

HOW NOT TO ORDER THE WRONG WINE ON THE RIGHT OCCASION!

For many, ordering wine at a restaurant can be like throwing darts with your eyes closed.

But we have good news!

You don't have to be an expert to order an amazing wine and impress others in the process.

We'll give you an infallible script for you to get it right when ordering wines at the restaurant so that you don't have to rely on luck and can use the weapons of knowledge.

The Price

It is no secret that wines in restaurants have very high prices.

Although there is a big difference in price patterns from restaurant to restaurant, on average, they sell their bottles of wine two to three times more than the price they paid at wholesale.

Don't be afraid to buy the cheapest bottle on the wine list. In our experience, the cheapest bottle can usually be a very pleasant wine.

Don't confuse it with "house" wine, which is usually served only by the glass. This is better to avoid.

If you're not sure about the cheapest option at a restaurant, you can always order the second cheapest bottle on the menu and continue to get quality for value.

Glass or Bottle?

Order a bottle or glass of wine?

If we know that a glass of wine is around $\frac{1}{5}$ of a bottle and you know that you are going to drink at least three glasses of the same wine, buy the bottle! It will definitely be cheaper than asking for a glass.

In some parts of the world, you can ask to take the rest of the wine home. Don't feel pressure to finish the bottle at dinner, especially if you have to drive home. You'll end up looking more poised and professional than trying to polish off the bottle as if it were a challenge.

Ordering wines by the glass can be more advantageous, however, especially when dining at one of your favorite spots. For example, when choosing a glass pour, you are able to taste through different wines, styles, regions, finding not only the style you like but also discovering pairings throughout the meal.

Lesser Known Wines

Grape varieties and lesser-known wine regions can be a big hit! They often have better value, with a better price-quality ratio since they are not so "famous" (which can sometimes mean paying for the reputation and/or land more than the wine itself).

No Shame When Ordering!

A bottle of Agiorgitiko, please ?!

Don't worry about pronouncing a wine incorrectly!

Never let this discourage you from asking for something you're interested in! Some servers may have learned the pronunciation a few hours earlier, and will almost always be impressed with someone trying something different.

Know Your Taste

Know what you like and be honest with yourself.

Grapes, regions and styles of wine go in and out of fashion. This does not mean that they adapt to your taste or that one type is "better" than another.

Having a clear idea of what you like puts you ahead of the vast majority of customers.

There are so many different styles of wine, so many types of grapes and producing regions, that our approach to the exciting world of wine can often be erroneous and complicated and we don't know where to start and what conclusions to draw.

Organizing wines by style is a good idea. Oaked or unoaked? Sur-lie or MLF? Crisp and lean or fuller-bodied? Dry or off-dry? Still or Sparkling? Easy and refreshing or thought-provoking?

I hope these tips help you get to know your favorite wine style better!

RED WINE

Among red wines, there are several different styles.

They are directly linked to the grape varieties, the place where they were planted and the various decisions made by the winemaker during vinification.

How a wine was aged and for how long also has varying impacts on its flavor and price.

For example, a winery must decide on various cooperages for their oak barrels. Do they want French oak, American oak, Slavonian oak, Hungarian, etc?

Do they want a light toast, medium toast, or heavy toast. Different grains of wood and the toast level can impart subtle or drastic flavors into the wine, ranging from vanilla, coconut, charred cedar, nutmeg, etc.

When it comes to price, imagine the cost of buying all the barrels! Using new oak barrels can range from \$600 - \$1,200 for the *smaller* size barrel alone, which gets factored into the final price of the wine.

If a wine is aged in oak and stored at the cellar to complete its maturation in said barrels, this is also a factor that is built into the final price of the wine, as storage time prevents the winery from making money so they must make it up later on.

The color and tannins (the solid part of the wine that gives the wine a feeling of astringency or dryness. It is extracted from the skin and seeds of grapes) are found in the skin and in the seed (or “pip”) of red grapes.

Depending on the type of grape and the climate in the region where it was planted, the skin will be more or less thick, and the concentration of coloring and tannic compounds will be higher or lower depending on the winemaker’s style.

To extract color, flavors, aromas, and tannicity (quantity of tannins), the must is kept macerating in the juice with the skins.

And that is why depending on different grapes and different maceration times, the extraction and concentration of the substances will be different, giving rise to these styles of red wine:

- Full-Bodied Reds
- Medium-Bodied Reds
- Light (and Elegant) Reds

FULL-BODIED RED WINES

These are wines that are characterized by the intensity of its aromas and the weight of the wine on the palate.

