

Serving and Tasting Wine

Before serving wine, the bottle and its **label** must be shown to the guest and then opened. The waiter then **pours** a little wine into one of the guests' glasses for **tasting**. After his or her approval, wine is served to all the other guests, **clockwise**, serving them from their right, and then the bottle is left on the table or it is placed in a **wine cooler** or **ice bucket** with ice cubes.

Wine glasses must be chosen according to the type of wine which will be served.

Wine glasses are smaller than water glasses and white wine glasses are smaller than those for red wines. White wines are generally served in a **tulip**, sparkling wines and champagne in a **flute**, or **champagne cup**, red wines are served in a **balloon-shaped glass**, and liqueurs in a **goblet**.

The four steps in wine tasting

Step 1: Evaluate its appearance

Look & Swirl - guarda e fai girare il vino nel bicchiere

Hold the glass **by the stem** so that you can see the wine clearly and your hands do not warm it.

Swirl the glass to get the wine moving; look at the way the wine **clings** to the glass.

Step 2: Check the bouquet (or the smell)

Nose - annusa

Put your nose into the glass and **sniff**; then give your glass a second swirl and sniff more deeply.

Step 3: Pay attention to the taste

Taste - assapora

Take a **sip**, savour the flavours, **rolling** the wine gently around your mouth; **swallow** only when you really have a sense of the flavours and feel of the wine.

Step 4: Evaluate the finish of the wine

Linger - soffermati

Consider the length of time the wine taste stays with you. This length of time is called the **finish** and some wines can linger for as long as a minute. Also consider the **balance** of the wine; do any tastes dominate?

4, 5 o 6 gusti ??? - How many tongue tasting zones are there?!!

Contrariamente a quanto si legge ancora in tanti libri di testo i gusti che percepiamo non sono 4 (amaro - **bitter**, aspro - **sour**, dolce - **sweet**, salato - **salty**).

Esiste un gusto molto importante in cucina perché è il sapore che ci fa percepire un cibo come "saporito". Questo quinto sapore si chiama "**umami**".

La parola è in lingua giapponese e significa appunto "saporito" (**savory**).



Secondo la definizione ufficiale dell'Umami Information Center, "l'umami è un gusto sapido piacevole che viene dal glutammato, e da diversi ribonucleotidi, che si trovano naturalmente in carne, pesce, verdura e prodotti lattiero-caseari". Pare che questo gusto, così poco conosciuto, faccia bene alla salute, o, più precisamente: l'insensibilità all'umami si traduce in perdita di appetito, riduzione della salivazione, e diminuzione di peso, con conseguente degradamento dello stato generale di salute.

Ma non è finita qui. Recentemente in Australia un gruppo di scienziati ha individuato un sesto sapore: quello del grasso (**fat**). Pare che le persone in grado di individuare il gusto del grasso mangino un minor numero di cibi ipercalorici rispetto a quelle che, il sapore del grasso, proprio non lo sentono!

Material extra

THE APPEARANCE OF A WINE

Words that describe the appearance of a wine include:

Brilliant -- remarkably high clarity.

Clear -- transparent, without sediment or filmy cloudiness.

Cloudy -- opposite of clear, indicative of something wrong with the wine.

Maderized -- a wine past its prime with a brownish tinge due to oxidation or age.

Purplish -- a young color, deep in red wine, indicating it will take time to mature.

Ruby -- a rather dark red, often indicative of the youthfulness of a wine.

THE SMELL OF A WINE

How a wine smells is indicative of its quality. The smell of a wine is often referred to as its ``nose.'' Words used to describe it are:
Aroma -- the perfume of a wine, derived from the grape species out of which it is made. The aroma should convey a typical varietal nose.

Bouquet -- the complex smell arising with maturity in good wine.

Complex -- scents within scents, suggestive of many different analogies with fruits (apples, pears), flowers (violets) or nuts (walnuts).

Corky -- smell of a bottle that has a moldy cork.

Foxy -- characteristic smell of the native American grape from which New York wines are mostly made, as, for example, the concord.

Heady -- attractively high in alcohol.

Lively -- a fresh, frank, good smell of a wine that is young and will last.

Musty -- an unpleasant smell, probably from a barrel with a rotten stave.

Sour or acetic -- a wine gone sour through contact with the air. Smell of vinegar.

Spicy -- a wine with a pronounced and special aroma or taste, piquant but natural.

Sulphury -- hot, slightly prickling to the nose. Often found in cheap white wine in which sulphur is used as a preservative. Sulphur is not harmful but should not be apparent.

Yeasty -- wines with odor of yeast, or fresh bread.

TASTE OF A WINE

Acidic -- tart, freshness of natural fruit. A high acidity helps to age a wine, and make it a suitable dinner wine.

Astringent -- the mouth-puckering taste quality in young red wine with much tannin. Indicative of a long-lived wine.

Bitter -- excessive tannin from stems, stalks or seeds, too long in wood.

Clean -- a well-made wine, well stored.

Dry -- without sweetness.

Earthy -- a special flavor that certain soils give to wines. Disagreeable if too pronounced, but a great Burgundy is always earthy.

Flat -- lacking acidity, insipid.

Flinty -- dry, clean, sharp taste usually from soils in which the vines grow.

Fruity -- wines with a definite and attractive aroma and flavor of fresh fruit; true of young fine wines.

Smooth -- without harshness.

Sweet -- detectable amount of residual grape sugar.

Tart -- too high in total acidity, green.

Thin -- deficient in body; watery.

Woody -- stored overly long in wood, usually oak.

FEEL OF A WINE

Words are needed to describe how a wine feels on the palate.

Big -- of robust character, a compliment.

Body -- the feel of a wine in the mouth, tangible to the tongue.

Fat -- well-fleshed; not a desirable characteristic in itself.

Full-bodied -- opposite of thin; high viscosity, weighty on the tongue.

Hard -- austere, without much charm.

Nervous -- vigorous and fine.

Robust -- sound, sturdy, full-bodied.

Thin -- deficient in body, watery, poor.

Velvety -- smooth; feel in the mouth of an excellent wine that is mature, mellow, fine-textured and soft.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF A WINE

Balanced -- quality of a wine in which the sugar and acid are in harmony.

Character -- when the salient taste characteristics are asserted.

Coarse -- a young wine without breed, lacking finesse.

Common -- ordinary wine, no outstanding characteristics.

Distinguished -- an exceptional wine of balanced harmony.

Elegant -- a flattering term for a truly fine wine.

Finesse -- a wine with class or distinction; out of the ordinary.

Rough -- poor, cheap, badly made wine.

Sturdy -- wine that indicates it can stand aging.

Young -- a comparative term; wine not yet at its peak, still improving.

There is no end to the words that can be used to describe a wine. Be as original as you can in describing the wine you are tasting. I have used words from the above list in talking about wines in this column.