learn than to be in the very space where you can immediately put your newfound knowledge into practice? In this guide, we're embracing the concept of preparing a relaxed meal with friends and family, accompanied by a variety of wines. To enhance your learning experience, imagine starting with an apéritif in your kitchen, then transitioning to your dining room as you explore more wine options along the way. Once seated, we'll delve into the art of pairings and share tips and tricks that will captivate your guests. Brace yourself for a delightful and enlightening dinner experience!

As my guests walk in, I love to welcome them with an apéritif wine. There's something special about offering a beverage that

- aligns perfectly with the weather,
- suits the taste buds of my guests,
- and fits the occasion seamlessly.

Let's dive into what makes an apéritif wine unique.

**The term "apéritif" has its roots in the French words "laxative" and "apertive," which refer to a remedy designed to open or dilate the digestive system. Historically, the so-called laxative liqueur had a more affordable substitute—an apple. This gave rise to the well-known advice, "Eat an apple before a meal." The wisdom behind this practice lies in the fact that apples are rich in natural sugars like fructose and pectin, a structural acid, both of which help to dilate your digestive system, easing the process and making the passage of your meal smoother. And what else is packed with sugar (fructose) and acid? Wine!

However, not all wines are created equal in this regard. The fermentation process converts much of the sugar into alcohol, which means that a modest glass of dry wine before your meal doesn't quite qualify as an apéritif for its digestive benefits. We're looking for something with a bit more "fructose" to do the job. Sorry!**

a·pe·ri·tif

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noun

An alcoholic drink taken, before a meal, to stimulate the appetite.

"It's almost impossible to choose where to go for an aperitif."

Sugar in relation to wine

Sugar in wine is a consequence, not a choice. Saying that a wine is too sweet oversimplifies something as complex as wine. What you should truly appreciate, and even comment on, is the texture, versatility, and benefits of the wine, not just its sugar content.

Wine growers don't use the term "sweet wine," and if they do produce it, it's to offer a greater variety of choices to their customers and for their own enjoyment. As the first to consume their wines, they tend to create complementary wines. Not only because it would be monotonous to drink only dry wines, but also because they, like you, enjoy a wide variety of dishes. They aim to produce wines that accompany the entire meal, from apéritif to digestif, including the cheese platter and other dishes that benefit from the texture, versatility, and qualities of "sweeter" wines.

Sugar in wine: what you need to know

Are you the kind of person who checks the sugar content of your apples, bananas, or oranges when you buy them at the grocery store? Probably not, because that information isn't listed on the packaging for fruits, including grapes. The reason is simple: it's healthy sugar, fructose. And since you know that fruits are good for you, you've never felt the need to worry about their sugar content.

When I was working in the vineyards of Alsace, France, I loved drinking freshly harvested grape juice, just before it began its fermentation. That juice was part of my healthy breakfast—pure, natural grape juice. So, for those concerned about the sugar content in wines, thinking they might be less healthy, what makes you believe that grapes lose their health benefits once they're fermented? They don't lose it. Whether you stop the fermentation at 40 grams per liter of sugar or at 5 grams, it's still the same

healthy sugar I loved to drink in its original form.

I should mention that the grape juice I consumed came from vineyards that prioritize biodynamic and natural practices, avoiding pesticides, fungicides, chemical fertilizers, and any other harmful substances in their vines. I'm very particular about this, and if that weren't the case, I simply wouldn't have consumed them.

So where does the myth that sweet wines are bad for your health come from?

This "myth" is evident in the way many wine consumers choose their bottles today; they look for wines with the lowest possible sugar content. It's not always listed, but when the information is available, they try to stay below 5 g/L. The problem with this belief is that it causes them to miss out on fabulous types of wines like Sauternes, Banyuls, and Muscats, to name just a few, along with unforgettable experiences.

The confusion comes from all the studies that explain how sugar is bad for your health. I agree—refined white sugar isn't part of my diet either. I replace it with pure, unaltered maple syrup, straight from the tree—the healthy kind. And if wine is implicated, it's because it's often perceived as an ultra-processed food. As I explained at

the beginning of this book, there are only two categories of wines: "technological" wines and "terroir" wines. To be categorized as a "terroir" wine, it can only contain fructose—just the natural sugar from the grapes. As for chaptalization, the addition of sugar to grape must before fermentation, the quality of the sugar used matters, whether it's fructose, maple syrup, sucrose, etc. When it comes to "technological" wines, most contain refined white sugar, the kind of sugar that's harmful to your health. It's mainly used to increase the alcohol content and make the wine more palatable to the novice palate. I'm sure many of you started drinking wine with a Gallo or a Ménagé à Trois. Well, that's because the sweetness of those wines wasn't far off from the desserts or other sugary products your palate was accustomed to.