They are usually dark wines, through which you cannot see a finger behind the glass, for example. It's what is called a 'high cover' wine.

They have a lot of color pigment because the grapes typically have thicker skins which have higher anthocyanins that are extracted when macerating (soaked in grape juice) for a long time.

These are generally wines produced in warmer regions since longer sun exposure allows the grapes to ripen more fully, including color pigmentation as it hangs longer on the vine.

In these warmer climate regions, the grapes ripen easily and therefore the alcohol content is usually higher, around 14% vol (or 14°) or more.

Sometimes, it is even possible that the winemaker leaves some of the residual sugar (the natural sugar of the must that was left to ferment with the stop of fermentation) in the wine to increase the weight (or sensation of the wine's body) in the mouth.

In the aromatic phase of the tasting (phase where we smell the wine), darker fruits (such as blueberries, blackberries, currants) can appear, ranging from ripe to overripe to more complex dried fruit like prunes.

The grape varieties with which these full-bodied wines are produced commonly include:

- Cabernet Sauvignon
- Malbec
- Tannat
- Merlot (from warm climates)
- Tempranillo (Tinta Roriz)
- Nebbiolo
- Cabernet Franc
- Monastrell (Mourvedre)
- Touriga Nacional
- Syrah
- Zinfandel
- etc...

The serving temperature for these wines cannot be too high, because the heat will increase the sensation of alcohol in a wine. They should be served around 18/20°C (64/68°F).

At the table, they pair well with foods with strong flavors such as:

- Red meats (and almost all meat used in barbecues)
- Roast lamb
- Strong (flavorful) (Potent?), cured, and creamy cheeses
- Stews in general, especially ones with meat & spiced
- Game meat
- BONUS PAIRING: And many can pair very well with Dark Chocolates and a Good Cigar!

MEDIUM-BODIED REDS

Medium-bodied red wines are excellent wines for pairings, as they have balanced tannins and moderate acidity. The alcohol content of these wines tend to be between 13% vol and 14% vol.

Wines aged in wooden barrels for at least a year usually fall into this category of medium-bodied wines.

The characteristic aromas (smells) are red fruit (raspberry, cherry, strawberry) with notes of spices (vanilla, pepper or cloves) from oak aging. Depending on the winemaking style, the fruit can range from ripe, jammy, or even baked.

The grape varieties commonly used to produce this medium-bodied style of red wine include:

- Merlot (from cold climates)
- Grenache (Garnacha)
- Carignan
- Sangiovese aged in barrels
- Valpolicella Blend (Corvina, Rondinella, Molinara)
- Barbera
- Dolcetto
- Aglianico
- Mencía
- Carménère
- Mourvedre
- Mondeuse

These are the reds that can accompany a great variety of dishes due to medium tannin structure, balanced fruit notes with acidity to keep the wine refreshing and lifted, and will compliment (instead of competing) with a variety of spices used. Imagine, for example, how well a Sangiovese pairs with the medium-rich tomato sauce, melted cheese, and almost any kind of savory topping imaginable! Other great food ideas for pairing with medium-bodied reds are endless, a few of our favorites:

- Pastas
- Pizzas
- Vegetable stews
- Roasted White meat
- Lean red meats (even in a salad!)
- Blue fish (tuna, salmon, sardines ...)
- Almost all types of cheese
- Cold cuts, charcuterie boards with cured meats
- Vegetables
- Mushrooms

and much more!

LIGHT (AND ELEGANT) REDS

It is wrong to consider that lighter wines are inferior or of lesser quality than full-bodied wines. It can be argued that the opposite is more true than this common misbelief.

Light-bodied red wines are typically those that have less concentration of solid structure, tannins. The intensity of aromas can range from pungent to shy, the intensity of flavors from high to

low. Sometimes it is in these lighter-bodied red wines that we find the subtle nuances of a specific microclimate since the fruit is what speaks instead of the winemaker's decisions in the cellar.

They can be guard wines, aged in the cellar and/or bottle for many years to develop complexity and rest until their ready.

These are wines in which the aromas of fresh red fruits shine through (raspberry, red currant, strawberry), floral notes (violet, iris, rose) accompany the balance with sometimes herbaceous appearances (laurel, mint, tomato leaf, eucalyptus). Depending on the variety and the winemaking style, sometimes sweet spices can balance the above, or if made from a lower quality standpoint predominate (vanilla, cinnamon, aniseed, cloves, nutmeg).

