



Wine experts are always talking about hints of this and nuances of that, while the rest of us are drawing blanks. Do these tasters have more acute senses? No, they have just learned how to pay close attention to their senses while tasting. And they have developed a method to evaluate wine, a vocabulary to describe it and a framework with which to categorize it.

You, too, can become a better taster and get more out of each glass—both pleasure and knowledge. The path of the connoisseur doesn't lead to snobbery or pretension. It embodies true appreciation. You train your palate and your brain as you enjoy each sip.

—Gloria Maroti Frazee, director of Wine Spectator School

TASTING WINE

Wine tasting involves four activities:

OBSERVING:

Using your senses to perceive, identify and measure stimuli

DESCRIBING:

Using your vocabulary to reveal the wine's features

COMPARING:

Recalling similar wine types to use as benchmarks

EVALUATING:

Synthesizing all the information to judge wine quality

TASTING METHODS

Much like a worker on an assembly line, an expert goes through a series of simple and repetitive motions while tasting through a flight of wines. Lift glass, tilt and look. Swirl and sniff. Sip and swish. Pause. Spit. Sniff, sip and spit again. Scribble a tasting note. Repeat with the next wine.

Why this repetition? When you examine two wines, you need to compare like features: Color should be compared with color, body with body, finish with finish, and so on. The repetitive steps help you collect the same type of information for each wine.

Expert tasting methodology—**see > sniff > sip > summarize**—reminds you to use each of your senses, as well as your brain.



SEE: Fill your glass one-third to one-half full. Hold it against a white background and tilt it to see the variation in color from the deepest part of the liquid to its edges. Looking at the color, intensity and clarity can give you hints about the grape variety a wine is made from (Cabernet Sauvignon is typically darker than Pinot Noir, for example), the growing conditions that year (warm weather can lead to riper grapes with deeper colors), or winemaking techniques (a wine that

is brilliantly clear may have been filtered to remove suspended particles that another winemaker may think add to the wine's character). Color can also indicate a wine's age: A young red wine full of color compounds will be very dark, but as it ages and the compounds drop out of suspension, the wine lightens to "brick" or "amber."

SWIRL AND SNIFF:

Before a wine is swirled, its aromas are trapped in the liquid. By swirling, you increase the surface area, which increases alcohol evaporation, carrying aromas into the air. Stick your nose right into the bowl of the glass and inhale. Since scents account for about 75 percent of a wine's character and quality, focusing on your sense of smell is essential.

SIP AND SWISH:

Take some wine into your mouth, not a big gulp, but not too little either. Swish, or roll, the wine around in your mouth to bring the liquid into contact with all your taste buds, which are dispersed throughout your tongue, soft palate and throat. Like swirling wine in your glass, the evaporating alcohol carries scents into your retronasal passages.

SPIT:

What's the quickest way to tell an expert taster from a beginner? The expert spits. This keeps the brain fog-free, so that each wine can be properly appreciated. Before attending that walk-around tasting, practice spitting into the kitchen sink. After you spit (or swallow, if you're just drinking a glass), exhale gently and slowly through your nose and mouth to concentrate on how the wine finishes.

PAUSE:

After the first sip, pausing for a few breaths gives you time to form an overall image of the wine. Think of this step as the Zen of tasting. Don't write or talk right away. As soon as you start verbalizing your impressions, your brain switches into intellectual mode, making it difficult to detect additional stimuli. Suggestions often influence perception. When a fellow taster describes a wine as tannic before you've formed your opinion, you are more likely to experience the wine as tannic.

• Watch our How to Taste video to learn more, at www.winespectator.com/howtotastevideo.

• For more evaluation questions to ask at each step, see the "Expert Tasting Methodology" section of this PDF.

UNDERSTANDING THE COMPONENTS OF WINE

Wine is basically fermented grape juice. It's made from crushed grapes and yeast. The flavors you find in fine wine come from the grapes themselves, not additives. The oak barrels in which some wines are stored can impart additional flavors, among them vanilla, spice, toast, smoke and, of course, oak.

