

A question of taste

International wine fair Vinexpo lands at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre next Tuesday and is expected to draw 15,000 visitors, many of whom will be hoping to take part in the nation's burgeoning wine market. The *Post* offers a crash course in wine appreciation for those planning a trip to Wan Chai for a taste of the action.

Wine servings

Serving temperature

18°C to 15°C



Large red wine
Glass shape with a wider mouth offers more exposure to air, allowing wine to breathe

Wines/grape varieties
Older red wines with complex aromas such as pinot noir, burgundy, Médoc, Rioja

14°C to 13°C



Small red wine
Narrower glass directs the bouquet to the nose

Light red wines such as Beaujolais, shiraz

14°C



Fortified wine
Smaller than a wine glass, but with a rounded bowl. Allows concentration of aromas on nose

Port, Madeira, mistelle, Marsala

14°C to 11°C



Sherry
Even smaller than a port glass, perfect to accentuate fruity aromas

Fino, manzanilla, pale cream, amontillado, dark cream

12°C to 11°C



Large white wine
A little smaller than a small red wine glass, but with a wide bowl

Chardonnay, white bordeaux, verdejo, burgundy

11°C to 10°C



Small white wine
Glass shape traps the aromas of the wine

Aromatic light whites: riesling, gewürztraminer

10°C



Rosé wine
Large opening directs wine to tip of the tongue, increasing sensitivity to sweetness

Young rosés: syrah, weissherbst, carignan, Cigales

8°C



Sweet wine
Rounded bowl allows the wine to be directed towards the back of the mouth

Sweet, unfortified wines: muscat, ice wine

9°C to 7°C



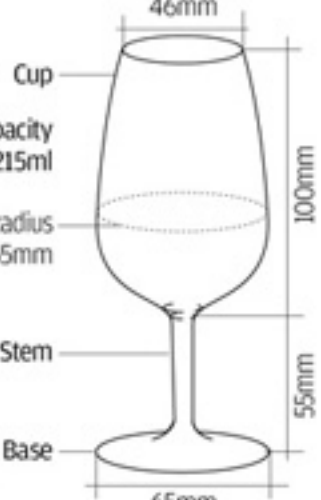
Flute
Tall narrow bowl keeps wine cold, allowing appreciation of the bubbles

Champagne, cava, vinho verde, Asti Spumante

Tasting, step by step

1 Serving

Wine tasting glass standard dimensions
(vary within 2-3mm)




Fill the glass to 1/4 or 1/3 of its volume



The wine bottle
Most common volume is 75cl (750ml), but sizes vary

2 Visual appreciation

Looking at the wine often gives a sense of anticipation of the sensations to follow



View against a bright and white background

Hold by the stem


Transparent and clean glass

Evaluate the wine:

- a Colour**
Hue and depth of intensity
- b Clarity**
Should be brilliantly clear. Haze, blur or cloudiness denotes unacceptable wine
- c Viscosity, bubbles**
Note any resistance to flow and the effervescence (more typically for sparkling wines)


3 Aroma appreciation

First smell the wine before swirling




Faulty wine
Uncharacteristic, unpleasant or vinegar smell means wine could be oxidised, has acetic acid or has cork contamination

