As a food service professional, the number one reason to sell wine is INCREASED CHECK AVERAGES AND HIGHER GRATUITIES. For example, if you were to sell an additional 4 bottles of $25 wine per shift, 5 shifts per week, 50 weeks per year, and receive 15% gratuity, you would be adding $3,750 to your salary! (4 x $25 = $100; x 15% = $15; x 5 shifts = $75; x 50 weeks = $3,750)

Beyond the monetary benefits, there are a number of great reasons to recommend wine to your guests:

- It tastes good!
- Food and wine are natural partners and when paired properly will enhance the flavor of each other. An enhanced dining experience will bring guests back to your restaurant for repeat visits.
- Medical research suggests that, in moderation, wine contributes to good health.
- It tastes good!

How to Increase Wine Sales

- **Familiarize yourself with the wine list.** Guests often look to servers for recommendations since it is virtually impossible for the average consumer to be familiar with the 20,000 plus wine labels available in the U.S. market. You can’t make a recommendation if you don’t know anything about the wine. It may not be possible to taste the entire wine list, but wines by the glass should be tasted when possible and descriptions of wines by the bottle should be made available (most winery web sites have wine fact sheets available).

- **Recommend Wine.** Wine lists should be presented to the host rather than being placed on the table randomly. Recommend wine and food pairings. Ask for the wine order.
  - May I suggest champagne or sparkling wine to start?
  - May I recommend a bottle to share or wines by the glass?
  - Cabernet Sauvignon pairs well with the beef special. May I bring you a glass with your entrée?
  - May I pair a glass of wine or cognac with your final course?

- **Banish Wine Snobbery.** Many guests are intimidated by wine and therefore never order it for fear of embarrassment; pronunciations are difficult and tasting etiquette confusing. Help your guests feel comfortable with wine. Wine is a beverage meant to be enjoyed and it can be enjoyed on many different levels, end of story! Some guests will welcome a little pomp and circumstance with a fine bottle of wine; others will simply want a great tasting beverage to wash down their meal. Learn to read your guest’s wine level and accommodate them accordingly. Never contradict a customer’s wine selection; everyone has different tastes and unless your opinion is solicited, don’t offer it.

**Types of Customers**

- **Wine-Savvy Diners** usually know what they want and are willing to pay higher prices for a special bottle.
- **Special Occasion Diners** want something unique to celebrate the occasion. Often, they are willing to take recommendations. Offer a range of prices to choose from to accommodate their budget.
- **Casual Diners** may not want to spend a lot of money on a meal and appreciate budget-friendly suggestions.
- **Frequent Diners** patronize the restaurant regularly and like staff to know their preferences and make suggestions accordingly.
Bud Swelling in Spring—A primary bud awakens from dormancy as the vine pumps life up from its roots. (Jan/Feb)

Bud Break—Leaves from buds left on canes after winter pruning begin to emerge. (Feb/March)

Leaf Emergence—Leaves are now recognizable and shoots are beginning to photosynthesize. (March)

Shoot Growth—More leaves emerge as the shoot elongates. At this point, shoots are still highly susceptible to frost which can significantly damage crop yield. (March)

Flower Cluster Emergence—Many of these tender young flowers will become this year’s fruit. (March/Apr)

Flower Clusters Before Bloom—Flowers are fully formed but have not yet bloomed. (Apr)

Beginning of Bloom—Flower caps pop off to reveal the reproductive stigma and stamens of the vine’s flowers. (Apr/May)

Full Bloom—Because grape flowers are self-pollinating their bloom is unlike many fruits which display extravagant blooms to attract birds and bees to help them pollinate. (May)

End of Bloom—All the flowers that will get fertilized have been pollinated and the berries begin to swell. (May/June)

Just Before Berry Set—Remnants of flowers remain before the unfertilized berries fall off the cluster. (May/June)

Berry Set—Flowers that have been fertilized now become firmly attached to the stem and will eventually become grapes. (June)

Berries Enlarging—Cells within the berries are dividing as well as expanding. (June)

Cluster Closing—Berries have reached full size and have no room for further enlarging. (June/July)

Beginning of Veraison—Berries begin to turn color, soften and further develop their flavors and sugars. (July)

Veraison Nearly Complete—The point at which most grape clusters have completed veraison is an ideal point to thin out those clusters which are the furthest from completing veraison. (July/Aug)

Ripe Cluster—Grape flavors are fully mature, acids and sugar are in balance—it’s harvest time! (Sept/Oct)

Images courtesy of California Wine Institute. © Merryvale Vineyards, Napa Valley, CA 2004
There are three main factors that drastically affect the flavor of the grape and ultimately, the wine that is made:

- **Terroir**
- **Wine growing**
- **Winemaking**

**Terroir** is the one factor which cannot be readily altered. The following factors determine terroir:

- Climate, as measured by temperature and rainfall
- Sunlight energy
- Topography (altitude, slope, etc.)
- Soil's physical and chemical characteristics
- Soil water relations

**Wine growing management**: Specific practices that the grower controls that directly impact the flavor of the grapes and wine produced.