The grape varieties commonly used to produce this light-body, elegant style of red wine include:

- Pinot Noir
- Pinot Meunier
- Gamay
- Trousseau
- Poulsard
- Cinsault
- Trepas
- Graciano
- Grignolino
- Nerello Mascalese
- Nero d'Avola

Because of their subtlety, this lighter style of red wine typically goes well with lighter dishes such as below, or simply on it's own:

- Chicken
- Turkey
- White fish
- Seafood
- Pasta - with cheese sauces or sour cream base
- Light or Cheesy risottos
- Almost all cheeses ...
- Popcorn!

In general, pair this style of red wine with meals where the intensity of the flavor does not compete against the elegance of the wine.

Be careful, because in this group you can find wines with higher acidity.

ROSE WINE

Rosé wines are the Sommeliers darling wines.

While they've had a bad reputation carried over from the 60's, there has been a Renaissance of dry rose and it's for the better. They are often our favorite wine choice because they can pair with such a large variety of dishes.

Most Sommeliers consider only one type of rosé wine. However, we like to divide them into two different styles, because its use at the table is very different:

- Light rosés
- Full-bodied rosés

LIGHT ROSE WINES

These are what we call "rosé with a soul of white wine", light in color with a fruity and smooth flavor, high acid, and typically bone dry.

Usually made with red grapes and a short maceration period (or non at all) to extract a bit of color and aromas, sometimes it can even just be a mixture of red and white wine.

They are very easy-going and pleasant to drink.

Aromas of stone fruits (peach, apricot, melon), citrus fruits (lemon, lime, pomelo) and flowers (roses, orange blossom, lilac) stand out.

They can be made using any type of grape, but are usually produced with the thinner skin red grapes such as:

- Pinot Noir
- Gamay
- Garnacha / Grenache
- Cinsault
- Mourvedre
- Carignan / Cariñena
- Sangiovese
- Syrah

Because of their high acid and low tannin structure, they pair well with mild dishes, risottos, pasta with light sauces, white meats, fish or seafood with a mild flavor.

Some wines in this group are rosés from Provence in the south of France, where the benchmark for lighter-roses developed into a worldwide phenomenon, and could be argued for the recent rise in demand once again!

The adequate serving temperature is about 10°C (50°F) - cold, but not too cold.

FULL-BODIED ROSÉS

Think of these as wines that have a "red wine soul" - its color reaching more pigmentation to a strawberry pink.

These are wines made with slightly longer macerations (longer skin contact) and sometimes even a brief aging period in oak barrels.

You can think of its color intensity similar to its accentuated flavors. Aromas of ripe red fruits, even jam or baked fruit, sometimes accompanied by a heavier body and notes of creaminess or yogurt.

Common grape varieties used to produce this richer style of rosé include:

- Tempranillo (Tinta del País)
- Cabernet Sauvignon
- Cabernet Franc
- Corvina
- Tannat
- Malbec
- Merlot

- Montepulciano
- Barbera
- Dolcetto
- Syrah
- Sangiovese
- Touriga Franca
- Touriga Nacional

Soft game meats such as duck or rabbit are often great pairings, in addition to Chinese, Mexican or even Indian dishes as the increased flavor profile in the wine can hold its own to the increased flavor profile in the food.

Rosés from Spain, Portugal, Chile and Argentina commonly produce this style.

The service temperature should be around 12°C (50-55° F).

WHITE WINE

White wine is not just for the summer.

They range from crisp and lean like an Italian Pinot Grigio, to a slightly richer and more potent option like a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc. Or they can be aged and turned into a complex beauty like the famed Chardonnay's of Burgundy or even an aged Chenin Blanc from South Africa.

While sometimes we hear that “white wine is for women”, or that it's not as complex or nuanced as red wine, these prejudices are simply

ill-placed. We must set aside this prejudice because there are so many varieties and regions that can express even the same grape drastically different in one corner of the world than the other.

...white wines have enormous complexity, are extremely varied and often reveal much more about their identity of origin, relationship to the soil, climate, and even the winemaker themselves.

With such ranges, come many preferences. Let's dive into the main 3 styles:

- Light-Body White
- Medium-Body & Aromatic White
- Full-Body White

LIGHT WHITE WINE

Don't be fooled by the name, because among the wines in this category we can find a lot of elegance and complexity.

They must have a common characteristic that is a sign of quality: They must be very fresh!

If you are not fond of acid wines, it is best to wait to drink from the second year of the harvest as the wines continue to evolve in the bottle and develop complexity as it ages.

