



## DESCRIBING WINE

**ACIDITY:** Tartness - the sharp taste of natural grape acids

**AFTERTASTE:** The taste that lingers in the mouth after a wine is swallowed, also known as “Finish”

**AROMA:** The smell of wine coming from the grapes themselves and from the fermentation process

**ASTRINGENT:** Many red wines and some whites have a rough, harsh, puckery feel in the mouth (more tactile sensation than flavor), usually from tannin

**AUSTERE:** Used to describe wines whose fruit flavor is muted by tannins and high acidity; often a characteristic of young wines, whose flavor opens up, softens and develops with some bottle age

**BALANCED:** Fruit, acid, oak and other components in proportion

**BIG:** Describes a wine with rich, full flavors, tannins and aromas and/or full body

**BODY:** Substance, texture or “thickness” of a wine on the palate

**BOUQUET:** Fragrance of wine that originates in fermentation, processing or aging

**BRIGHT:** Used for fresh, ripe, zesty, lively young wines with vivid, focused flavors

**CLEAN:** Well-made wine free of any off-taste

**CLOYING:** Excessive sweetness in wine, to the point that it dominates the flavor and aftertaste, and is not balanced by acid, alcohol or fruit concentration

**COMPLEX:** Layers and levels of scents and flavors

**CORKED:** A musty, wet-newspaper smell resulting from a cork tainted by trace amounts of a chemical called TCA

**CRISP:** Noticeable acidity

**DRY:** Not sweet

**ELEGANT:** Wines with a balanced, delicate style may be described as elegant

**EARTHY:** Distinct odor or taste suggestive of soil

**FAT/FLABBY:** Lacking acidity and structure

**FINISH:** The tactile and flavor impressions left in the mouth after wine is swallowed, or “Aftertaste”

**FLORAL:** Having aromas reminiscent of flowers

**FRUITY:** The distinctive aroma and taste of fruit, though not sweetness, with which it is often mistaken or confused. A wine can be both fruity and dry (having no sweetness or sugar)

**GENEROUS:** Full-bodied wine, and full flavored, rich and smooth on the palate

**GRASSY:** Aroma of fresh-cut grasses; a fresh, distinctive, characteristic flavor of some Sauvignon Blancs



## DESCRIBING WINE CONTINUED

**GREEN:** Younger wine that has a lean, sharp character

**HARD:** Astringent wine with high tannin levels

**HARSH:** Astringent, acidic or high-alcohol wines may be perceived as harsh on the palate. Some wines, which are harsh when young, lose this characteristic (and improve) with bottle age

**HERBACEOUS:** Having aromas or flavors reminiscent of herbs or other green vegetation

**HOT:** Refers to an excessive level of alcohol

**LIGHT:** Lack of density, flavor and concentration

**LUSH:** Wines with a rich, viscous tactile impression due to high alcohol or high sugar

**MADERIZED:** A term describing wines which have lost their freshness and color brilliance, typically due to exposure to air (oxidation) and excessive heat

**MELLOW:** Soft, mature, ripe

**MUSTY:** A dank, moldy smell

**OAKY:** Flavor or smell imparted by oak barrels. Both vanillin, a component of the oak itself, and toastiness, from charring the wood during barrel production, are common characteristics of oaky wines

**OXIDIZED:** A wine with reduced freshness and stale aroma due to excessive exposure to air

**RAISINY:** Rich, concentrated, dried-grape taste and aroma, often due to the actual use of raisinated grapes to make the wine

**RICH:** Dense intensity in wine; may apply to concentrated flavor, high alcohol, sweetness, full body, or a combination of these

**ROUND:** Wine harmoniously balanced in body, flavor, tannins and acid

**TANNIN:** Extract of the skins, stems and seeds of the grapes, perceived as a drying or puckery sensation

**TART:** Sharp, sour taste of acidity in wine

**TEXTURE:** The mouthfeel of a wine, a combination of density and smoothness

**VEGETAL:** Weed-like character

**VELVETY:** Mellow, fine and soft

**YEASTY:** Odor of yeast or fresh bread

**YOUNG:** Fresh, fruity, unoxidized wine

**WOODY:** Wine with excessive odor or taste of woodh