Most volatile aromas



Swirl the wine glass

This movement releases the less volatile aromas



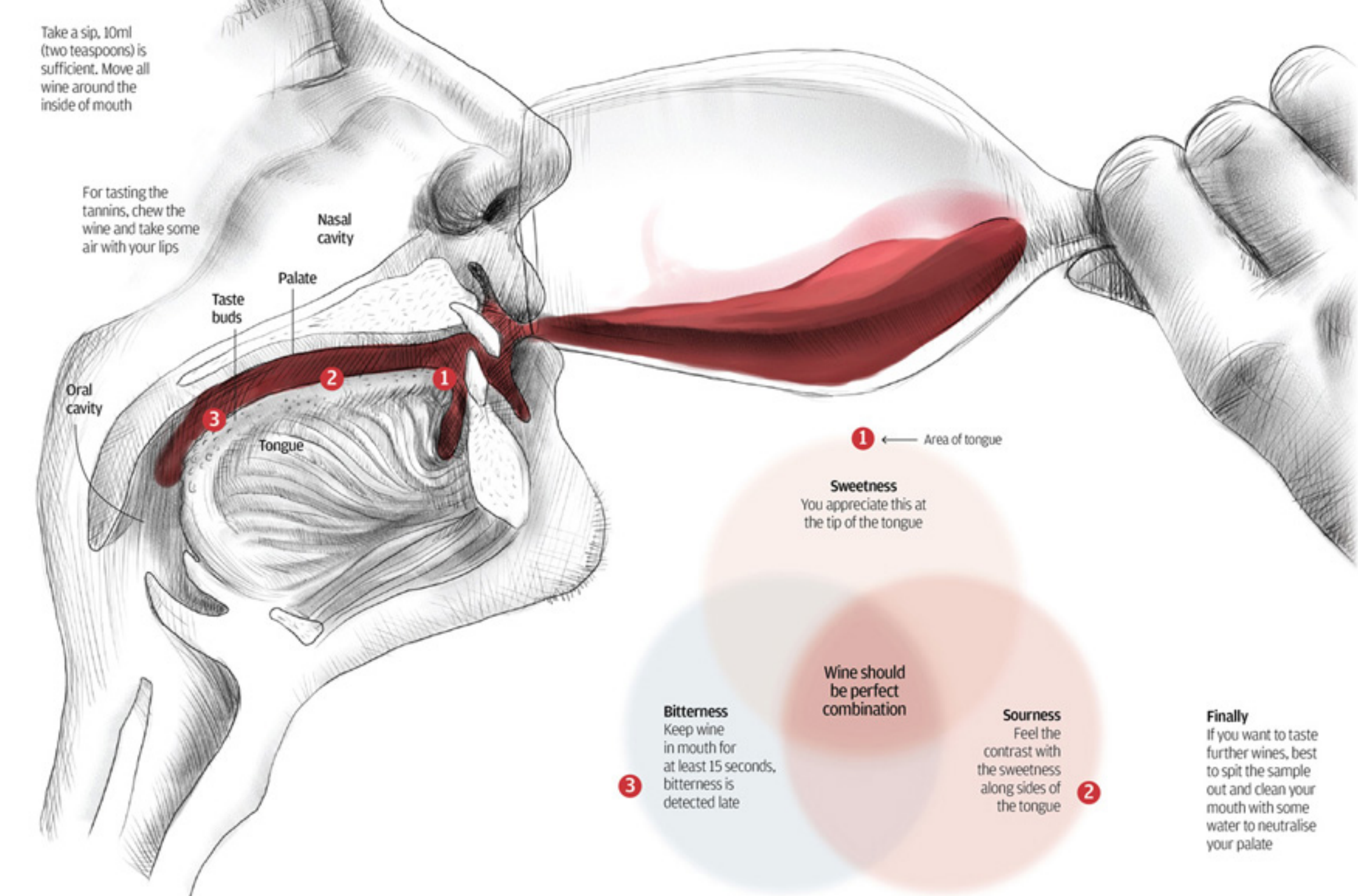
Immediately smell the swirled wine

Most aged wine
Smells of spices, wood, leather

Young wine
Flowers, fruits

4 In-mouth sensations

Take a sip, 10ml (two teaspoons) is sufficient. Move all wine around the inside of mouth



For tasting the tannins, chew the wine and take some air with your lips

Nasal cavity

Palate

Taste buds

Oral cavity

Tongue

1 Area of tongue

Sweetness
You appreciate this at the tip of the tongue

2

3

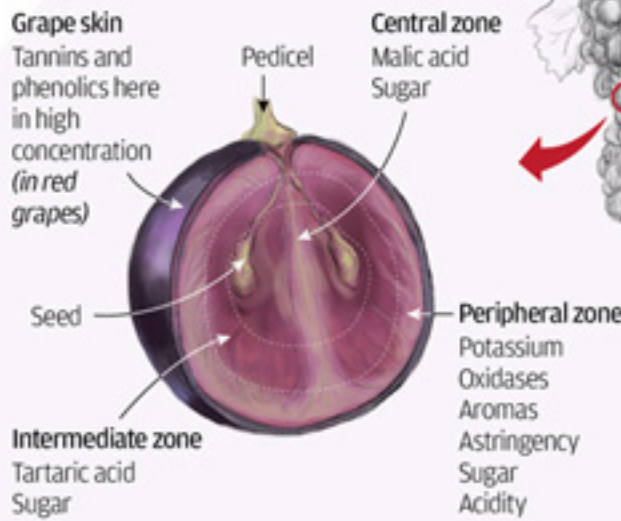
Bitterness
Keep wine in mouth for at least 15 seconds, bitterness is detected late