To sum up:

- Authentic "terroir" wines, or the least induced, will contain ONLY the natural sugar from the grape.
- Technological wine, on the other hand, will typically have added refined white sugar.

By the end of this book, you will be able to recognize these two categories of wine and therefore benefit from the right type of sweetness.

Is your palate suited for sweet wine?

Among the 16,000 participants in my tastings so far, I've found that about 15% find sweet wines too sweet for their liking. I've also noticed that people with this type of palate tend to prefer a bag of salty chips as a snack rather than cookies or other sweet treats. If that's your case, accept it—it's part of your DNA. While your tolerance for sweetness might improve over time, it's not as simple as training your palate to appreciate specific flavors like coffee, oysters, white wines, or others. That said, try wines with lower sugar levels. Also, when paired with food, the perceived sweetness is often much less noticeable, and sometimes even negligible.

The perception of sugar in a wine can sometimes differ from its reality. During a tasting, a wine may seem sweeter than it actually is due to the balance between its other components, like acidity, flavor intensity, or tannins. For example, a wine with high acidity might taste less sweet, even if it contains a significant amount of residual sugar. Conversely, a wine with low acidity might taste sweeter, even if its sugar content is low. It's essential to understand that

perceived sweetness is often the result of a complex harmony between these elements. Therefore, it's better to taste the wine in context rather than simply relying on the sugar content listed on the label.

Whatever your palate's preferences, don't deprive the 85% of your guests who enjoy the pleasure of unctuous (sweet) wines just because your palate isn't suited to them. Make sure to have wines with different sugar levels on hand to cater to everyone's tastes.

The same principle applies to white and rosé wines. When they are lighter-colored with simpler flavor profiles they should be served between 43°F and 48°F (6°C to 9°C). However, more complex white wines, particularly those aged in oak barrels, reveal more flavors and aromas at slightly higher temperatures, ranging from 48°F to 57°F (9°C to 14°C). When you have tested and appreciated this approach, you understand the importance of a proper wine glass with a stem, rather than following the trend of stemless glasses, which ultimately prevents you and your guests from getting the best possible tasting experience.

“During a tasting, a wine may seem sweeter than it actually is due to the balance between its other components, like acidity, flavor intensity, or tannins.”

The difference between an apéritif wine and a dessert wine

It's often mentioned on wine bottles to "serve as an apéritif," but this isn't always justified. Winegrowers are usually the least qualified to provide impartial advice on their own wines. Not only do they have a personal and financial interest in promoting their products, but their palate has also become accustomed to the flavors and characteristics of their wines. Additionally, food and wine pairings require a different expertise. If winegrowers haven't often tested their wines in context, ideally blind, on impartial consumers, they lack the necessary feedback to validate their recommendations. That's why many rely on sommeliers to write pairing suggestions and complementary preparation guides. In any cases, it's your responsibility to ensure that the wine you serve is well-suited for the occasion.

We now understand that for a wine to qualify as an apéritif, it must possess a good level of sweetness and acidity. However, dessert wines share these characteristics as well. The key to

differentiating them lies in their balance.

Balance: The harmony in the composition of a wine where none of its components dominate.

The balance of a wine is based on a harmonious distribution of flavors and characters. In the case of an apéritif wine, after a few sips, the **perceptible** sweetness no longer dominates; it blends with the wine's other components. You couldn't say that this wine is too sweet, acidic, astringent, or too flavorful because it harmonizes perfectly in your mouth. This level of balance is particularly characteristic of technological wines, which are specifically manufactured to cater to a market of consumers who favor wines that are perfectly balanced from the very first sip. Given that many consumers lean towards such balance, it's no surprise that the sales of technological wines significantly outpace those of terroir wines.

It's the total opposite for 90% of terroir wines which are specifically

designed to complement and enhance your dishes. To achieve this, the three predominant characters—acidity, sweetness, or astringency—must be prominent in the mouth. If your wine is balanced from the first sip, it cannot fulfill its primary mission: to elevate your food. The food is what allows your wine to find its balance.

For example, if acidity is the predominant character in your wine, it's the first thing you'll notice from your initial sip. This acidic dominance in your mouth should persist until it makes contact with your food. Once you begin your meal, you'll notice that the wine's acidity blends in and enhances your food. That's balance.

A terroir wine relies on three key taste elements to find its balance:

1. One or more predominant characters
2. Flavors
3. Food

So, if after a few sips, your wine is mainly sweet and/or acidic, it needs a third element to find its balance, which is... food.

