

WINE PRODUCT INFORMATION

Wine Glossary of Terms:

Acetic Acid:

Chemical name for the major component of vinegar. Acetic acid is produced in wine from alcohol by acetic acid bacteria in the presence of air

Acidic:

Or tart, or sour. All wines contain some acids, mostly tartaric. Younger wines usually contain more acidic than older ones.

Acidity:

The sour taste in wine and foods. Acidity contributes to the keeping ability of wines.

Aftertaste:

The taste left in your mouth after sipping wine.

Aging:

Storing the wine under precise conditions to improve the wine. Aging can be done in oak barrels or in the bottle.

Alcohol:

Alcohol in wine provides texture, flavor and vinosity as well as providing balance and stability. The primary alcohol is known as ethyl alcohol or ethanol.

Alsace:

Alsace is a famous region in eastern France bordering with Germany. The wines of Alsace are of high quality and use varieties such as Gewurztraminer, Sylvaner, Riesling, Pinot Blanc, and Muscat.

Angelica:

A sweet dessert wine, usually amber in color and lacking any distinctive flavor. It

is often made from leftover lots of wine usually sold as Alter wine.

Anjou:

A wine sub-region in the Loire valley in France best known for its rose wines.

Aperitif wine:

Any wine served before a meal.

Appearance:

A term used in the evaluation of wine to describe whether a wine is crystal clear, cloudy, or contains sediment. It has nothing to do with the color of a wine.

Appellation:

Term used to describe the location of the vineyard that the grapes were grown for a specific wine.

Aroma:

Smell or fragrance from a wine that has its origins in the grape as opposed to "bouquet", which has its origin in the processing or the aging.

Astringency:

Sensation of taste, caused by tannins in the wine, which is best described as mouth drying, bitter, or pucker.

Auslese:

German word meaning selection. German law requires auslese be made from select bunches of grapes riper than those which were discarded.

Baking:

This term refers to the process of producing Sherry by deliberately oxidizing wine through heating and aerating it for a period of several weeks.

Balance:

A wine in which the tastes of acid, sugar, tannins, alcohol, and flavor are in harmony is said to be "in balance."

Balling:

A density scale used to determine the sugar content in water based solutions, like wine.

Barossa Valley:

The best known region in Australia for table wines.

Barrel Fermenting:

The act of fermenting white grape juice in barrels instead of using the more usual stainless steel tanks.

Barrique:

French wine barrel with a capacity of about sixty gallons.

BATF:

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, they collect the alcohol taxes and administer regulations.

Beaujolais:

Very well known wine region in east central France. Beaujolais wines are light, fresh, fruity and ready to drink at a very young age.

Beerenauslese:

German word meaning, "berry selection", these wines are made from grapes that have been individually plucked from the vines not in clusters to insure maximum ripeness.

Bench Graft:

Method of putting a desired variety of grape on a root stock by cutting both and putting them together like a jigsaw puzzle.

Big:

Tasting term that refers to a heavily flavored, often tannic and alcoholic wine.

Binning:

Storage of a newly bottled wine in bins for aging prior to labeling and shipping.

Black Rot:

Fungus disease of grape vines.

Blanc de Blanc:

A Champagne term referring to white wine made from white grapes usually Chardonnay.

Blanc de Noir:

A Champagne term referring to white wines made from black grapes, usually Pinot Noir.

Blending:

Combining two or more grape varieties, types or lots to improve the final blend or cover up a flaw in the wine. Many blends are much more complex than a similar wine made with a single grape variety.

Body:

A tasting term used to describe the viscosity, thickness, consistency or texture of a wine. A wine with body often has a higher alcohol or sugar content.

Bordeaux:

The most important wine region in France from an economic point of view and possibly wine quality as well.

Botrytis Cinerea:

Fungus that grows on the skin of certain grapes as they ripen on the vine. Called "noble rot" because it can turn ordinary grapes into great dessert wines.

Bouquet:

The smell or fragrance in wine which has its origins in the wine production or aging process.

Breathing:

Letting a bottle of wine stand for several minutes to several hours after pulling the cork out.