Sourness
Feel the contrast with the sweetness along sides of the tongue

Finally
If you want to taste further wines, best to spit the sample out and clean your mouth with some water to neutralise your palate

Wine should be perfect combination

Inside a grape



Grape skin
Tannins and phenolics here in high concentration (in red grapes)

Pedicle

Central zone
Malic acid
Sugar

Seed

Intermediate zone
Tartaric acid
Sugar

Peripheral zone
Potassium
Oxidases
Aromas
Astringency
Sugar
Acidity

Where wine comes from



The colours of wine

White wines										Rosé wines				Red wines							
Greyish yellow	Greenish yellow	Pale yellow	Lemon yellow	Light gold	Golden yellow	Gold	Brownish yellow	Amber	Brown	Onion skin	Salmon	Raspberry	Copper	Brick red	Ruby	Garnet	Cherry	Purple	Blackish red		
Pinot grigio	Sauvignon blanc, verdejo	Colombard, grüner veltliner	Riesling, gewürztraminer	Chenin blanc	Chardonnay, viognier, semillon	Dessert wines, manzanilla	Sherry, mature white burgundy	Vin Santo, Tokaji	Málaga, Marsala	Rosé champagne	Rosé syrah	Rosé grenache, white zinfandel	Aged grenache	Mature pinot noir, aged bordeaux	Young pinot noir, tempranillo	Cabernet sauvignon, merlot, nebbiolo	San-giovese, zinfandel	Barbera, amarone	Shiraz, vintage port		

PALE

MODERATE

DEEP

STRAW



LEMON



GOLD



AMBER



PALE

MODERATE

DEEP

GARNET



RED



RUBY



PURPLE



THE COLOR OF WINE



[light-bodied]

Light-bodied red wines tend to have low tannin and high acidity.
e.g. Pinot Noir, Gamay



[medium-bodied]

Medium-bodied red wines tend to have moderate tannin and medium acidity.
e.g. Tempranillo, Merlot and Sangiovese



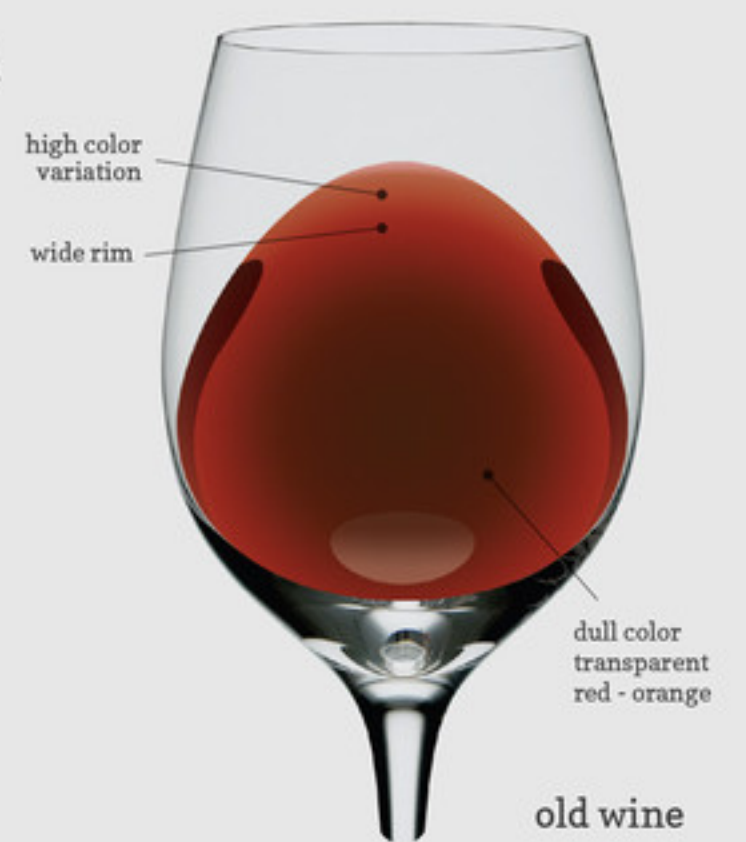
[full-bodied]

Full-bodied red wines tend to have high tannin and low acidity.
e.g. Syrah, Malbec and Cabernet Sauvignon



young wine

A young wine is at its peak level of tannin, acidity and fruit aroma.



old wine

Wine loses acidity and tannin over time but gains bottle-aged aromas of spice.