The main components of wine provide clues about where the wine was grown and how it was made. They also affect qualities such as taste and "mouthfeel." Here is a rundown of what they are:

WATER, pressed from the grapes, constitutes the single largest element of wine.

ALCOHOL, the second-largest element, is produced during fermentation, when yeasts convert grape sugar into alcohol. Wines with high levels of alcohol have richer mouthfeels and fuller bodies. Alcohol can also add the perception of sweetness and, at very high levels, a hot, burning sensation. High levels of alcohol indicate that the grapes were very ripe at harvest—perhaps they came from a warm region or a hot growing season, or they were picked late in the season.

SUGAR in wine comes from ripe grapes. It is mostly converted into alcohol during fermentation, and winemakers can control the amount of sugar remaining in the finished wine—"residual sugar," or RS for short. Wines with no sugar, or imperceptible amounts, are referred to as "dry." Wines with high levels of residual sugar have sweet tastes, along with richer, smoother mouthfeels and fuller bodies.

ACIDS come from the grapes and are key components in all wines. The three main types of acids in grapes are tartaric, malic and citric. Acids add a distinctively crisp, refreshing sensation: They may cause your mouth to pucker and salivate, as if you were biting into a lemon wedge. Grapes grown in cool regions, or where temperatures dip significantly at night, are more likely to have higher acidity. During vinification, some wines undergo malolactic fermentation, which transforms hard, malic acid (think Granny Smith apples) into lactic acid, which has a softer mouthfeel (think milk).

TANNINS and other phenolics come mainly from red grape skins but can be found in some white wines, since they are also imparted by seeds, stems and new oak barrels. Each of the three main types of phenolics in wine contributes to a wine's profile: Anthocyanins add color, catechins add bitterness, and tannins add a drying, astringent mouthfeel. Both bitterness and astringency—experienced mostly on the finish—develop slowly in your mouth, then tend to linger, building up with repeated sips.

FLAVOR COMPOUNDS come from the grapes and the winemaking process. They impart aromas and flavors that can mimic citrus fruits,

tropical fruits, berries, flowers, jam, nuts, caramel and a host of other scents. Compared with other foods, wine is incredibly complex.

Like the ingredients in lemonade, individual wine components are not experienced in isolation—they are part of a blend. In both lemonade and wine, the components can be divided into two categories. The "soft" components of wine are fruit, sugar and alcohol. They can seem soft, round and lush in your mouth. The "hard" components are acids and tannins. They can seem firm, sharp, angular and harsh.

Soft and hard components balance each other on a continuum; some people prefer sweeter lemonade, while others add more lemon juice. With wine, the grape variety and style influence the balance point. Chardonnay, with its lush fruit and alcohol, is usually on the softer, rounder end of the continuum. Sauvignon Blanc, with its bracing acidity, is usually on the harder, crisper end.

VOCABULARY: TALKING ABOUT WINE

It's not easy to translate sensory experiences into words, but experts share a generally agreed-upon vocabulary with fairly precise meanings for each term. To build your vocabulary, read *Wine Spectator's* tasting notes carefully. Pay attention to the terms that are used and the features they describe. If anything is unclear, you can look it up at WineSpectator.com/glossary.

POWER AND ELEGANCE are descriptors that can be helpful for forming an overall impression of a wine. Powerful wines feel muscular, with big tannins. They demand attention, rather like a shout. In contrast, elegant wines are delicate, slender and more subtle, like a whisper. Their layers of complexity can be overlooked unless you're paying close attention.

STRUCTURE is sensed through a wine's mouthfeel. The soft and hard groups of components discussed above contribute to mouthfeel. Structure is determined by both the quantity of these components and the balance between the soft and hard groups. The human body provides an analogy. The soft component is like flesh, rounding out the body, and the hard component is like bone, keeping the body upright. When a person or a wine has more flesh in relation to bone, descriptors such as soft, round, lush, plump and even flabby come to mind. When there is more bone than flesh, the structure is described as firm, sharp and angular.