Brix:

The unit of measurement for soluble solids (sugar) in ripening grapes.

Brut:

French term referring to the driest Champagne.

Bulk:

Wine sold by the tank from one winery to another to usually produce lesser quality inexpensive Generic wine blends.

Bulk (process):

A method of producing sparkling wines in a large tank instead of secondary fermentation in the bottle. Also called the Charmat Process.

Bung:

Stopper for barrels.

Bung Hole:

The hole in the side of a wine barrel through which the barrel is filled and emptied.

Burgundy:

One of the great wine regions of France. The classic red burgundy is produced only with Pinot Noir grapes and the white with Chardonnay.
Generic name for any of the common red wines produced and sold by California wineries.

Carbonic Maceration:

A process where the grapes are not crushed but fermented whole. This process is used to make nouveau wines and should be drunk early; they do not benefit from aging.

Cask:

Any wooden container used for wine aging and storing.

Chablis:

Wine region in central France with wines produced from 100% Chardonnay grapes. Generic name used in America for table white wines.

Champagne:

Any sparkling wine produced in the Champagne region of France.

Chianti:

Medium to full-bodied table red wine from Tuscany in Italy. Chiantis are blends but the primary grape is Sangiovese.

Claret:

Common name for the red wines of Bordeaux.

Clarity:

A subjective term for the absence of cloudiness or sediment in a wine.

Clean:

The wine has no off odors or tastes.

Climate Region:

A system for identifying how well certain grapes can grow in an area by calculating the amount of average daily heat it receives.

Clone:

A copy of an extremely desirable vine. Often whole vineyards can be propagated by grafting or budding one vine.

Clos:

In France, a walled or enclosed vineyard.

Cold Fermentation:

A method of fermenting grape juice at a lower temperature to produce wines with as much fruit and varietal character as possible.

Complex:

A complex wine is many faceted, each sip brings out another flavor or nuance.

Cork:

Stopper for wine bottles originally made from the bark of a cork oak tree.

Corked:

A sour moldy smell in a bottle of wine caused by a defective cork that is often discovered only after the wine has been opened.

Cote:

The name given in France to a slope covered by vineyards.

Cru:

The French word for growth that usually refers to the high quality growth classification.

Crush:

“The Crush” refers to the time of year that the grapes are harvested and fermented. “Crush” is the process of opening the grapes to extract the juice and separate the stems.

Cultured Yeast:

A pure culture of known strains of yeast selected specifically for their abilities to ferment wines promptly without producing any off flavors.

Cutting:

A piece of grapevine cut from last year’s growth in the winter to propagate new vines in the spring.

Cuvee:

A specific batch of a specific vintage.

Degorgement (Disgorging):

The removal of the plug containing spent yeast from the Champagne bottle just prior to adding dosage and final corking.

Demi-:

French combining form used with a noun to denote half of whatever it is.

Demi-sec:

Champagne term meaning medium sweet, but literally means half dry.

Dessert Wine:

Any class of sweet wines, usually fortified to a higher alcohol level, served with or as a dessert. Common dessert wines include but are not limited to Ports, Sherries, Muscatel and Madiera.

Distillation:

The process of removing alcohol and flavors from wine to create Brandy. The wine is boiled and the vapors are channeled into a cooling tube condensing the vapors into high alcohol, high flavored Brandy.

Dom Perignon:

A Benedictine monk often called the father of Champagne. He was the cellar master at the Abbey of Hautvillers in the late 1600's and early 1700's. According to the legend, he was the first to trap the CO₂ in the bottle produced by secondary fermentation of wine. He is said to have stated after his first taste "Come quickly I'm drinking stars". This is legend not historically backed fact.

Domaine:

A term used on wine labels meaning a wine estate.

Drained Pomace:

The solids left over in a crush tank after draining off the juice.

Dry:

A "dry" wine has little or no sweetness and has very little or no sugar left after

fermentation.

Early Harvest:

Wines that are produced in the coolest years when the grapes could not ripen to full maturity. The wines are low in alcohol, light, easy to drink despite high acid levels. They do not age well.

Enology:

The science and technical study of winemaking.

