



JANE LOPES

Jane is wine director at Attica and author of *Vignette*.

Fermentation equation

Illustrations SIMON LETCH

There's no alcohol without fermentation. But what actually happens to turn a bunch of grapes into your favourite wine?

FERMENTATION: Just a simple equation? Yes – and so much more! Fermentation is the simple process of converting grapes into wine, producing alcohol along the way. The starting ingredients are sugar (present in grapes) and yeast (either ambient or inoculated). The yeast consumes the sugar, and the output is alcohol and carbon dioxide. Usually the wine ferments until it is dry (has no or very little residual sugar left), and the carbon dioxide dissipates into the ether. Voila! A dry, still wine is born.



At a bottle shop

Knowing whether a wine is sweet is the perennial question we ask when scanning bottles of riesling on a wine store shelf. If we go back to our trusty fermentation equation – sugar + yeast = CO₂ + alcohol – then less alcohol in the finished wine means there will be more unfermented sugar. So, if you pick up a bottle of riesling and the label states 13 per cent alcohol, then that wine will almost always be dry (or close to it). If the alcohol is south of 10 per cent, there's a good chance you're looking at a sweeter wine.



At a restaurant

There are several ways of making sparkling wine but the one that results in the highest quality uses the method that originated in Champagne. It involves a second fermentation inside the bottle in which the wine is sold. Fermentation creates carbon dioxide and if it is trapped in a bottle instead of dissipating, it sticks around as bubbles. Result? Champagne. This process isn't only employed in France; many Australian sparkling wines also use it (with cheaper results).



At a winery

A fortified wine means it has had a distilled spirit added to it. Usually these wines are sweet, but not always. Fermentation halts when fortification occurs: the yeast cannot survive at such a high alcohol level, so they die off and stop converting sugar into alcohol. Thus, the point at which fortification occurs corresponds to the sweetness of the wine. If a wine is fortified early on or before fermentation, it will be quite sweet. If it is fortified later in fermentation, or afterwards, it will be medium-sweet to bone dry.



THE DROP

Canned cocktails

Words AMY COOPER

IF MIXED drinks in tins make you think of spam and pineapple chunks, consider this: it's 2019. Sensibilities have advanced, and so has science, driving a new generation of classy ready-made drinks exemplified by the canned Archie Rose Espresso Martini and Four Pillars Negroni from Curatif, a trio of Australian bartenders. The cans boast impressive sustainability credentials but the real clincher is the taste.

The beach? Your lounge room? Now you can drink your favourite cocktails wherever you like.



Thanks to geek-boggling food technology negating the need for preservatives, a proprietary brew from Seven Seeds Coffee, and their creators' finickiness, the Espresso Martini has the depth and balance of its bar-made brethren, with the vodka's five botanicals sweetly smooching the coffee's fruity notes. Currently in development, with at least one slated for summer, are a Margarita, Bloody Mary, Aviation, Old Fashioned, classic Daiquiri, and decaf Espresso Martini. With good canned wine already available, is it time to put the tinnie on the top shelf? Yes, we can!

From bottle shops and curatif.com