Wine 101

A Guide to the World of Wine
For more than 30 years, Ravenswood has been synonymous with bold, classically crafted wines of exceptional quality and soul. Our Vintners Blend wines showcase California's finest varietals, crafted in a delightfully approachable style. Bright and richly flavored, our world-renowned Zinfandel is delicious for everyday drinking and an exceptional value.

**Government Warning:**
(1) ACCORDING TO THE SURGEON GENERAL, WOMEN SHOULD NOT DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES DURING PREGNANCY BECAUSE OF THE RISK OF BIRTH DEFECTS. (2) CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IMPAIRS YOUR ABILITY TO DRIVE A CAR OR OPERATE MACHINERY, AND MAY CAUSE HEALTH PROBLEMS.
Basic White Varietals

The following is a short list of basic white wine varietals to purchase that will ensure your home is wine ready for any occasion.

PINOT GRIGIO
(PEA-no GREE-gee-oh)

- Pinot Grigio is the Italian name for the French or American wine varietal known as Pinot Gris
- Medium full bodied, crisp and dry, with forward fruit

RIESLING
(REESE-ling)

- Riesling is the great white wine grape of Germany and grows well in cooler climates
- Produced at all levels of sweetness
- Wonderfully crisp, light, dry wines

MOSCATO
(Muss-KAHT-oh)

- Moscato is considered one of the world’s ancient grape varieties
- Light-bodied, very aromatic and fruity; sometimes slightly effervescent or fully sparkling
- Almost always sweet

SAUVIGNON BLANC
(So-veen-YOHN Blahnk)

- The wine’s most dominant characteristic is an instantly recognizable aroma typically described as grassy or herbaceous
- A clean, usually refreshing white wine with a broad range of styles

CHARDONNAY
(Shar-dun-NAY)

- Chardonnay is the most famous varietal of all, the vanilla of the wine world
- Styles ranging from light to full bodied
- Subtle fruit flavors and aromas consistent with apple, pear, pineapple, and orange
Basic Red Varietals

The following is a short list of basic red wine varietals to purchase that will ensure your home is wine ready for any occasion.

MÉRLOT (Mare-LOW)
• The homeland of Merlot is the Bordeaux region of France where it is the most planted vine variety
• Produces a lush, plummy, velvety wine, typically medium bodied

SANGIOVESE (San-Joe-VAY-zee)
• Sangiovese is Italy’s most widely planted red grape and the heart of most central Italian red wines, most notably Chianti and Brunello
• Produces dense plumminess when grapes are fully ripe
• Well-structured, often high-acid wines

PINOT NOIR (PEA-no Nwahr)
• Pinot Noir is the grape variety exclusively responsible for red Burgundy
• The vine does better in cooler climates since the fruit ripens relatively early
• Fruity at the core, essences like strawberry, cherry, and plum mingle with notes of sandalwood, spice, and flowers

SYRAH/SHIRAZ (Sir-AH/Shur-OZ)
• Shiraz is the Australian and South African name for the French variety known as Syrah
• Produces ripe and often sweeter wines than Rhône-based wines, and a suggestion of chocolate as opposed to pepper and spices

ZINFANDEL (ZIN-fan-dell)
• Red zinfandels range from fruity with light to medium body, to rich and powerful
• Rich berry, black cherry, and plum aroma with a crisp refreshing mouthfeel

CABERNET SAUVIGNON (Cah-burr-NAY So-veen-YOHN)
• Cabernet Sauvignon is the world’s most famous red wine grape
• Powerful and recognizable aroma of black currants
• Ages extremely well in the bottle, developing subtle flavor compounds

MALBEC (MAHL-beck)
• Malbec originates from the Bordeaux region of France
• Has become Argentina’s signature grape
• Distinguished by plummy dark-fruit flavors and earthy tannins for a medium to full-bodied wine
Wine Tasting

Wine is easy to enjoy. The process of tasting wine should not be intimidating, it should be fun. The following steps take just a little time, yet they give you the benefit of truly appreciating and understanding the nuances of each varietal.