Enzymes:

Proteins in all plants and animals that control reactions that take place during metabolism. It is the reason yeast produces alcohol from the sugars in grape juice to produce wine.

Estate Bottled:

A phrase found on some labels meaning that the wine was owned, farmed, produced, and bottled by the winery owners.

Ethenol:

The type of alcohol produced by yeast fermentation of sugar.

Excise Tax:

A tax placed on produced products not imported goods.

Extra Dry:

In Champagne this term means extra sweet. In Sherries this term means extra dry.

Fermentation:

The process of yeast growth in grape juice or other sugar solution in which the sugar is transformed into alcohol and CO₂. The CO₂ bubbles to the surface of the solution giving the appearance of boiling.

Filter:

To Strain out the solids from a solution.

Filtration:

The act of passing the fermented wine through something to separate the liquid and the solids. In the past asbestos was often used as the filter medium. It is no longer used as such.

Fining:

The act of clarifying or removing undesirable components from wine. This is done by adding a pure material that reacts with the undesirable component. The fining agents are typically gelatin, egg whites, clay and active carbon. Blood has been used in the past but is no longer approved.

Finish:

The last impression left in the mouth after tasting a wine.

Fortified Wine:

Any wine to which Brandy has been added to raise the alcohol content and stabilize the wine.

Generic Wine:

A blended wine of ordinary quality without any varietal characteristics.

Grand Cru:

A French category of great vineyards.

Graves:

Wine region that surrounds the city of Bordeaux.

Haut:

French term for high in a geographical sense. When added to another word it means higher up the hill or river than the word it is being compared to.

Haut Medoc:

A wine sub region of Bordeaux in the up river portion and considered the best part of the Medoc for wine quality.

Hectare:

A unit size of farmland in Europe approximately 2.5 acres.

Hermitage:

A wine type grown on a group of specific vineyards in the Rhone region of France. These wines are known for their high tannins and age very well.

Hybrid:

A new variety of grape developed by crossing two or more different varieties of grapes.

Ice Wine:

Wine made from frozen grapes. The grapes are pressed while frozen and never fermented with the solids.

Imperial:

An oversized bottle with a capacity of about six liters.

Jerez:

A small city in southern Spain and the birthplace of Sherry.

Jug Wines:

A common name given to wines sold at modest prices in larger containers also called generic.

Kabinett:

A German classification of wines ranking just below Spaetlese.

Lactic Acid:

A natural organic acid that occurs in many foods but is found in only trace amounts in wine unless the wine has undergone secondary malo-lactic fermentation.

Late Harvest:

A term used to describe a wine with grapes harvested late in the year when very or even over ripe. Often used in dessert wines because of the high residual sugar content.

Leaker:

A bottle of wine that has wine seeping out through the cork. This indicates a bad cork or seal and most likely the wine has also gone bad.

Lees:

Singular, the sediment that falls to the bottom of the tank during processing.

Legs:

The sheets or tears that fall down the inside of a wine glass when swirled. They help the drinker with insights as to how full bodied the wine will be.

Liebfraumilch:

Denotes that the wine comes from Rheinhessen in Germany. Literally means mothers milk and is an ordinary table wine.

Liter:

The standard volume of measurement in the metric system.

Loire Valley:

One of the larger wine producing regions of France.

Maceration:

The act of soaking grape skins in the juice prior to fermentation to extract all the flavor possible.

Madeira:

Portuguese island that produces a rich, Sherry like dessert wine called Madeiras.

Magnum:

An oversized bottle that contains twice the amount of wine in an average 750ml bottle. The word magnum is used for a great wine in that size and 1.5 are used for more ordinary wines.

Malic Acid:

A natural organic acid that occurs in ripe grapes. It is the second most abundant organic acid found in most grape varieties.

Malo-lactic Fermentation:

A bacterial fermentation which sometimes occurs after the primary alcohol fermentation. This secondary fermentation converts the malic acid into lactic acid and CO₂ lowering the overall acidity of the wine. Modern cultures have been created to bring on this fermentation.

Margaux:

Great wine sub-region of Bordeaux in France.

