

# **THE WINE BASICS & UNDERSTANDING EURO SELECTIONS**



## SECTION 1

# **WINE** | **THE BASICS**



This section covers the basics of winemaking, wine characteristics, proper tasting skills and looking for clues on wine labels. We believe it's important to understand terms like acidity, tannin, body and oak because they are referenced in some descriptors on the wine list. Learning how to taste properly will enhance your overall appreciation of wine. Most importantly, have fun with your guests exploring our great selection.

# WINE | CHOICES



## CHOICE | FLAVOUR & STYLE

**Choice affects flavour & style. How you make the wine is dependent on the flavour and style you want.**

- When the white wine grapes arrive at the winery they are gently pressed and the juice is separated and placed in stainless steel tanks, cement tanks or oak barrels for fermentation. The red grapes are treated differently. The juice is not separated from the skins. This helps create additional flavours and complexities. During the fermentation process in both wines, the yeast converts the natural sugars in the grape juice into alcohol.
- If fermentation is allowed to continue until the yeast has consumed most or all of the sugar, the resulting wine will be dry, with very little residual sugar left.
- To make a sweet wine, the winemaker stops the fermentation before the yeast has consumed all the natural grape sugars. This leaves an amount of residual sugar in the wine, resulting in a sweet taste. Sooner means sweeter and later means dryer.

# WINE | CHOICES



## CHOICE | FLAVOUR & STYLE

**Taste & texture is also affected by the winemaker's choices. The most important is what type of vessel to ferment the grapes in and/or the wine in.**

- **Going stainless anyone?** New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs would be nothing without this winemaking tool. Stainless steel tanks are meant to preserve the grapes' natural acidity and in turn...flavour! What does it taste like? Lick a stainless steel spoon...no flavour, get it? Winemakers love this and use it to accentuate the wine's crisp & lively fruit character.
- **Round of oak anyone?** How do you make a square into a circle? Simple...you smooth out those sharp edges! This is exactly what happens when wine is aged in oak barrels. It allows for the oxygen to slowly seep in, which smooths out the wine, creating a rounder, more textured profile. Oak also imparts aromas and flavours like vanilla, coconut & caramel to different degrees. The inside of the barrel is toasted at different levels by flames. Think what your toaster does to toast? Light, medium or heavy...*all choices!*

# WINE | CHARACTERISTICS



**Sweet vs Fruit Sweet:** is residual sugar in the wine & makes the tip of your tongue tingle. Fruit means the wine exhibits flavours or aromas that remind you of specific fruits.



**Acidity:** Juicy green apples...got it! Leaner, crisper wines & cool climate styles have more acid & round, riper wines & warmer climate styles have less. Higher acid means lighter body.



**Tannin:** Black tea anyone? It's that bitter, drying sensation you can get along the sides of your tongue & back of your mouth. Now pair that with lots of ripe fruit...ahh, balance!



**Alcohol:** Most run 11-14.5% ABV, alcohol by volume. Lower alcohol wines taste lighter in body and the higher ones taste fuller. That warm sensation after a sip? That's it alright!



**Body:** Think milk...skim, 1%, 2%, homogenized and so on, get it? The boxes are even colour coded. Don't worry about the how... just remember to focus on the weight in your mouth!

# WINE | CHARACTERISTICS



**Look** at the color of the wine. It is a good indicator of its body & texture. Generally lighter-colored wines have a lighter body & darker-colored wines have a fuller body.



**Swirling** introduces oxygen into the wine, which helps "open up" and concentrate the aromas and flavours. It makes the overall tasting experience more engaging and enjoyable.



**Smelling** a wine before tasting is an important step that prepares your senses, enhances the overall tasting experience, and provides valuable information about the wine's style.



**Sip & swish** the wine around your mouth. It's crucial for evaluating its key characteristics like acidity, tannin, alcohol, sweetness & body. Spitting after tasting actually enhances the sensory evaluation...who knew?



## Think

What comes to mind? Talk about what you taste and the textures you feel. This is the fun part...no wrong answers for once!

"These great graphics came from [winefolly.com](http://winefolly.com). A fun, must visit site to learn about wine. We totally love what they do!"



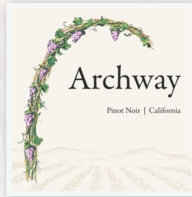


## CLUES | READ THE LABELS

**Scratch & sniff wine labels would make things so much easier wouldn't they? While we wait, here's some tips.**

- **Grape type:** Grape variety or varieties used gives you an idea of the flavour profile you may encounter.
- **Region:** The label indicates where the grapes were grown and the wine was produced. Different regions have distinct characteristics due to factors like climate, soil, and winemaking traditions.
- **Producer:** The name of the winery or producer.
- **Tasting Notes:** Labels may include tasting notes or flavour descriptors. While these are subjective, they can still give you a general idea of what to expect in terms of aroma, flavour and mouthfeel.
- **Vintage:** The year the grapes were harvested & the wine was produced.
- **Alcohol %:** Alcohol by volume percentage is a helpful indicator of the wine's strength and body.

