

Wine Tasting Terms

Acetic:	Sour, with the smell or sharp taste of vinegar. Too much will make the wine undrinkable.
Aroma:	The perfume of young wines from the fresh fruit of the grape variety before bottle aging.
Astringency:	The quality of causing the mouth to pucker. Astringency usually softens and mellows with age in the bottle.
Baked:	Quality found when wine is made from very ripe grapes.
Balance:	A fine harmony and relationship of the wine's component parts, usually referring to the basic elements of fruit, tannin, acid, etc.
Body:	Consistency, thickness or substance of a wine, as to the lack in a thin wine.
Bouquet:	That part of the fragrance of the wine which originated from fermentation and aging, as distinguished from "aroma", the fragrance of the grape.
Brilliant:	A wine of remarkably high clarity.
Brut:	Driest of the dry in sparkling wine. No sugar is left after fermentation and no sugar is added.
Character:	Positive and distinctive taste characteristics giving definition to a wine.
Clean:	A well made wine, an old wine, as well as a young wine, with no "off" smell or taste.
Corky:	Indicating an off-taste from a defective cork.
Delicate:	Applies to wines that should be light, usually white, young and fresh.
Demi-Sec/	In the United States this term is used to describe a fairly sweet sparkling wine.
Semi-Dry:	
Dry:	Without sweetness; not "sour".
Elegant:	Well balanced, with finesse, a truly fine wine.
Earthy:	Often associated with grapes grown in heavy soils. It is the smell and imaginary taste of fresh earth.
Extra Dry:	In champagne, slightly less dry than brut.
Flabby:	Too soft, or flat, lacking acidity, without character.
Flinty:	Dry, clean, sharp, steely, often used to describe Chablis.
Flowery:	Appealing to the fragrance of a wine, almost flower-like, used to describe many Gewurztraminers.
Fresh:	Young, lively and clean.
Fruity:	Having the fragrance and flavour of a familiar fruit, e.g. melon or blackberry.
Full:	A full-bodied wine, the feel and sensations of wine in the mouth, rich in fruit flavours.

Grapey:	A wine that tastes like fresh grapes, such as Muscat, Johannisberg Riesling, etc.
Grassy:	The smell of grass or new mown hay. Often describes Sauvignon Blanc.
Green:	Unripe, unbalanced acidity, raw taste.
Hard:	Severe flavor from high tannin and /or acid. Often mellows with time.
Light:	Lacking in body, color or alcohol, but pleasant.
Lively:	Usually young, fruit wines with a little carbon dioxide.
Maderized:	Flat, oxidized smell, past its prime, "over the hill"; has acquired brownish tone.
Mellow:	Mature, soft in taste, no rough edges with proper age.
Noble:	Superior, showing by aroma its aristocratic grape variety.
Nose:	Referring to qualities of aroma and bouquet.
Nutty:	English term denoting the characteristic pungent flavour of Sherry. The result of oxidation in wine.
Oxidized:	Having lost its freshness from contact with air.
Robust:	A big and full wine.
Round:	Well-balanced, mature wine, without harshness.
Ruby:	Resembling in color a clear re jewel, as in young red wines.
Rough:	Insufficient age.
Sec:	In other wines than Champagne, denotes a dry wine.
Sharp:	Excessive acidity.
Soft:	Mellow, without roughness or hotness to the throat.
Sound:	A well made wine, no defects, well-balanced.
Sour:	Vinegar, a wine that is spoiled, unfit to drink.
Spritzzy:	Pleasant, slightly sparkling wine caused by a very slight secondary fermentation in the bottle. Found mostly in young wines.
Sulphury:	A disagreeable odor of sulphur. If the smell does not disappear after pouring, it indicates the wine is faulty.
Sweet:	High residual sugar content.
Tart:	Sharpness caused by too high acidity.
Thin:	Lacking in body and alcohol, watery, will not improve with age.
Velvety:	The soft mouth feel of exposure to oak, smells like vanilla extract.
Woody:	Undesirable odor and flavour from too long contact with wood.
Yeasty:	Young wine tasting of yeast as in fresh bread, wine still in barrels. A pleasant characteristic of many Champagnes.