

# **Four Steps of Wine Tasting Simplified:**

## **1) Color and Clarity.**

The first step of wine tasting is to look at the color and clarity. First we want to make sure the wine is clear and reflective, not cloudy or faulty in appearance. The color of a wine can tell us a lot, from the varietal to how old a wine might be. For instance, most white wines will be a greenish to lemon yellow when they are young, but as a white wine ages, that color deepens to more of a golden tone. Reds are the opposite... red wines actually lighten in color as they age. You can also often tell the overall climate of the region the grapes came from. Grapes grown in a cooler climate will show a different hue than the same variety of grapes grown in a warmer climate.

## **2) Body.**

We can determine the body of a wine by tipping the glass so the wine comes just to, about, the rim and bringing it back, then looking for how the wine sheets/sticks to the glass and how the legs form. If it's a thin sheet of wine that falls very quickly with thin legs, it is a light bodied wine. If it's a thicker sheet that sticks to the glass and falls in thicker legs, it is a fuller bodied wine. Typically speaking, body of wine can represent alcohol content (light

bodied wines = lower alcohol, fuller bodied wines = higher alcohol) and even residual sugar. (More residual sugar will produce a heavier body). Think of body as "mouthfeel". A fuller bodied wine will feel heavier on the palate. Using milk as an analogy: skim milk feels thin and watery and would represent the mouthfeel of a light bodied wine. Heavy cream would feel thick and heavy and would represent the mouthfeel of a full bodied wine. 2% milk would be somewhere in the middle, representing the mouthfeel of a medium bodied wine.

### **3) Aroma.**

Smell the wine. You can detect various fruit aromas, possible herbal, spicy and even earthy aromas. Now swirl the wine to aerate it, and see how much more powerful those aromas become! What do those aromas remind you of? Do you smell aromas of other fruits (such as citrus, stone fruits, tropical fruits, berries, etc.), or perhaps aromas of various herbs and/or flowers? Perhaps spices and earthy notes. This doesn't mean that the wine has actual herbs and fruits and spices in it. When grape juice ferments, it releases other aroma compounds similar to those things.

### **4) Taste.**

Now we taste the wine. When we taste, we taste certain things on certain parts of the tongue. For instance, we sense sweet/sugar on

the tip of the tongue, acidity on the sides of the tongue, and bitter on the back of the tongue. Swish the wine around and hit all those areas of the tongue to truly get a sense of all that is happening with the wine.

Did you feel sweet on the tip of your tongue? If yes, the wine has some residual sugar (RS), which offers a degree of sweetness. If not, you have a dry wine. “Dry” in this context refers to lack of RS.

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Did you feel it on the sides on your tongue? Does your mouth have a watering feeling? If so, you have successfully detected the acid in the wine. Every wine contains acid, but each wine has a different degree of acid. You can tell which has high, moderate, or low acidity based upon what you are feeling on the sides of the tongue, as well as the degree of mouth watering the wine invokes.

You can sense delicious fruit, yet not sense sugar on the tip of the tongue. So indeed a wine can be quite fruity, but without being sugary-sweet.

And finally, could you taste the fruit we were able to smell? Perhaps you detected fruit or herbs on the palate that you weren't able to detect on the nose.

To learn more, please join us at one of our public Vino Is Life Experiences or schedule your own in-home Sip & Shop Experiences.

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