

CHOOSING THE BEST WINE

It can be frustrating going into a wine shop or grocery store, looking down the aisle at all the wines there are to choose from, and not knowing where to start. Whether you are choosing wine to go with your meal or serving to guests it can be a daunting task. With all the help of drinking many wines over many years we have figured out what works for us and want to share it with you. Hopefully this will answer all your questions.



DRY VS SWEET

People always ask, “What does dry mean anyway?” Well here is my description. It makes you want to drink water afterwards. Hmm...but wine is wet! Yes, but it has the qualities of what your mouth feels like after a good exercise on a hot day. The tannins in the wine come from the stems, seeds, and skin of the grapes, which are left in the tank during the fermentation process. It is found mainly in red wine because white wine is fermented without the pulp included. The tannins are what causes the dryness and what tastes bitter. Bite into a grape seed or the stem sometime. See what you taste. It makes you pucker. And don't forget to drink as much water as wine to hydrate your body since the alcohol is depleting it.

We all know what sweet is. Think desserts! But our smell affects the flavor as well so when you breathe in the aromas of a wine and it has sweet, floral notes, it tends to taste sweeter.

Grapes have a natural yeast on them. Have you ever noticed the whitish coating on grapes when they hang on the vine? That is the yeast. So during the fermentation process the yeast turns the sugar to alcohol. So the less sugar it has the higher the alcohol content. When you are in the store looking at wine look at the alcohol content. Here is a guide to tell if it is going to be sweeter or drier based on the alcohol content:

And Above 14%-----13%-----12%-----11%-----10% on down
Driest-----Drier-----Semi-sweet-----Sweeter-----Sweetest

Now on a side note, this is a general rule. There are fortified wines like Port which they add Sherry to so the alcohol is generally around 18% and it is sweet! Sometimes additional sugar is added to the wine as well to make it sweeter.

Some **DRIER** wines include:

Malbec, Chianti, Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Chablis, Norton, Chambourcin, Chardonnell

SEMI-SWEET wines include:

Brachetto, Lambrusco, Gewurtraminer, Kabinett Riesling, Chenin Blanc or Vouvray, Traminette, Seyval Blanc, Vignoles

SWEET includes:

Moscato, Auslese Riesling and Late Harvest Rieslings like Ice wine, Niagra, Cayuga, Catawba and many fruit wines like Peach, Strawberry, Blackberry (yet a little tart), Cherry

Of course there are so many more wines on the market but this should give you an idea.



QUICK GENERAL GUIDE

Stores tend to group wines together that are similar to each other. For example, dry, full bodied reds tend to be together on the shelf. Some examples of them may be Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel (not White Zinfandel), Shiraz, etc.

Red wines that complement a meal generally are more light to medium bodied and balanced but still on the drier side. Varieties of these would include Merlot, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc, etc. Pinot Noir is a good wine to drink alone or with a meal.

In the white wine category, full and rich wines are typically buttery and/or oaky. Good example of that is a Chardonnay. A more rounded wine is Viognier or Semillon. They will be a little lighter tasting.

Some semi- dry or semi-sweet wines include Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, and Pinot Grigio which are great for drinking around the pool. The sweeter they are the colder you want them so they are even better for a hot summer day at the park!

Then there are Champagne and sparkling wines. They range from dry to sweet. If you want it drier then choose the Extra Brut. Champagne is a sparkling wine that is produced only in the Champagne region of France. There are many Sparkling wines that are sweet, sweet, sweet usually made with the Moscato grape. One version is the Moscato d' Asti from Italy.

Overall, whites are usually placed together on the shelves and reds together and usually they are in rows from dry to sweet. General rule!

Enjoy Better Tasting Wine

Taste the full flavors of your wine by serving it at the right temperature.