- **Canopy size**—Depending on the varietal and weather conditions, the grower must decide how many leaves to let the vine grow and keep. Too much shade and grapes could produce vegetal flavors. Too little shade and the grapes could sunburn and produce ‘burnt out’ aromas.

- **Irrigation**—The amount of water the vine is given at key stages in the growing season drastically affects the aromas. Too much water and the grapes aren’t concentrated enough, too little and the fruit flavor suffers.

- **Type of grape planted**—Through technological advances, growers can determine the specific varietals, clones, and rootstocks that are optimal for any given site. Not all grape varieties thrive in any given location. Napa was ‘blessed’ in the early ’90s with phylloxera, a devastating root louse that destroys the vine. It was discovered during the 1870s that American vine species are resistant to the devastation caused by phylloxera. Therefore it is now common practice in most wine regions to plant European varietals on American rootstocks. The need to replant many expensive vineyards caused growers to look carefully at the terroir of an area and plant accordingly. The results have been dramatic and as the young vines age, the wine quality of California will continue to improve.

- **Age of vine**—Vine maturity affects crop yields and flavor profile. A vine will not begin producing wine-worthy fruit until its third year. As a vine ages, the grapes can become more complex, however, very old vines produce lower yields.

- **Crop yields**—The amount of grape clusters that are permitted to reach maturity on any given vine has a direct correlation to flavor concentration. Too many grapes and flavor is compromised, too few and the cost of production becomes cost prohibitive for the winery. Sometimes, Mother Nature will control crop yields with freezes, excessive rain or hail.

- **Layout of the vineyard**—Including vine spacing, trellising, and row direction. The number of vines planted per acre, the way the vines are pruned, the direction of the row and resultant sun exposure all affect the grapes.

For winemaking, see next two pages.
Winemaking
White Wine

White grapes (Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon) are hand harvested, then hand sorted if necessary to discard defects. Then whole clusters are gently transferred directly to a horizontal pneumatic press.

Pressing is done to maximize yield at the lowest pressure rating.

The juice drips into a pan at the bottom of the press and is then pumped into a stainless steel, temperature controlled settling tank.

Juice is chilled to 50°F overnight. The clear juice is pumped off the settlings (lees) into another stainless steel tank (racking), where SO₂ and yeast nutrients are added. The juice is immediately pumped to fill 225L French oak barrels for fermentation. Some lots are inoculated with yeast, and others are allowed to ferment with naturally occurring yeast which lends additional complexity and seamlessness.

When the barrels have finished fermentation (7-21 days) they are topped. The yeast sediment (lees) is stirred every month (Chardonnay only) and one month before bottling, stirring stops. Stirring the lees adds silkiness and flavor complexity to the wine. Wine is aged in barrels from 4 to 16 months.

Chardonnay is encouraged to undergo a second fermentation, called malolactic; Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon are not. The secondary fermentation is really a conversion of malic acid to lactic acid. The conversion softens the wine and adds buttery aromas.

Barrels are racked (clear wine separated from lees) with pressure from inert gas (nitrogen)—for gentle handling and minimal aeration—and the wine is blended into stainless steel tanks.

Some wines are fined with bentonite to remove excess proteins, and isinglass to remove excess tannins and sculpt the mouth-feel.

Some wines are filtered for clarification just prior to bottling.
Red grapes (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Syrah, Zinfandel, Pinot Noir) are hand harvested, then hand sorted if necessary to discard defects. The clusters are then gently de-stemmed without crushing and the must put into stainless steel tanks.

When naturally-occurring yeasts have begun to ferment the must, nutrients are added during the first pump-over. Rather than inoculating with an introduced yeast, using the wild yeast results in added complexity and seamlessness in the wine. Fermentation may last from 5 to 15 days. After fermentation finishes, the wine is left on the skins, often for an additional 30 days of extended maceration, to allow softening of the tannins which have been extracted from the skins.

