

WHY TASTE?

By working through the classes, you'll gain a solid theoretical understanding of wine. But really appreciating wine is more than an intellectual exercise; it means using your senses of sight, smell, taste and touch.

In the ABCs of Wine Tasting, classes 2 and 3 are tutored tastings that:

- Guide you through the process of conducting your own wine tastings
- Train your senses to recognize the aromas, flavors, tastes and textures commonly found in wine

Finally, wine is a lot more fun when it's shared with friends and consumed in moderation. We hope that you'll use this course to appreciate and enjoy wine to its fullest.

WHEN AND WHERE TO TASTE

Since the tasting materials can be read on-line or printed out, you have a number of options:

- We encourage you to print out the tasting tutorial and share the wine tasting with friends.
- Work through the tastings on-line.
- Take the tasting tutorial to a local wine bar where you can purchase the wines by the glass.

REQUIRED MATERIALS (besides wine)

- **Stemware:** one glass per taster, per wine. In the ABCs of Wine Tasting, each tutored tasting highlights three wines, so each taster should have three identical glasses. Ideally, the glasses should be tulip-shaped, with a profile that narrows toward the rim.
- **Corkscrew:** to open the bottles
- **Water:** to cleanse your palate and hydrate
- **Spit container:** opaque cup
- **Tasting Note Worksheet:** printed out from class materials to record your tasting notes
- **Tasting Mat:** printed out from class materials
- **Pen:** to take notes

PURCHASING THE WINES

Wines are not supplied by Wine Spectator School, but these pages contain all the information you need to buy wines for the tasting tutorials.

Learn by doing:

Students find that buying their own wine increases their understanding of wine. Some buy all the wines in a single trip to the store. Many students enjoy taking separate trips for each tasting; they provide the opportunity to build a relationship with a single wine merchant or to compare the service at a few stores.

Cost:

The wine list (on the next page) includes the approximate cost for a good-quality example of each wine. More expensive wines are available should you wish to trade up, but a more expensive wine does not necessarily provide a better illustration of a given point. Always buy at your own comfort level.

If you average \$12-\$15 per bottle, the total cost for completing each of the two tastings in the ABCs of Wine Tasting course is \$36-\$45 – and you'll have wine left for dinner. The final cost depends on your market, the amount you want to spend and the number of friends participating in the tastings.

Dialog:

To guide your purchase, we've provided a list of specific wines or wine styles along with their approximate prices and the tasting goals. Show the list to your local merchant or explain the following points:

- I'd like some wines for a comparative tasting.
- The three wines are _____, _____ and _____.
- The goal for the tasting is to _____.
- I'd like to stay under _____ dollars a bottle.

The staff at any good wine store will be happy to help you select the appropriate wines from their stock.

Tasters per bottle:

Approximately 2 ounces of each wine are required for a taste, so a standard 750 ml / 25 oz bottle can accommodate 10-12 people.

If you are going to taste with friends, we recommend starting off with a smaller group of 4-6 people, making set up much easier.

WINE LIST

Wines should be:

- True to type, emphasizing the hallmark characteristics of each grape variety
- The same age or within a vintage or two of each other
- In the same general price range, within \$5-\$6 of each other

Class 2: White Tasting Trio

- Riesling from the Alsace, New Zealand or Austria or a dry style from Germany
- Sauvignon Blanc from California, made with minimal or no oak
- Chardonnay from California, with evident oak

Purchasing guidelines...

- This tasting compares the three varietals and illustrates the influence of oak. Tell your wine merchant that these are the points you want to highlight.
- You can find good examples of Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc for \$12-\$15; expect to pay a few dollars more for the Riesling.

Class 3: Red Tasting Trio

- Pinot Noir from Oregon, California or New Zealand
- Shiraz from Australia
- Cabernet Sauvignon from California or Chile

Purchasing guidelines...

- This tasting illustrates the spectrum of reds in terms of body and tannin levels
- You can find good examples of Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon for \$12-\$15; expect to pay a few dollars more for the Pinot Noir.