An apéritif wine, on the other hand, requires only two elements to balance:

1. Predominant characters
2. Flavors – and their intensity

The predominant characters are what you perceive from the first sip, hence the term "predominant." But this part of the tasting is more commonly known

as the "attack" because it isn't meant to be pleasant. Often, an "attack" will make you wince and comment: "It's good, but it's very acidic," or "Interesting taste, but too sweet." The stronger, more surprising, and even unpleasant the attack, the more effective it is. So, rather than reacting negatively, see it as a wine doing its job—preparing your mouth to better enhance the accompanying dish. A wine that is "too" acidic, sweet, or astringent isn't a flaw once served in its context. On the contrary, these are valuable assets greatly appreciated during a meal.

The attack is the initial criterion in the taste evaluation of a wine. It constitutes the first impression felt, where these predominant characters, acidity, sweetness, or astringency are evaluated based on their intensity.

Balance also requires consideration of the wine's flavor intensity. A flavor is when you say, "This wine tastes like..." or "I perceive flavors of...". Generally, amateurs struggle to perceive and comment on a wine's distinctive flavors, and it's often the first thing they seek to learn. Connoisseurs, on the other hand, tend to confuse a wine's distinctive flavors, its typicality, with their personal taste memories or recalls. For example, to describe the flavor of a Chardonnay, they might say: "This wine highlights notes of green apple, stone fruits like peach, with hints of citrus and vanilla." It's important to note that in the case of terroir wines, these flavors aren't added but are often used

to describe the typical characteristics of Chardonnays. During a blind tasting, without knowing the wine's origin, it's likely you wouldn't distinguish these flavors.

Fortunately, it's not necessary to recognize or describe a wine's flavors to appreciate its balance. It's enough to compare their intensity with that of the dominant characters.

THE 3 MAIN PREDOMINANT CHARACTERS YOU'LL NEED TO MASTER:

1. **Unctuousity** – smooth texture, sweet
2. **Acidity** – i imagine biting into a fresh lemon or lime
3. **Astringency** – the dry sensation in your mouth caused by tannins

These characters are linked to the five taste receptors you're probably familiar with:

- **Sweet** = signals the presence of sugar – Unctuousity
- **Sour** = detects acidity – Acidity
- **Bitter** = caused by high tannin concentration (red or orange wines) – Astringency
- **Salty** = perceives minerality (in white wines)
- **Umami** = can be found in aged wines

I draw these connections to help you better understand why certain words are more likely to be used to describe a wine or a sensation. For good reasons, wine has its own unique terminology

for expressing tastes and sensations. For instance, tannic or astringent wines are often described by amateurs through negative words like “bitter” or “harsh.” While these terms may capture part of the experience, they lack the precision and nuance needed to accurately describe a wine. Nevertheless, to build confidence in a novice, my reply to them would be, “You're on the right track—it's the maceration with the grape seeds that contributes to this harshness, or as we say, the astringency from the tannins.” Connoisseurs, on the other hand, might appreciate the same tannic wine by noting, “This wine has firm tannins that provide excellent grip, perfectly drying out my mouth to enhance the flavors of my steak.”

Knowledge is often the only difference between a good wine and a bad wine.

As for the “secondary characters,” it's only after a few more sips that they are easier to detect.

THE SECONDARY CHARACTERS ARE:

- **Body** – texture
- **Intensity** – of flavors and sensations in the mouth
- **Persistence** – of flavors and sensations in the mouth
- **Typicity** – the distinctive taste of a wine, influenced by the vineyard location, soil, climate, and the winegrower's experience
- **Complexity** – diversity and richness of flavors

WHAT IS THE “BODY” OF A WINE?

To understand what the “body” of a wine is, compare the texture of a glass of water to that of whole milk with 4% fat content. Pour them into wine glasses and swirl them around to observe the “legs” or “tears” on the glass walls, as you would with wine. You'll notice that the slower these traces descend, the more body the liquid has. In the case of wine, it's primarily the alcohol that plays a crucial role in creating the body.

A wine's body can often be anticipated based on the grape variety and terroir. For example, wines made from grape varieties like Gamay (Beaujolais) and Pinot Noir (Burgundy) generally have a light body, while a Bordeaux made from Merlot aged in oak barrels for 36 months will have a fuller, richer body. However, it's not so much the grape variety that determines a wine's body, but rather its climate. Wines from warm climates generally have more volume and body than those from cool climates because the grapes ripen faster, producing more sugar that turns into alcohol during fermentation. This excess alcohol contributes to the roundness and richness of the wine.