BODY refers to the wine's weight, or how thick it is. For example, skim milk is light-bodied; it feels thin or light in your mouth. Cream is full-bodied; it feels thick or heavy. Sugar, alcohol and tannins each add body to wine. Furthermore, the perception of body increases as a wine's aromatic intensity increases, yet, in contrast, decreases as acidity increases. Body is important because it can help determine drinking order (light-before

full-bodied) and food pairings (lighter foods go with lighter-bodied wines; heavier foods are better paired with fuller-bodied wines).

TEXTURE is a tactile sensation perceived in your mouth. It is contributed mainly by acidity and tannins, and by residual sugar. Descriptors include silky, smooth, velvety and rough.

Paradoxically, the best way to begin describing wine is to say nothing at all. Don't even try to think of any descriptors for about 15 seconds after sniffing or sipping. Instead, allow an overall impression of the wine to develop slowly; let the wine come to you.

The next step is to search for specific descriptors. Most people begin with fruit aromas. For example, white wines normally evoke pale-fleshed fruit families, including citrus, tree and tropical fruits. Tasters then often specify particular fruits in each family, such as lemon or grapefruit, apple or pear, mango or pineapple. Red wines typically call up red and black fruits, such as strawberry, raspberry, blueberry, blackberry, black cherry and plum.

After fruit aromas come other flavors, such as vanilla, spice, mineral and tobacco. Then come structural descriptors, such as firm or soft. Finally, you return to where you started, with descriptors such as elegant, delicate, muscular and powerful.

FRAMEWORK

After you taste and describe a wine, it's time to put it into context. Like the art historian who can point to paintings that exemplify specific styles of art, the wine expert can describe benchmark wines. An expert can also tell you the characteristics associated with individual grape varieties, the wine styles of famous (and not-so-famous) growing areas and the effects that various winemaking techniques can have on a given wine.

That's a lot of detail to file away. Most experts organize all the bits of information into a framework based on grape variety. This framework provides a context that helps with wine identification.

For example, suppose we pull the cork on a bottle for a blind tasting and pour one glass for a novice taster and another for an expert. Each immediately detects the pungent aroma of freshly cut grass. The novice keeps sniffing, searching for other scents found in the universe of wine aromas. In contrast, the expert knows that freshly cut grass is a classic descriptor for Sauvignon Blanc. This narrows the search down to the short list of aromas associated with that variety. If some of these other characteristic aromas are present, the expert quickly identifies the wine.

The context provided by this varietal framework also helps with wine recall. Remembering the wines you've tasted in the past provides

a context that helps you identify or evaluate the wine you are currently tasting. It's amazing to hear an expert compare wines they've sampled on different occasions, sometimes decades apart.

EVALUATING WINE

Every person has a unique set of wine and food preferences. These are determined by our experiences and our individual thresholds for perceiving each of the hundreds of aromas and flavors that exist in wine. Two people may taste the same wine and come away with different descriptions of its aromas and tastes.

Several factors contribute to individual variations: the number of aroma and taste receptors you have, your saliva production rate, the impact of age on your senses, gender and hunger level. Finally, experience counts. Take a moment to recall the scent of a ripe peach. Are you remembering the delicate scent of a peach ripened on a supermarket shelf? Or is it an extremely aromatic, tree-ripened peach from the farmers' market? Your recollection of "ripe peach" is influenced by your experiences.

When it comes to wine, some people prefer lighter, crisper styles; others go for bigger, more powerful ones. Some people enjoy the vanilla and spice flavors added by new oak; others don't. Identifying your favorite wine styles comes down to trusting your palate.

But when it comes to wine scores, these reflect wine quality judged using the objective parameters described below:

BALANCE:

A wine is balanced when the fruit and all the other components are in harmony. The main idea is that no single element overwhelms the rest.

COMPLEXITY:

A complex wine has many aromas and flavors. It is layered and nuanced. It keeps unfolding in your glass, revealing more over the course of a meal. (However, straightforward wines can still be good; easy on the palate and the pocketbook, they are great for everyday enjoyment.)