[light-bodied]

Light bodied white wines tend to have high acidity and are best enjoyed ice-cold.
e.g. Pinot Grigio, Albariño, Muscadet



[medium-bodied]

Medium bodied white wines tend to have moderate acidity. Most white wines fall into this category.
e.g. Sauvignon Blanc, Trebbiano, Chenin Blanc



[full-bodied]

Full bodied white wines have lower acidity and rich creamy flavors.
e.g. Chardonnay, Viognier, Semillon



young wine

Most white wines are meant to be enjoyed young with higher acidity and fresh flavors.

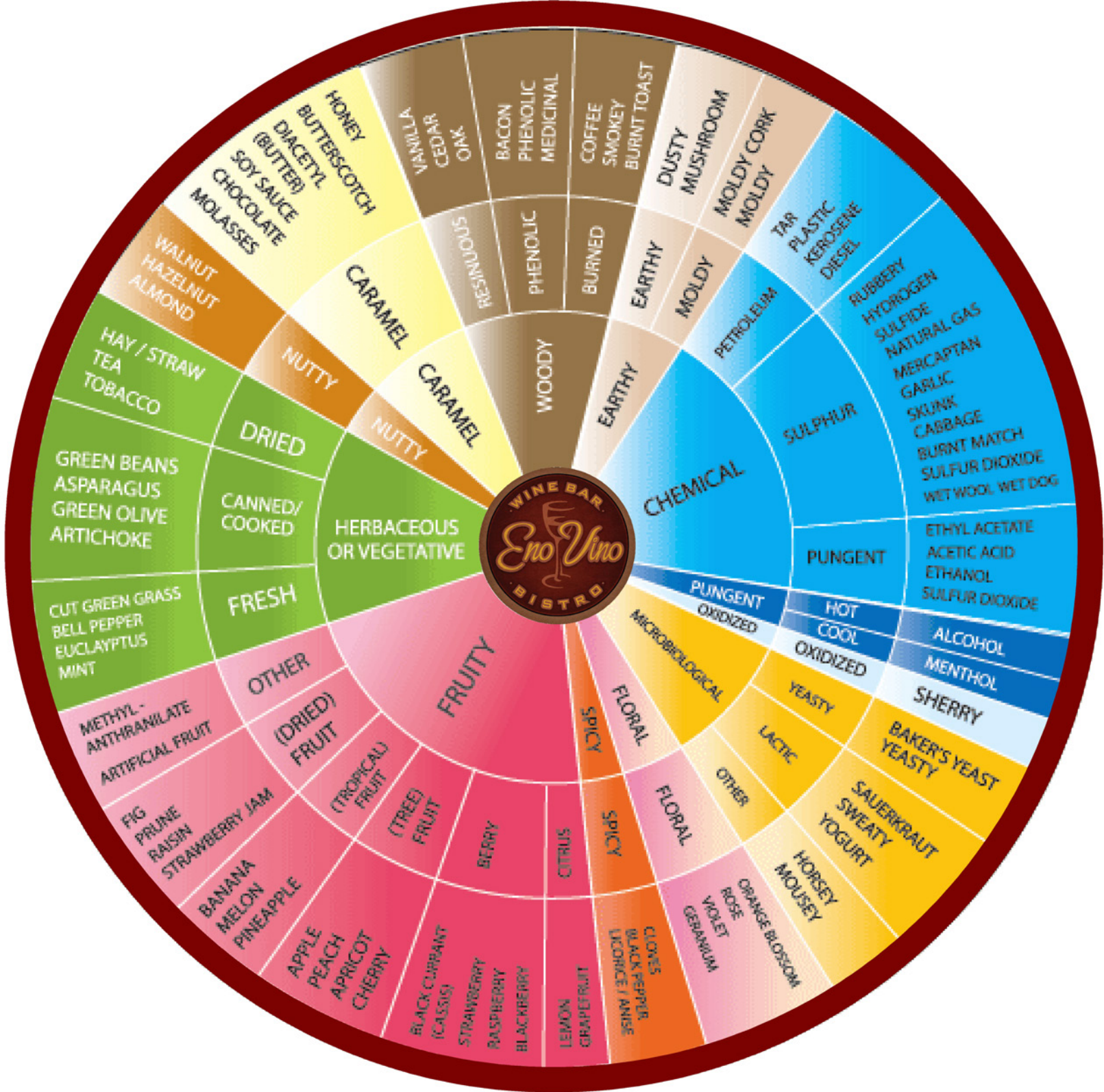


old wine

Aging is best suited for full-bodied and sweet wines. It lowers acidity but adds tertiary nutty aromas.



Designed by winefolly.com

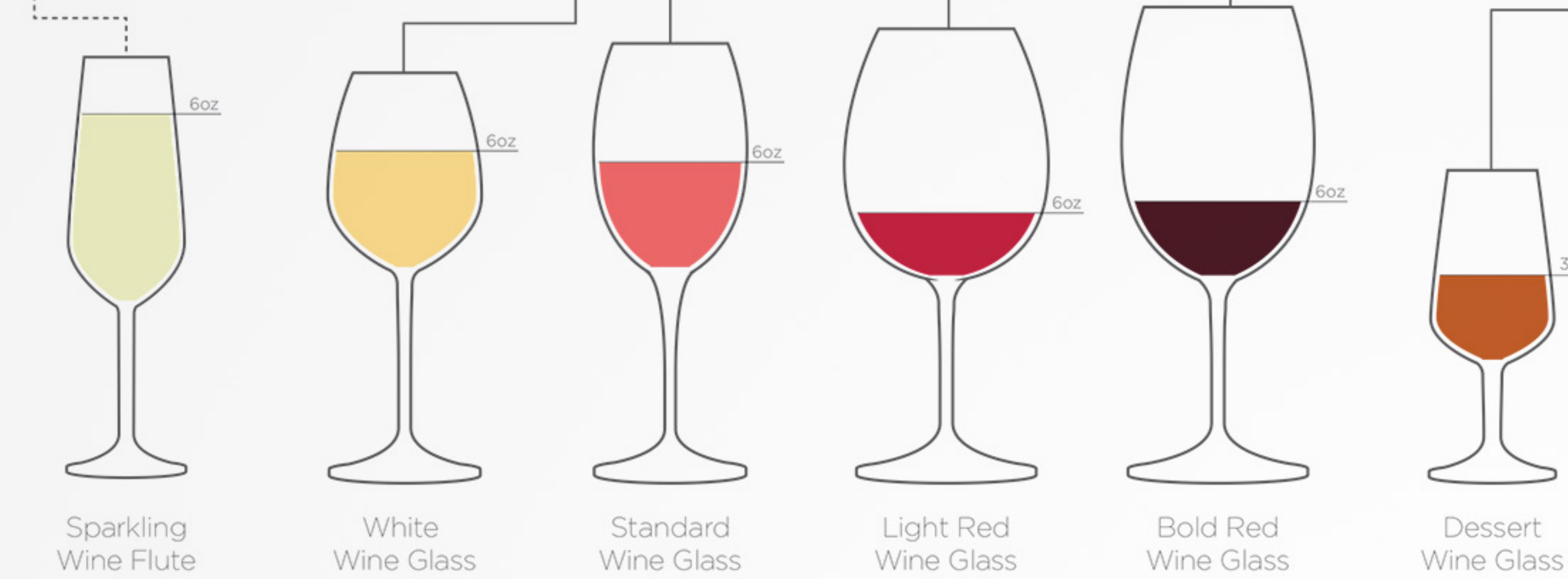


BASIC WINE GUIDE

Types of Wine



Wine Glasses



Decoding a Wine Label

The Producer

The winery's name is not always this obvious. Many bottles show the largest text after the region, such as "Burgundy." It's also common to see the wine blend named, such as "The Prisoner." If you like the wine learn what winery produced it.