Vinification also plays an important role. Wines that remain in prolonged contact with the grape skins and seeds or are aged in barrels tend to be more full-bodied. This explains why aged red wines are often richer than white wines. Although some barrel-aged white wines or orange wines, after

prolonged maceration, can also have a pronounced body.

Sugar is another key element. Think of maple syrup, naturally smooth and rich in body. Even though wines aren't as dense as maple syrup, their sugar content directly influences their body; the sweeter they are, the fuller and more corpulent they become. Sauternes is an excellent example.

Body can also be anticipated by the intensity of colors. Light wines are more transparent, while full-bodied wines, like a Bordeaux Merlot, have a deeper, more opaque color.

The body of a wine also plays a crucial role in food pairings. Recognizing a wine's body is essential for successful pairings, aligning light wines with delicate dishes and full-bodied wines with richer, more flavorful dishes.

The body of a wine has a direct impact on two secondary characters that are essential for food pairings: intensity and persistence of flavors and sensations in the mouth.

THE INTENSITY OF A WINE'S FLAVOR

An intense wine is characterized by a richness of aromas and a depth of flavors. It doesn't just brush your taste buds; it envelops them. This intensity is often the reflection of an expressive terroir, well-crafted grapes, and meticulous vinification. For example, the intensity of a Beaujolais is often weak compared to that of a Merlot aged for 36 months in oak barrels.

An example of an intense beverage would be an espresso. This

concentrated coffee, with its rich and powerful flavor, offers a gustatory experience that immediately stimulates the senses. Like an intense wine, a well-prepared espresso captures the essence of coffee beans, revealing complex notes ranging from dark chocolate to subtle hints of caramel or dried fruits. The intensity of espresso is expressed through its deep aroma, velvety texture, and lingering taste that remains on the palate long after the last sip.

THE PERSISTENCE OF A WINE'S FLAVOR

It's important not to confuse "intensity" with "persistence." One can exist without the other, though they often go hand in hand. When we talk about persistence, we must include not only the flavors but also the sensations of a wine, derived from its characters. For example, you might hear or read: "I get 9 seconds of flavor and about 14 of astringency" for a red Bordeaux, or "An intense enveloping smoothness that locks in its flavors for eternity" for a Sauternes.

To observe and quantify the persistence of a wine, take a sip and start counting the number of seconds during which the flavors and characters persist after swallowing or spitting out the wine, depending on your context. Considering the sensitivity of your palate, you'll get an average of 3 to 6 seconds for simple, less complex wines, 6 to 10 seconds for more flavorful wines with moderate intensity, and well beyond—up to 25 seconds for rich, smooth wines.

A more contextual way to quantify a wine's persistence is to use the *caudalie*, a French unit of measurement that indicates the number of seconds you have to bring food to your mouth to fully enjoy the wine-food pairing. It's a very Epicurean perspective, but it's essential to emphasize that good persistence, good length on the palate, greatly enhances the quality of food and wine pairings.

Fun Fact: It takes one second to pronounce the word "caudalie." Count how many times you say the word "caudalie" in your head to get the number of seconds the flavors and characters of your wine will last on your palate before they dissipate.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT APÉRITIF WINE

By now, you should have a good idea of the wine to serve as an apéritif: a wine that perfectly balances its residual sugars (between 20 and 50 g/L) and its acidity. Additionally:

- **Body:** The first welcome wine should be refreshing, preferably light rather than full-bodied.
- **Intensity:** Low, as the meal is a crescendo of wines, from the lightest to the most intense, to avoid overwhelming your guests' palates.
- **Persistence:** Low, since it's served without accompaniment.
- **Typicity:** Authentic, original, ideally local, as always.
- **Complexity:** Simple.

A sparkling cider perfectly meets all these criteria and, in addition, is often very affordable. Serve it chilled and blind. :)

We're not done with "balance" yet.

The balance of your wine is fragile and can easily change. Two important factors that will affect the balance of your wine, thus the quality of your experience:

- The state of your mouth
- The temperature of the wine

Let's say you have a sip of a wine while you have a candy in your mouth. The sweetness of your candy will completely saturate the sweetness of your wine, destroying any balance your wine may have had. Therefore, to be able to get all the subtleties of your wine, to perceive all its characters, you need a neutral mouth.

To do this, gargle with water, then take a piece of bread, alone, without butter or other toppings, to restart the process of saliva production; the liquid that promotes the activation of taste receptors, like electricity when it comes into contact with water.