FINISH:

This describes the length of time that flavors and tastes linger after the wine has been swallowed or spit out. Great wines have long, lingering finishes. In addition, the nature of the finish is important. In white wines especially, the effect of acidity can be felt at this point; a wine with moderate to high acidity may have a clean, crisp and refreshing finish. In red wines, tannins and astringency usually reveal themselves on the finish, which may be described as "smooth and silky" or "rough and coarse."

AGEABILITY:

Most wines are best drunk in their youth, when they are fresh and fruity. Only a tiny fraction of wines have the ability to mature and improve after five years in the cellar, or even decades. To age well, a wine must have plenty of extract—flavor compounds, alcohol, tannins, sugars, acids, pigments—and these components must be found in balance with each other. For example, a young wine with lots of tannins but not much fruit will not age well; the fruit will fade long before the tannins soften.

TYPICITY:

Is this wine typical of its grape variety and growing region? In great wines, the answer is usually yes, and descriptors may include “classic,” “textbook” and “hallmark.” For example, the aromas of tar and roses are hallmarks of Barolo, but would be atypical for red Bordeaux.

At a minimum, wine should be clean, and the aromas, flavors, tastes and mouthfeel should be pleasing. However, the best wines are not only pleasing, they are complex. They have long finishes and reflect their grape variety, origin and vintage, as well as the winemaker’s skill. Simply put, they are unforgettable.

Wine scores are based on these parameters, but remember your individual preferences. A highly rated wine may not be of your preferred style, so it’s important to consider the description in addition to the score when purchasing a bottle.

BECOMING A WINE CONNOISSEUR

It takes commitment and dedication to gain a deeper appreciation of wine. Here are a few suggestions:

TASTE REGULARLY.

When you do, try two or more wines at a time; comparing and contrasting makes it much easier to identify and evaluate each wine’s features.

KEEP A TASTING JOURNAL.

Whether you write exhaustive notes in a leather-bound book or a few key descriptors on your smartphone, a journal will help you remember wines and styles that you’ve tried.

GET TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL RETAILER.

Your favorite retailer can be a great wine mentor, answering questions and suggesting wines that will be delicious with dinner or interesting to compare in a tasting at home.

TAKE A WINE COURSE.

Whether it’s through a local wine school, a university program or an online class, a good wine course can change the way you look at wine. Wine Spectator School offers 10 online courses with guided

tastings—from Understanding Wine to in-depth seminars on key regions, food-and-wine pairing and sensory evaluation; all of them are free with membership to WineSpectator.com.

No matter how you decide to continue your education, you can’t go wrong by following this advice: Enjoy each sip. Whether the wine in your glass is marvelous or merely drinkable, it connects you to distant vineyards and close friends. This enjoyable journey can continue for the rest of your life—there’s always a new vintage, a new wine and something new to learn.

Following are two sample comparative tastings, one for white wines and one for reds, so you can explore more. We’ve picked three different grape varieties for each tasting and provided some background for each; ask your local retailer to help you pick out wines that are typical of each variety. Then we’ve given you a checklist to walk through each step of tasting and pick out the characteristics you can identify in each wine. Finally, there are blank tasting journals and tasting mats to help you set up your own tastings. And remember, tastings are best shared with friends. Cheers!



