

Wine Fundamentals mini course

by Somm-Secrets



Objectives

- Discover the basics! What is Wine, what are the different styles and secrets behind Old World/New World denominations!
- Get familiar with the most popular grape varieties, the noble grapes and their characteristics.
- Survive a Restaurant Wine list and order wine without feeling intimidated
- Learn Wine Tasting tips and vocabulary to describe wine like a pro!

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- Understand Wine lists
- Tips to order Wine in Restaurant
- Wine Pairings secrets

4. Tasting Wine like a pro

- Tasting methods and perception
- Vocabulary, and Aromas you need to best describe wine

1. Understanding Wine



What is Wine

- Wine is an alcoholic beverage made with fermented grape juice !
- Can be made with any fruit (apples, cranberries, plums) but most wines are made with wine grapes: **Vitis Vinifera**.
- Archaeologists have discovered evidence of wine consumption in Georgia dated to 6000 BC and in Armenia dated to 4100 BC.



What's inside a bottle



- 2.5 pounds of grapes
- 700 grapes
- 750ml / 25oz
- 72% water
- 13% alcohol
- 10% sugar
- 3% acids
- 2% minerals

Fun fact:

- Over 1300 grapes varietal / only about 120 make up most of the wine we drink.

Terroir

- Great wines start in the vineyard, with the terroir.
- **Terroir:** all the environmental elements that can influence the wine.
 - The soil, (nutrients, irrigation)
 - The climate, (sun exposure, wind)
 - The vineyard topography (south facing, hillsides...)
- It gives the wine a sense of time and place
- Each Wine regions has a specific terroir. This is why, to understand the taste of Wine; you need to understand where the grapes come from and the wine has been made. Chardonnay or Riesling can be very different depending on their provenance.

Old World/New World

Old World

The known world to Europeans until 1492



New World

Land unknown before 1492

What happened in 1492?

Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas (New World).

NEW WORLD - CALIFORNIA, SOUTH AMERICA, AUSTRALIA, SOUTH AFRICA

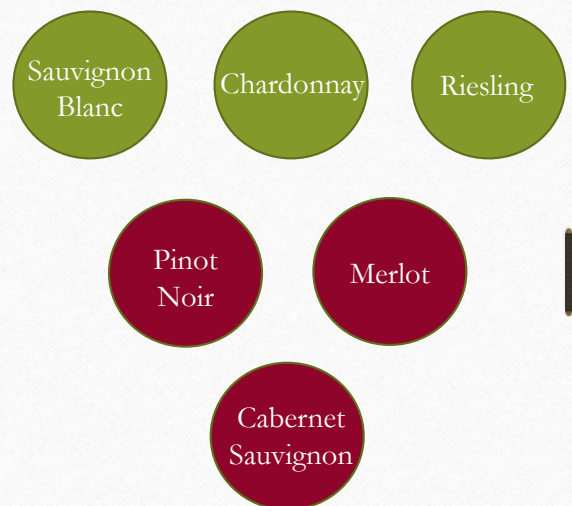
- Grapes ripen fairly reliably, vintage variation is minimal
- More overtly fruity and higher alcohol, limited aging potential

OLD WORLD - FRANCE, GERMANY, NORTHERN ITALY, NORTHERN SPAIN

- Higher acidity, lower alcohol content, more food friendly
- Less fruit flavors, more mineral and herbal flavors
- Aging potential for the best wines
- Grown in cooler climates with less sun and shorter growing seasons, vintage variation is high

2. The Noble Grapes

- Sauvignon Blanc (France)
- Chardonnay (France)
- Riesling (Germany)
- Pinot noir (France)
- Merlot (France)
- Cabernet Sauvignon (France)



