**Basic Wine Training**

 Learning about wine it always start from looking at the wine even before smelling the wine or tasting the wine.

### Let’s Start With White Wine

First look at the shade of yellow. Is the yellow very light and bright, approaching clear, or is the yellow deep and full, almost approaching the color of straw? Light and bright white wines that you can see through have had minimal contact with the grape skins and are usually crisp and refreshing, like lemonade on a hot summer day. Typically, these wines have not been [aged in an oak barrel](https://vinepair.com/wine-101/oaked-unoaked-wine-guide/).

If the wine is darker and deeper in yellow, then this is usually a good sign that the wine was aged in an oak barrel. It will have a smoother taste and will be much fuller and richer.

### Now Let’s Look At Red Wine

The same steps hold true when examining a red as with a white. Start by looking at the shade of red wine in your glass If the wine is light red, even approaching pink, it should taste light and bright. It may even be a little tart or “fresh” tasting and that is because the lighter the red of a wine, the less likely that it was ever aged in oak, and oak is what helps round and mellow a wine.

As the hue of the red wine gets darker and darker, approaching the colors of maroon and purple, the red will become much bolder and richer. These types of red wine are the ones you think of when you think red wine and steak dinner, and the darker and deeper the color, the longer they’ve spent aging in an oak barrel.

Now that you’re an expert in examining and understanding the color of the wine you’re going to drink, it’s time to swirl it around your glass.

After Looking at the wine and knowing what to expect of the wine by the color that you’re being pour. Now let’s start with swirl of the glass. You can do different type of swirl you can leave the glass on the table hold it firmly on the bottom and do small circle on the table, or you can just lift the glass and swirl your wrist slightly in circles.

Now it’s the turn of smelling the wine, when you go to smell the wine, stick your nose all the way in the glass and close your eyes. There are different techniques of smelling the wine. You can use your preference as long as you get a good smell of the wine.

As you smell the wine, think about what scents you’re picking up. If it’s a white wine, maybe you smell bananas, lemon rind, pineapple. If it’s a red wine, you may smell prunes, cherries, strawberries, peppers, plums, or tobacco.

Let’s talk about the tannins of the wine. Tannins are naturally occurring compounds that exist inside grape skins, seeds and stems name polyphenols. Polyphenols are released from the skins, seeds and stems, when they soak in the grape juice just after the grapes have been pressed. That is what gives the dryness of the wine such as the cabernet sauvignon.

What is oak? Oak can enhance the color of the wine, soften and round out flavors. If this is a white wine, the longer the wine sits in oak, the darker yellow it will become, almost mimicking the hue of the straw. If the wine is red, color is not affected as much, but often the longer the wine sits in oak, the darker red it can become. The oak in terms of flavor will be a vanilla, mocha, caramel, toffee or honey. There also multiple style of oak like French oak or American oak. French oak tends to have more tannins, while the American oak tends to be more aromatic and sweeter.

There are three different body of wine which are known as light body, medium body and full body. The main factor of the body difference is the alcohol.

## **Top Red wine varietals + tasting notes**

#### **Cabernet Sauvignon**

**Tasting Notes**: Dark, ripe fruits, black cherry, plum, spice, vanilla, cedar or oak from barrel-aging

**Body:** Heavy

**Notable Growing Regions:** Grown in every wine producing country, well known styles from California, France (Bordeaux)

**Food Pairing**: Grilled meats, roasted meats- beef, lamb

#### **Pinot Noir**

**Tasting notes**: Red fruits, bright cherries, strawberry, some spice, vanilla,

**Body**:Light

**Notable Growing Regions**: France (Burgundy), California, Oregon, Australia (Yarra Valley), New Zealand (Otago Valley), Italy (Northern)

**Food Pairings**: Light, flavorful meats - duck, pork, chicken thighs; mushrooms; salmon and heavy flavored fish

#### **Bordeaux Red Blends (Meritage)**

 Mimic the style of Bordeaux reds from the Bordeaux region of France. This blend is generally dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon, but also utilize other grapes like Cab Franc, Merlot, Malbec

**Tasting Notes**: Big, bold, dark fruits,; savory flavors; mineral flavors; tannic (drying); cedar, oak, vanilla

**Body**: Heavy

**Notable Growing Regions**: Produced through out the world, notable from California, Chile, similar to Bordeaux blends from France

**Food Pairings**: Smoked meats, roasted meats; lamb; firm cheese

#### **Malbec**

**Tasting Notes**: Dark berry, cherry, black pepper spice, cocoa, wet earth

**Body**: Medium

**Notable Growing Regions**: Argentina (Mendoza), France

**Food Pairings**: Pasta, Barbecue or grilled meats, spicy food

#### **Merlot**

**Tasting Notes**: Raspberries, strawberries, mineral, cedar

**Body**: Medium

**Notable Growing Regions**: France (Bordeaux), Washington, California, Italy (Tuscany), Australia (South Australia)

**Food Pairings**: Many foods from chicken and pork to dark meats

## **Top white wine varietals + tasting notes**

**Chardonnay**

**Tasting Notes**: Wide range depending on stye; lemon, apple, pear, bright fruits; mango, pineapple, peach, tropical fruits; vanilla, butter, baked goods, coconut

**Body**: Medium

**Notable Growing Regions**: France (Chablis, Burgundy), Italy, California, New York, Australia (South Australia)

**Food Pairings**: Fish, lightly seasoned chicken, soft cheeses

#### **Sauvignon Blanc**

**Tasting Notes**: Green fruits, lime, green bell pepper, pear; stonefruit, kiwi, peach; oaked, vanilla, coconut, butter

**Body**: Medium to Medium-heavy

**Notable Growing Regions**: France (Bordeaux, Loire Valley), Italy (Northeast), New Zealand (Marlbourough, Hawkes Bay), California, Chile

**Food Pairings**: White meats, chicken, pork; white fish, shell fish, lobster, clams; soft, sour cheese

#### **Pinot Grigio/Pinot Gris**

 The same grape, called Pinot Grigio in Italy, Pinot Gris in France

**Tasting Notes**: Italian, lime, pear, sour apple; France, lemon, honey, honeysuckle; U.S., white nectarine, ripe stonefruits

**Body**: Medium to Medium-heavy

**Notable Growing Regions**: Italy, France, U.S.

**Food Pairings**: Fresh fish, green salads, shell fish

#### **Rosé**

**Tasting Notes**: Varying styles; Light, rose petal, underripe strawberry, limestone; Medium, strawberry, summer fruits; Heavy, ripe fruits, floral, spice hints

**Body**: Light to Medium-heavy

**Notable Growing Regions**: France, Spain, California, Italy

**Food Pairings**: Dependent on style anything from light salads to barbecued meats