The free-run wine is separated from the skins. The skins, which are still quite moist, are shoveled into bins and placed into a pneumatic press. The wine is monitored coming from the press and only wine without aggressive tannins is included with the free-run, making it the most supple and concentrated of all the lots. The later press fraction is kept separate.

The wine is put into 225L French oak barrels where it completes the second fermentation (called malolactic fermentation). The secondary fermentation softens the wine. At Merryvale, French oak is used exclusively because of its addition of distinctive flavors such as vanilla and nutmeg and its complementary tannin components.

Racking of the Bordeaux reds occurs every three months. In the first year the wine is aerated during racking to soften the tannins. In the second year in the cellar the wine is not usually aerated during racking. (Less tannic grape varieties such as Pinot Noir and Zinfandel are not racked nor aerated, and the Pinot Noir is bottled after nine months.)

Blends are made in the winter following harvest. In their second year the wines are fined with fresh egg whites if necessary to resolve excess tannins. After up to 20 months in French oak barrels, the wines are racked for a final time and bottled—usually without filtration. Unfiltered wines, because they have not been stripped, tend to be more complex wines.
**Varietals and Styles**

**White and Sparkling Wines**

**Chardonnay** *(shar-du-NAY)*—
Grown in most parts of the wine growing world, Chardonnay is fairly neutral on its own, displaying green apple and mineral notes. However, it is in the winery that this grape gets adorned with finery, from barrel aging and fermentation to malolactic fermentation. The styles run the gamut from dry to medium dry, rich, full and oaky to lean, crisp and flinty depending on their treatment.

**Sauvignon Blanc** *(SOH-vee-nyohn-BL AHn)*—This grape is intensely aromatic and acidic. Depending on the growing region and winemaking techniques it can range from grassy, herbaceous, flinty, and green, to aromas of peach, fresh hay and melons. It is also known as Fumé Blanc in the United States.

**Riesling** *(REES-ling)*—This grape produces wines with a brilliant sweet/acid balance ranging from bone dry to intensely sweet. Riesling’s varietal characteristics are very distinctive; delicate, perfumed, floral, and fruity with fresh apple and apricot scents.

**Sparkling Wine & Champagne**—
Sparkling wine is made in most wine producing countries, but technically the only region that has a right to call their sparkling wine Champagne, is the Champagne region of France. Sparkling wine can be made in different styles, but the common theme is bubbles. The bubbles come from dissolved carbon dioxide, held under pressure, in wine (remember, carbon dioxide is a by-product of fermentation).

Extreme caution should be exercised when opening a bottle of sparkling wine.
- Point the cold bottle away from guests or valuable decorative objects
- Remove the foil wrap
- Untwist the wire, keeping your thumb over the top of the cork, remove the wire hood
- Place a napkin over the cork
- Holding the bottle at an angle, gently twist the bottle off the cork
- The sound you want to hear is a gentle whisper as opposed to a loud pop

**Dessert Wines**—There are two main types of dessert wine: late harvested wines and brandy fortified wines.

**Late Harvest Wines**—Grapes are harvested late in the season to ensure high levels of sugar. The resultant wines are high in sugar and low in alcohol. Acidity levels vary, but the wines are usually rich and viscous.

**Fortified Wines**—This wine type involves the addition of grape spirits either during fermentation to halt fermentation or after fermentation. The great fortified wines of the world include Sherry, Port, and Madeira. The wines are high in alcohol and residual sugar levels range from bone dry to very sweet.
**Varietals and Styles**

**Red Wines**

**Cabernet Sauvignon** (cab-er-NAH sob-vee-NYOHN)—The king of red wines, capable of being the most tannic and long lived of the reds. Complex and supple, aromas of concentrated blackberry and cassis are most commonly found. One of the most planted top-quality wine varieties in the world.

**Merlot** (mehr-LO)—Lower in color and tannin than Cabernet Sauvignon, but no lightweight either. Stylistically Merlot can be fresh and grapey with tender tannins and aromas of cherries or it can be deep, dense, and concentrated with massive tannins.

**Pinot Noir** (PEA-no Nuahr)—A difficult grape to grow and vinify, but when it’s done right, the wines are delicious with delicate and compelling flavors and aromas. The wines are low in tannin, with good acidity and broad expansive aroma and bouquet.

**Syrah** (sib-RAH)—Known as Shiraz in Australia, Syrah is heavily pigmented, tannic, and alcoholic. Stylistically, it can be fruit driven, with aromas of blackberry, loganberries and the like or it can be a wild combination of rosemary, thyme, pepper, and anise with aromatic accents of lavender and musk.