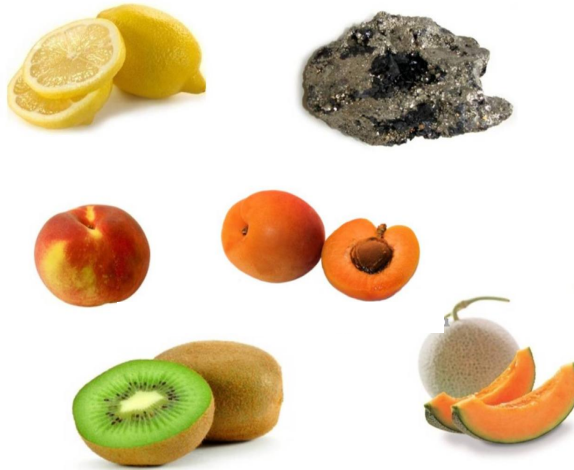
The 6 original noble grapes

White noble grapes

Sauvignon Blanc



Riesling



Chardonnay



Sauvignon Blanc

- **Style:** unoaked, dry, crisp with high acidity, grassy
- **Aromas** of citrus, lime, grapefruit, gooseberry, tropical, minerality.
- **Regions:**
 - **France, Loire:** lime, green grass, mineral, light bodied
 - **New Zealand, Marlborough:** passionfruit, lemongrass, pineapple, acidic with a hint of sugar, light bodied
 - **California, Napa:** citrus, white peach, grapefruit, honeydew, medium bodied



Chardonnay



- **Style:**
 - oak-aged, buttery, creamy, medium to full bodied
 - Unoaked, crisp, mineral, light to medium bodied
- **Aromas** Lemon, Apple, zest, Pear, Pineapple, Passionfruit, Peach, minerality, dairy, almond, vanilla, butter, coconut,
- **Regions:**
 - **Unoaked:** France Burgundy Chablis, Sonoma coast, Oregon
 - **Oak aged:** Napa, Argentina

Riesling



- **Style:** Unoaked. Dry, off dry, semi-sweet, sweet, **or** sparkling
- **Aromas** flowers, apricot, lychee, almost perfumed aromas, ginger, honey, petrol
- **Regions:**
 - **Germany, Mosel, Rheingau:** off-dry, semi-sweet, Sweet, medium acidity
Trocken, Kabinett, Spatlese, Auslese
 - **France, Alsace:** Dry, high acidity, lime, nectarine.
 - **USA, New-York:** dry to off-dry, honey, lemon peel, medium acidity

Red noble grapes

Pinot Noir



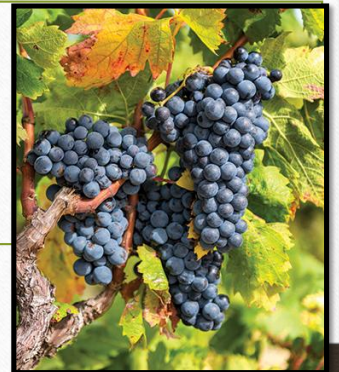
Merlot



Cabernet Sauv.



Pinot Noir



- **Style:** oak-aged, light/medium bodied with medium tannin.
- **Aromas** black cherry, sour cherry, plum, dried herbs, hearth and cedar.
- **Regions:**
- **France, Burgundy:** Dryer style, earthy, light/medium bodied, minerality, high acidity
- **USA, Oregon:** ripe cherry, strawberry, medium/full bodied, medium acidity
- **USA, California:** fruit driven, jammy, full bodied, medium acidity, low tannins

Merlot

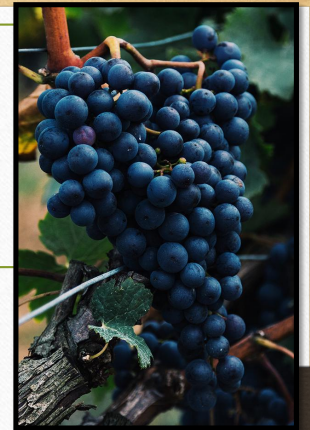


- **Style:** oak-aged, fruit flavors, moderate tannin, balanced acidity.

Food friendly wine.