1. **See**
   Hold the glass by its stem and tip it away from you, preferably against a white background. See the different shades of color, particularly at the rim. Red wines range from deep purple to pale tawny; whites go from pale greenish-yellow to deep gold.

2. **Swirl**
   By swirling, you maximize the wine’s surface area and release more of the bouquet.

3. **Smell**
   Notice if the wine is clean and attractive, the intensity of the smell, and what the aromas bring to mind. Negative or “off” smells are: Vinegar: Too much acetic acid in wine. Sherry: Too much oxygen in wine. Cork: Wine has absorbed the taste of defective cork making it musty or moldy in flavor. Sulfur: Too much sulfur dioxide present.

4. **Sip**
   Hold the wine in your mouth for three seconds before swallowing. Notice how sweet or sour, bitter, astringent, or alcoholic the wine is. Gauge the body of the wine. Think skim milk, milk, heavy cream. Also, how does the wine feel in your mouth? The term “mouthfeel” is used for the sensations experienced.

5. **Savor**
   Now is the time to assess the wine as a whole. Do I like this wine? Why or why not? Were all the elements in balance or did one of them seem obtrusive? In young reds, tannin often dominates while young whites are often very acidic. In an older wine, this lack of balance would be a fault. Is the wine light, medium, or full bodied? What kinds of food would work well with this wine?
## Wine and Food Pairing

### Body to Body
- Reflect body, texture, and characteristics of the wine with those of the food.
- Delicate or lightly flavored foods work best with light-bodied wines.
- Stronger, heavier foods should be paired with medium to full-bodied wines.

### Traditional Pairings
- The basic rule is to pair white wines with fish and white meats like chicken – red wines with red meats.

### Wine with Dessert
- Make sure the wine is as sweet as or preferably sweeter than the dessert being served.

### Varietal Pairings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Varietal</th>
<th>Protein</th>
<th>Other Foods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pinot Grigio</td>
<td>Turkey, Pork</td>
<td>Fresh Fruit, Mild Cheeses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riesling</td>
<td>Poultry, Fish</td>
<td>Chocolate, Cheesecake, Tarts, Mozzarella Cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fumé/Sauvignon Blanc</td>
<td>Salmon, Halibut, Oysters</td>
<td>Asian Foods, Pasta/White Sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chardonnay</td>
<td>Chicken, Seafood</td>
<td>Cheddar Cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinot Noir</td>
<td>Shellfish, Pasta</td>
<td>Parmesan/Romano Cheeses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merlot</td>
<td>Beef, Lamb, Chops</td>
<td>Mild Cheddar, Pasta/White Sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrah/Shiraz</td>
<td>Peppered Meats, Sausage</td>
<td>Pasta/Red Sauce, Cheddar Cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zinfandel</td>
<td>BBQ, Steak, Spicy Food</td>
<td>Mild Curry, Risotto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabernet Sauvignon</td>
<td>Beef, Lamb, Chicken</td>
<td>Brie Cheese, Chocolates</td>
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</tbody>
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How to Open a Bottle of Wine

1. With the small knife on your good corkscrew, cut the capsule cleanly beneath the lip of the bottle. Rotate the bottle as you cut.

2. Hold the bottle by the neck and insert the tip of the corkscrew at an angle and slightly off center. (This helps to prevent cork breakage). Turn the corkscrew until it is fully into the cork.

3. Hook the lever of the corkscrew onto the rim of the bottle. Hold the lever in place with the thumb of the hand that is holding the bottle. Lift up the corkscrew in one firm slow motion until the cork is fully extracted.

How Much to Buy

There is a simple formula to determine the right amount of wine you will need to ensure a successful party.

First, determine the number of guests that will be coming to your event. Next, take the number of guests and multiply by the number of hours the party is intended to last. This will give you the average number of servings you will need.

**Example:**
Number of Guests x Number of hours = Number of Servings
5 guests x 2 hours = 10 Servings

Once you know the number of servings you’ll need, you can then calculate the amount of wine to purchase based on the number of servings in each bottle size:
750ml bottle = 5 servings
1.5L bottle = 10 servings
3L bottle = 20 servings

**Example:**
If you need 10 servings, you could purchase either two 750ml bottles or one 1.5L bottle.