Expert Tasting Methodology

STEP	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	MORE DESCRIPTIONS
SEE Tilt glass at a 45-degree angle against a white background.	Clarity, Color and Intensity Is the wine brilliant, clear or hazy? What color is the wine? Is it pale or intense?	White colors: green tinge, straw, gold, amber Red colors: purple, ruby, garnet, brick, amber Pale, dark, inky, opaque
	Legs Are they pronounced, indicating more alcohol and a fuller body?	Pronounced and persistent or faint
SMIFF Swirl, then put your nose inside the rim of the glass and take two to three sharp sniffs to smell for aromas.	Intensity and Identification Are the aromas faint or intense? What are the aromas?	White aromas: white-, yellow-, orange-fleshed fruits Red aromas: red and purple fruits White and red aromas: floral, herbal, mineral, spice Oak aromas: vanilla, spice, smoke, cedar, oak
	Temperature Is the serving temperature affecting your perception?	Too cold: tart with muted fruit flavors Too warm: alcoholic and flabby
SIP Take a small amount of wine into your mouth, then swish the liquid around, bringing it into contact with every part of your mouth. Olfactory epithelium in retronasal passages picks up flavors. Tongue senses tastes: sweet, tart, bitter, umami. Mouth feels for tactile sensations. Back of throat feels heat from alcohol.	Body Does the wine fill your mouth?	Light-, medium- or full-bodied (think of skim milk vs. cream)
	Flavor Are the flavors intense or dilute? What are the flavors? Are they the same as the aromas?	Lemon, peach, pineapple Strawberry, blueberry, black cherry
	Taste and Mouthfeel What are the tastes and tactile sensations?	Sweetness: rich, thick, sweet Umami: rich, thick, savory Acidity: bright, crisp, refreshing, tart Tannins: silky, smooth, velvety, firm, astringent
	Balance and Structure Are the fruit, acidity, tannins and alcohol in balance? Is the wine age-worthy?	Harmonious, integrated, well-knit, disjointed Concentrated, austere, firm, elegant, round, powerful Drink now, will improve for X years
	Finish Do the flavors linger or do they stop immediately?	Short, moderate, long
SUMMARIZE Spit or swallow wine and record impressions.	Quality What is the wine's quality?	Poor, good, excellent Flawed, vinous, simple, complex, layered
	Preference Do you like or dislike the wine?	Don't like, like, love
	Value Considering its price, how good is the wine?	Good value, moderate, overpriced Everyday, weekend, special occasion
	Overall Impression How would you describe the wine in one sentence? What stands out about the wine or makes it distinct or memorable?	

WHITES			
	Riesling	Sauvignon Blanc	Chardonnay
Origin	Alsace, Germany	Bordeaux, Loire	Burgundy
New Frontiers	Australia, California, New York	California, New Zealand	Australia, California, many other regions
AKA	almost always called Riesling	white Bordeaux (blend) Sancerre Pouilly-Fumé Fumé Blanc	Chablis white Burgundy Pouilly-Fuissé
Aromas/Flavors	Citrus, apple, peach, apricot, mineral, honey	Grapefruit, melon, grassy, herbal, mineral	Apple, pineapple, vanilla, smoky, lemon, mineral
Acidity	Medium to high	Medium to high	Low to medium
Sweetness	Dry to off-dry to sweet	Dry	Dry
Body	Light to medium	Medium	Medium to full

REDS			
	Pinot Noir	Shiraz or Syrah	Cabernet Sauvignon
Origin	Burgundy	Northern Rhône	Bordeaux
New Frontiers	California, Oregon	Australia, California, South Africa	Australia, California, Chile, Italy, etc.
AKA	red Burgundy	Hermitage, Crozes-Hermitage, Côte-Rôtie	red Bordeaux and Meritage from California (part of the blends)
Aromas/Flavors	Strawberry, raspberry, cherry, earth, mushroom	Raspberry, blackberry, black pepper, violet, bacon	Black currant, cherry, mint, tobacco, bell pepper
Acidity	Medium to high	Medium	Medium
Sweetness	Light	Medium	Full
Body	Light to medium	Medium to full	Medium to full

Origin: The growing regions where the grape rose to prominence.

New Frontiers: The growing regions where grapes have found new homes and are used to make noteworthy wines.

AKA: Throughout Europe, many wine regions specialize in making wine from one grape variety or a blend of specific grapes. These wines are often named after the growing area, rather than the grapes itself. In Burgundy, for instance, white wines are made from Chardonnay and red wines are made from Pinot Noir; the wines themselves are named after the towns or vineyards where the grapes were grown (i.e., Chablis).