- **Aromas** black cherry, plum, chocolate, dried herbs, and cedar.
- **Regions:**
 - **France, Bordeaux :** firm tannins, earthy, tobacco flavors. Long aging.
 - **California, Sonoma, Napa:** fruit-forward, berries, moderate alcohol and tannins.
 - **Italy, Tuscany:** blended with native grapes to make super tuscans.

Cabernet Sauvignon



- **Style:** oak-aged, dark fruits, full bodied. Medium to strong tannins, acidity, long aging when from Europe
- **Aromas** black cherry, black currant and blackberry, tobacco, licorice, mocha.
- **Regions:**
 - **France, Bordeaux :** blended with merlot and cab franc. Herbal, floral, tobacco.
 - **California, Napa:** fruit-forward, black berries, cherry, vanilla.
 - **Italy, Chile, South Africa:** integrated tannins, medium acidity, but full bodied.

3. Ordering Wine



Understanding Wine Lists

Most restaurants organize their wine lists in one of three ways:

1. By Wine Style

- Sparkling / White / Rosé / Red / Dessert - *Most common in casual restaurants.*

2. By Grape Variety

- Chardonnay / Sauvignon Blanc / Pinot Noir / Cabernet Sauvignon / Merlot - *Common in New World restaurants and wine bars.*

3. By Region

- Burgundy / Bordeaux / Champagne / Tuscany / Rioja / Napa Valley - *Common in fine dining restaurants.*

The 6 Main Wine Styles

- 🍾 Sparkling | Champagne, Prosecco, Cava
- 🍋 Crisp & Light Whites | Sauvignon Blanc, Albarino, Riesling, Pinot Grigio
- 🍊 Rich & Full-Bodied Whites | Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc,
- 🌹 Rosé
- 🍒 Light Reds | Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc, Merlot
- 🍇 Full-Bodied Reds | Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Malbec
- 🍷 Dessert & Fortified | Port, Sauternes, ice Wine

Wine Regions Shortcut

Burgundy

- Think: 🍋 Chardonnay 🍒 Pinot Noir

Bordeaux

- Think: 🍇 Cabernet Sauvignon 🍇 Merlot

Champagne

- Think: 🍾 Sparkling Wine

Tuscany

- Think: 🍒 Sangiovese (Chianti, Brunello)

Piedmont

- Think: 🍒 Nebbiolo (Barolo, Barbaresco)

Rioja

- Think: 🍇 Tempranillo

Napa Valley

- Think: 🍇 Cabernet Sauvignon

Marlborough

- Think: 🍋 Sauvignon Blanc

Order Wine without feeling intimidated

Step 1: Decide Your Budget First

Before looking at the wine list, ask yourself:

- By the Glass or full bottle?
- Budget range?

Step 2: Ask your table their Wine style preference

Now, you already narrowed the list to Wine Style and price.

Step 3: Decide what you will eat to better match the wine

Wine should not be ordered first. You should wait until you have a better idea of what you and your table will eat. The wine will complement your food even better if you pair it.

Pro Tip:

Now you can ask your sommelier recommendations based on your wine preferences, food ordered and price range.

Common Wine Myths

- ✗ More expensive = better
- ✗ Older = better
- ✗ Well Known Brand = better
- ✗ A same grape varietal taste the same regardless of where it comes from.
- ✗ French or Italian wines are always superior
- ✗ Red wine always goes with meat
- ✗ White wine always goes with fish

The best wine is the one you enjoy!

5 Restaurant Secrets Sommeliers Use

- The second-cheapest bottle in a category is often a better value than the cheapest.
- Ask for "something similar" to a wine you already enjoy.
- If the list is overwhelming, choose a grape variety first, then narrow by region and price.
- Champagne or Sparkling Wine goes with pretty much anything!
- If you remember nothing else from this course, remember this: a wine list is simply organized information! Whether it is arranged by style, grape variety, or region, your goal is always the same: identify a price and style you enjoy and narrow your options from there 🍷

Wine pairing



Wine Pairings made simple!

