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# 100 TERMS RELATING TO WINE & WINE-TASTING

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“...good company, good wine, good welcome, can make good people.”

William Shakespeare

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# “A meal without wine is like a day without sunshine.”

Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

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- 1. Acidity:** The liveliness and tartness in wine help maintain balance. When tasting, you can gauge the acidity of a wine by taking a sip and noticing how much you salivate after your swallow - the more a wine makes you salivate, the higher acidity it has. In scientific terms, the pH balance of the wine.
- 2. Aftertaste:** The flavor remaining after the wine has been swallowed. The initial taste of a wine can vary wildly from its aftertaste. See also: Finish.
- 3. Aging:** The process of allowing wine to mature in barrels, tanks, or bottles. Wines change as they age, softening tannins and bringing forth new flavors.
- 4. Alcohol:** Ethanol produced by fermenting grapes. The alcohol content of a wine plays an important part in a wine's sweetness (especially if a wine has lower alcohol because the fermentation was stopped early to allow for more residual sugar) and its initial taste on your tongue.
- 5. AOC:** "Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée", a French certification for geographical origin and typicity. You might also see "AOP," which stands for "Appellation d'Origine Protégé," and is essentially the same thing.
- 6. Appellation:** Designated wine-growing regions with specific rules.
- 7. Aroma:** The smells directly from grapes; distinct from Bouquet. Also called primary aromas.

**8. Astringent:** Describes wines that are harsh and drying in the mouth. See also, Tannins.

**9. Balance:** The harmony between acidity, sweetness, tannins, and alcohol.

**10. Barrel:** The oak container used for fermenting or aging wine. Wine barrels can come in different sizes, different types of oak, and other variations that may affect the quality and taste of the wine.

**11. Biodynamic:** A holistic, homeopathic, and ecological approach to farming and winemaking that follows the lunar calendar and sees the vineyard as interconnected with man, moon, earth, and stars. Chemicals in farming are eschewed in favor of special compost preparations.

**12. Blanc de Blanc:** “White from White.” White wine made exclusively from white grapes, is usually used to refer to sparkling wines like Champagne.

**13. Blend:** A wine made from more than one grape varietal.

**14. Body:** The weight and fullness of wine in the mouth (think about the difference in mouthfeel between water, skim milk, and full-fat milk - this is body).

**15. Botrytis:** A beneficial fungus that can create dessert wines like Sauternes, also called “noble rot.”

**16. Bouquet:** The layers of aroma in a wine that develops with bottle aging. May also be called tertiary aromas.

**17. Brettanomyces:** A yeast that can give wine a barnyard or medicinal smell, also used in brewing beer.

**18. Brilliant:** A wine that is very clear and bright.

**19. Brut:** A dry sparkling wine.

**20. Buttery:** A wine that has a rich flavor and smoothness reminiscent of butter.

- 21. Capsule:** The protective covering at the top of the bottle.
- 22. Cask:** Another term for the barrel.
- 23. Chaptalization:** The process of adding sugar to juice before fermentation to increase the alcohol content of the finished wine.
- 24. Clarity:** The clearness or haziness of a wine.
- 25. Classified:** A wine officially rated for quality.
- 26. Complex:** A wine exhibiting multiple layers of flavor and aroma.
- 27. Corked:** A wine tainted with cork taint, causing a musty or moldy character.
- 28. Crisp:** A wine with refreshing acidity.
- 29. Cru:** A French term denoting a vineyard recognized for quality.
- 30. Cuvee:** A blend or batch of wine.
- 31. Decanting:** Transferring wine from the bottle to another container to separate sediment and/or expose the wine to more oxygen.
- 32. Demi-sec:** Medium-dry wine.
- 33. Dessert Wine:** Sweet wines are typically consumed with or as dessert.
- 34. Dry:** A wine with no perceptible sugar content.
- 35. Earthy:** Aroma or flavor reminiscent of earth or soil.
- 36. Enology:** The science of wine and winemaking.
- 37. Fermentation:** The chemical conversion of sugar into alcohol by yeast.
- 38. Filtration:** The process of removing solid particles from wine.
- 39. Finish:** The taste lingering after the wine has been swallowed. Can also be used to describe how long the taste lingers (ie. a “long finish” means the taste lingered for quite a while.) See also: Aftertaste



- 40. Flinty:** A mineral quality in wine, often found in whites like Chablis.
- 41. Fortified Wine:** Wine to which a spirit, usually brandy, has been added in order to stop the fermentation before all of the sugar has been converted into alcohol. Port is an example of a fortified wine.
- 42. Foudre:** A large wooden vat used for aging wine.
- 43. Fruity:** A wine with strong fruit flavors (note: “fruity” ≠ “sweet”! It’s possible for a wine to be fruity while having little/no residual sugar).
- 44. Full-bodied:** A wine that is rich and intense.
- 45. Generic:** Wine labeled by region rather than specific vineyard or varietal.
- 46. Grafting:** Joining rootstock and scion from different vines to combine characteristics.
- 47. Gran Reserva:** Spanish term for a wine that has been aged for a long time, both in barrel and bottle.
- 48. Green:** Underripe flavors in a wine, often due to harvesting grapes too early.
- 49. Harvest:** The process of picking grapes.
- 50. Herbaceous:** A wine with flavors or aromas of green plants or herbs.
- 51. Ice Wine:** A sweet wine made from grapes frozen on the vine, which concentrates sugars.
- 52. IGP:** “Indication Géographique Protégée,” a French certification for geographical origin and typicity similar to AOC/AOP, but less strict.
- 53. Jeroboam:** A large bottle holding about three liters of wine.
- 54. Lees:** Sediment consisting of dead yeast and grape particles.

