

LOU MIRANDA ESTATE

A family tradition since 1939

Lou Miranda Estate Introductory Wine Course

Contents

1 How to taste wine

- A Look
- B Swirl in your glass
- C Sniff
- D Sip
- E Swirl in your mouth
- F Spit out

2 How to analysing wines

- A How to analyse wine and common tasting descriptors
- B Basics of wine judging

3 White & red varieties and styles

- A Labelling wines in Australia
- B Classifying grapes and styles
- C White wines that age well
- D Red wines that age well
- E Flavour characteristics of white varieties
- F Flavour characteristics of red varieties

1. *How to taste wine*

How to taste wine

- Look
- Swirl in your glass
- Sniff
- Sip
- Swirl in your mouth
- Spit out

Below is a quick overview of how to taste wine, in Item 2 'How to analyse wines' you will be read how to correctly analyse the process you are taking.

A Look

- Pour a small amount of wine in a glass and place it against a white background
- What do you see?

B Swirl

- Swirl the wine around the glass to release the aroma of the wine
- The wine clings to the side of the glass. The bigger the 'legs' running down the side of the glass the higher in alcohol the wine
- How thick are the 'legs' on the rim of the glass?

C Sniff

- Place the glass near your nose and take in the aroma of the wine.
- Can you describe the smells?

D Sip

- Take a generous sip of the wine
- Where on your tongue is the wine affecting?

E Swirl in your mouth

- Swirl the wine around your mouth to get the full flavour of the wine
- Breathe in while the wine is still in your mouth so as to carry the aromas to the back of the throat
- What flavours do you taste?

F Spit out

- After tasting spit the wine into a spittoon.
- What is the aftertaste?

Now read Item A 'How to analyse wine' to help you describe the flavours, smells & taste you have just experienced.

2. How to analyse wines

The following approach to analysing wines is designed to objectively analyse wines and draw conclusions. Keep in mind, however, that you may not always like a wine, though can deem it perfectly good quality.

It is best to analyse a wine 'blind' this means that you do not look at the label, but taste the wine on the merits of its appearance, aroma & palate.

Below are common descriptive words used in order to explain the wine you are tasting.

A How to analyse wine and common tasting descriptors

Appearance

Place the wine into a suitable glass. Look at the wine against a white background. Below are the four visual elements you will analyse prior to tasting.

- Style of wine - Red, white, rose
- State of maturity - Young red wines show purple wine reflections that brown with age, young white are pale with green tints that deepen & become golden with age.
- Body - Light, medium full bodied by the viscosity & depth of colour
- Condition of the wine - Any sediments or hazes? Or star bright & luminous?

Appearance - Tasting descriptors

- Clarity - Brilliant / Star-bright / Transparent / Cloudy / Hazy / Turbid / Opaque.
- Intensity - Deep / Dark / Rich / Pale / Light / Weak.
- Hue - Watery / Lemon / Greenish / Amber / Gold / Straw / Garnet / Strawberry / Cherry / Brick.
- Maturity - Pale lemon - old gold (whites). Purple tinted - brownish (red).
- Faults - Clouds or hazes (sediment and corky bits are not faults).



Lou smells the aroma of the wine before he tastes it.

Aroma

80% of the perception of a wine derives from its aroma.

- Variety(ies) employed - What flavours do you smell? Each grape type has its own unique characteristics that vary from where they originate.
- Origin - Wines can express their terroir. Experience & theory knowledge helps.
- State of maturity - Youthful wines smell fresh (primary & winemaking characters) and mellow and soften with age.
- Winemaking techniques - Oak, lees, carbon maceration, malolactic fermentation etc.
- Condition - If not detected on the appearance, many faults are noticeable on the nose.
- Quality - The intensity, typicality, complexity of aromas provide clues about quality level.

