Minnesota Wine Tasting and Appreciation

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Who am I?
Red wine vs. White wine making

THE *Basic Rule* to Remember:

- White wine is pressed *before* fermentation
  - So, only the juice is fermented

- Red wine is pressed *after* fermentation
  - Fermentation with juice, skins, seeds, & pulp together
LESSON ONE
What is dry, off-dry, semi-sweet, sweet...?

• A **dry** wine is a wine with *no residual sugar* left in solution, i.e., during fermentation ALL sugars have been consumed and changed into alcohol by yeast

• Off-dry, semi-sweet, and sweet wines are wines with *un-fermented sugars* remaining in the wine

• Dry is 0%-0.7% Residual Sugar (RS)
• Off-dry is 0.7% to 1.5% RS
• Semi-sweet is 1.5% to 3% RS
• Sweet is over 3% RS
LESSON TWO

What does “varietal” mean? What is a grape variety?

• A “varietal” is a specific type of grape plant, aka a *cultivar*

• *Ex: Chardonnay* is a white grape variety originated in *Burgundy*, France.
  • Note: *(Burgundy is a place, not a grape!)*

• *Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Frontenac and Marquette* are varieties of red wine-grapes

• *Riesling, Pinot Gris/Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, Itasca and La Crescent* are varieties of white wine-grapes
LESSON THREE
What does VINTAGE mean?

- The vintage date is the year that the grapes were grown and harvested, (not the year it was bottled!)

- Grapes give one crop per year

- Harvest is August through... November
  - Except for Late Harvest and Ice Wines

- Some years have better weather conditions and the grapes are better, so the vintage year is important
Common Wine Faults:

Vinegar smell – Acetic acid

Nail Polish – Ethyl acetate

Burnt match – Sulfur compounds

Oxidized – Tired, muted, not Fresh-smelling, flat

Corked – TCA, wet-cardboard, musty, wet dog
Tasting wine, seeing, smelling and touching wine too!

• How we taste
• How we smell
• How to taste
Taste buds
“Retro-Nasal Olfaction”
How To Taste

- Look, color, clarity, age
- Swirl, aerate
- Smell, aroma vs. bouquet
- Swirl & Smell again!
- Taste, “3-times”
- Retro-nasal effect: After swallowing, breathe in your mouth and out your nose
- Finish...
You “hear” wine too!

• CHEERS!!!
Aroma Wheel

- Primary, secondary, tertiary aromas & flavors

- Wheel has the major descriptors, but there are 1000’s of others...

- To buy: winearomawheel.com
  - $6 each

- These are copyrighted
Taste wine number 1

- Carlos Creek Winery
- 2019 Petit Ami
- Alexandria, Minnesota
- $11.49
- The wine is dry, no residual sugar
Petite Amie

- Released in 2005
- Cross of Muscat & Swenson Red
- Cold-hardy to minus 25F
- Aromas of rose, violet and grapefruit/lemon
- Created by private breeder David Macgregor, South Haven, MN
Taste wine number 2

- Parley Lake Winery
- 2018/19 Frontenac Gris
- Waconia MN
- $15.99
- Aromas & flavors of peach, apricot, ginger, etc.
- Wine is off-dry with a hint of sweetness
THREE Frontenacs!
...noir, gris, blanc
...black, gray, white
Taste wine number 3

- Chankaska Creek Winery
- 2018 MN Marquette
- Kasota, MN
- 16.99
Marquette

- Released in 2006
- Related to Pinot Noir
- Red fruits, cherry, etc.
- Pepper and spice
- Earthy component
- Can be made as a dry red or a great dry rosé
What is wine?

“Wine is sunlight held together by water.” - Galileo

Above all, great wines have an authentic sense of place that derives from the vine, the soil, the climate, and the people tending the vines and the wines.

Great wine is made in the VINEYARD much more so than in the winery...
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