The Vintage

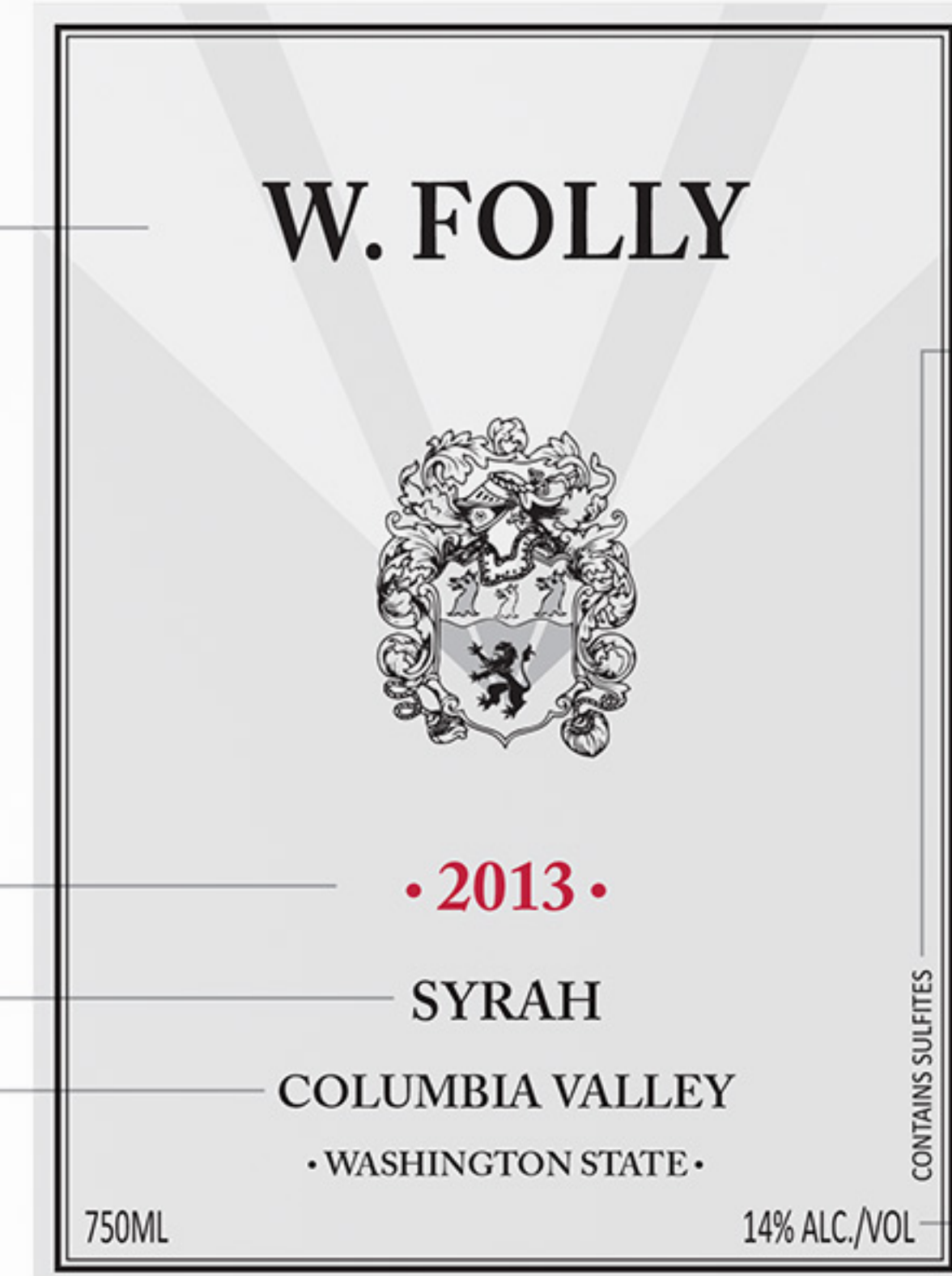
Every year, changes in weather affect the flavor of wine grapes. Some vintages taste better than others, so pay attention.

The Variety

In the US, a wine must contain at least 75% of the listed variety. In countries where wine is named after the region (vs. variety) learn the associated grapes. (i.e. *Rioja* is Tempranillo, *Beaujolais* is Gamay, & *Red Burgundy* is Pinot Noir)

The Region

Where exactly does the wine come from? Some regions are better at certain types of grape varieties than others. For instance, Columbia Valley is a better region for Syrah vs. Pinot Noir.



Sulphites

By law, wines with over 10 PPM (parts per million) must list content. Most wines range from 20-200 PPM which is nominal compared to most commercial dried fruit.