Aroma - Tasting descriptors

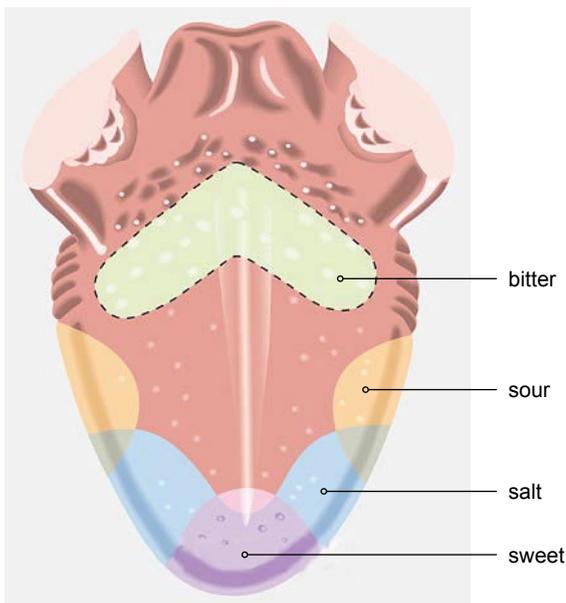
- Condition - Clean / Faulty
- Intensity - Low / Medium / High (forward or restrained)
- Fruit Character - Fruity / Floral / Vegetal / Spicy / Smoky / Minerals
- Secondary - Oak (new, old, type) / Malolactic / Lees influence
- Maturity - Youthful (green aromas) / Aged bouquet / Tired / Oxidised
- Climate - Delicate / Green hints - Full / Luscious / Ripe characters

2. How to analyse wines

Palate

Confirms the impressions from steps 1 & 2 whilst also giving us other information.

- Sweetness - Bone dry to sugary sweet, detected at the front of the tongue.
- Acid - Or sourness, level and type appears on the side of the tongue.
- Alcohol - The warmer and more rounded the sensation, the higher the alcohol level.
- Tannins - In red wines the level and type are noticeable on the sides and back of the tongue.
- Finish - Long, lingering and interesting or short and forgettable.
- Quality attributes - Concentration of fruit, balance of components, intensity, complexity level, personality are a few vital factors to consider. Very important to determine a wine's cellaring potential.



Palate - Tasting descriptors

- Sweetness - Bone dry / Off-dry / Medium / Sweet / Luscious / Honey / Treacle / Syrup / Cloying
- Acid - Flabby / Low / Balanced crisp / Acidic / Racy / Drying
- Alcohol - Low / Medium / High / Warm / Hot
- Tannin - Soft / Velvety / Silky / Powdered / Grippy / Hard / Astringent / Extracted / Green
- Body - Thin / Light / Medium / Full / Voluptuous / Heavy
- Fruit Intensity - Low / Restrained / Delicate / Medium / Pronounced
- Fruit Character - Fresh / Pure / Savoury edge / Mineral edge / ripeness
- Winemaking - Nutty (lees) / Creamy & grippy (oak) / Type of oak / Buttery (malolactic / Maceration level / Carbonic maceration (viscous)
- Length - Short / Ok / Persistent

Conclusions

- Variety - Primary fruit characters, acid, sweetness, tannins, alcohol, style of winemaking
- Origin - 1. Restrained/forward, fruit character & Style, acid, complexity.
2. Secondary fruit, colour, structure, clarity, tannin, finesse, length.
3. Tertiary characters, winemaking influences
- Vintage - Colour, Integration, knowledge of vintage characters
- Age - Tannin character, bouquet development, loss of primary characters
- Quality - Intensity (nose & palate), balance, concentration, length, personality, depth, complexity.

How analyse wines

B The basics of wine judging

Wine is a sensory experience. This creates problems in setting criteria or its judgement as everyone's sensory perception is unique, and varies according to many factors - including time of day, health, emotional state etc. Wine judging is an attempt to objectively assess wines according to scale that is absolute. It is based on the premise that wine has measurable attributes.

The criteria for analysis in wine shows is based on measuring quality attributes of given wines against those of similar specifications (ie same variety, region, vintage, price point).

The Australian show judging system works on a twenty point scale with maximum points detailed
3 points for appearance
7 points for aroma
10 points for palate

C Main wine faults

Sulphur Compounds

During fermentation a range of Sulphur compounds can be produced. This can begin as unpleasant characters such as hydrogen sulphide (rotten egg gas) to more pungent compounds such as garlic or burnt rubber (mercaptans). Hydrogen sulphite can be removed from wine and should not be present in bottled wine.