**Zinfandel** (ZIN-fan-dell)—A densely pigmented grape that frequently has high alcohol and highly extracted fruit flavors. Zinfandel is a heady, full-bodied red with ripe raspberry fruit accentuated by pepper and spice. When done right, it is often described as dusky, brooding, briary, brambly, exotic, brawny, exuberant, or opulent.

**Cabernet Franc** (cab-er-NAH FRAHnk)—Herbal and slightly spicy in character. Sometimes found as a single varietal wine, but mainly used as a blending grape that adds aromatic complexity.

**Petit Verdot** (peh-TEET-vehr-DOE)—Flavors of anise seed and a meaty savoriness characterize this grape. Used as a blending grape, this varietal adds color and a tannic richness to Bordeaux blends.

**Oak in Winemaking**—Among the constituents of oak are many flavorful compounds. The molecules that give vanilla, cinnamon, clove and nutmeg their flavor are all found naturally in oak wood. Oak also has a huge array of tannin molecules, plus sugars that caramelize when toasted. Inside a properly made oak barrel, the fermenting juice or wine slowly absorbs the wonderful flavors and caramelized sugars from the wood which complement and add complexity to the flavors of the fruit. Additionally, the tannins in oak blend with the tannins and color of the wine to enrich and stabilize them.

The two main families of oak used for wine cooperage are American and European. Merryvale uses French oak exclusively. Although American oak is relatively dense making it easily watertight and cheap to mill and cooper, compared to French oak, it has relatively large amounts of some distinctive flavor compounds, reminiscent of dill and coconut, that are not part of the classic, Old-World wine tradition. American oak also tends to produce wines with coarser tannin structure than the more subtle and supple French oak. For many winemakers and connoisseurs, French oak just tastes and feels better than American oak.
Wine Styles—Any given varietal will have many different styles depending on the winemaking techniques and terroir. Consumers will find it helpful if wine lists are produced to reflect stylistic differences, either by region, or better yet, by primary flavor attributes, progressing from the mildest to strongest flavor profile.

**Example of Progressive Wine List**

**CHARDONNAY/BLEND**
((Listed from light intensity to moderate intensity and oak)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wine Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KIM CRAWFORD, Marlborough Uncoiled New Zealand, 2002</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOS, Pesco Robles, 2001</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeLOACH, California, 2001</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARGYLE, Willamette Valley Oregon, 2001</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOMAINE WILLIAM FEVRE, Chablis France, 2001</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MERRYVALE, Napa Valley Starmont, 2001</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDNA VALLEY, Edna Valley Peragon, 2002</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANDMARK, Sonoma &amp; Monterey Counties Overlook, 2001</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHATEAU STE. MICHELLE, Columbia Valley, 2001</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Listed from moderate to full intensity and oak)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wine Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KENDALL-JACKSON, California Vintner’s Reserve, 2001</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANCISCAN OAKVILLE ESTATE, Napa Valley, 2001</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CATENA, Mendoza Alegre Vineyards Argentina, 2001</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SONOMA-CUTRER, Sonoma Coast Russian River Ranches, 2001</td>
<td>10.75</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THOMAS FOGARTY, Santa Cruz Mountains, 2000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATTLE CREEK, Alexander Valley, 2000</td>
<td>9.75</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA CREMA, Russian River Valley, 2000</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINER, Napa Valley, 2000</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROMBAUER, Napa Valley Corneros, 2001</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESSERT WINES - 2-OZ POUR**
(Listed from moderate to full intensity)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wine Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BERINGER, Napa Valley Nightingale, 2000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOS, Muscato Teens of Dow Late Harvest, 2001</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUADY, Orange Muscat Essencia, 2000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INNISKILLIN, Vidal Icewine Oaked Niagara Peninsula, 2002</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOLCE, Napa Valley Late Harvest, 1995</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SWEET TOOTH**
A flight of dessert wines - a trio of 2-oz tastes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wine Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BERINGER, Nightingale; EOS, Tears of Dow; QUADY Essencia</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Read a California Wine Label

It is important to note that different states within the United States have slightly different labeling laws. Other countries will also vary in their labeling laws and styles.

**Vintage** – The year that the grapes were harvested. 95% of this wine must have been harvested in the year listed. Non-vintage wines can be a combination of vintages. Typically, sparkling wines and fortified wines will be non-vintage blends.

**Varietal** – In California, wines are typically labeled as varietals, like Chardonnay, or if the wine is a blend, the winery will create a proprietary name for the wine like Profile. The most common blends are Bordeaux or Meritage blends that include any two of the following grapes: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, and Petit Verdot.