## WHY DON'T WE JUST CREATE ONE?



"...30 ml's of that one and let's do 10 ml's of this silkier style ...*yeah, it's getting close.*"

### Archway Pinot Noir | California

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We started the blending process with the winemaker and a lot of different options. There were samples and glasses everywhere ... organized chaos. Some wines had aromas of juicy red fruit while others had that soft, plush black cherry profile. Some had bright acidity, some had that silkier style, and others had a dash of smooth vanilla oak. It all came together and added up to an easy drinking style we are proud of. *Finally...* the name came to us, inspired by the historic arch at the entrance of the city where we had all come together ... Lodi, California. We hope you enjoy it as much as we do. Cheers!

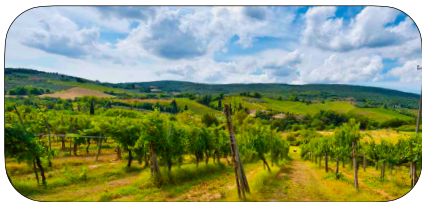


## SECTION 2

# UNDERSTANDING | EURO



This section provides a general overview on the regions, grape types, and styles for some of Europe's most popular wines. It's not about doing hours of homework to memorize everything; it's about gaining a general feel for how the Euro selections fit into our wine program. Some Euro wines have recognizable grape types while others are listed by their growing region. This can make them a little harder to understand. As a rule, you can refer to the Euro selections as they appear on the list. This booklet is simply designed to give you some additional insight, especially when it comes to presenting wines for 'Open Bottle Night'. Have fun and remember...*it's just squished fruit!*



## PROSECCO | NORTHERN ITALY

**Prosecco is a dry, sparkling wine from the Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia regions of northeastern Italy.**

- **Grapes:** They are made primarily from the Glera grape variety.
- **Winemaking:** The name "Prosecco" is derived from the Slovenian word "Prozek", meaning "path through the woods", and was first documented in the 16th century. Grapes are harvested and then undergo a process called the Charmat method. In this method, the base wine is fermented in stainless steel tanks, where the secondary fermentation takes place, trapping the Co<sub>2</sub> and creating the characteristic lively bubbles.
- **Style:** Prosecco wines are characterized by their light, fresh, & dry, fruit-forward profile, often with notes of green apple, citrus, and white flowers.



## CHAMPAGNE | NORTHEAST FRANCE

**Champagne** is a special type of sparkling white wine that is produced in the Champagne region of northeastern France, located just outside of Paris.

- **Grapes:** Made from a blend of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier grapes.
- **Winemaking:** It is made using a specific production method called the "traditional method" or "méthode traditionnelle", which involves a second fermentation in the bottle to create the bubbles. Sparkling wines made outside the Champagne region in France, even if produced using the same grapes and methods, cannot legally be called "Champagne".
- **Style:** Delightfully crisp, lively and refreshing with a creamy, bubbly mouthfeel. Sophisticated & refined!



## VINHO VERDE | NORTHWEST PORTUGAL

Vinho Verde is a type of wine that originates from the Minho region in northern Portugal. The name translates to "green wine", likely referring to the wine's youthful, fresh, and vibrant character, as well as the lush, green landscape of the Minho region where it is produced.

- **Grapes:** Too many and they are hard to pronounce so just remember...it's like a little, lively party in your mouth!
- **Winemaking:** The grapes are harvested earlier, before they fully ripen, to maintain the wine's fresh, light, and slightly herbaceous profile. The juice is fermented to produce a base wine with lots of acidity and then it is lightly carbonated to achieve that signature spritz character.
- **Style:** Lots of refreshing acidity, low to moderate alcohol levels (typically 8.5-11%), and a light, effervescent, and food-friendly character.



## SANCERRE | CENTRAL FRANCE

**Sancerre is a renowned wine region in the Loire Valley of central France, known primarily for its high-quality Sauvignon Blanc wines.**

- **Grapes:** Sancerre is considered the "spiritual home" of Sauvignon Blanc, and the wines from this region are often viewed as benchmarks for the varietal, known for their elegance and complexity.
- **Winemaking:** Winemakers aim to express the pure fruit flavours of Sauvignon Blanc with minimal oak influence. Most white Sancerre is produced without any oak, preserving the wine's crisp acidity.
- **Style:** They are characterized by their aromatic profile, with flavours often including grass, gooseberry, citrus, stone fruit, and mineral notes. They are typically high in acidity and offer a crisp, refreshing character. Most sauvignon Blanc wines in France lean to words this fresh, crisp style.