Pairing should enhance enjoyment—not create stress.

- **Seafood**
→ Sauvignon Blanc, Albariño, Champagne
- **Chicken**
→ Chardonnay, Pinot Noir
- **Steak or red meat**
→ Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec
- **Pasta with Tomato Sauce**
→ Merlot, Chianti, Sangiovese
- **Mix of Appetizers, finger food or Fast Foods**
→ Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Malbec or Syrah. Champagne and Rose will go too!
- **Rich Cream Sauces**
→ Chardonnay or Pinot Noir
- **Dessert or sweets**
→ Off Dry Riesling or Rose

4. Tasting Wine like a pro!



How to taste wine / The 6 "S"s

- **See:** Get a sense of the color / 1st nose
- **Swirl:** To release the aromas
- **Smell:** When smelling, vary between deep, prolonged inhalations and short, gentle sniffs. You can repeat swirling and smelling if the wine is complex and you are not sure / 2nd nose
- **Sip:** Coat your palate / pick up clues of flavor
- **Spit:** Tasting faculties can be reduced if you never spit
- **Savor and Conclude:** Ask yourself if you like it, is it balanced, complex, what makes it unique?

In practice

-
- Take a sip, coat every part of your mouth
 - Aerate the wine by breathing in
 - Hold the wine in your mouth, feel it
 - Spit or swallow, then breathe out with your mouth open
 - Evaluate and Think

*and No! You don't have to make horrible gargle noise when tasting wine!!!

Body and Balance

- **Body:** weight of the wine
 - Light: skim milk
 - Medium: 2% to whole milk
 - Full: whole milk to half and half
- **Balance:** Harmony between
 - Fruit flavors
 - acidity
 - sweetness
 - and tannins

Vocabulary

- **Taste profile:** fruity, floral, herbal, spicy, oaky

What to expect from the grape

- **Body:** light body, medium body or full body
- **Oak aging:** Creamy, buttery, oaky, woody, smoky
- **Sweetness:** dry, off dry, semisweet, sweet
- **Acidity:** low acidity, medium acidity, lean, crisp, acidic, puckery
- **Tannin:** bitter, soft, smooth, astringent, firm
- **Finish:** short, spicy, tart, bitter, sweet, long

Harmony between characteristics above create balance in wine

- **Balance:** unbalanced, flat, balanced, well balanced

Wine tasting note

Describing a wine (fill in with descriptors from Vocabulary slide)

This wine smells like *(taste profile)* with *(detailed taste profile descriptor)* aromas.

It is *(body)* and *(sweetness) with (acidity)*, the *(Oak aging if present)* and *(Tannin only for red)*.

With a *(finish)*, this *(provenance + type of wine)* is *(Balance/ quality)*.

Examples white wine and red wine

- “This wine smells like stone fruits with ripe apricot aromas. It is full bodied and dry with lean acidity, creaminess and smooth tannin. With a long finish, this Argentina chardonnay is very well balanced.”
- “This wine smells like berry and spices with black cherry aromas. It is medium bodied and dry with bright acidity, oak and firm tannin. With a long finish, this French cabernet sauvignon is extremely well balanced.”

Congratulations!

You now understand the fundamentals of Wine

You have taken the first step toward becoming a more confident wine drinker. 🍷

Imagine being:

- ✓ Confident ordering wine at a restaurant
- ✓ Comfortable discussing wine without feeling intimidated
- ✓ Able to understand why you enjoy certain wines
- ✓ Confident selecting bottles for dinners, gifts, and special occasions
- ✓ Comfortable tasting and describing wine with ease

If you enjoyed this free course, **the Wine Confidence Course** was designed specifically to help you become comfortable and confident in restaurants, wine shops, tastings, and social situations.

Don't stop there! Continue your Wine journey and

Join the Wine Confidence Course Today! 🍷 (only \$37)