It's a very common mistake to overlook the state of your taste buds when evaluating a wine. To address this, always have some leftover food on hand to prepare your palate in the most contextual way possible. For instance, chefs and I always prepare

wine pairings on the very morning of a tasting. This allows us to take into account not only the fresh flavors of their culinary creations but also the weather outside. It's important to understand that our taste buds are less receptive to acidic flavors when it's cold and damp, which also explains why we tend to favor rosé wines in the warmth of summer.

How to hold your wine glass correctly



This is a topic that is often controversial and overlooked, yet it's crucial for anyone who wants to truly experience and demonstrate a real appreciation for wine. When you see someone who knows how to hold a wine glass, it's a touch of class that can outshine even the most elegant attire. Indeed, you could spend thousands of dollars on your appearance, but if you don't know how to hold your wine glass, all your effort becomes futile; to us, you're exposed. It's like that incredibly attractive person who, as soon as they start talking, makes you want to find an excuse to leave. It's appearance without substance.

People who know how to hold their wine glass demonstrate that they value the moment, that they are attentive, and that they possess a knowledge that allows them to fully enjoy the experience, engaging all

their senses—and even yours. At this level of refinement, you become someone rare and valuable. If you're already in a relationship, this quality makes you even more desirable. And it works both ways. If someone can't appreciate this quality in you, it might be worth taking a closer look at what draws you to them. Knowing how to hold a wine glass is a skill that is both profound and meaningful.

As a sommelier, how you hold your wine glass is what determines how we'll take care of you. Why should we pay attention to your wine experience if you're not paying attention yourself? I always make it a point to ensure that your wine is served at its optimal temperature. I'll even go as far as calculating the amount of wine I should pour into your glass, knowing that it will take you 10 minutes to finish it. But if you hold your glass in a way

that undermines all my efforts, why should I continue?

I will write a whole other book about this subject, but for now, let's keep it to the essential. The best way to define a wine glass is actually “a wine temperature controlling device, thus, the taste and effectiveness of the pairing”. It's amazing how all my attendees get to realize how important is the most undermine wine tasting tool there is. In other words, you can't ever pretend to “appreciate” wine if you don't know how to use an “a wine temperature controlling device”.

Eventually, I will write an entire book on this subject, but for now, let's focus on the essentials. A wine glass is much more than just a container; it's a true “temperature control device” for your wine, and consequently, it influences the wine's flavors, characters, and

ultimately, the effectiveness of your food pairings. It's fascinating to witness the moment on my participants' faces when they realize the importance of this tool they once considered insignificant. It's the kind of insight that makes for a perfect social media clip—“Things I Wish I'd Known Sooner.” or Category: “Things you didn't know you needed to know!” In short, you can never truly “appreciate” wine if you don't know how to properly use a “wine temperature control device.”

The principal is very simple:

- The lower the temperature of your wine, the more acidity you perceive
- The higher the temperature, the more flavor comes out of hibernation and enrich your palate.

Every wine glass should have a stem

Think of the stem as the handle of the wine glass designed specifically to maintain the ideal temperature of your wine by keeping your warm fingers and hand away from the bowl. Glass, especially thin ones, quickly absorbs body heat, and even slight warming can alter the wine's flavors and characters, thereby affecting your overall experience.

Therefore, when you're served a glass of wine, always start by holding the glass by the stem. Take a sip and assess whether you need more acidity to enhance your dish, or more flavor.

Let's consider your apéritif wine as an example. If you've just taken it out of the fridge, it's likely around 4°C (39°F). Once poured into your glass, the temperature will quickly increase by about 1°C. To enjoy the wine at its best, you'll want it to reach about 8°C (46°F), where it will be perfectly balanced. To achieve this, warm the wine slightly by cupping the bowl of your glass. Slide the stem between your ring and middle fingers, allowing the bowl to rest in the palm of your hand, the warmest part. This will help the wine warm up more quickly.

Once your apéritif wine reaches the desired temperature, set it back on the table and from that point on, hold the glass by its stem.

Wine is meant to be a sensory experience, including the sense of touch. To reflect this, I've designed a wine glass with an epicure—the joint between the stem and the bowl—molded inward rather than outward. This creates the sensation of holding a bubble of air in your hand, making the glass not only more effective in warming your wine but also more comfortable and visually appealing.

