

WINE DEFINITIONS

APERITIFS: Wines taken before a meal to stimulate the appetite. Aperitifs should have sufficient acid to taste fresh and leave the palate clean. Alcohol should be between 14% and 17%.

TABLE WINE CLASSES: These wines are meant to accompany the enjoyment of food. They can vary from light to strong flavour. Table wines are varied in style and colour and are dealt with under separate headings.

RED TABLE WINE DRY: Colour should be red but tints of purple or black or tawny is acceptable. The wine must be without easily recognisable sweetness. The flavour can be substantial and should remain in the aftertaste. Some astringency from tannins is expected, with mellowness and maturity desirable. The bouquet should be complex and vinous. Acidity should be between 0.45% and 0.65% and the alcohol from 10% to 14%. Examples such as Bordeaux, Burgundy, Rioja.

WHITE TABLE WINE DRY: Pale colour is desirable, there should be no brown or pink tones. The wine should taste dry without easily recognisable sweetness. The flavour should be pleasant with no bitter aftertaste and should give an impression of freshness leaving the mouth clean. Acidity should be between 0.5% to 0.8% and alcohol between 9% and 13%. The bouquet should be clean fragrant and vinous. Examples such as White Burgundies, Alsace and dry Loire wines.

WHITE TABLE WINE MEDIUM DRY: Pale colour is desirable. The wine must have easily detected sweetness but not sufficiently predominant to classify it as a sweet wine. A good balance and flavour are more important than the exact degree of sweetness. Alcohol should be between 8.5% and 13% and acidity between 0.55% and 0.90%. Examples would be German wines such as Liebfraumilch and QbA and QmP wines.

WHITE TO GOLDEN TABLE WINE SWEET: Colour can be deeper than for the dry or medium wines ranging up to golden but should not be dark. The flavour can be richer than the other wines with the alcohol up to 14%. The acidity should be between 0.6% and 0.9% sufficient to balance the sweetness and to prevent a cloying finish. The sweetness should not overwhelm the other characteristics. This is a wine that is best drunk with fruit or dessert at the end of a meal. An example would be Sauternes.

ROSE TABLE WINE, MEDIUM DRY: Commercial examples from the dry Tavel to the medium Anjou. The wine should be pink, variations in colour intensity and slight orange or 'onion skin' tints are acceptable. The flavour must be light, fruity and fresh and the bouquet should reflect these points. There should not be excessive astringency. Acidity should be between 0.55% and 0.9% and the alcohol between 10% and 12% and the whole should be in balance with any sweetness.

AFTER-DINNER WINE RED SWEET: The colour should be deep. Mature wines may have tawny characteristics but should display some red colour. The flavour should be rich fruity and vinous, the whole being mellow and mature. Acidity should be between 0.45% and 0.7%. The alcohol should be as high as may be achieved by fermentation. The wine should be as sweet as the other characteristics will permit without it becoming cloying. Although this wine is often called 'Dessert' it is meant for drinking after dinner. Examples would be Mavrodaphne of Patras 15% to Port 22%.

AFTER-DINNER WINE WHITE TO BROWN SWEET: Here a wide range of colours is acceptable with the deeper colours usually providing the best wines but there must be no red colouring. Acidity should be between 0.5% and 0.9%. All other characteristics are as After Dinner Wine Red Sweet. Examples are Madeira, Muscat & sweet Oloroso Sherries.

FORTIFIED WINES - Madeira Type: Wines in this class should emulate the Malmsey type of wine. This is a fortified, luscious, sweet 'After-Dinner' wine. The colour is deep tawny. The wine is full bodied and has a full sweet flavour with caramelised overtones on the farewell. The sweetness is balanced by a fairly high level of acidity. The final Specific Gravity should be from 1.025 to 1.050, alcohol about 18% and the acidity as tartaric acid about 0.6% to 0.7%.

WINES BY INGREDIENT: These wines can range from light dry table to full bodied sweet after-dinner wines. The main criteria are that the wine should be clean and sound and that it is in balance for the particular class in which it is entered. When judging named ingredient classes one can often detect other ingredients and while these may improve the wine, they may blur recognition of the named ingredient. Provided that they do not predominate over the named ingredient the entry is acceptable.

MEAD: Mead is essentially a wine whose character is derived from the use of honey, as the major source of fermentable sugar. Variants with added fruit juice and/or herbs and spices are acceptable. A wide range of colours is acceptable, including red where red fruit juice is added.

SPARKLING WINE: This wine must contain carbon dioxide produced by a secondary fermentation in the bottle. Although this wine is usually white both red and rosé may be entered. Even though the wine may be specified as dry a small amount of recognisable sweetness is acceptable. Acidity may range from 0.6% to 0.9% and alcohol from 10% to 12%. The commercial example is Champagne.

LIQUEURS: Home-made liqueurs are strong (usually 25-40% alcohol), sweet, and highly flavoured after-dinner drinks. Many flavours and styles are encountered but they can be divided into three general groups:

Fruit base: e.g., alcohol infusions using various fruits (approx. 25-35% alcohol: 35-40% for orange liqueurs such as Cointreau and Grand Marnier).

Chocolate/Coffee base: e.g., Tia Maria, cacao types etc. (approx. 25-30% alcohol).

Herb/Spice base: e.g., peppermint, aniseed and more complex blends such as Benedictine types (approx. 30-40% alcohol, with Green Chartreuse an exception at 55%).

SOCIAL WINES: The wine should be smooth and well-balanced, and leave the palate clean. With a recommended alcohol content between 10% and 15%, it is usually medium sweet or sweet. Medium sweet social wines are more highly flavoured than table wines but less so than after dinner wines

COUNTRY FRUIT WINES: to be made from the main ingredient for the class; other ingredients may be added, but NOT grape or fruit juice, commercial concentrate or alcohol.