**55. Legs:** Streaks of liquid that coat the inside of a glass after the wine is swirled.

**56. Maceration:** The soaking of grape skins in juice or wine to extract color and flavor.

**57. Magnum:** A bottle containing 1.5 liters of wine or the equivalent of 2 standard wine bottles.

**58. Malolactic Fermentation:** A secondary fermentation process that softens acid in wine. Use in nearly all red wines and some whites. Can produce dairy aromas like yogurt and butter.

**59. Mature:** A wine that has reached its peak for drinking.

**60. Meritage:** A Bordeaux-style blend produced outside of France.

**61. Methuselah:** A large wine bottle holding six liters or the equivalent of 8 standard bottles.

**62. Microclimate:** The specific climate of a small, distinct area that can affect grape growing.

**63. Mousse:** The frothy head that forms on top of sparkling wines.

**64. Mouthfeel:** The overall sensation of the wine in your mouth. Can include body, acidity, tannins, alcohol, bubbles (if a sparkling wine), and other considerations.

**65. Must:** Freshly pressed grape juice that contains the skins, seeds, and stems.

**66. Nebuchadnezzar:** A very large bottle holding 15 liters of wine or the equivalent of 20 standard bottles.

**67. Nose:** The general smell or aroma of a wine.

**68. Oak:** The wood used for barrels in which some wines are fermented and/or aged.

**69. Oaked:** Wine that has been aged in oak barrels, imparting flavor.

**70. Oenophile:** A wine lover or connoisseur.

**71. Old Vine:** A term used to describe a wine made from grapes grown on vines that are older than average (note: there is no legal definition for what counts as an “old vine”). Old vines tend to have a lower yield, making the flavor of the grapes more concentrated.

**72. Organic:** Wines made from grapes grown without chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides. In most countries, wines must go through an official process of organic certification in order to be able to use the word “organic” on the label.

**73. Oxidation:** Exposure of wine to air, which can alter its color and flavors.

**74. Pétillant:** Sparkling wine.

**75. pH:** A measure of acidity or alkalinity in wine.

**76. Phenolics:** Compounds in wine that affect taste, color, and mouthfeel.

**77. Plonk:** Slang for cheap, low-quality wine.

**78. Pomace:** The solid remains of grapes after pressing.

**79. Port:** A fortified wine from Portugal, typically sweet and red.

**80. Premier Cru:** French for "First Growth"; a high classification of the vineyard.

**81. Pronounced:** A term used to describe strong characteristics.

**82. Pruning:** Cutting back vines to promote healthy growth and control the amount of grapes produced.

**83. Punt:** The indentation at the bottom of a wine bottle.

**84. Residual Sugar:** Sugar remaining after fermentation.

**85. Riddling:** The process of consolidating sediment from dead yeast cells in the neck of a bottle of sparkling wine before it is removed.

**86. Rosé:** Wine that is pink in color, made from red grapes with minimal skin contact.

- 87. Round:** A smooth and well-balanced wine.
- 88. Sediment:** Solid particles that form in wine during aging.
- 89. Sommelier:** A wine expert who specializes in all aspects of wine service.
- 90. Sparkling Wine:** Wine with significant levels of carbon dioxide, making it fizzy.
- 91. Spicy:** A flavor reminiscent of spices, detected in some wines.
- 92. Still Wine:** Wine without carbonation.
- 93. Sulfites:** Compounds used to preserve wine and prevent oxidation.
- 94. Sweet:** Wines with a noticeable residual sugar content. (Note: Don't confuse "sweet" with "fruity"!)
- 95. Tannins:** Compounds that add bitterness and complexity, mostly found in red wines. After taking a sip of red wine, you'll notice the physical sensations of tannins in your mouth in the roughness/dryness inside your cheeks or the front of your mouth against your teeth.
- 96. Terroir:** The environmental conditions, especially soil and climate, that give wine its unique flavor. A French word, roughly translated as "a taste of place."
- 97. Varietal:** Wine made from a single specified grape variety.
- 98. Vinification:** The process of making wine.
- 99. Vintage:** The year in which a wine is made. The same wine can taste differently from year to year, depending on the environmental conditions, so knowing the vintage can be important.
- 100. Weight:** How thick a wine feels in the mouth. Similar to the body.



We hope our list has stoked your curiosity and will encourage you to further explore your love of wine. If you have any questions for us, please [get in touch](#).

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