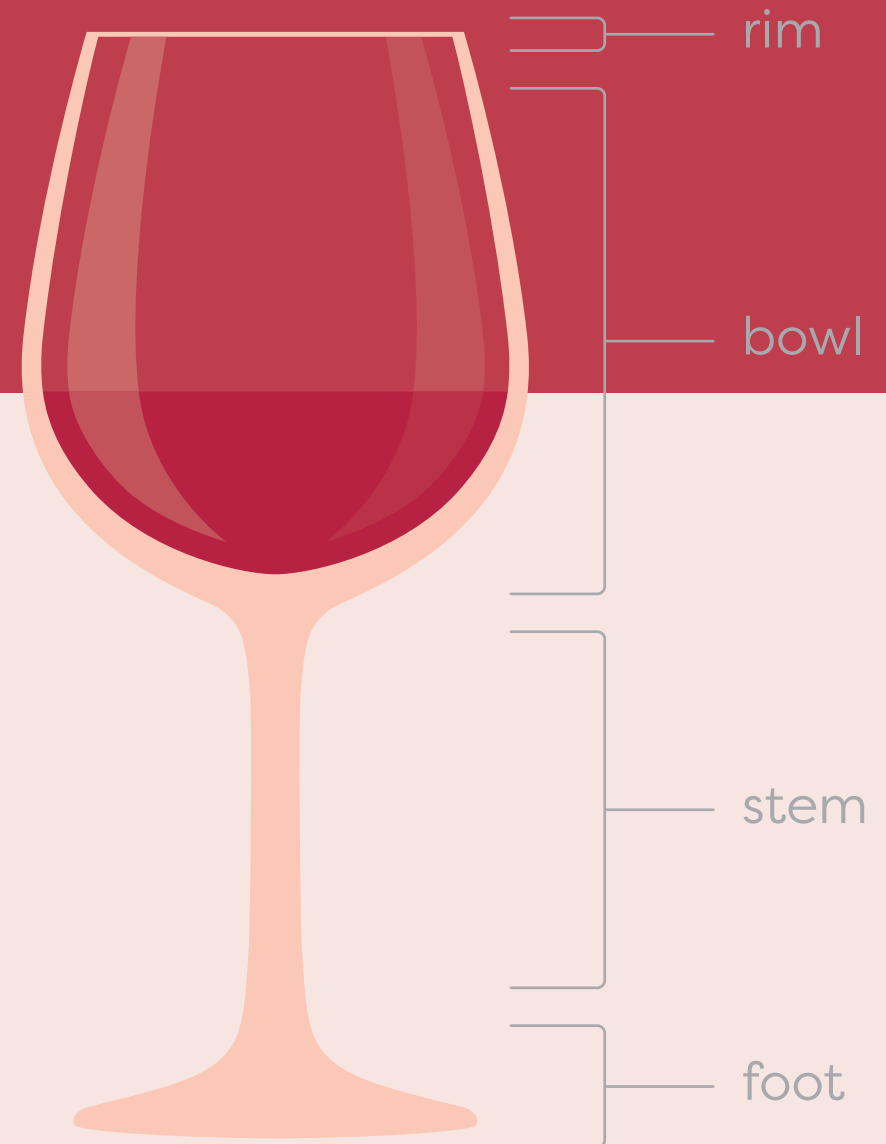
Always serve your wine 2 to 4 degrees colder than the ideal drinking temperature, allowing your guests to decide for themselves how much acidity or flavor they prefer.

If you mistakenly hold your wine glass by the bowl, you'll bring out of hibernation flavors that have no reason to be there, resulting in a wine that loses its freshness, becomes overly sweet, and presents unwelcome lingering flavors. In other words, you've sacrificed the benefits and enjoyment of a wine that was meant to be perfectly balanced at 8°C (46°F).

Additionally, the winegrower who crafted this wine may have intended for you to discover specific flavors that emerge precisely between 8°C and 9°C. So, out of respect for their

work—and to ensure that you fully appreciate the unique experience this wine offers—always hold your wine glass correctly.