Riesling

Producer: _____
 Growing Area: _____
 Vintage: _____
 Alcohol %: _____
 Price: _____

Sauvignon Blanc

Producer: _____
 Growing Area: _____
 Vintage: _____
 Alcohol %: _____
 Price: _____

Chardonnay

Producer: _____
 Growing Area: _____
 Vintage: _____
 Alcohol %: _____
 Price: _____

SEE

Color	Green – Yellow – Straw – Gold – Amber	Green – Yellow – Straw – Gold – Amber	Green – Yellow – Straw – Gold – Amber
Intensity	Pale – Medium – Dark	Pale – Medium – Dark	Pale – Medium – Dark

SNIFF

Aromas & Flavors	Citrus: Lemon, Lime, Grapefruit	Citrus: Lemon, Lime, Grapefruit	Citrus: Lemon, Lime, Grapefruit
	Tree Fruit: Apple, Pear, Peach, Apricot, Fig	Tree Fruit: Apple, Pear, Peach, Apricot, Fig	Tree Fruit: Apple, Pear, Peach, Apricot, Fig
	Tropical: Melon, Pineapple, Banana, Mango	Tropical: Melon, Pineapple, Banana, Mango	Tropical: Melon, Pineapple, Banana, Mango
	Floral: Orange blossom, Honeysuckle	Floral: Orange blossom, Honeysuckle	Floral: Orange blossom, Honeysuckle
	Herbal: Grass, Green vegetables, Mint, Dill	Herbal: Grass, Green vegetables, Mint, Dill	Herbal: Grass, Green vegetables, Mint, Dill
	Earthy: Stone, Slate, Moist Earth, Mushroom	Earthy: Stone, Slate, Moist Earth, Mushroom	Earthy: Stone, Slate, Moist Earth, Mushroom
	Spicy: Cinnamon, Nutmeg, Clove, Allspice	Spicy: Cinnamon, Nutmeg, Clove, Allspice	Spicy: Cinnamon, Nutmeg, Clove, Allspice
Nutty: Almond, Hazelnut, Marzipan	Nutty: Almond, Hazelnut, Marzipan	Nutty: Almond, Hazelnut, Marzipan	
Woody: Vanilla, Oak, Smoke, Toast	Woody: Vanilla, Oak, Smoke, Toast	Woody: Vanilla, Oak, Smoke, Toast	
Caramel: Honey, Butterscotch	Caramel: Honey, Butterscotch	Caramel: Honey, Butterscotch	

SIP

Acidity	Low – Medium – High	Low – Medium – High	Low – Medium – High
Sweetness	Dry – Off-dry – Sweet	Dry – Off-dry – Sweet	Dry – Off-dry – Sweet
Body	Light – Medium – Full-bodied	Light – Medium – Full-bodied	Light – Medium – Full-bodied

Flavor A wine's flavors and aromas are often similar. Circle the flavors you can identify in the aroma section above.

SUMMARIZE

Finish	Short – Moderate – Long	Short – Moderate – Long	Short – Moderate – Long
Quality	Poor – Good – Excellent	Poor – Good – Excellent	Poor – Good – Excellent
Preference	Dislike – Like – Love	Dislike – Like – Love	Dislike – Like – Love

Sauvignon Blanc

Wine 2

Riesling

Wine 1

Chardonnay

Wine 3

Pinot Noir

Producer: _____
Growing Area: _____
Vintage: _____
Alcohol %: _____
Price: _____

Shiraz

Producer: _____
Growing Area: _____
Vintage: _____
Alcohol %: _____
Price: _____

Cabernet Sauvignon

Producer: _____
Growing Area: _____
Vintage: _____
Alcohol %: _____
Price: _____

SEE

Color	Purple – Ruby Red – Brick – Amber	Purple – Ruby Red – Brick – Amber	Purple – Ruby Red – Brick – Amber
Intensity	Pale – Medium – Dark	Pale – Medium – Dark	Pale – Medium – Dark