**Appellation of Origin** – Indicates where the grapes come from by state, county (or counties), or American Viticultural Area (AVA)
- **State** – 100% of the grapes must come from within the state’s borders.
- **County** – 75% of the grapes must come from the county listed. If more than one county is listed, the percentage of grapes grown in each county must be listed.
- **AVA** – Regulated by the Tax and Trade Bureau, these areas have been designated as having unique characteristics such as climate, soil, elevation, physical features and sometimes historical data. 85% of the grapes must come from the AVA.

**Alcohol** – The percentage of alcohol in the wine.

**Reserve/Vineyard Designate**
- **Reserve** – No legal definition exists in the United States, however, generally wineries will limit the use for some of their finest wines.
- **Vineyard Designate** – 95% of the wine must come from the specific vineyard listed.

**European wine labels** – It is common for European wines to be labeled regionally rather than by varietal. Examples of this include Chianti, a region in Italy that produces mostly Sangiovese-based wines. There are regional laws that govern the type of varietals that may be planted in the region, as well as blending, growing, and harvesting requirements. In order to appeal to international wine drinkers, some European winemakers are labeling their wines by varietal.
Restaurant Wine Service
Temperature and Storage

Storage/Cellar Basics – For a wine to be at its best when opened, it must be stored properly. The serious enemies of wine are prolonged contact with air, extreme heat or cold, fluctuations in temperature, vibration, sunlight, and strong odors. Wine is best stored under the following conditions:

- Horizontally to keep the cork moist and prevent it from shrinking. A shrunken cork allows air into the bottle, which may spoil the wine.
- In a dark, insulated and temperature-controlled room. Ideally, the temperature should be 11° C or 52° F, but anything between 40°-65° F (5°-18° C) is fine as long as the temperature doesn't fluctuate. The higher the storage temperature, the faster the wine will age, as higher temperatures increase the rate of oxidation.

Ideal serving temperatures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wine Type</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Ideal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fortified wine</td>
<td>61° to 64° F</td>
<td>62° F / 17° C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium- to full-bodied red</td>
<td>55° to 65° F</td>
<td>60° F / 16° C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light-bodied red</td>
<td>50° to 55° F</td>
<td>53° F / 12° C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry white and rosé</td>
<td>44° to 54° F</td>
<td>48° F / 9° C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparkling</td>
<td>41° to 47° F</td>
<td>44° F / 7° C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet (but not fortified)</td>
<td>41° to 47° F</td>
<td>44° F / 7° C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cellar image courtesy of the Inn at Langley, Washington.

© Merryvale Vineyards, Napa Valley, CA 2004
Corkscrew – The ‘waiters’ corkscrew is the most commonly used corkscrew in restaurants. A good one will have a blade for cutting the foil and a lever for easier opening. To use this corkscrew simply cut the foil with the blade under the second lip of the bottle. Next, center the point of the corkscrew in the middle of the cork and give it a firm turn to anchor the worm. Turn the corkscrew gently and firmly without pressing down, until the worm has been inserted entirely (depending on cork length, this will vary). Place the lever on the lip of the bottle and pull up slowly and firmly.

Ahso – Insert the longer prong of the ah-so between the cork and the bottle and, while applying slight downward pressure, rock the prong back and forth until the shorter prong can also be inserted between the cork and the bottle. Once both prongs are inserted, rock the handle from prong to prong, applying downward pressure. When the ah-so is fully inserted, simultaneously pull the handle upward and twist it to release the cork.

Decanter – There are two main reasons to decant a wine: to remove the sediment from an older bottle of red wine and to aerate a young bottle of red wine. To decant a wine off its sediment, it can be helpful to hold a flashlight or candle under the neck of the bottle while pouring the wine into the decanter. This makes it possible to see the sediment as you are pouring and stop accordingly.

Wine Bucket – The wine bucket should be used to lower the temperature of a wine or to maintain the proper temperature. Fill the bucket with two parts ice and one part water. The water will make it easier to place the bottle in the bucket for quick chilling.

Glasses
- **Shape** - The best shape for a wine glass is one that has a stem and a bowl that is turned in slightly at the rim to capture and hold the aroma of the wine. The stem will allow the customer to hold the glass without affecting the wine temperature. The glass should be large enough to allow the customer to swirl a 2 ounce pour without incident. Riedel has developed a specific glass for each of the main grape varieties and these glasses will enhance the enjoyment of wine to a greater extent. For more information on Riedel glasses, please visit their web site at www.riedelcrystal.com

- **Placement** – Every restaurant will have its own distinctive table setting. The most common placement for wine glasses is to the right of the cover above the tip of the dinner knife. If more than one glass is to be set the glasses should be positioned at an angle up from the tip of the dinner knife in order of service from right to left.
Propose: Guests often depend on servers or sommeliers to propose a wine recommendation. Know the wines on your list, as well as possible food pairings. Proposing several wines in different price categories will put the customer at ease and allow them to make a choice that they are comfortable with.

