



WINE

G U I D E

TIPS AND ADVICE ON:

- Pairing wine with food
- The perfect service
- Storage and care
- Why vintage matters
- Choosing dessert wine

AND MORE!

Get a Local Taste

WINERIES MAKE UP A FAST-GROWING TREND IN AMERICA

If wineries are cropping up in your area, you're not alone.

According to WineAmerica, the wine industry association based in Washington, the country has seen astonishing growth in wineries in recent years. There were 6,672 wineries open in America in 2010, which represents nearly 2,000 more than existed just three years earlier. In 1979, there were just 579 wineries, so wine-making has been a long-term growth industry for decades.

What's behind all the growth? Aside from the obvious — people continue to enjoy unwinding around a bottle of wine with friends and loved ones — two big trends are driving it.

LOCAL EATING

For many reasons, Americans are increasingly looking to local sources for their food. It's better for the environment because the food has less distance to be shipped; it's fresher and often considered healthier, especially from local organic farms; and it's good for the local economy, supporting



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Nearly 2,000 wineries opened across America between 2007 and 2010, according to WineAmerica.

the friends and neighbors who live and work on nearby farms.

Those same advantages are also driving sales from local wineries. Shoppers love being connected to the craftspeople who actually produce what they buy. Many shoppers

enjoy the change of pace that eating locally can provide, and knowing exactly where their wine came from.

AGRITOURISM

Another factor driving the growth in wineries is agritourism, where visitors travel to

wineries to see exactly how the wine is produced — and to get a taste of the finished product, of course.

In an age when gigantic corporations seem so dominant in the food industry, many people like to experience firsthand how their food

is grown. By visiting wineries, people can see every step of the process for themselves, making them feel more connected to what they're eating.

Besides, it's just plain fun to see how wine makes it from the grapevine to the dinner table.

The Perfect Match

OPEN NEW EXPERIENCES BY PAIRING WINE WITH FOOD

Few things go together as beautifully as fine wine and perfectly cooked cuisine.

Get the match right, and the food and drink will complement each other perfectly, bringing out the subtle flavors of every single bite and sip. A good pairing will make the flavors dance on your tongue.

Get it wrong, and unpleasant flavors and overtones will collide to ruin the meal.

While there are some basic rules of thumb that many people follow — red wine with lamb and beef, white wine with fish and chicken, and a sweet wine with dessert — these should be thought of more as general guidelines rather than hard-and-fast rules. A good pairing is a matter of personal taste that can vary with the subtle nuances of the wine and the dish itself.

GET ADVICE

The best place to start is a restaurant with a sommelier, a professional wine expert who knows all about wines and how they interact with food. Fine restaurants will have someone on staff to help you make the pairings. That's their whole job, after all.

Other restaurants may have highly experienced waiters or managers who know what their customers prefer — or can make their own recommendations based on their experience with

various menu items.

The bottom line is that, especially for beginning wine drinkers, you need to get some input from people who know what they're talking about. That can help you avoid making big, potentially embarrassing mistakes at important meals.

TRUST YOUR INSTINCT

Once you get some experience with pairings that you like, you'll probably have a gut feeling about which wines will work best with each course. Listen to that feeling because, when it's informed by personal experience, it's usually right.

It's important to experiment by trying different wines with different types of food. If you try a spectacular white wine with spicy chicken, for example, the seasoning in the food might ruin the drink. Pair it with a different, more mild chicken dish, and you may get a much better experience.

LET IT SHINE

Finally, it's important to let the centerpiece of your meal stand out.

If you're trying to show off the complex or subtle combinations

of flavors in your entree, a mild, softer wine will let it stand out. Likewise, if you're serving an exceptionally fine, older vintage of wine, you should plan for the food to be milder, lighter and simpler to let the complex taste of the wine shine through.

Whatever is on your plate, the wine pairing has the potential to either make it sublime or completely wreck the flavor. Finding a good match comes from a mix of trial and error, personal preference and solid advice.