SNIFF

Aromas & Flavors	Berry: Strawberry, Raspberry, Blackberry, Currant	Berry: Strawberry, Raspberry, Blackberry, Currant	Berry: Strawberry, Raspberry, Blackberry, Currant
	Tree Fruit: Red Cherry, Black Cherry, Plum	Tree Fruit: Red Cherry, Black Cherry, Plum	Tree Fruit: Red Cherry, Black Cherry, Plum
	Dried Fruit: Jam, Raisin, Prune	Dried Fruit: Jam, Raisin, Prune	Dried Fruit: Jam, Raisin, Prune
	Floral: Violet, Rose Petal, Lilac	Floral: Violet, Rose Petal, Lilac	Floral: Violet, Rose Petal, Lilac
	Herbal: Bell pepper, Olive, Sage, Mint, Anise, Tobacco	Herbal: Bell pepper, Olive, Sage, Mint, Anise, Tobacco	Herbal: Bell pepper, Olive, Sage, Mint, Anise, Tobacco
	Earth: Earth, Mushroom, Tar, Truffle	Earth: Earth, Mushroom, Tar, Truffle	Earth: Earth, Mushroom, Tar, Truffle
	Meat: Smoked Meat, Bacon, Leather	Meat: Smoked Meat, Bacon, Leather	Meat: Smoked Meat, Bacon, Leather
	Spice: Cinnamon, Clove, Black Pepper, White Pepper	Spice: Cinnamon, Clove, Black Pepper, White Pepper	Spice: Cinnamon, Clove, Black Pepper, White Pepper
Wood: Vanilla, Oak, Smoke, Toast	Wood: Vanilla, Oak, Smoke, Toast	Wood: Vanilla, Oak, Smoke, Toast	
Other: Chocolate, Coffee	Other: Chocolate, Coffee	Other: Chocolate, Coffee	

SIP

Acidity	Low – Medium – High	Low – Medium – High	Low – Medium – High
Sweetness	Light – Smooth – Rough	Light – Smooth – Rough	Light – Smooth – Rough
Body	Light – Medium – Full-bodied	Light – Medium – Full-bodied	Light – Medium – Full-bodied

Flavor A wine's flavors and aromas are often similar. Circle the flavors you can identify in the aroma section above.

SUMMARIZE

Finish	Short – Moderate – Long	Short – Moderate – Long	Short – Moderate – Long
Quality	Poor – Good – Excellent	Poor – Good – Excellent	Poor – Good – Excellent
Preference	Dislike – Like – Love	Dislike – Like – Love	Dislike – Like – Love

Shiraz

Wine 2

Pinot Noir

Wine 1

Cabernet Sauvignon

Wine 3

_____	Wine	_____
_____	Blend	_____
_____	Producer	_____
_____	Region	_____
_____	Vintage	_____
_____	Alcohol	_____
_____	Price	_____

SEE *Circle the best description for your wine in each category*

Brilliant — Clear — Hazy	Clarity	Brilliant — Clear — Hazy
Green Tinge — Straw — Gold — Amber	Color	Green Tinge — Straw — Gold — Amber
Pale — Medium — Dark	Color Intensity	Pale — Medium — Dark
Faint — Pronounced	Legs	Faint — Pronounced

SMELL *Circle the best description for your wine in each category*

Faint — Medium — Powerful	Aroma Intensity	Faint — Medium — Powerful
Lemon, Lime, Grapefruit	Citrus	Lemon, Lime, Grapefruit
Apple, Pear, Peach, Apricot, Fig	Tree Fruit	Apple, Pear, Peach, Apricot, Fig
Melon, Pineapple, Banana, Mango	Tropical	Melon, Pineapple, Banana, Mango
Orange Blossom, Honeysuckle, Jasmine	Floral	Orange Blossom, Honeysuckle, Jasmine
Grassy, Green Vegetables, Mint, Dill	Herbal	Grassy, Green Vegetables, Mint, Dill
Stone, Slate, Moist Earth, Mushroom	Mineral	Stone, Slate, Moist Earth, Mushroom
Cinnamon, Nutmeg, Clove, Allspice	Spice	Cinnamon, Nutmeg, Clove, Allspice
Almond, Hazelnut, Marzipan	Nut	Almond, Hazelnut, Marzipan
Vanilla, Oak, Smoke, Toast	Wood	Vanilla, Oak, Smoke, Toast
Honey, Butterscotch	Caramel	Honey, Butterscotch