Alcohol Level

The alcohol level can help distinguish how bold the wine tastes. A red wine with over 14.5% alcohol will taste bolder than a red wine with 12.5% alcohol by volume.

120-160 CALORIES Brut-level	110-170 CALORIES Sweet wine: add 50 cal.	110-170 CALORIES	120-180 CALORIES	150-200 CALORIES	190-290 CALORIES
Alcohol by Volume 9-14%	Alcohol by Volume 9-14%	Alcohol by Volume 9-14%	Alcohol by Volume 10-15%	Alcohol by Volume 12-17%	Alcohol by Volume 14-20%
Non-Vintage ICE COLD 43°F 6°C	Unsoaked ICE COLD 43°F 6°C	COLD 48°F 9°C	COOL 54°F 12°C	CELLAR TEMP. 62°F 17°C	COOL ROOM 68°F 20°C
Vintage COLD 48°F 9°C	Oaked COOL 54°F 12°C				
⌚ Lasts open 2 Days	⌚ Lasts open 1 week	⌚ Lasts open 1 week	⌚ Lasts open 2 days	⌚ Lasts open 4 days	⌚ Lasts open 1 month

Wine with Food



Tasting Tips



Wine Aromas

Fruit

Lime
Lemon
Gooseberry
Passion Fruit
Grapefruit

Apple
Pear
Melon
Nectarine
Peach

Pineapple
Mango
Apricot
Fig
Candied

Flower/Herb

White Flowers
Rose
Orange Blossom
Honeysuckle

Vanilla
Grass
Thyme
Celery

Jalapeno
Lemongrass
Ginger
Saffron

Other/Oak

Beeswax
Honey
Caramel
Almond
Burnt Sugar

Vanilla
Butter
Nutmeg
Coconut
Saline Solution

Flint Rocks
Mushroom
Chalk Box
Cultured Cream
Petroleum

Fruit

Cranberry
Cherry
Strawberry
Raspberry

Plum
Black Currant
Blackberry
Blueberry
Olive

Tart
Sweet
Stewed
Candied
Jammy

Flower/Herb

Rose
Hibiscus
Eucalyptus
Lavender

Cinnamon
Anise
Sage
Rosemary

Vanilla
Pepper
Oregano
Mint

Other/Oak

Smoke
Tobacco
Mushroom
Leather
Vanilla

Clove
Nutmeg
Chocolate
Sandalwood
Bacon Fat