Sparkling Wine



Serve between
45 - 48°F

We Recommend:

- 45°F for Asti
- 46°F for Cava
- 47°F for Prosecco
- 48°F for Champagne

The best glass shape is



Light White Wines



Serve between
45 - 50°F

We Recommend:

- 45°F for Rosé
- 47°F for Sauvignon Blanc
- 48°F for Pinot Grigio
- 50°F for Riesling

The best glass shape is



Full-Bodied White Wines



Serve between
50 - 55°F

We Recommend:

- 50°F for Chablis
- 52°F for Chardonnay
- 53°F for Viognier
- 55°F for Montrachet

The best glass shape is



Light Red Wines



Serve between
55 - 60°F

We Recommend:

- 55°F for Beaujolais
- 56°F for Pinot Noir
- 58°F for Barbera
- 60°F for Grenache

The best glass shape is



Full-Bodied Red Wines



Serve between
60 - 65°F

We Recommend:

- 60°F for Malbec
- 62°F for Merlot
- 64°F for Cabernet Sauvignon
- 65°F for Syrah

The best glass shape is



Wine COOLER
DIRECT
THE WINE STORAGE EXPERTS

Nice little chart by Wine Cooler Direct.

THE RIGHT TEMPERATURE

Dry Reds	55 – 65 degrees
Sweet Reds	45 – 55 degrees
Whites	45 – 55 degrees
Champagne	35 - 45 degrees

Serving wine at the right temperature is important or you could lose the flavor of the wine. For a red wine you can put it in the refrigerator for about 20 minutes before serving it. That should take the warmth off of it just enough to still taste all the flavors.

Whites are opposite, take the white out of the refrigerator 20 minutes before serving. Perfect! If it is too cold you will not get the full flavor the wine deserves.

Champagnes need to be on ice. ICE COLD!



PAIRING WINE WITH YOUR FOOD

At Home or the Restaurant

There are many myths about serving red wines with your red meats and whites with white meat. There is no exact way to pair wine and food but there are some guidelines. So here is the latest.

FOOD:

Pan-seared red meat
BBQ'd or roasted beef, pork

SERVE WITH WINE:

White wine or lighter reds
Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah

Sausage or hamburger	Red Zinfandel, Petite Syrah, Shiraz
Lamb	Bordeaux, American Chardonnay, Riesling
Grilled Chicken or Fish, Salad	Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris
Pork Chop in mushroom sauce	Pinot Noir
Desserts	A wine sweeter than the dessert – Sauternes, Muscat

Cheeses:

Goat Cheese	Vouvray, Sauvignon Blanc
Soft Cheeses (Brie)	Pinot Noir, Beaujolais
Hard/Aged Cheeses (Cheddar, Gouda)	Cabernet Sauvignon, Port, Merlot, Rioja

Pair wines from the same region as the food you are making or ordering.

If you have a peppery steak don't buy a spicy red wine like Shiraz. Your mouth will be on fire. Hot, spicy foods such as Indian, Thai, or Mexican will numb your tongue so pair it with a full bodied, cold, white or a light bodied red wine such as a Beaujolais or even Champagne!

Preparing salty foods? It will suppress bitterness in wine and make sweet wines taste sweeter.

The crisp, clean flavors of many white wines will match perfectly with a rich, creamy dish.

Making pasta with a red sauce try Chianti. It's Italian!

Chocolate is hard to pair because it coats your mouth. Find a fortified Ruby Port! YUM!

I feel the need to point out one wine that gets misconstrued, Zinfandel. Zinfandel is a spicy, bold red wine from different areas like California, Australia, South Africa, and Italy (where it is known as Primitivo). Now White Zinfandel is made by keeping the skins in the juices during the fermentation process for a short time to give it a blush color. Then the pulp is removed. Sutter Home in California was known to make the White Zin popular in the 1970's. Many rural restaurants carry White Zin but as you go into bigger cities if you order a Zinfandel it will be big and bold and dry!

When at a **restaurant** decide what meal you plan to eat first. This is a guideline to go by:

If it's Italian, choose an Italian wine.

If its Lamb or Duck choose a French wine.

If it's a heavier Beef choose a heavier red. Just not spicy with spicy.

Chicken -choose a lighter to medium red or white

Fish -this is all over the place but choosing a medium bodied white will be a safe bet.

If all else fails, **ASK THE SERVER or SOMMELIER** what they would pair with your meal.

Hope we helped you make your next trip to the wine store a little easier!

Lynn and Chrissy, Winery Gals

www.WineryGals.com