Parts of a wine glass



How wine color intensity gives you clues to the ideal serving temperature

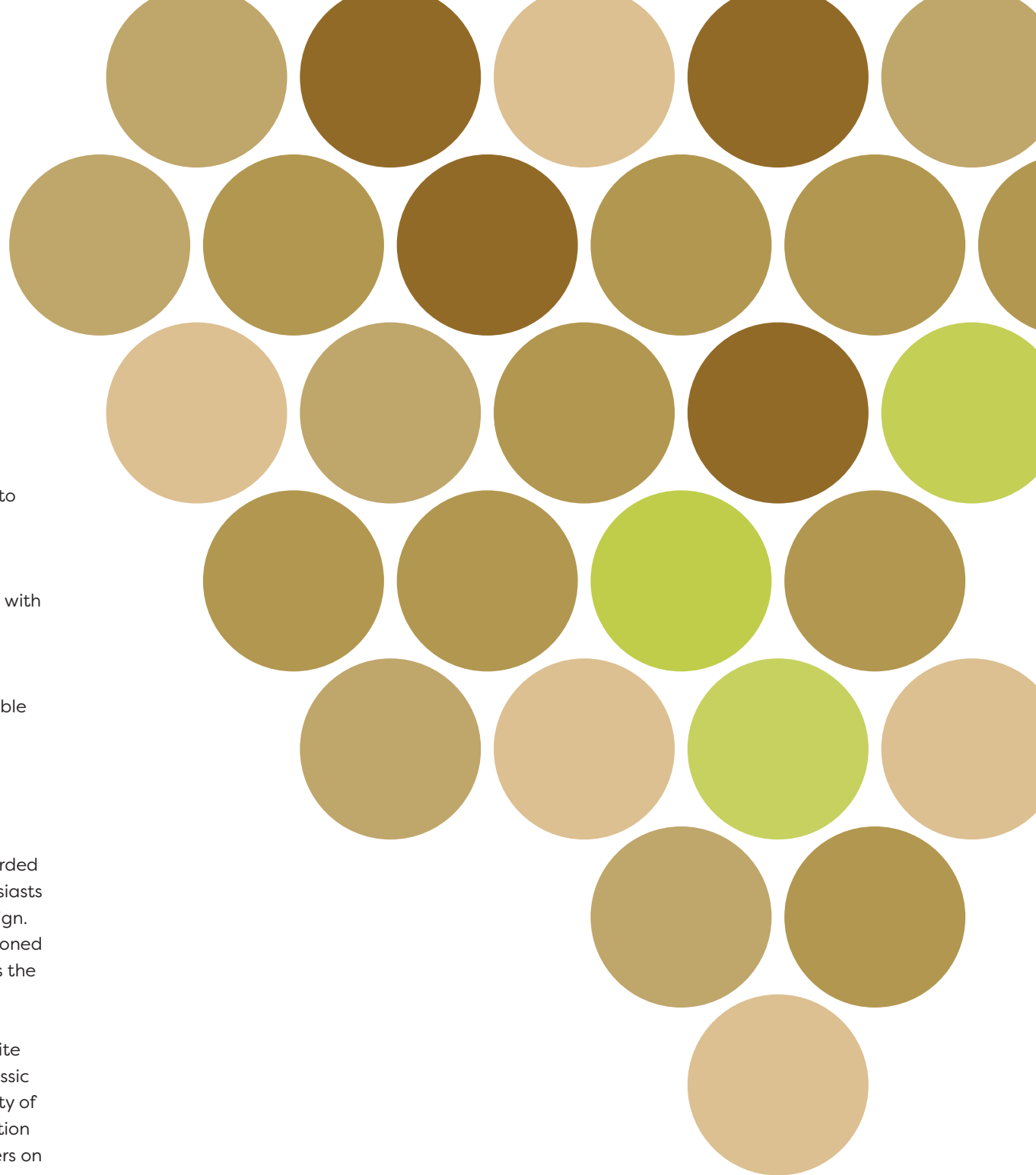
In general, lighter-colored wines tend to exhibit more pronounced acidity, and an aromatic profile that is often more delicate and limited in range. For this reason, a light red wine is best served at around 60°F (16°C) to preserve a better part of its acidity, which can more effectively complement dishes like fish and seafood. On the other hand, darker-colored wines, which boast richer flavors and greater complexity, must be served at a higher serving temperature. By gently warming the wine—holding the bowl in the palm of the hand until it reaches around 19°C (66°F) or more, depending on your context—you can fully awaken these nuanced flavors.

The same principle applies to white and rosé wines. When they are lighter-colored with simpler flavor profiles they should be served between 43°F and 48°F (6°C to 9°C). However, more complex white wines, particularly those aged in oak barrels, reveal more flavors and aromas at slightly higher

temperatures, ranging from 48°F to 57°F (9°C to 14°C). When you have tested and appreciated this approach, you understand the importance of a proper wine glass with a stem, rather than following the trend of stemless glasses, which ultimately prevents you and your guests from getting the best possible tasting experience.

The ideal wine glass

The Tulip wine glass is widely regarded as the ideal choice for wine enthusiasts due to its simple yet versatile design. With a tall stem and well-proportioned bowl, this glass not only enhances the wine-tasting experience but also ensures the proper aeration and temperature control of your favorite wines. Whether you opt for the classic elegance of crystal, the practicality of glass, or the affordable sophistication of crystalline, the Tulip glass delivers on all fronts.