However, if you are a friend of high acidity, in the first year they are fantastic!

These wines can be produced with grapes:

- Pinot Blanc
- Pinot Gris
- Grüner Veltliner
- Loureiro
- Arneis
- Falanghina
- Biancolilla
- Trebbiano
- Fiano di Avellino
- Alvarinho
- Muscat or Moscatel
- Muscadet
- Picpoul
- Txakoli
- Pinot Grigio
- Unoaked Chardonnay (cold climate)
- Aligote

Pairing with these lighter style wines would go well with lighter flavored dishes, such as: raw bar, fresh seafood, fried or roasted fish, fresh spring vegetables, a variety of salads and medium light cheeses.

MEDIUM-BODIED AND AROMATIC WHITES

Medium-bodied whites may have more body, texture, alcohol, & complex flavor notes and potent aromas. Brief contact with oak (wooden barrels from oak trees, ranging from American, French, Slavonian, etc) will add tannin structure to the wines and, depending on the toast level, baking spice notes too. Some of these

wines are often fermented in an oak barrel (alcoholic fermentation & malolactic fermentation) which contributes to the greater aromatic complexity, body, structure, and ageability.

(transformation of must sugar into alcohol by yeast),

We can find these style of wines produced from a wide variety of grapes, including the ones from above and a few new ones:

- Sauvignon Blanc
- Semillon
- Riesling
- Gewurztraminer
- Verdejo
- Chenin Blanc
- Chardonnay (cold weather and old world)
- Godello
- Torrontés
- Viognier
- Greco di Tufo
- Albana
- Unoaked Chardonnay (Warm climate)

These are wines to be paired with poultry meat, soft game like duck and rabbit, vegetables, dishes based on potatoes and melted cheeses, etc.

FULL-BODIED WHITE

You can easily mistake them for a red wine. They are made of white grapes in which there may be skin contact (maceration), on the lees

or sur lie (the wines rest/age lying on the yeast after fermentation is finished and before filtering) and/or aging in wood.

They are unctuous (think body), glyceric (think sticky) and dry wines that are rich and full of flavor, ranging from fruit to floral, pastry to baking spices.

Sometimes they even have a buttery note, which comes from a type of fermentation called “malolactic fermentation” where the malic acid (think green apple) converts to lactic acid (think lactose). This results in aromas and flavors of butter, cream and yogurt.

The barrel aging adds flavors of vanilla, cooked or baked fruit or jelly (apple, pear) and floral (jasmine, acacia).

These fuller-bodied whites are more commonly produced with the following varieties:

- Chardonnay (new world and aged in oak)
- White Garnacha
- Marsanne
- Roussanne
- Furmint
- Viura (Rioja)
- Semillon
- Chenin Blanc
- Sauvignon Blanc (Fumé Blanc)

These wines harmonize well with dishes that have a higher intensity of flavor and richer texture such as:

- Meat (Yes! Even red)
- Hunting meat Game? (wild boar, for example)
- Roast lamb
- Meat or mushroom risotto
- Meatier seafood like lobsters and crabs
- Potent and creamy cheeses

SEMI SWEET AND SWEET WINES

These are wines in which the predominant aromas are fruits and flowers and intentionally have some residual sugar (the natural sugar of the must that was left to ferment with the stop of fermentation) left in the wine.

This can be done to balance the often sharp acidity in a wine, which is an important element in a sweet wine so that it is still refreshing and has a lifted fruit profile instead of a flat, onenote profile. These tend to be made from grapes that have a longer hang-time on the vine (developing more sugar and less acid as it ripens).

The best examples of these wines can be found using grapes such as:

- White:
 - Riesling
 - Gewurztraminer
 - Muscat
 - Moscato
 - Chenin Blanc
 - Semillon
 - Sauvignon Blanc

- Red:
 - Garnacha
 - Zinfandel
 - Gamay
 - Lambrusco

SWEET WINE

Sweet wines can be divided into two large groups:

Naturally sweet wines

Natural sweet wines

I know that this first division seems like a joke, but it is very important to know it, because their production methods are totally different.

All must contain, to be considered sweet, at least 50 grams of residual sugar per liter of wine.

NATURALLY SWEET WINES

These are wines in which the must is fermented with a concentration of sugar so high that the yeasts die intoxicated by the alcohol content produced during fermentation, leaving unconsumed (natural) sugar in the wine.

There are various ways to produce these sweet style of wines, largely depending on how the winemaker chooses the source of the sugar that is left in the must.