Tips for Serving Wine

Have you ever bought a supposedly spectacular, highly recommended wine that didn't quite live up to your expectations? If so, the problem might not lie with the wine itself, but with how it was being served.

How you deliver a wine matters almost as much as the variety of wine you pick. From the temperature to the glassware, the specifics of how the wine gets to your mouth can make a noticeable difference.

TEMPERATURE

While you should always take steps to store your wine at the correct temperature — especially if it will be stored for a long period of time — sometimes wine has to be chilled or warmed up before serving.

To chill wine, a quick and easy way is to place it in a bucket of ice and cold water. How long you leave it in the ice will depend on the type of wine. Champagne, which should be served quite cold, may take 30 minutes in the ice, compared with just five or 10 minutes for a warmer red wine.

While the right temperature to serve a wine is at some level a purely personal preference, here are some general guidelines for the service temperature:

Light white, rosé, sparkling: 40° to 50° F

Full-bodied white, light red: 50° to 60° F

Full-bodied red, port: 60° to 65° F

GLASSWARE

Different types of wine are also best served in specific types of glassware.

RED WINE: Glasses for serving red wine typically have wide, deep bowls so that plenty of oxygen contacts the wine. This emphasizes the scents and helps to bring out the subtle flavors in reds.

WHITE WINE: White wine glasses typically look similar to the red-wine glassware, except with smaller bowls and a smaller opening at the top. Because white wine doesn't usually age for as many years as red, it doesn't develop the same complexity of flavor and hence doesn't need as much oxygen contact.

CHAMPAGNE: Long, thin glasses called Champagne flutes are ideal for sparkling wines. The tall, narrow shape directs the tiny bubbles all the way up the side of the glass, extending their life and intensifying the aroma that is funneled to the top of the glass.

SHERRY: Because sherry has such an intensely sweet flavor, special glasses with a smaller capacity are often used to serve it. Other dessert wines are popularly served in sherry glasses, too.



Make it Sparkle



CHAMPAGNE, SPARKLING WINE ADD ELEGANCE

From wedding ceremonies to upscale parties and anniversary celebrations, one drink says “this is something special.”

For centuries, people have celebrated their milestones with Champagne or sparkling wine, with the rising bubbles almost symbolic of lifting people’s spirits.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

Some people confuse Champagne with sparkling wine, but there is a difference. They’re both produced in the same way. Champagne is simply a type of sparkling wine that is produced in the Champagne region of France, where bubbling wines occurred naturally centuries ago.

Today, while true Champagne continues to be in high demand and often commands high prices as a result, there are many high-quality sparkling wines produced all around the world. Some of the best come from right here in America.

WHY DOES IT BUBBLE?

Originally, winemakers thought of bubbles as a defect in their wine.

They would take steps to remove it.

Over time, though, people started to favor those tiny carbon dioxide bubbles in their drinks, and some winemakers started encouraging their products to sparkle — even though the exact process of why it sparkled remained a mystery.

Today, we know that Champagne and sparkling wine gets its bubbles from a second phase of fermentation. The ordinary wine is made in the first fermentation before a little more sugar and yeast are added, then left to ferment a second time — typically in the bottle itself, which leads to very high pressure inside the bottle.

PAIRING IT

Because of the bubbles that tickle the tongue, sparkling wine can actually be easier to pair with foods than traditional wines are.

Champagne and sparkling wine generally pair well with a wide variety of appetizers and slightly salty foods. Most hors d’oeuvres work well with bubbly, not to mention the most common party snack foods like chips, pizza, pretzels and nuts.

Why Vintage Matters

Wine aficionados will tell you that while the type of wine matters a great deal, the wine's vintage can be just as important.

But why does vintage matter? Is it just a matter of wine snobbery? If grapes are produced on the exact same land and fermented in the exact same way, why would the exact year make a difference?

ANNUAL VARIATIONS

The obvious answer is that weather conditions can vary dramatically from year to year, and this in turn will make a dramatic difference in how the wine tastes in your glass.