## BORDEAUX | SOUTH WESTERN FRANCE

The Bordeaux region in France is renowned for its high-quality wines. Located in the southwest, it is divided into smaller areas known as appellations.

- **Grapes:** White Bordeaux's are primarily made from Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon.
- **Winemaking:** Winemakers aim to express the pure fruit flavours and want to preserve the wine's crisp acidity. Some producers experiment with oak fermentation or aging for a richer, more structured style, but most white Bordeaux is produced in a fresh, crisp unoaked style. The back label will generally let you know.
- **Style:** White Bordeaux wines are known for their balance of Sauvignon Blanc's fruitiness and Sémillon's roundness, often displaying flavours of citrus, stone fruit, and floral notes.



## BOURGOGNE | EAST CENTRAL FRANCE

**Bourgogne Blanc** is a white wine appellation in the Burgundy region of France, primarily made from the **Chardonnay** grape variety.

- **Grapes:** They are primarily made from 100% Chardonnay, which is the main white grape variety grown in the region.
- **Winemaking:** After fermentation a small portion of the wine is aged for up to 8 months in French oak barrels, while the rest is aged in stainless steel tanks. This combination of oak and stainless steel-aged components helps create a more accessible, consumer friendly style great place to start.
- **Style:** They are known for their elegant, rich fruit character, with flavours of green apple, pear, and floral notes. They are also known for their balance of fruit, acidity, and subtle oak influence.



## CHABLIS | NORTH CENTRAL FRANCE

**Chablis is a unique style of Chardonnay-based white wine from the northernmost region of Burgundy.**

- **Grapes:** Chablis wines are made exclusively from Chardonnay grape.
- **Winemaking:** Bourgogne blanc is a great place to start learning about French chardonnay's. Pro tip: the region has a very unique soils which are rich in limestone and fossilized oyster shells. Millions of years ago, the area was covered by a shallow sea. This contributes to the wine's minerality and acidity style. Chablis wines typically undergo very little oak influence, with most seeing no oak at all during fermentation and aging. This preserves the pure, expression of Chardonnay.
- **Style:** Chablis wines are characterized by bright citrus, green apple, and white flower aromas, with a lean, mineral-driven, and high-acid palate.





## BOURGOGNE | EAST CENTRAL FRANCE

**Bourgogne Rouge**, also known as red Burgundy, is a red wine appellation in the Burgundy region of France.

- **Grapes:** They are made from the Pinot Noir grape variety, the main red grape grown in Burgundy.
- **Winemaking:** Bourgogne Rouge is a great place to start learning about French Pinot Noirs. These wines are often produced from vineyards located at the foot of the slopes, on limestone-rich soils which contribute to the wines' color, aroma, and structure.
- **Style:** Rich, crimson in color with aromas & flavours of red fruits like raspberry, red currant, & wild strawberry. They are lighter and drier in style with higher acidity compared to Pinot Noirs grown in warmer regions of the globe such as California.



## BARBERA D'ASTI | NORTH WESTERN ITALY

Barbera d'Asti is from the hilly areas of the Asti in the north western wine region of Piedmont.

- **Grapes:** Barbera d'Asti must contain a minimum of 90% Barbera grapes, from the vineyards of Asti. Regular Barbera will contain a little less and can come from anywhere within Piedmonte.
- **Winemaking:** They are fermented in stainless steel or concrete tanks to preserve the fresh acidity. Some go on to be aged in oak barrels or oak casks from 4 - 6 months or to increase complexity.
- **Style:** Barbera d'Asti and the cheaper Barber wines are known for being a medium-bodied, fruit-forward red wine with bright acidity and relatively low tannin. They have flavours of dark red fruits; strawberry, blackberry, plum with pepper & spice.



## BAROLO | NORTH WESTERN ITALY

**Barolo DOCG** is a prestigious, premium red wine produced in the Piedmont region of northwestern Italy, centered around the town of Barolo.