Marsala:

A dessert wine of Italy made in Sicily, not fruity as Ports or Madeiras.

Medoc:

Red wine district within the Bordeaux region of France that produces many of the greatest red wines of the world.

Mendoza:

The major wine district in Argentina that produces about three-quarters of that country's wines.

Methode Champenoise:

The traditional, expensive and time-consuming method of bottle fermenting sparkling wines.

Meursault:

A region in Burgundy famous for their white wines made from all Chardonnay grapes.

Mosel:

A German wine region famous for its Rieslings and one of the world's most

northern vineyards.

Must:

The result of crushing the grapes before fermentation that include the juice, skins, seeds, stems and anything else that found its way into the crusher.

Napa Valley:

The most famous American wine region located in northern California. With more than 250 producing wineries this is also a very popular tourist destination.

Noble Rot:

Common name for *Botrytis cinerea*, the famous fungus of many dessert wines.

Nouveau:

A term used to describe a wine, usually made by Carbonic Maceration, that captures the freshest and fruitiest characters of the wine. Usually released early these wines have no aging potential.

Oak:

A type of hardwood used to make barrels to age and impart specific flavors to wines.

Oporto:

The seaport city in Portugal that all port wines *must* be shipped from.

Osmosis:

The natural movement of fluids through a membrane toward a solution of higher concentration.

Quillage:

This is the act of topping barrels with wine to keep them full and not exposed to air because of evaporation. Recent studies have shown that topping the barrels actually adds oxygen rather than protecting the wine from it.

Overcropped:

A grapevine that carries too much fruit for it to ripen. The solution is prudent

pruning.

Oxidation:

An Adverse change in the wines flavor, appearance, or composition due to exposure to air.

Pauillac:

One of the great sub regions of Medoc. Many famous vineyards are located here and estate bottle almost all the wine produce so that very little gets sold as just Paullac.

Phylloxera:

A microscopic aphid that lives on vine roots and sucks the juice. The aphid kills European wine varieties but the American vine roots are resistant. Phylloxera was defeated worldwide by grafting European wines to the resistant American roots.

Phylloxera Biotype B:

A mutant form of the original that successfully attack and destroy formerly resistant rootstocks. There are rootstocks that are immune to this type as well.

Pomace:

The residue, composed mostly of skins, seeds and pulp, left over after fermentation.

Port:

Any fortified wine shipped from the Oporto region in Portugal. Other countries use the name for similar wines.

Pouilly Fuisse':

Widely considered one of the finest dry white wines produced in southern Burgundy, it is made solely from Chardonnay.

Pouilly Fume:

A dry white wine produced in the Loire Valley out of Sauvignon grapes.

Press:

The act of squeezing the last of the juice from the pomace and the machine that does it.

Press Wine (Juice):

Far more tannic juice and wine made from pressing fresh pomace.

Pruning:

The act of cutting off various parts of the grapevine to control shape, growth and quality.

Pump Over:

The pumping of wine from the bottom of a fermenting tank over the top of the solid cap to keep it wet and extract as much color and flavor as possible.

Punch Down:

Pushing the cap down into the liquid for the same reasons as Pump Over but this method is used in smaller tanks.

Racking:

Removing the juice in the tank from the sediment below. Usually by the use of a racking valve placed about 20 inches above the bottom of the tank.

Residual Sugar:

The measurement of unfermented sugar remaining in the wine after fermentation and the key to the sweetness of a wine.

Retsina:

A Greek table wine held in contact with pine resin for flavor.

Rhein:

The German spelling of Rhine a famous wine river that runs northward along

Germany's western border.

Rhine:

Famous river in Germany and the name given to the wines produced in this area.

Rhone:

A major river in southeastern France and the name of the wines produced in the vineyards along the river.

Riddling:

The hand turning of racked wine to disrupt settlement.

Rioja:

Spain's best and most well known wine producing region.

Rosato:

Italian name for rose wines.

Rose:

French word for pink table wine.

Rosso:

Italian for red wine.

Rouge:

French word for red wine.

