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## How To Taste Wine Like A Professional

By Ken Finnigan

To many people the sight of a man or woman in a restaurant or bar sniffing and swirling a glass of wine before ultimately tasting it and relaying their satisfaction to the server can seem rather pretentious. However, this is actually the best way to get the most from your bottle of wine; to see, smell and taste every aspect. Whether it is an expensive box of wine or a prize winning bottle of Merlot, to truly appreciate a bottle of wine it is important to learn how to correctly taste wine.

The most important thing to keep in mind when tasting a wine is to be sure to use your senses. Enjoying a glass of wine is not simply about drinking and noting the taste, but about inspecting all aspects of the wine.

Colour is very important in wine which is why people are often seen holding a glass of wine up to the light before drinking it. As wine ages the color of the wine changes. Red wines in general begin as a very dark red or purple color. Over time, red wines tend to fade from this dark shade to a garnet and finally a brick red. At first this color change might only be noticed around the rim of a wine, but over the years the entire wine will fade. White wine on the other hand tends to darken with age. White wines usually start out straw or lemon in color and age to dark amber.

Why is the color of a wine so important to inspect? The color of a bottle of wine with respect to it's age can be an important key in determining if a bottle of wine has been manufactured poorly. For example, if a one-year-old bottle of Sauvignon Blanc is already a very dark, deep amber color when the bottle is first opened, this could signify that the bottle has not been manufactured and processed correctly causing the wine to age prematurely and not taste it's best. The same can be said for red wines, if a young bottle of Merlot is already a brick red or brown color when opened, chances are good there was a problem with the bottle and it will not have optimal taste.

Some in the wine community still think it is important to inspect the legs of a glass of wine. "Legs" is a term used to describe the oily wine beads that are on the sides of a glass after it has been swirled around. Many used to think that these legs were a sign of high alcohol or sugar content giving a better quality of wine, and while this might be true in a variety of cases, nowadays most people prefer to use taste as a better method of assessing quality.

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The best way to release the aromas of a glass of wine is to swirl it for a few moments. Swirling helps to agitate the wine and allows more oxygen to have contact with the wine, which in turn releases aromas. It is important to smell a glass of wine before drinking to ensure that the wine smells healthy. A wine should never smell moldy, stale, oxidized, or vinegary in any way.

Aside from checking if a wine smells healthy, swirling a glass of wine is also a great way to be able to smell the primary and/or secondary aromas. Primary aromas are usually found in younger wines, and usually are fruit related, such as orange, raspberry and cherry. Older wines take on secondary aromas, which are earthier. Sometimes wines are said to have an oak, musk or butter flavor, which all are considered secondary aromas.

Finally there is using your palate and tasting the wine. Does the wine taste fruity or earthy? Is it sweet or dry? What kind of texture does it have; thin, buttery, rich? How long did the flavor last after it the

wine was swallowed? A wine that lingers is a sign of a good quality wine, but it also means the flavor can be enjoyed longer.

Now that the basics of wine tasting have been revealed, the next time you order a bottle of wine, don't be embarrassed to sniff it, swirl it and taste it like a professional.

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### **The Basics Of Wine Tasting**

**By Kadence Buchanan**

Wine tasting is an assessment of a wine's quality. It's not just about taste but also covers aroma, color, the way it feels in one's mouth and how long the wine persists in the mouth after tasting. Wine tasting is also one way to determine the maturity of the wine and whether it is suitable for aging or for immediate drinking. Its purpose is to discover the key facets of the wine in order to appreciate it better in every sense of the word.

Wine tasting also serves to compare a particular wine with others that fall into the same price range, region or vintage – its quality, whether it is typical of the region it was made in, whether it uses certain wine making techniques and if it has any faults. It may sound hard to believe, but practiced wine tasters can actually tell if a wine was made through oak fermentation or malolactic fermentation. Their taste buds and their noses are simply that well-developed.

## How To Taste Wine Like A Professional

In wine tasting, wine is often served "blind," meaning that the taster should not see the wine's label because he might be influenced by it and to ensure impartial judgment of the wine.

Wine should be served at temperatures of 16 and 18 degrees centigrade (60 and 64 degrees fahrenheit). It is at this temperature that the wine's flavor and aroma is said to be most detectable. It is important that wines be served at the same temperature so that they can be judged using the same standards. The one exception is in the case of sparkling wine, which is usually served chilled mainly because sparkling wine does not taste well when it is warm.

Since wines do not taste alike, the order of tasting the wine is also important. For instance, heavy or sweet wine leaves a lingering taste that can affect the taste of succeeding lighter wines. There is actually a preferred order of tasting: sparkling wines; light whites, then heavy whites; roses; light reds; heavy reds; sweet wines.

So, the next time you see someone smelling his wine or just gently dabbing it on his tongue and lips, you have a better idea of what's going on. In truth, it looks foreign and a little complicated, but anyone can be an accomplished wine taster with some practice. All you have to do is drink more wine. What could be easier?

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