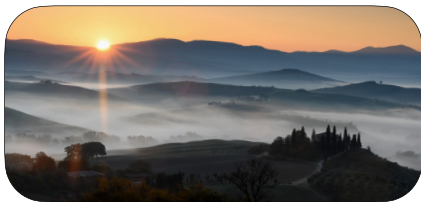
- **Grapes:** Barolo is made exclusively from the Nebbiolo grape variety, which is known for its high acidity, powerful tannins and ability to produce age-worthy, complex wines.
- **Winemaking:** Barolo is one of the most expensive and sought-after wines in the world. They undergo extended winemaking techniques & aging. They are required to age 36 months before release. This includes at least 18 months in oak barrels, which helps develop complexity and soften the tannins.
- **Style:** Barolo wines are known for their light ruby color, haunting aromas of tar and roses. They have high acidity, and powerful, age-worthy tannins that require lots of time to soften.



## CHIANTI CLASSICO | WEST CENTRAL ITALY

**Chianti Classico is a prestigious, historic region within Tuscany producing high-quality, complex red wines with a balance of elegance & rusticity.**

- **Grapes:** Made with a minimum of 80% Sangiovese grapes, with the remaining 20% of other approved red grape varieties.
- **Winemaking:** Chianti Classico has strict production regulations including a minimum aging time of 12 months. The iconic black rooster, emblem is a symbol of the Chianti Classico region, dating back to the 14th century.
- **Style:** Bright, ruby red color and a dry, fruity taste with savoury, earthy notes, high acidity, and medium tannins that make it an excellent food-pairing wine.



## ROSSO DI MONTALCINO | WEST CENTRAL ITALY

**Rosso di Montalcino is a wine produced in the Montalcino region of Tuscany.**

- **Grapes:** Primarily the Sangiovese grape, the same grape used to produce renowned Brunello.
- **Winemaking:** The Rosso di Montalcino style was created to offer a more approachable and affordable version of the more expensive Brunello. Minimum oak aging is 10 months. Most Brunello producers make a Rosso di Montalcino.
- **Style:** The wines are typically bright ruby red in color, with notes of red fruits, balsamic, floral, and spicy elements. They tend to be more approachable and drinkable when young compared to the more structured, complex and age-worthy Brunello.



## BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO | WEST CENTRAL ITALY

**Brunello di Montalcino** is an iconic, expensive, and strictly regulated Tuscan wine known for power, complexity, and age-worthiness.

- **Grapes:** Made from 100% Sangiovese grapes.
- **Winemaking:** Montalcino is a unique area. The warm, dry microclimate, varied soils, and vineyards located at high elevations contribute to the wine's character. Brunello di Montalcino has very strict requirements, including a minimum 5-year aging period (6 yrs. Riserva) & at least 2 years in oak barrels.
- **Style:** The wine is known for its powerful, structured, and age-worthy style, with flavours of red fruits, balsamic, spice, and leather, as well as high tannins & acidity. The finish is long, layered & very complex.



## VALPOLICELLA | NORTH EASTERN ITALY

**Valpolicella is a red wine produced in the Valpolicella region, in the foothills of the Alps in northeastern Italy.**

- **Grapes:** Made from a blend of local grapes with Corvina being the most important.
- **Winemaking:** Valpolicella wines undergo a relatively short maturation period, often just a few months in steel tanks, to preserve the wine's youthful, delicate character. This helps keep the price of the wine more accessible for the consumer.
- **Style:** Typically light-bodied, fresh, & vibrant. A classic Valpolicella wine is typically characterized by fresh, vibrant aromas of red and black cherries, berries, and subtle spice notes, with an overall sense of purity and simplicity on the nose.

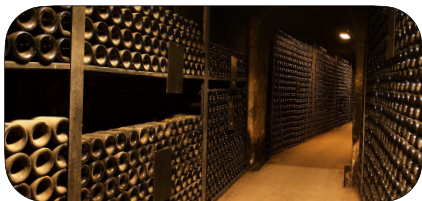


## VALPOLICELLA RIPASSO | NORTH EASTERN ITALY

Valpolicella Ripasso DOC is a distinctive red wine produced in the Valpolicella region, situated in the foothills of the Alps in northeastern Italy.

- **Grapes:** Produced from a blend of local grape varieties, with Corvina being the most important.
- **Winemaking:** Ripasso is considered a step up in quality, price & complexity from basic Valpolicella, but not as powerful or structured as the premium Amarone. The Ripasso method involves re-fermenting or "re-passing" the Valpolicella wine over the leftover concentrated, raisinated grape skins & seeds from the production of Amarone. This elevates the body and texture.
- **Style:** This Ripasso method also imparts additional flavours and complexity to the Valpolicella, with notes of red & black fruit, vanilla, and a slightly dried fruit or ethereal character. A must try for sure!