Saint-Emilion:

Town to the south east of Bordeaux that gives its name to the wines produced there. Saint Emilion wines are the biggest and heartiest of all the reds in this region and take the longest to age and soften to drinkability.

Sancerre:

Small but well established wine growing region on the upper Loire valley not far from Chablis. Only Sauvignon blanc grapes are grown here to produce the wine.

Sauternes:

A region in southeastern France that produces dessert wines Semillion and Sauvignon varieties.

Sec:

French term meaning dry but on a Champagne bottle it means sweet.

Secco:

Italian for dry.

Secondary Fermentation:

Any fermentation that takes place after the primary yeast fermentation has been completed.

Sekt:

German word for sparkling wine.

Sherry:

Fortified wine made in Jerez region of Spain.

Soave:

A type of Italian white table wine.

Solera:

A method used to produce consistent wines by blending in newer wines as older wine is taken out for bottling. Often used in Sherry production.

Sommelier:

An employee at a restaurant that is in charge of the wine selection and quality control of those wines.

Sonoma:

A coastal county north of San Francisco that shares a border with Napa county and produces some wines as fine as some Napa wines.

Spakling Wine:

Wine that contains enough CO₂ to make it bubbly.

Spatlese:

German word meaning late harvest. These wines are sweet and high in quality.

Spumante:

Italian word for sparkling wine.

Still Wine:

Wine that is not sparkling.

Sugaring:

The adding of common sugar during the fermentation process to raise the alcohol level in the wine.

Sulfur Dioxide:

A chemical added to wines to stabilize the wine.

Sulfite:

The dissolved form of sulfur dioxide.

Table Wine:

Legally defined category of wine with lower than 14% alcohol content.

Tannin:

Bitter tasting material in wines that is partially responsible for preserving wines during the aging process. Tannin in wine comes from the skins, stems and seeds of the grape and softens with time.

Tartaric Acid:

The most prominent natural acid of grapes, juice or wine. Cream of Tartar is a by-product of the wine making process.

Trockenbeerenauslese:

The highest category of sweet dessert wine made in Germany. The word means dry berry selection, which means the Botrytis raisined grapes are individually picked so that only fully dried grapes are used to produce the wine.

Tuscany:

The wine region in central Italy that produces Chianti.

Ullage:

The empty space between the cork and the wine in a bottle. Used as an indicator as to how well the bottle has been sealed and stored over a long period of time.

Varietal:

A term used to describe wines made from a single variety of grape.

Vendange:

French term for the harvest of grapes and the act of harvesting the grapes.

Vermouth:

A fortified wine, both red or white, that has been flavored with herbs and barks.

Vin:

French word for wine.

Vin Santo:

Made only in Tuscany this is a sweet dessert wine made by pressing dried Malvasia and Trebbiano grapes and allowing them to ferment at their own pace for as many as a couple of years. The phrase means wine for the saints.

Vinegar:

Literally means sour wine. Can be produced from almost any fruit.

Vinifera:

The scientific name of the primary species of vitis (vines) Used for winemaking.

Vinification:

All the operations, procedures, and processes involved in winemaking.
(Winemaking.)

Vintage:

The year that the grapes were harvested.

Vintage Wine:

Wine that is produced by at least 95% of the grapes that were harvested in that year and so stated on the label.

Vintner:

Originally a term used for the person that grows and produces the wine.
Commonly used to describe anyone in the wine business.

Viticulture:

The science, art and study of growing grapes.

Wild Yeast:

Any of the thousands of airborne yeast varieties. Not commonly used in winemaking because of the unknown airborne strains.

Wine:

The natural beverage produced by yeast fermentation of grape juice or must.

Wine Vinegar:

Vinegar made from wine. Kitchen vinegar may be made from apples, pears or any other cheap fruit.

Winery:

A place where wine is made. Some have a building or several buildings or a cave or open-air tanks.

Yeast:

A unicellular microorganism which occurs naturally in the air, especially in fruit growing regions. Both wild and cultured yeast can quickly metabolize natural sugars into alcohol and CO₂, called fermentation.

Yeast Lees:

Solid sediment, mostly spent yeast that settles to the bottom of a fermentation tank after completed fermentation.