There are several sweet wines around the world that have become famous for their different styles, and great ageability since the high concentration of sugar acts as a natural preservative (think, for example, why jams can last so long!).

One production method commonly used in sweet wine making utilizes the specific fungus *Botrytis Cinerea*, also known as “noble rot”. This route louse commonly appears in hot and humid climates, shriveling and dehydrating the grapes, therefore concentrating the sugars and acids.

Certain climatic conditions are therefore essential in order for this specific type of transformation to occur. Some of the famed examples around the world that celebrate and prize these *nobly* sweet wines include Tokaji from Hungary (Furmint as the main grape), Sauternes from Bordeaux, France (Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon), and even the Spatlese Rieslings from Germany or Alace, France.

Within this style of naturally sweet wines, there are also late harvest wines, typical of Alsace, Germany and Austria but produced all over the world. Where the climate allows, the “noble rot” will affect the grapes in the vineyard, and the winemaker will delay picking them (harvest) until later in the season (aka: longer hang time) so that the dehydration will shrivel the grapes even more and concentrate the sugars to the highest level, in turn producing some of the (naturally) sweetest wine possible.

Another way to produce this naturally sweet wine is from snow! These famous sweet wines are called “icewine”, which have

developed high sugar concentration by grapes frozen on the vines. This method dehydrates the grapes by freezing the water liquid and concentrating the sugars and acids. Requiring cold climate conditions, you can find icewine in the colder areas, around the globe such as northern Germany, Austria, Canada, even New York.

NATURAL (OR FORTIFIED) SWEET WINES

Fortified wines are made by the addition of a distilled spirit (typically a spirit made from grapes), which interrupts the alcoholic fermentation by rapidly increasing the alcohol concentration which kills off the yeast necessary to convert the sugar into alcohol. Therefore, the sugar content at the time the juice is fortified remains at that higher level, and the combination of both the increased alcohol and sugar preserves the wine.

These wines can be produced with white or grapes such as:

- White:
 - Muscat
 - Pedro Ximénez
 - Malvasia
 - Chenin Blanc
 - Ugni Blanc / Trebbiano
 - Sauvignon Blanc
- Red:
 - All of the native 'Tourigas' from Portugal (for Port Wine)
 - Pinot Noir
 - Garnacha / Grenache
 - Monastrell
 - Zinfandel

The most famous wines produced in this way are often recognized by the name of the producing regions such as: Porto (in Northern Portugal), Jerez (Southern Spain), Madeira (Portugal's islands), among others.

All of these sweet wines are wonderful and ideal for finishing a meal (digestive). Although you can also enjoy at the start of the meal (aperitive), especially if you follow the philosophy of eating dessert first!

PAIRING: When pairing sweet wines, try to follow the philosophy of pairing the strong flavors to another strong flavor so that one doesn't compete over the other. For example, one of the most famous pairings worldwide is Port with Stilton. Others to try are pairing with blue and cured cheeses, foie gras, and almost all sweet desserts from chocolate to cheesecake to even fruit tarts.

You name it!.

PRO TIP: Watch out for citrus and tropical fruits in your sweet wine pairings. The high acid doesn't always work well with the richness of the wine.

SPARKLING WINE

Sparkling wines are directly associated with celebrating. It was often the choice of drink of Parisians at the high-brow parties, or the drunken nights of the roaring twenties. It is said that the shape of the "coup" or cup glass made for Champagne in the early years was shaped from Marie Antoinette's left breast even!

The excitement, lifting bubbles, and fancy glasses are an easy way to match a celebratory mood. But they are also, more and more, becoming acknowledged as excellent gastronomic wines for wine pairings. Various styles exist for sparkling wines, ranging from bone dry to lick-smacking sweet, some aged for centuries and others made for cooking and easy drinking.

The best known sparkling wines around the globe include:

France

- Champagne
- Crémant
- Petillant Natural

Spain

- Cava

Italy

- Prosecco
- Franciacorta
- Asti
- Lambrusco

Germany

- Sekt

Other 'new world' countries also produce quality sparkling wines, such as Australia, Argentina, Brazil, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States.

The pairings for these wines are practically endless!

- Cheeses (especially creamier ones, but almost all cheeses work)
- Fish and shellfish
- Charcuterie plates
- Light meats like pork and turkey
- The sweet styles go very well with desserts

Now you know more about the different styles of wine!
Just choose yours and start enjoying.

Our advice:

There's a lot to learn about wine, at times it feels endless, even for us.