The best winemakers are very skilled at keeping their wine's flavor consistent from each harvest, but there's only so much they can do to offset the whims of Mother Nature. Temperatures, rainfall amounts and frost dates can all play havoc with grapes, causing them to grow bigger or smaller, drier or juicier, and forcing them to be harvested earlier or later.

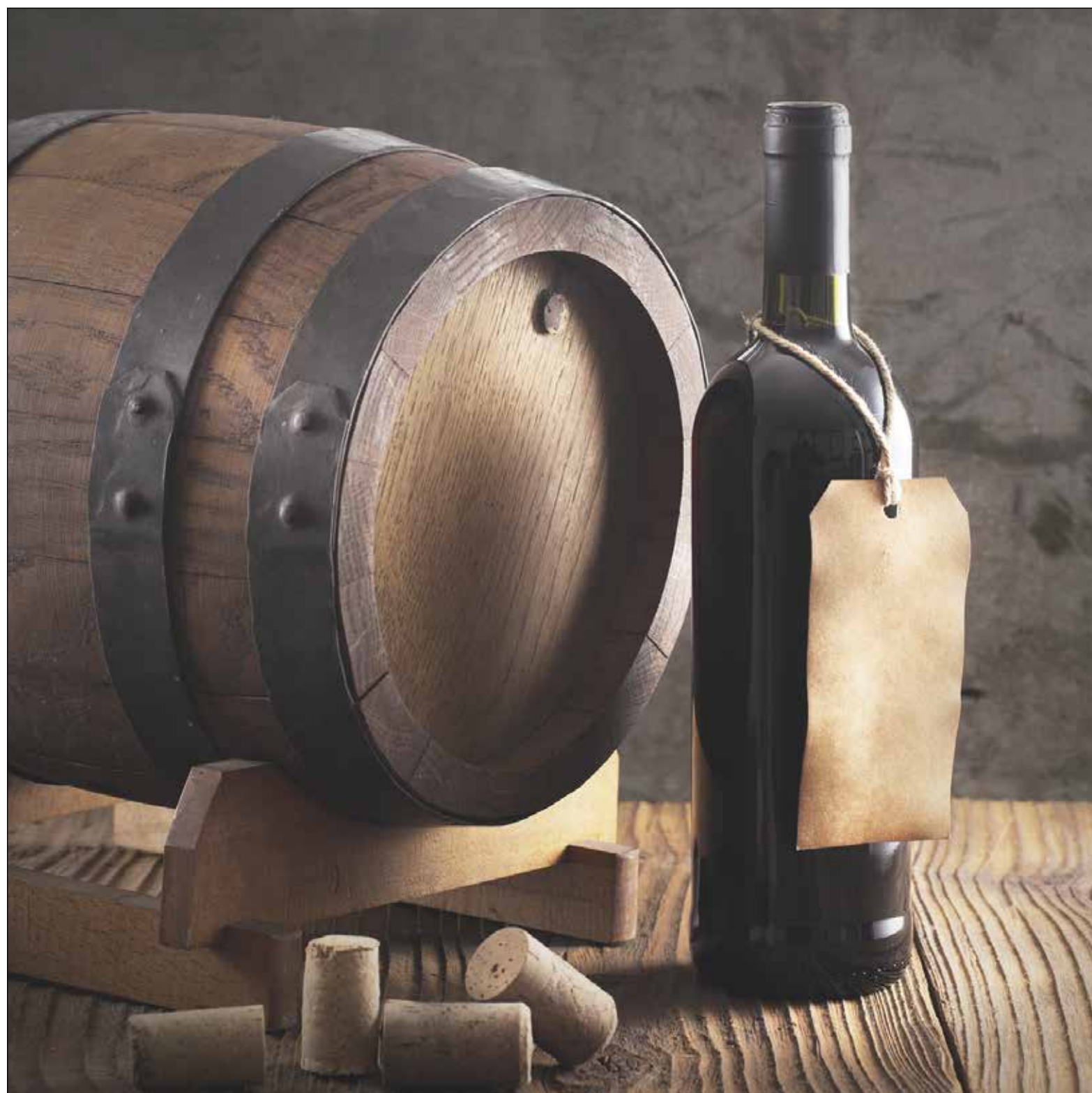
All these variations mean wine from the exact same winery, produced by the exact same winemaker, will be better in some years than others.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

Vintage is one of many factors that makes buying a wine such an adventure. If you know which years produced the best wine in a particular region, you can seek out that one special vintage.