Pull: Pull the cork at the table and present the cork to the host. The cork is presented so that the customer can see that the wine has been stored properly; one side of the cork should be wet and the other side should be dry. It is not necessary to smell the cork.

Present: Present the bottle to the host and repeat the wine name and vintage.

Pour: Pour 1-2 ounces of wine for the host to taste. If the wine is satisfactory, continue pouring for the rest of the table, moving clockwise around the table. Glasses should not be filled more than 1/3 full to allow the guests to swirl their glasses. The last person to receive wine is the host. A bottle of wine contains 24.5 ounces. Become familiar with your restaurant’s glasses so that pouring for large parties isn’t a problem. There is nothing worse than over pouring for five people and not having enough wine left for the sixth person! The remaining wine should be placed to the right of the host and poured when needed. Glasses should be kept filled, but be careful not to over pour. Ask for a second bottle order before the bottle is empty, ensuring uninterrupted wine service throughout the meal.

Check with your restaurant management on house policy for dealing with wines that are flawed or that the customer simply does not like.

Photo location and staff courtesy of Tra Vigne Ristorante, St. Helena, Napa Valley.

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Winetasting
The Five ‘S’s of Winetasting

See: Look at the wine color against a white surface. Aside from the aesthetic value, color tells a lot about the wine in the glass. As a white wine ages, it becomes darker, more golden in color and as a red wine ages it loses color. Oak aging, grape varietal and climate will also affect color.

Swirl: Swirling opens up the aromas and flavors and introduces oxygen which will help soften a young red wine's tannins.

Sniff: Start smelling the wine a few inches above the rim of the glass. Often people miss aromas by plunging their nose straight into the glass. Note the types of aromas, their intensity and harmony. If there are unpleasant smells, that may indicate that the wine is flawed.

Sip: Take a sip and ‘inhale’ the wine—like a backwards whistle. Move the wine around your mouth. There are only four things that we actually taste: sweetness, saltiness, bitterness, and acidity. Everything else comes from ‘smelling’ the wine in the mouth. The slurping facilitates in mouth smell by drawing the aroma to the retro nasal passage where in mouth flavors are identified. The weight of the wine should be noted as this will help with food pairing suggestions later on. Think of wine weight like milk: a light-bodied wine is skim milk, a medium-bodied wine is whole milk, and a heavy-bodied wine is cream.

Savor: Think about what you’re tasting. Is it seamless, angular, full, light, crisp, buttery, well-balanced, overly acidic? Does it have a long finish or an abrupt end? Do you like it or hate it?

Pressed for time? Tip your head back, take a sip, wait 2.2 seconds and decide what you think about the wine.

It can be that easy!! Sometimes we forget that wine can be enjoyed at many levels!!
When tasting wine, some find it useful to describe exactly what they are smelling and tasting. Common wine aromas are listed below. The aromas come from the grapes themselves as well as their cellar treatment (referred to as bouquet).

**Herbs and Spices**
Dill, Tobacco, Bay Leaf, Mint, Green Grass, Straw, Basil, Vanilla, Black Pepper, Clove, Fennel, Nutmeg, Cinnamon, Lemon Grass, Thyme, Licorice/Anise

**Wood**
Smoky, Tree Bark, Sawdust, Tar, Raw/Green Wood, Eucalyptus, Cedar

**Fruit**
Plum, Cherry, Blueberry, Currant, Raspberry, Blackberry, Strawberry, Fig, Coconut, Grape, Watermelon, Cranberry, Mango, Orange, Lemon, Pomegranate, Grapefruit, Lime, Tangerine, Pineapple, Banana, Kiwi, Apple, Apricot, Peach

**Vegetable**
Rhubarb, Bell Pepper, Black Olive, Green Olive, Tomato, Celery, Green Bean, Beet, Baked Potato

**Floral**
Violet, Rose, Lavender, Lilac, Honeysuckle, Orange Blossom

**Earth**
Underbrush, Mushroom, Truffle, Humus

**Other stuff**
Chocolate, Leather, Grilled Meat, Baked Bread, Butterscotch, Caramel, Soy Sauce, Cherry Cola, Coffee, Walnut, Almond, Musk, Butter, Maple Syrup, Hazelnut, Honey, Baker’s Yeast, Dusty, Chalky

**Off-Aromas – Something is wrong here!**
Moldy, Garlic, Onions, Nail Polish, Burnt Matches, Vinegar

Off-aromas indicate that the wine is flawed in some way. The most common off-aroma is wine spoiled by cork taint. The affected wine has a musty, unpleasant odor.
Never drink or eat anything you don't like.