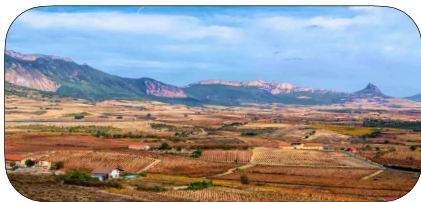




## **AMARONE CLASSICO** | NORTH EASTERN ITALY

**Amarone Classico DOCG** is a prestigious, full-bodied, and high-alcohol Italian red wine from the wine region of Valpolicella.

- **Grapes:** Made primarily from a blend of local grape varieties, including Corvina, Corvinone, and Rondinella.
- **Winemaking:** The grapes are harvested ripe in October and then dried (appassimento) for 3-4 months, which concentrates the sugars, flavours, and tannins in the wine. After a long fermentation and aging process, 2 years min. in oak barrels, the wine is intense, full bodied, and often 15+% alcohol.
- **Style:** Amarone Classico is known for its full-bodied, complex, & age-worthy style, with flavours of ripe dark fruits, chocolate, coffee, and spice, balanced by high alcohol and moderate acidity.



## RIOJA CRIANZA | NORTHERN SPAIN

**Rioja Crianza is a style of red wine from the prestigious Rioja region in northern Spain.**

- **Grapes:** The primary grape used in Rioja Crianza is Tempranillo.
- **Winemaking:** Rioja Crianza wines must be aged for a minimum of 1 year in oak barrels, followed by at least 1 year of bottle aging before release. They are considered a mid-level, affordably priced style between the lighter Joven wines and the more structured, premium age-worthy Reserva and Gran Reserva selections.
- **Style:** This oak aging, along with the blend of grape varieties, gives the wines a distinctive flavour profile of red and dark fruits, spices, leather, and vanilla. They are known for their balance, elegance.



## BORDEAUX | SOUTH WESTERN FRANCE

The Bordeaux region in France is renowned for its high-quality wines. Located in the southwest, it is divided into smaller areas known as appellations.

- **Grapes:** Red Bordeaux's are blends, typically dominated by Cabernet and/or Merlot, with smaller amounts of Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot & Malbec.
- **Winemaking:** Fermentation happens in a combination of stainless steel tanks and oak barrels. After fermentation, it is aged in oak barrels, typically for 12 to 18 months, which imparts notes of vanilla, spice, & structure.
- **Style:** Bordeaux Rouge is characterized by bold, black fruit flavours, firm tannic structure (drying sensation in your mouth), & some distinct mineral and possibly earthy notes.



## CÔTES DU RHÔNE | SOUTHERN FRANCE

Côtes du Rhône ("hillsides of the Rhône") is a major wine appellation in the Rhône wine region of southern France.

- **Grapes:** The key red grape varieties are Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre.
- **Winemaking:** Côtes du Rhône red wines undergo a process where the hand harvested grapes are fermented as whole bunches. The wine may then be aged in foudres, (large oak cask for gentle aging) or stainless steel and/or concrete tanks to maintain that fruit character.
- **Style:** The Côtes du Rhône growing season is long and hot. The wines are known for being full-bodied, rich, and warm, with flavours of ripe red and black fruits, as well as earthy, spicy notes.



## CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE | SOUTHERN FRANCE

**Châteauneuf-du-Pape is a historic and renowned wine region in the southern Rhône, known for its Grenache-based blends & unique terroir.**

- **Grapes:** Châteauneuf-du-Pape wines are typically blends, with Grenache being the dominant grape, often combined with Syrah, Mourvèdre, and other permitted varieties.
- **Winemaking:** The Châteauneuf-du-Pape wine region was established in 1936, making it one of the first officially recognized wine growing regions in France. The wines must adhere to very strict production rules and standards. The region is known for its unique soils, including the distinctive "galets roulés" (rounded river stones) that cover the vineyards and help retain heat.
- **Style:** The wines are generally full-bodied, high in alcohol, and exhibit flavours of ripe red and black fruits, as well as earthy, herbal, and spicy notes.



## PRIMITIVO DI PUGLIA | SOUTHERN ITALY

Primitivo Puglia IGT is a ripe, fruit-forward red wine produced in the Puglia region of Italy, which is the traditional home of the Primitivo grape variety.

- **Grapes:** 100% Primitivo. The name comes from the Latin term 'primitivus' which means early ripening. DNA analysis has confirmed it is identical to the Zinfandel grape grown extensively in California.
- **Winemaking:** Primitivo is generally fermented in stainless steel tanks to preserve freshness and acidity and sometimes aged in older oak barrels to soften and impart a light vanilla style to it.
- **Style:** The focus is on soft, smooth texture with ripe, jammy flavours like blackberry, fig, and strawberry. They often have notes of pepper & spice.

**HAVE | FUN**