Unfortunately, you usually won't be the only person who wants it. Depending on the exact wine, one particular vintage can sometimes be in high demand, which drives up the price when the supply is scarce.

It can also be a personal choice. If there's one particular wine that you love, make sure you note the year on the label. With any luck, you'll be able to hunt down the exact same vintage in the future so the new bottle will match the flavor that you love.



Tips for Storage

For many people, purchasing wine can represent a considerable investment.

If you want to make the most of your wine purchases, especially over the long term, you need to take good care of what you're buying. Here are some things to consider:

TEMPERATURE

First and foremost, wine needs a cool temperature to maintain its flavor. And different types of wine will store better at various temperature ranges. Some general guidelines:

Champagne and sparkling wine: 43-47° F

White blush, rosé, and dry wines: 46-57°

Light red wine: 55° F

Rich red wine: 59-66° F

CONSISTENCY

Trying to store wine in an ordinary refrigerator presents two major problems. One, your refrigerator will store the wine at too cold a temperature for most common varieties. And two, the temperature will fluctuate wildly because you open and close the refrigerator door so often.

Unless you have the funds and interest to build a full wine cellar, the next best thing is a specialized wine refrigerator. Small versions are available at retail stores for under \$200, although higher capacity or better quality machines can cost considerably more.

BOTTLE POSITION

How you position the wine bottle can also dramatically affect its lifespan and flavor. Corked bottles should always be placed on their sides so that the cork stays wet, which will keep it firmly sealed.

You should also make sure the wine is stored in a way that keeps it undisturbed. It should be placed away from sunlight, temperature changes and any vibrations.



Choosing a Dessert Wine

A rich, sweet wine is a great way to elevate an ordinary dessert to a work of culinary art.

Unfortunately, as well-versed in eating desserts as we Americans are, we generally don't have as much experience in picking dessert wines as our European counterparts.

That's beginning to change, though, as more people look toward specialty wines to complement their end-of-meal sweets.

Here are some basics to know.

MATCH THE FLAVOR

The first rule of thumb is that the dessert wine should be slightly sweeter than the dessert itself. Otherwise, the sweetness of the dessert could emphasize any bitter tones in the wine when they're combined on the tongue.

The second rule is the wine's intensity should match the dessert itself.

For example, a light, delicate, fruity pastry could easily be overpowered by an intense red wine. You would want to pick a very delicate, fruity white wine to match the lightness of the dessert.

Likewise, the strong flavor of a dark chocolate cake would require an equally strong-flavored wine to balance it out. It would be too



PHOTO: SHALAMOV / YAYMICRO.COM

A good dessert wine will be sweeter than the dessert itself while matching the intensity of its flavors.

easy for the wine's taste to get lost in the chocolate otherwise.

EXPERIMENT

If you're new to dessert wines, the best way to decide what to serve when entertain-

ing is to experiment ahead of time.

You can pick two or three of your favorite, sweet specialty wines to start with. You may be able to find them at a nearby grocery store, but you'll generally find a better selection of dessert wines from

boutiques.

Whether served in a glass to be paired with a sweet treat, or used in the dessert preparation itself, you can try out different recipes and combinations to find fun, exotic combinations.

And remember, the most

elegant desserts aren't necessarily the most elaborate ones. Simple ideas like biscotti cookies served with a sweet, delicate wine, or drizzling some of your favorite vintage on top of ice cream and raspberries, can be an easy way to end a memorable meal.