**Sweetness** in food cancels the “fruit” and/or any residual sugar in wines, making them taste drier than they are. Sweet dishes call for wines of at least equal sweetness.

Spicy/hot foods cancel some of a wine’s fruitiness too. Serve them with lightly sweet, very fruity, low tannin, and/or crisp wines. Stay away from higher alcohol, tannic red, and/or oaky wines.

Spicy Thai food and Gewürztraminer

Rich dishes overpower delicately flavored, lighter bodied wines. Serve with full flavored, full bodied, higher acid wines.

Pasta Carbonara or Braised Ribs and Cabernet Sauvignon

Smoked foods overpower all but the fruitiest, richest wines. Low tannin, extremely rich, and/or moderately sweet wines are best here.

Smoked Duck and Merlot

When pairing, look for complementary or contrasting flavors in your food and wine selections.

Bleu Cheese and Antigua Dessert Wine

Salty or briny foods also cancel the “fruit” in wines. Salty dishes call for aromatic wines with high acidity, some sweetness, low tannins, and/or intense fruitiness.

Oysters and sparkling wine

Tart foods cancel some of a wine's fruitiness. Serve them with lightly sweet, very fruity, and/or full bodied wines. In some cases, tart or crisp wines will also work well.

Veal Piccata with Sauvignon Blanc or a crisp Chardonnay

Fish and game overpower mildly flavored, medium bodied, dry wines. Try these with very fruity, full bodied, high acid, and/or medium sweet wines.

Salmon with Pinot Noir

© Merryvale Vineyards, Napa Valley, CA 2004
Tragedy struck European winemakers with the spread of Phylloxera in the late 1800s.

Around 6000 B.C.—The first wines are produced in Caucasia and Mesopotamia.

3000 B.C.—Egypt and Phoenicia start wine production.

50 B.C. - A.D. 500—Wine production grows to include most of Western Europe, Southern Russia, and parts of Britain.

Throughout the 14th-16th centuries, Europe had no supply of clean drinking water, and wine was a standard in the daily diet.

The 17th Century saw Champagne invented and better glass making helped wine become more stable and transportable.

1779—First vineyard in California planted at San Juan Capistrano.

1789—Upon his return from France, Thomas Jefferson becomes wine advisor to the Presidents and advocate of wine consumption. During his eight years as President, Jefferson purchased over 20,000 bottles of wine from Europe.

1838—First vineyard planted in Napa Valley by George Yount.

1857—Count Harazsthy founds first winery in Sonoma.

1861—First winery founded in Napa Valley.

1879—Prohibition reduces number of wineries in the United States from 700 to 160.

Tragedy struck European winemakers with the spread of Phylloxera in the late 1800s.

1920-1933—Prohibition reduces number of wineries in the United States from 700 to 160.

1976—Paris Challenge—Two Napa Valley wines beat top French wines in a tasting in France. American wine, especially Napa Valley wine, is taken seriously for the first time.

1983—Napa Valley becomes an American Viticultural Area or AVA.

1983—Merryvale Vineyards is founded.

© Merryvale Vineyards, Napa Valley, CA 2004
An American Viticultural Area (AVA) is created when any interested party formally petitions the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to designate a specific geographic area as a unique viticultural area. Wineries can display approved AVA names on wine labels if at least 85 percent of the grapes used to make wine were grown in the AVA indicated on the label.

Map courtesy of the Napa Valley Vintners, Napa Valley Grape Growers and VESTRA.
There are 89 distinct American Viticultural Areas within California.
California
By The Numbers

462,800,000: gallons shipped by California wineries in 2002 (US and abroad)

4,400: approximate number of winegrape growers in California.

3,000: number of commercial wineries in the U.S.

1,300: approximate number of wineries in California.

1,000: number of commercial wineries in California, roughly half which sell fewer than 5,000 cases.

232: number of commercial wineries in Napa County.

25: number of California’s largest commercial wineries who ship 90 percent of all California wines to U.S. markets.

10: In the late 1850s Los Angeles had 10 times as many vines as Napa.