But it is supposed to be fun! With a brain filled with this knowledge, try to pay more attention to the grape varieties and their growing regions to uncover which wines you like.

And most importantly, don't be afraid to discover new things!

BASIC ETIQUETTE RULES

As with many dining rules, the world of wine has its own set of etiquette rules that can be important to know. Most are intended to ensure the enjoyment of a wine even! They can be very useful in events like:

- Business Dinners
- Meeting the significant other's parents
- Formal Meetings
- Elegant Dinner Dates

Here are a few basic rules to use:

Serve the wine in a wine glass, always!

Not only because it looks better, but because a wine glass is designed to help with wine tasting as it will always taste better out of them.

There are a variety of glasses specific to different styles of wine, such as what we've discussed above, but you can always rely on a "universal" wine glass for any occasion - even bubbles!

PRO TIP: glass of fine crystal enhances the experience even more.

Hold the wine by the stem (the stem) of the glass

Not only does it look more beautiful and elegant, but above all else we do it to avoid warming the wine in the cup of the glass as our body will change the temperature of the wine. Plus, no one likes to see a glass full of dirty fingerprints either!

Check the wine label and check the cork

Check:

1. That the Sommelier, or waiter, has show you the chosen bottle before opening it. This happens so that the customer can check if the bottle they ordered is the correct one.
2. That the label matches what you selected from the wine list, taking note especially on the name and vintage.
3. That the cork is moist (which shows that the bottle was stored correctly horizontally), doesn't smell funky (as it could indicate a corked or tainted wine).
4. Then, smell the cork, where you will assess whether the drink is in perfect condition.
 - a. Faulted wine comes in various forms. A few to look out for are:
 - i. Aromas of vinegar, meaning possible oxidation
 - ii. Aromas of fungi indicating mold, or bacteria, has developed
 - iii. Aromas of bandaid, usually a sign of Brettanomyces, a specific bacteria that can arise in cellars and of course, the wine.

It is very difficult for a beginner to identify some of these faults, but it is best to remember and try, even if it's just to practice!

Only return the wine if it has a 'defect' or any of the above faults were possibly detected. You can always ask the Sommelier, or server, to see for themselves.

If the wine is not good it can show aromas to:

- Animal
- Sweat
- Horse
- Stable
- Pigsty
- Goat hair
- Rotten apple
- Mold
- Vinegar
- Rotten egg
- Cardboard
- Metallic
- Among others...

If the wine is a still wine and has bubbles it can be a serious defect.

PRO TIP: NEVER ask to return a wine because you didn't like it!

Smell Your Wine

Smell, taste, analyze and think about it. Think...

What does it smell like?

Does it taste like it smells?

Is the finish long and thought-provoking or does it end abruptly?

Most importantly, do you like it?

- If so, what do you like about it?
- If no, what do you find off putting?

Try to drink from the same position in your wine glass to reduce marks

NEVER leave lipstick marks on the glass! Very unclassy and an absolute pain to get off!

Clean your mouth with your napkin before drinking your wine to avoid food marks on the rim of the glass.

When Opening a Bottle of Wine.... Try to do it silently, like a ninja!

At most formal settings, the loud noise of opening a bottle can be seen by some as unprofessional and ill-experienced. Especially when it comes to a bottle of sparkling wine. I mean, you waste good juice that way too!

Think of it this way...

The noise of the cork exploding is only cool if you are the champion of Formula 1!

Avoid Strong Perfumes

Strong perfumes always interfere with your ability to taste, as the majority of what you taste comes from the olfactory bulbs located retronasally (through the nose!). So what you're tasting is mostly what you're smelling.

If you are less interested in smelling and analyzing the wine, it is still courteous to avoid perfumes for the person who is next to you!

How to Toast

When going in for a clink-clink to cheers someone, try to shock (hit) the bowl (balloon) part of the glass to prevent the cups from breaking.

ALWAYS look into the eyes of those who toast with you

It is a sign of self-confidence, good luck, and basic education in the world of wines to make eye contact while toasting someone.

Superstitions, maybe.

But a best practice indeed!

Service

Always fill just a third of the wine glass, so as to leave enough room for the wine to breathe, allow enough room in the glass to swirl it around and open it up to smell/appreciate, and to avoid over-pouring someone.

If you are going to taste the wine before serving, help yourself to a micro-pour, just enough for a sip, to ensure it's stability and readiness to drink.

Remember to always serve your guests before yourself. Serve your portion only after all are served.

Try to keep up, whenever possible, with the pace that others drink.

AND...most importantly....

CHEERS!

