



DESCRIBING WINE

ACIDITY: Tartness - the sharp taste of natural grape acids

AFTERTASTE: The taste that lingers in the mouth after a wine is swallowed, also known as “Finish”

AROMA: The smell of wine coming from the grapes themselves and from the fermentation process

ASTRINGENT: Many red wines and some whites have a rough, harsh, puckery feel in the mouth (more tactile sensation than flavor), usually from tannin

AUSTERE: Used to describe wines whose fruit flavor is muted by tannins and high acidity; often a characteristic of young wines, whose flavor opens up, softens and develops with some bottle age

BALANCED: Fruit, acid, oak and other components in proportion

BIG: Describes a wine with rich, full flavors, tannins and aromas and/or full body

BODY: Substance, texture or “thickness” of a wine on the palate

BOUQUET: Fragrance of wine that originates in fermentation, processing or aging

BRIGHT: Used for fresh, ripe, zesty, lively young wines with vivid, focused flavors

CLEAN: Well-made wine free of any off-taste

CLOYING: Excessive sweetness in wine, to the point that it dominates the flavor and aftertaste, and is not balanced by acid, alcohol or fruit concentration

COMPLEX: Layers and levels of scents and flavors

CORKED: A musty, wet-newspaper smell resulting from a cork tainted by trace amounts of a chemical called TCA

CRISP: Noticeable acidity

DRY: Not sweet

ELEGANT: Wines with a balanced, delicate style may be described as elegant

EARTHY: Distinct odor or taste suggestive of soil

FAT/FLABBY: Lacking acidity and structure

FINISH: The tactile and flavor impressions left in the mouth after wine is swallowed, or “Aftertaste”

FLORAL: Having aromas reminiscent of flowers

FRUITY: The distinctive aroma and taste of fruit, though not sweetness, with which it is often mistaken or confused. A wine can be both fruity and dry (having no sweetness or sugar)

GENEROUS: Full-bodied wine, and full flavored, rich and smooth on the palate

GRASSY: Aroma of fresh-cut grasses; a fresh, distinctive, characteristic flavor of some Sauvignon Blancs



DESCRIBING WINE CONTINUED

GREEN: Younger wine that has a lean, sharp character

HARD: Astringent wine with high tannin levels

HARSH: Astringent, acidic or high-alcohol wines may be perceived as harsh on the palate. Some wines, which are harsh when young, lose this characteristic (and improve) with bottle age

HERBACEOUS: Having aromas or flavors reminiscent of herbs or other green vegetation

HOT: Refers to an excessive level of alcohol

LIGHT: Lack of density, flavor and concentration

LUSH: Wines with a rich, viscous tactile impression due to high alcohol or high sugar

MADERIZED: A term describing wines which have lost their freshness and color brilliance, typically due to exposure to air (oxidation) and excessive heat

MELLOW: Soft, mature, ripe

MUSTY: A dank, moldy smell

OAKY: Flavor or smell imparted by oak barrels. Both vanillin, a component of the oak itself, and toastiness, from charring the wood during barrel production, are common characteristics of oaky wines

OXIDIZED: A wine with reduced freshness and stale aroma due to excessive exposure to air

RAISINY: Rich, concentrated, dried-grape taste and aroma, often due to the actual use of raisinated grapes to make the wine

RICH: Dense intensity in wine; may apply to concentrated flavor, high alcohol, sweetness, full body, or a combination of these

ROUND: Wine harmoniously balanced in body, flavor, tannins and acid

TANNIN: Extract of the skins, stems and seeds of the grapes, perceived as a drying or puckery sensation

TART: Sharp, sour taste of acidity in wine

TEXTURE: The mouthfeel of a wine, a combination of density and smoothness

VEGETAL: Weed-like character

VELVETY: Mellow, fine and soft

YEASTY: Odor of yeast or fresh bread

YOUNG: Fresh, fruity, unoxidized wine

WOODY: Wine with excessive odor or taste of woodh