4: California’s ranking, by volume, among wine producers in the world—behind Italy, France and Spain.

4: percentage of California’s total wine production from the Napa Valley, known worldwide for outstanding quality.

3: The number of commercial wineries in the U.S. has tripled in the last 20 years.

...acre of land is home to between 450 and 2,200 vines.

...vine produces between 15 and 50 clusters of grapes.

...vine typically produces between three and four bottles of wine, or between 15 to 20 glasses, annually.

...ton of grapes makes about 60 cases of wine, which equals 720 bottles.

...225-liter barrel of wine equals 25 cases, which is 300 bottles or 1,500 glasses.

...bottle of wine contains about 2.8 lbs. of grapes.

...5-oz. glass of wine contains a little over half a pound of grapes.

Statistics courtesy of the California Wine Institute.

Other Fun Wine Facts

Order of tasting:
sparkling, white, red;
young before old; light before heavy;
dry before sweet;
common before fine.

Wine Consumption in the U.S. reached a high of 2.68 gallons per resident in 2003.

Turkey has nearly twice as much vineyard acreage as the United States.

Merryvale Vineyards is located in the heart of the Napa Valley. For more information, call 800-326-6069 or go to www.merryvale.com.
WINE QUIZ
RATE YOUR WINE KNOWLEDGE

1. What is the term for the training of the vines with posts and wire?
   a. Pruning
   b. Thinning
   c. Trellising
   d. Shading

2. What is the term for the secondary fermentation in which malic acid from the grape is converted into lactic acid?
   a. Carbonic maceration
   b. Enoculation
   c. Malolactic
   d. Lacticidity

3. The human tongue perceives each of the following taste sensations except...
   a. Bitterness
   b. Acidity
   c. Saltiness
   d. Spice

4. Which of the following is not a term associated with vineyard management?
   a. Lees
   b. Trellising
   c. Canopy
   d. Spacing

5. Stainless steel tanks are used...
   a. Only for inexpensive wine
   b. To add mineral notes
   c. To ferment red wine
   d. To sterilize wine

6. What is added to ‘fortify’ a wine?
   a. Egg whites
   b. Sugar
   c. Brandy
   d. Vanilla

7. What is the technical term for the conversion of grape sugar to alcohol by yeast?
   a. Reduction
   b. Racking
   c. Fermentation
   d. Stimulation

8. When should a wine be decanted?
   a. To aerate a young red
   b. To fortify a wine
   c. To remove off odors
   d. To hide the wine producer

9. Tannins are extracted from...
   a. Grape skins
   b. Grape seeds
   c. Oak barrels
   d. All of the above

10. Which of the following wines is usually the most tannic?
    a. Cabernet Sauvignon
    b. Sauvignon Blanc
    c. Pinot Noir
    d. Sangiovese

11. Why would fresh eggs be used in the winemaking process?
    a. Tannin management
    b. Palate cleansing
    c. To add depth
    d. Filtration

12. What does ‘AVA’ stand for?
    a. American Viticultural Area
    b. American Vineyard Appellation
    c. American Vineyard Association
    d. Approved Viticultural Area

13. What percentage of grapes must come from a particular vineyard in order for that vineyard name to appear on the label of a California wine bottle?
    a. 100%
    b. 85%
    c. 90%
    d. 95%

14. The most appropriate wine to serve with spicy food is...
    a. A tannic wine
    b. A wine high in alcohol
    c. A sweet wine
    d. An acidic wine

15. Why is wine stored horizontally?
    a. It looks better
    b. It takes up less space
    c. To keep the cork moist
    d. To collect the sediment on one side

16. Swirling wine...
    a. Makes you look like a wine geek
    b. Releases the aroma of a wine
    c. Should never be done
    d. Traps the volatile molecules

17. Fume Blanc is another name for...
    a. Blanc de Blanc
    b. Chardonnay
    c. Sauvignon Blanc
    d. Pinot Blanc

18. Which of the following U.S. Presidents was a big wine fan?
    a. Thomas Jefferson
    b. George Washington
    c. Richard Nixon
    d. Helmut Kohl

19. How many 6 ounce pours does a 750ml bottle hold?
    a. Four
    b. Three
    c. Five
    d. Six

20. Successful wine salesmanship depends on...
    a. Product Knowledge
    b. Enthusiasm
    c. Suggestive selling
    d. All of the above

Answers:
1. c
2. c
3. d
4. a
5. c
6. c
7. d
8. a
9. d
10. a
11. a
12. a
13. a
14. a
15. c
16. b
17. c
18. a
19. a
20. d

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