SIP *Circle the best description for your wine in each category*

Low — Medium — High	Acidity	Low — Medium — High
Dry — Off-dry — Sweet	Sweetness	Dry — Off-dry — Sweet
Light — Medium — Full-bodied	Body	Light — Medium — Full-bodied
See above in Sniff	Flavor	See above in Sniff

SUMMARIZE *Circle the best description for your wine in each category*

See above in Sniff	Aftertaste	See above in Sniff
Short — Moderate — Long	Finish	Short — Moderate — Long
Unbalanced — Balanced	Balance	Unbalanced — Balanced
Simple — Moderately Complex — Complex	Complexity	Simple — Moderately Complex — Complex
Poor — Good — Excellent	Quality	Poor — Good — Excellent
Dislike — Like — Love	Preference	Dislike — Like — Love

_____	Wine Blend	_____
_____	Producer	_____
_____	Region	_____
_____	Vintage	_____
_____	Alcohol	_____
_____	Price	_____

SEE <i>Circle the best description for your wine in each category</i>		
Brilliant — Clear — Sediment	Clarity	Brilliant — Clear — Sediment
Purple — Ruby Red — Garnet/Brick — Tawny/Amber	Color	Purple — Ruby Red — Garnet/Brick — Tawny/Amber
Pale — Medium — Dark	Color Intensity	Pale — Medium — Dark
Faint — Pronounced	Legs	Faint — Pronounced
SMELL <i>Circle the best description for your wine in each category</i>		
Faint — Medium — Powerful	Aroma Intensity	Faint — Medium — Powerful
Strawberry, Raspberry, Blackberry, Currant	Berry	Strawberry, Raspberry, Blackberry, Currant
Red Cherry, Black Cherry, Plum	Tree Fruit	Red Cherry, Black Cherry, Plum
Jam, Raisin, Prune	Dried Fruit	Jam, Raisin, Prune
Violet, Rose Petal, Lilac	Floral	Violet, Rose Petal, Lilac
Bell Pepper, Olive, Sage, Mint, Anise, Tobacco	Herbal	Bell Pepper, Olive, Sage, Mint, Anise, Tobacco
Earth, Mushroom, Tar, Truffle	Earth	Earth, Mushroom, Tar, Truffle
Smoked Meat, Bacon, Leather	Meat	Smoked Meat, Bacon, Leather
Cinnamon, Clove, Black Pepper, White Pepper	Spice	Cinnamon, Clove, Black Pepper, White Pepper
Vanilla, Oak, Smoke, Toast	Wood	Vanilla, Oak, Smoke, Toast
Chocolate, Coffee	Other	Chocolate, Coffee
TASTE <i>Circle the best description for your wine in each category</i>		
Low — Medium — High	Acidity	Low — Medium — High
Light — Smooth — Rough	Tannin	Light — Smooth — Rough
Light — Medium — Full-Bodied	Body	Light — Medium — Full-Bodied
Low — Medium — Powerful	Flavor Intensity	Low — Medium — Powerful
See above in Sniff	Flavor	See above in Sniff
OVERALL <i>Circle the best description for your wine in each category</i>		
See above in Sniff	Aftertaste	See above in Sniff
Short — Moderate — Long	Finish	Short — Moderate — Long
Unbalanced — Balanced	Balance	Unbalanced — Balanced
Simple — Moderately Complex — Complex	Complexity	Simple — Moderately Complex — Complex
Poor — Good — Excellent	Quality	Poor — Good — Excellent
Dislike — Like — Love	Preference	Dislike — Like — Love



Wine: _____

Producer: _____

Region: _____

Vintage: _____

Alcohol: _____

Price: _____

APPEARANCE

Color, Intensity

AROMA

Identification, Intensity

FLAVOR

Identification, Intensity

BODY

BALANCE

Fruit, Acidity, Tannin, Alcohol, Sweetness

FINISH

SUMMARY

Complexity, Quality, Preference

