

5 SMART HACKS TO PICK THE RIGHT FRENCH WINE AT THE SUPERMARKET

Simple tricks to shop like a wine lover
(even if you're not one yet)



THE ART OF WINE ACADEMY

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Hi, I'm Juliette a French wine educator, passionate sipper, and founder of The Art of Wine Academy.

I created this project to share something close to my heart: the joy of wine, without the snobbery. Whether you're new to wine or already a curious taster, I want to help you feel more confident, more curious, and more connected to what's in your glass — even if you're just grabbing a bottle at the supermarket.

I believe wine should be simple, elegant, and fun. No need to memorize complicated words or fake expertise. Just a bit of guidance, a splash of French flair, and the freedom to trust your own taste.

In this ebook, I've shared some of my favorite go-to tips to make French wine easier to choose and enjoy. These are the same tricks I use myself (yes, I still browse supermarket aisles in search of hidden gems!).

When I'm not sipping, teaching, or writing, I'm probably:

- Creating wine reels on Instagram (come say hi!),
- Hosting fun tastings,
- Or dreaming up new games and courses to help people fall in love with wine, one bottle at a time.

Let's make wine feel like what it really is — a small everyday pleasure, full of stories and surprises.

INTRODUCTION

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A WINE EXPERT TO MAKE GREAT CHOICES. YOU JUST NEED THE RIGHT CLUES.



Shopping for wine can feel like decoding a foreign language — especially in France. Labels full of unfamiliar words, shelves packed with endless options, and prices that don't always make sense... I've been there. And I promise: you don't need to know everything about wine to enjoy it (and choose it well).

I created this little guide to give you supermarket superpowers — smart, stylish tricks to help you spot quality and avoid the gimmicks. These are tips you can start using today, whether you're picking wine for a dinner party, a picnic, or just a cozy evening at home.

With just a few insider hacks, you'll feel more confident every time you walk down that wine aisle — no stress, no overwhelm, just excitement and elegance.

Let's turn your next wine run into a confident, joyful moment you'll actually enjoy.

HACK #1 – IGNORE THE MEDALS, READ THE LABEL

FORGET THE GOLD STICKERS REAL QUALITY IS IN THE DETAILS.



We all notice medals. Shiny gold stickers or impressive-sounding awards can be very persuasive. But here's the truth: a medal doesn't guarantee quality. Some are serious, others are handed out like candy.

Instead of getting dazzled, look for real information:

- **Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC)** – *This tells you the wine follows strict regional rules and quality standards. It's a great starting point.*
- **The producer's name** – *Is it a real estate or winemaker (like “Domaine”, “Château”, or “Clos”) or just a vague brand? The more specific the label, the more likely it reflects real craftsmanship.*
- **Clarity over design** – *Look for wines that give you facts: the vintage, the grape, the region, the story. These tell you more than gold foil ever could.*

Next time, skip the bling. Choose the bottle that quietly tells you the truth.

HACK #2 – THE COLOR OF THE CAPSULE TELLS A STORY

THE CAPSULE ISN'T JUST DECORATION

IT'S A CLUE TO WHO'S REALLY BEHIND THE BOTTLE.

At the top of every bottle is a capsule — the little metal or plastic cover over the cork. It might seem like decoration, but in France, the capsule color often tells you who made the wine and how. Here's your color code cheat sheet :

HACK #2

DECODE THE LETTERS ON THE CAPSULE



- **Green capsule:** Bottled by the winemaker at the estate. This is a strong sign of quality and traceability. You're getting wine made and bottled in one place, by one person or family.
- **Red capsule:** Bottled by a wine merchant or négociant. These wines can be blended from different sources. They're not bad — but they often lack a unique identity.
- **Black capsule:** Typically used for premium or aged wines, especially in regions like Bordeaux or Burgundy. It signals structure and aging potential.
- **Gold capsule:** Often used for special cuvées or wines that want to look prestigious. Sometimes it's real, sometimes it's marketing — always double-check the label.
- **Silver or white capsule:** Often found on light, fresh wines like rosé or young whites. It suggests something clean and easygoing.

HACK #3 – THE VINTAGE ISN'T EVERYTHING, BUT IT MATTERS

EVERY WINE HAS A BIRTH YEAR. AND IT TELLS YOU MORE THAN YOU THINK.



The vintage — that little year printed on the bottle — is the year the grapes were harvested. It can have a big impact on what you taste.

Let's break it down :

- **Red wines** : A bit of age helps. Reds that are 2–5 years old often show their best balance of fruit, body, and smoothness. Very young reds can feel harsh or closed.
- **White wines** : Look for freshness. A recent vintage (1–2 years old) means crisp acidity and vibrant aromas.
- **Rosé wines** : Always go for the latest year. Rosés are made to be drunk young — bright, fruity, and alive.

But remember: it's not just about age, it's about style. Some wines are made to be enjoyed young, others to be aged. This hack helps you match your expectations with the wine's reality.

HACK #4 – LESS IS MORE (ESPECIALLY WITH LABELS)

SOMETIMES THE BEST WINES ARE HIDING BEHIND THE SIMPLEST LABELS.



Ever been drawn to a label with shiny gold foil, an elaborate château illustration, or a dramatic name? You're not alone. But the truth is, great wines don't always scream for attention.

In fact, some of the best wines in France have the simplest labels — a clean font, a region, a year, a name. That's it.

Why? Because these winemakers aren't trying to dazzle you. They're focused on what's inside the bottle. Their wines don't need gimmicks. So next time you're in doubt, go for the label that feels honest, elegant, and real. Look for clarity, not clutter.

HACK #5 – DECODE THE TINY LETTERS ON THE CAPSULE

TWO TINY LETTERS TOTAL TRANSPARENCY.

Here's a secret most people miss: on many French bottles, you'll see tiny two-letter codes printed on the capsule or label. These are official categories that reveal how the wine was made.

Here's what they mean :

- **R (Récoltant):** The winemaker grew the grapes and bottled the wine themselves. Highest authenticity.
- **N (Négociant):** A merchant who bought and blended the wine. Quality can vary.
- **E (Entrepositaire Agréé):** A registered warehouse or bottler — often used for large-scale, generic wines.

If you're shopping for Champagne, look for these codes:

- **RM (Récoltant-Manipulant):** Grower Champagne — made by the grape grower. Often fantastic.
- **NM (Négociant-Manipulant):** Big brands — consistent and well-made.
- **CM (Coopérative de Manipulation):** Produced by a group of growers.
- **SR (Société de Récoltants):** A group of small growers bottling together.

Once you know these letters, you can spot who's really behind the wine — and decide if that's what you want to support.



LET'S STAY IN TOUCH

If you enjoyed these tips and feel more confident about picking wine, let's keep the conversation going.

I share weekly tips, reels, stories and wine joy on Instagram — especially designed for curious minds like yours.

📍 **Follow me: [@theartofwineacademy](https://www.instagram.com/theartofwineacademy)**

And don't hesitate to send me a message!

I love connecting with fellow wine explorers!

Cheers to your next smart, stylish sip.

Juliette Leroux

Founder of The Art of Wine Academy