Volatile Acidity (VA)

Volatile acidity is caused by acetobactor reacting with alcohol in wine (Acetobactor is one of only two bacteria that can survive in wine). It is detectable by its lifted vinegary aroma.

Ethyl Acetate & Acetic Acid

Ethyl acetate is the ester of acetic acid and results in a lifted smell of nail varnish or aeroplane glue. In low concentrations the volatile acidity can add complexity to wine which is a point of contention with some winemakers and consumers



Varies varieties of cork. Top left the cork as seen in the 'bark' of the cork tree.

Cork Taint

Also known as 'corked' or corkiness. Off aromas and flavours in the wine are derived from contact with cork impregnated with mould 2, 4, 6, trichloroanisole (TCA). This is not a winemaking fault, but occurs in 2 - 8% of all corks.

Cork Taint is most common reason for spoiled wine and is easily recognisable by a musty, wet hessian, mouldy or mushroom overtones.

Oxidation

Caused by over exposure of wine oxygen. This results in the loss of fruit flavour, premature colour change and build up in levels of acetaldehyde (sherry like smells)

White & red varieties and styles

A Labelling wines in Australia

- Varietal composition - What grape varieties are used in the wine. By Australian law, varietally labelled wines must contain at least 85% of the specified grape type. If there is more than one grape, the varietals must be listed in descending order of content ie Cabernet Sauvignon 60% / Merlot 40%.
- Origin - Where the grapes originally come from. In Australia we call the origin 'Appellation' there are 28 registered appellations in Australia. Barossa Valley & King Valley are both Australian appellations.
- Brand name - Lou Miranda Estate, Leone, Southern Trail and Terreno are all brand names owned by Lou Miranda Estate.

B Classifying grapes and styles

White grape varieties

- Neutral
- Light or Aromatic - never oaked, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc
- Medium bodied - sometimes oaked
- Full bodied - oaked and rich, Chardonnay

Red grape varieties

- Blush/Rose
- Medium bodied - Merlot
- Full bodied - Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz

C White wines that age

Most white wines are produced without any skin contact, (phenolics help a wine age). Acid, sugar & certain winemaking techniques help white wine to age. In summary: Riesling ages best of the aromatic styles. Oak fermented and matured chardonnay especially with lees contact ages well. Botrytis & sweet wines also have a good life span.

D Red wines that age

Just because it is a red wine, does not mean that it is capable of ageing gracefully. Some prerequisites are:



Lou Miranda Estate Old Vine Shiraz & Lou Miranda Estate Old Vine Shiraz Mourvedre are full bodied wines made to cellar for up to 10 years.

- Purpose of consumption - early drinking styles are made soft and easy drinking, wines meant for ageing tend to be stronger and richer.
- Overall balance - if a wine is not well balanced in its youth, it will not gain fruit and flavour with age.
- Personal taste - some people enjoy aged wines while others dislike them.
- Variety - medium bodied varieties like pinot noir tend to favour early consumption whilst thick skinned cabernet sauvignon are naturally age-worthy.
- There are always exceptions to the rule.

E Flavour characteristics of white varieties

- Pinot Grigio - Apple, pear, citrus, lime, passionfruit
- Sauvignon Blanc - Asparagus, capsicum, herbaceous, grassy, gooseberry, tropical fruit
- Chardonnay - Cucumber, grapefruit, apple, melon, peach, fruit salad, fig, tropical fig
- Botrytis Semillon - Peach, honey, apricot

F Flavour characteristics of red varieties

- Merlot - Herbaceous, leafy fruit, violets, sappy, cherry, raspberry, plum, beetroot, blackcurrent
- Cabernet Sauvignon - Herbaceous, capsicum, tomato bush, leafy, minty, black olive, blackcurrent
- Shiraz - Herbs, spice, raspberry, plum, pepper, blackberry, mulberry, liquorice, black olive, jam