



WINE TASTING NOTES

Wine tasting basics begin with getting in touch with your senses. Wine is fully enjoyed when you engage your senses of sight, smell, taste, and touch.

The sense of hearing might come into play when you exude a long sigh after taking a sip of a wonderful wine. Otherwise, it is the only sense that doesn't play a major role in wine tasting.

It is important to understand how you can engage all of your senses to truly enjoy a glass of wine.



First, understand what you are looking for when you see a glass of wine. Some might say that the appearance is not that important but most of us are very visually-oriented people.

Therefore, when examining the look of the wine you are observing the color and clarity. We want the wine to have a rich, brilliant hue that is clear. Different grape varieties will have different color hues; from a light yellow to rich amber of white wines to a light strawberry color in Pinot Noir to a deep, almost black of Petite Sirah.

LDV Winery does not fine or filter many of its wines, instead opting for a gentler and more natural process called racking. This involves removing the wine from their barrels every 45 days, cleaning the barrels of sediment that has naturally settled, and then returning the wine to the barrel to continue the aging process.

Bottle sediment may remain and is common in high tannic wines like Petite Sirah or older fine wines. The tannins can link together to form dense proteins that will sink to the bottom or cling to the bottle sides. Pour wine carefully and do not dump so the sediment does not end up in your glass. It is common and normal to also see sediment, red coloring, or crystals (wine diamonds) on the cork when it is removed.

A good quality wine will have an intense color.

The "legs" seen running down the sides of a glass after it is swirled, may indicate the intensity of the wine's flavor and may be an indication of the wine's alcohol content.

A good tip when viewing the wine is to hold it up against a plain white background, swirl the wine slowly, and tilt the glass slightly as you observe the wine's color and clarity before taking that first sip.



The sense of smell is one of the most complex of the five senses and is important for wine tasting.

Your nose has hundreds more receptors than your mouth. The sense of smell is probably your most intense measuring tool in wine tasting, though taste is the ultimate pay off.

The wine glass plays an important part in creating the right environment to experience the wine's full aroma.

Take a deep inhale of the wine before tasting.



The goal is to try and identify the nuances of the "nose" or the essence of the wine's aroma. Is the wine's nose sweet, fruity, or spicy? Can you recognize the characteristics of the grape variety? Is the nose unpleasant or harsh?

Drinking wine is the marriage between the sense of taste and smell. You want to be able to engage both senses in every sip. The wine's taste might change as it enters the mouth, sits in your mouth, and as you swallow. Take a sip and hold it in your mouth and swish it around a bit before you swallow.

Observe how the wine changes at the front end (as it enters your mouth), middle (as it sits in your mouth), and at the finish (as you swallow and the flavor lingers). Some wines are very fruit-forward which means that as the wine enters your mouth the berry tastes are prevalent.



It is said that humans can only perceive four tastes: bitter, salty, sweet, and sour. These tastes are perceived through the taste buds on parts of your tongue. You taste sweetness typically on the tip of your tongue while things that are bitter tend to be in the back of your tongue. Acidity or anything sour sometimes makes people pucker so it is detected on the sides of the mouth while saltiness can be sensed in the upper and front parts of the tongue. It is important to note how the wine tastes on all of the mouth's sensory points.

The sense of touch in wine tasting refers to the feel of the wine in your mouth or the taste sensation. As you taste the wine, feel the wine on your palate. As you taste the wine, do you get impressions of weight (light, medium, or full-bodied), texture (silkeness, smoothness, or harshness), or astringency (dryness or bitterness at the back of your palate) for example?

Observe how the wine finishes in your mouth. This aftertaste and the length of time the wine lingers are all related to the sense of touch and taste sensations. Many say that the longer a wine lasts in your mouth the better the wine. Others don't care for a long finish.



The most important thing about enjoying wine is for you to determine what you like and don't like. Experiment with different wines made from different grape varieties. Don't give up on a type of wine because you did not like a wine produced by one winery. Every winemaker and every vintage adds to the wine's personality. Have fun and you decide what you like.

SPECIAL NOTE: Have you been the one responsible for ordering a bottle of wine for dinner and being asked by the waiter to taste the wine and you were not certain what to do?

Well you are not alone. Many are under the impression that when the bottle is opened and a small amount of wine is poured into your wine glass it is for you to determine if you like it or not. Well, that is not the purpose. What you are being asked to do is to inspect the wine to ensure that it is not flawed. So how do you do that?

First, you look at the wine's color and clarity. There should be no wine solids and be clear. Secondly, inspect the cork. The waiter will always offer the cork for you to examine. Inspect the cork for any problems such as mold or unpleasant odor.

Lastly, swirl the wine in the glass and take a big sniff. It should not smell rotten, moldy, musty, or like wet cardboard. You should be able to tell if the wine is bad by the way it smells. If you are still not certain, take a sip of the wine and/or ask the waiter or sommelier to taste. You will know if the wine has gone bad because it won't taste good. It is unusual for you to get a bad bottle of wine if it has been handled properly, but it happens. You might get a bottle of wine that you did not like, but that is never the reason for sending the bottle back. You might have just made a bad choice for you.