THE MATERIALS WINE GLASSES ARE MADE OF

Glass, primarily composed of silica, is known for its clarity and durability. It is a popular choice for wine glasses due to its versatility and resistance to breakage. Unlike crystal, glass does not contain lead, making it an affordable and practical option for everyday use while still providing a clear, crisp vessel to appreciate the visual qualities of wine.

Crystal, also made from silica, contains 24% lead oxide, which enhances its transparency and refractive index, giving it a brilliant sparkle and a more refined appearance. Crystal is the go-to choice for those who seek a touch of luxury in their wine experience.

Crystalline glass, on the other hand, is glass that contains 9% lead. It offers a middle ground between the affordability of standard glass and the luxurious feel of full crystal, making it an excellent option for those who want a bit of both worlds.

A different glass shape for each varietal?

I remain unconvinced that different wine glass designs are necessary to fully appreciate each type of wine or even specific varietals. A more practical approach to your wine glass collection is to base it on the number of different wines you plan to serve at an event.

Have you ever looked at the amount of wine poured into your glass and

thought, “That looks cheap, almost stingy!”? Indeed, the portion of wine can often seem tiny compared to the size of the glass. No matter how you look at it, it just doesn’t seem right—your wine glass is simply too big for the reasonable amount of wine you should be pouring.

A standard wine glass holds 12 to 16 fluid ounces (360 mL to 473 mL) at total capacity. To leave ample space for aeration and to properly access the wine, you should pour only about one-third of its capacity, or around 120 mL. If you plan to serve seven different wines in one evening, that’s 840 mL of wine—totaling more than one bottle. To present yourself as thoughtful and professional, I invite you to use the appropriate glass size based on the number of wines you want to share with your guests.

On any occasions, I would recommend serving seven different types of wines. And as we’ve seen earlier, in a context of a meal, the perfect amount of wine should be 375ml, half a bottle of wine. Therefore, 375ml divided by 7 wines = a bit less than 60ml. The glass you should be using is the 60ml wine glass. The measurement is made from the largest part of the bowl, which is the shoulder of the glass. In other words, if I was to pour 60ml in my 60ml wine glass, the amount of wine will be perfectly in line with the shoulder. If you were to serve 4 different wines, that would be the 100ml wine glass (375ml ÷ 4 wines).

Looks great and it showcase your new acquired wine knowledge. Furthermore, it just makes it so much easier on you, knowing you simply need to stop pouring at the shoulder of the glass.

For most occasions, I recommend serving seven different types of wines. As we’ve discussed earlier, in the context of a meal, the perfect amount of wine served per guest should be about 375 mL—half a bottle. Therefore, 375 mL divided by 7 wines equals approximately 60 mL per pour. The glass you should be using is the 60 mL wine glass. The measurement is taken from the widest part of the bowl, known as the shoulder of the glass. In other words, if I pour 60 mL into my 60 mL wine glass, the amount of wine will align perfectly with the shoulder. If you plan to serve 4 different wines, use the 100 mL wine glass (375 mL ÷ 4 wines). It looks great and showcases your newly acquired wine knowledge. This technique also helps simplify the serving process, allowing you to pour the ideal amount of wine by simply filling to the shoulder of the glass.

To resume, opt for the same Tulip-designed wine glasses for maximum wine appreciation, but choose different wine glass sizes depending on the number of wines served. These unique wine glasses that we have especially designed and handed crafts for you, come in increments of 20 mL and are available in glass for regular use, crystalline for a more refined touch, or crystal for special occasions. [Follow this link for more information.]

Now, you must be thinking, “That’s a lot of wine glasses to wash”.

Not really. Your guests will be using the same wine glass for all their wines, but for an evening featuring seven different wines, it’s best to have at least two wine glasses in front of each guest. This not only adds an elegant touch but also serves a practical purpose—if one glass is still in use when it’s time to move on to the next wine, you’ll have a spare ready for pouring. Additionally, having two glasses allows your guests to compare wines side by side, which is a more effective way to appreciate subtle differences. For example, I recommend serving your light and complex white wines together. Both wines can start at 7°C (45°F), but by the time the lighter wine is finished, the complex one should have reached its peak temperature of 12°C

(54°F), with its aromas and flavors fully out of their hibernation. This also presents a great opportunity to engage your guests with a suggestion like, “I invite you to taste the more complex white wine before finishing the lighter one, and compare them. To my palate, the complex wine overpower the lighter dish. Instead, try it with this more flavorful dish, which matches the intensity of the complex white wine. The result is a more harmonious pairing.”