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**How to Order Wine in a Restaurant**

**By Jason (The Snob)**

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Wine Ordering Basics — Just a Sniff, a Sip, and a Swallow

Perhaps you're comfortable ordering your "grande, nonfat, extra hot, wet cappuccino" every morning or having it your way every afternoon with your "hold the onions, hold the bun, pickles on the side, extra cheese cheeseburger wrapped in lettuce."

However, that doesn't mean you're exactly thrilled when it comes to ordering wine in a shi-shi restaurant. With just a little "how to" knowledge, you can start ordering wine with your head held high. It's a good idea to keep reading because you might humiliate someone if you dare ask for a bottle of "2-Buck Chuck" on your next outing.

Choosing a Wine

By the Glass or Bottle?

- It's less expensive to get a bottle if two or more guests are having a couple glasses of wine.
- You'll be much more limited in your selection when ordering by the glass.

What Kind of Wine Do You Want?

- Decide on red versus white. That eliminates half the list right away.
- If ordering for a group of people, you might order a red AND a white bottle to satisfy a broader range of preferences.

What Are You Eating?

- Choose a wine that compliments your meal whether you're having a steak or Caesar salad.

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- o Whites with lighter foods like grilled chicken or salads.
- o Big reds with steaks or heavy red sauces.
- o Lighter, fruitier reds with anything else.
- Connect your menu choice with a wine from the same region, i.e., Rioja with tapas, Chianti with red-sauced Italian dishes, and so on.

### How Much Do You Want to Spend?

- Know your approximate budget before you peruse the wine list.
- Beware that the house wines frequently have a high mark up for the restaurant and usually not the best values.
- If asking the server for suggestions, try asking about a particular wine in the price range you are considering. They will usually pick up on this clue and not suggest wines out of your budget.

### Ask Your Server

- Don't be afraid to ask for wine recommendations from your server.
- Some fine restaurants have a dedicated sommelier, (pronounced som-mel-yay), which is basically an on staff wine expert. Ask if you are unsure.
- Listen to their suggestions, but don't be bullied into any decisions, especially if you feel they are simply pushing a high mark up wine or one too expensive for your budget.
- Inform the server the type of wine you are looking for, such as a heavy or fruity red, or an oaky or dry white.

### The Serving Ritual

After you have made your decision, the server will serve the wine in a ritual that may seem odd to novice wine drinkers. Here is the process and what you need to do.

1. The server should first show you the bottle BEFORE it's opened. Inspect the label and vintage to make sure it is in fact what you ordered. Sometimes the restaurant will be out of the specified vintage and will bring you a different one. Now is the time for you to decide whether this is acceptable.
2. After opening, the server will present you the cork. Simply make sure it is not dried out and cracked. Note: Sometimes white wines will form white crystals on the cork. This is normal and is not a sign of a fault.

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3. Then the server will pour a small amount in your glass. Check the aroma to make sure there are no strong, offensive odors that you know shouldn't be there (such as vinegar and rotten eggs). If unsure, smell again or ask your server.

4. Now taste the wine. If trying a new type of wine that you are not familiar with, I would be extra cautious and ask the waiter his opinion before sending the wine back. It is not my policy to send back a wine that I just don't like unless the server notices my reaction and offers a replacement.

5. Once you have tasted the wine and feel it is not faulty, a simple nod or a "it's fine" will inform the server to start filling the glasses. The server will now decant the wine if necessary and then fill the guest's glasses first and finish with your glass.

### Maintaining Your Glass

- In most fine dining establishments, the server will refill your glasses as needed.
- If your glass runs empty, feel free to pour more yourself.
- Pour only to the lower one-third the glass. This lets air in and leaves you room to swirl — both of which enhance the enjoyment of your wines.

### Advice on Rejecting a Bottle

A good restaurant should be more than happy to exchange a bottle of wine for any reason but especially if there is reasonable doubt (a dried and cracked cork is good proof).

A good patron should give the restaurant the benefit of the doubt if you are unsure, but do not let the waiter bully your decision. If they give you a hard time, I would let the tip reflect the disappointment and advise the manager on the way out.

My advice:

Be firm, but polite. Return if necessary. But do not let a bad waiter or lousy management ruin the evening for your group. You always have the choice of taking your business to a restaurant who knows how to do business (Please the customer!)

In Conclusion:

Ordering wine doesn't have to be an ordeal, nor does it have to be scary or intimidating. Just remember these basics. Once you've gone through the motions of choosing and accepting the bottle with a sniff and a sip, you'll be a real wine ordering pro.

Author of the 2BASNOB.com website about the enjoyment of coffee, tea, wine and beer. All rights reserved [www.2basnob.com](http://www.2basnob.com).

## **Why Are Wine Cellars Beneficial?**

**By Julia Martinez**

Drinking wine is not only for occasions as we all know. What happens when you feel like drinking wine and it is not available? You have a surprise visitor and you want to have this wine but it is not on the market? These situations would be less tough if you have a wine cellar.

A wine cellar could store the wines you have and keep them more delicious as time passes by.

Is having a wine cellar not expensive?

Like any other home equipment, you need of course a sum of money to buy your own wine cellar. The expense will not be that long–termed for sooner you could gradually attain the long–term benefits of the wine cellar you have.

How does a wine cellar improve one's entrepreneurial skills?

Owning a wine cellar and increasing the number of wines you store on it is a way of polishing you as a future entrepreneur. As your knowledge of wines improves along the process, you could never ignore the fact that you would also be interested in starting your own wine business.

What is the best wine cellar?

Different wine cellars have their individual strengths and they vary a lot. It depends on how one sees a good wine cellar. To make your choices better, you could read about helpful tips on choosing the right wine cellar. To add, online search would be convenient and effective too.

Why is a wine cellar important?

Wine is more than a delightful drink. It has with its contents healthful benefits. Having a cellar to keep it with you without having to worry much every time you need some of it is the meaning of convenience and assurance as well.

Wine cellars are the chest that holds within them the treasure– the bottles of wine!

Julia Martinez is a freelance writer for the Wine Times. She writes a regular column which is published every Thursday. Her latest 'favorite pick' is

.



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