HOW TO TASTE WINE

Presented by
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Overview

• Discuss why and how to taste wine
  – Look
  – Smell
  – Taste

• Go over a tasting wheel

• Look, Smell, Taste, and discuss a few wines
Tasting wine

• When it comes to tasting wine consider wine in three stages
  – Look at the wine
  – Smell the wine
  – Finally taste the wine

• After tasting it is nice to have a notebook to record your thoughts about the wine
How to Look

• Take lighting and background into consideration
• Begin by not pouring the glass to full
• Hold the glass at the base and tip away from you at a 45 degree angle
• Look down on it
• Now what are we looking for?
What we are looking for

- White wines color not as important but can tell us some things
  - First look to see if wine is clean and bright
  - Make sure there is no haze or cloudiness
    - Throws out red flag possible flaw (contamination)
  - Make sure there are no crystals (tartrates), which are harmless but not aesthetically pleasing
  - In a still wine make sure there are no bubbles which could be signs of a refermentation
    - Some young whites are purposely given a small amount of CO2 for some more zip
Look Continued

- If deep gold yellow gives idea of possible sweet wine affected by botrytis where color and taste is concentrated (ice wines)
- If clear and pale, gives idea of young cool fermented white (German Rieslings)
- If sunny yellow sign of warmer climate white (Australian Chardonnay)
- If brownish tinges- things not looking good
  - Typical sign of oxidation (sherry like taste)
Look

• Red Wines - Color more important than in white wines (can tell us more)
• Color can give insight into
  – Age
  – Quality
  – Provenance
• Nice to have a white background to compare against
• Tilt glass at $45^0$ and look at the rim
Look (Red Wine)

- Red wines gradually shed their color with age
  Deep purple red ➔ ruby ➔ brick-red ➔ over the hill tawny color
- The more mature the wine, the paler and browner it will be at the rim
- Color can also shed light into the amount of tannins and if it was oak aged
Swirl

• Swirling should be practiced
• Is a transition step between look and smell
• Swirling the wine
  – Done mainly to release the volatile compounds (smells/aromas)
  – Also done to look at the “legs”
    • Legs give us a sense of alcohol and residual sugar
  – The more viscous = more legs = more alcohol and more sugar
Smell

• After swirling put your nose down into the glass and sniff. (cleansing sniff)
• Swirl a second time and put your nose in further and take a deeper sniff.
• Now interpret and use your senses
• You are now smelling volatiles which might remind you of, black currents, peaches, licorice, vanilla, lemongrass, flowers, etc....
Figure 2.5 The Wine Aroma Wheel

Smell

- Aromas should be pleasant and attractive
- If the aroma is an off aroma but not positively bad think of it as a unique feature because there could be more to this wine
Smells

• As for positively bad smells there are only a few you need to know
  – Musty, Dank, moldy smell = corked wine
  – Vinegar
  – Oxidized (nutty/ sherry)
  – H2S = rotten eggs, burnt matches, burnt rubber

• No smell at all (occurs in young wines referred to as the dumb phase)
Finally Taste!!

- Take a generous sip but not too much where you are forced to swallow.
- Now roll the wine around in your mouth so that it hits every taste bud.
- Now aerate (slurp) only do this in private or at the right time.
- Roll wine around again and finally spit or swallow depending on the situation.
- Now count how long the aftertaste lingers on your palette (finish).
Taste

• What are we evaluating when we are tasting
  – Balance (any rough edges or something that doesn’t mesh)
  – Length of flavor
  – The tastes do they match the aromas we were smelling
  – The overall sensations given to our palate
Taste

• Where do we taste
  – Front of tongue perceives the sugar
  – Sides are alert to acid
  – Back of tongue picks up the bitterness (tannins)
Conclusion

• Overall weight of the wine and memorable factor
  – Reflect on the visual, and sensory evaluation to conclude if this is a pleasant wine that should be tasted again and again.
Information

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