Dill
Black Tea
Graphite
Dried Leaves
Coffee

CHEMICAL COMPONENTS



RED WINE



86%

WATER

12%

ETHANOL

1%

GLYCEROL

0.4%

ORGANIC
ACIDS

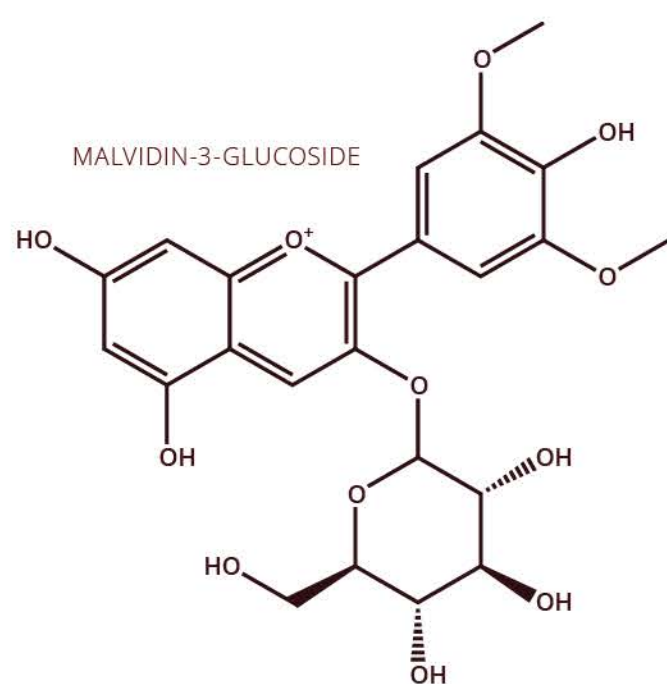
0.1%

TANNINS &
PHENOLICS

0.5%

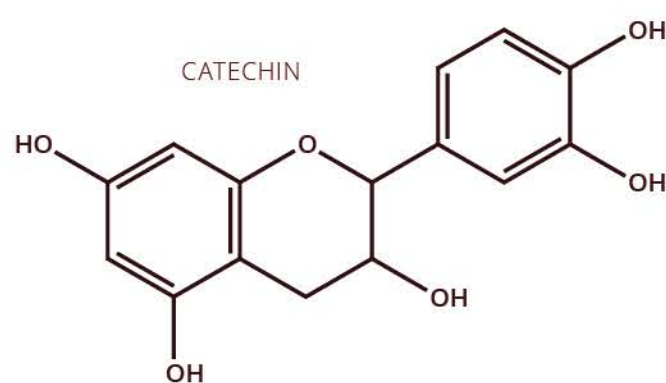
OTHER
COMPOUNDS

NOTE THAT THESE FIGURES ARE FOR AN AVERAGE COMPOSITION - EXACT PERCENTAGES WILL VARY DEPENDING ON THE PARTICULAR WINE



ANTHOCYANINS

Anthocyanins are found in the skin of grapes. As soon as the grapes are crushed, they can react with other chemicals in wine to produce polymeric pigments. Anthocyanins on their own are also coloured, but the colour varies depending on pH.

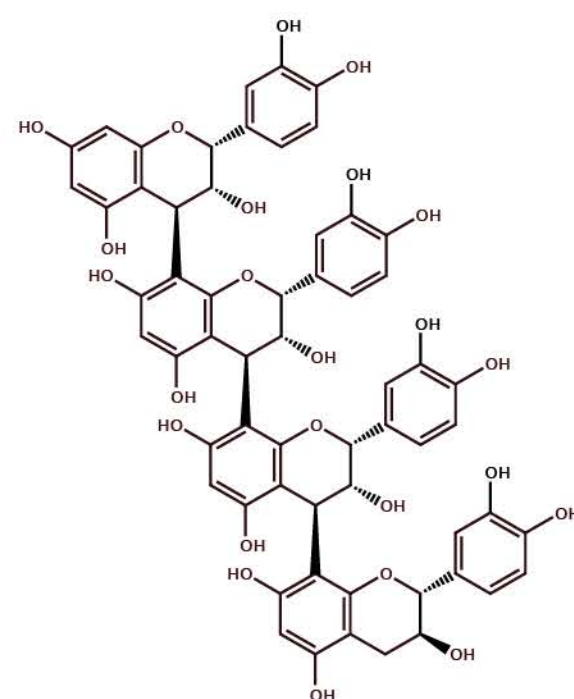


FLAVAN-3-OLS

Flavan-3-ols originate in the seeds of grapes, and are known for their bitterness. In red wine, the amount present can reach up to 800mg/L. 20mg/L is the amount required in order for a bitter taste to be imparted.

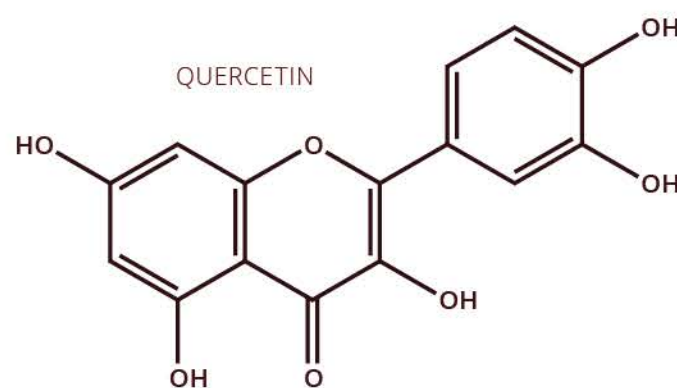


OVER
1000
DIFFERENT
COMPOUNDS



TANNINS

Tannins are polymers of other chemicals within wine. Condensed tannins are polymers of flavan-3-ols, and give red wine its astringency, causing a dry feeling in the mouth after drinking. Changes in tannin structure over time are an important factor in wine aging.



FLAVONOLS

Flavonols can help enhance the colour of red wine via a process called 'co-pigmentation'. They have potential anti-oxidant and anti-carcinogenic effects; however, their concentration in red wine is likely too low to confer significant health benefits.

