

Tasting Monterey

A WINE ENTHUSIAST'S MONTHLY JOURNEY THROUGH MONTEREY'S WINE COUNTRY



STORE HOURS

A Taste of Monterey
Cannery Row
Sun-Thu 11am-6pm
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Food service begins at
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Aromas & Bouquet

UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE

When you're wine tasting, you undoubtedly hear the terms aroma and bouquet tossed around. You've perhaps even considered them to be one in the same, as they are used so interchangeably. And, while they are indeed related, there is a distinct difference between the two.

Before we address this difference, let's briefly review a couple of overarching topics. First off, why does wine have such unique scents to begin with? The answer to this question is rooted in biology: it's believed that aromatic compounds are tools that aide in a vine's survival by attracting insects to assist in pollination and birds and other animals to eat the berries and disperse seeds.

This same trick seems to have attracted Homosapiens as well! Our sense of smell and detection of aromas when we drink wine is in fact how we taste wine; the flavors each of us recognize and individually distinguish determines if we are particularly fond of a specific wine or not. All of those flavors you detect in a wine, whether it be fruity, floral, earthy, woody, herbal, vegetal or mineral qualities are all perceived through what we detect with our combined olfactory senses.

And, yes, every individual's sense of smell and palate differs, and each of us may explain a similar flavor differently. This explains why two people sampling the same wine may describe aromas they perceive differently.

Wine aromas can be broken down into three main categories: primary, secondary and tertiary aromas. Primary aromas are associated with a specific grape varietal used to produce a wine, often called "varietal aromas." Secondary aromas are developed during the process of pre-fermentation and fermentation and are referred to as "vinous aromas." Lastly, tertiary aromas develop during the post-fermentation phase in the wine-making process when the wine is maturing either in a barrel or later in a bottle.

In official wine terminology, the primary and secondary aromas are really the only actual "aromas", and tertiary aromas are actually considered to be a wine's "bouquet." So, an easy way to think of it is that aromas are associated with the wine before its aged or bottled. Any scents/flavors acquired after that due to changes in the wine's chemistry, imparted scents from aging material (e.g. oak barrels) are all part of a wine's bouquet. The process of the wine aging first in barrels and then later in bottles is in fact blending aromas to make new aromas, and this is also casually referred to at times as creating a wine's "perfume."



Of course, this explains why a premium wine that has been allowed to sufficiently age will offer a complex bouquet and a young, immature wine will be lacking in bouquet. Developing a bouquet takes time and is an evolution; this explains why you've heard that a bottle of wine will never taste precisely the same as one identical to it if you open them at different times. We do not mean to say that a wine is boring while it is young. In fact, during the fermentation process and immediately afterward at the start of its creation, a wine's overall aromas change more rapidly than at any other point during its existence.

While we're talking tasting wine, let's mention that wine served at warmer temperatures will offer more detectable aromas than wine that's served cooler. And, that person at the wine bar that loves to over-exaggerate their wine-swirling by claiming that they want to "get some air into the wine" to open it up? Well...they are actually not wrong at all, even if they are perhaps a little over-zealous. Aerating a wine will certainly do good things to it, and don't be at all afraid to use your decanters at home that are patiently awaiting your attention.

Professional wine-tasters will often smell a wine before they swirl and then sniff again, as some subtle aromas can be overwhelmed with rapid aeration. And, it's actually recommended



Continued Inside

MONTHLY WINE SELECTIONS

RYDER ESTATE - 2015 Cuvée 348 Cabernet Sauvignon



The grapes for Ryder's Cabernet Sauvignon are sourced from two sustainably farmed estate vineyards situated in southern Monterey County, part of California's renowned Central Coast. This region experiences warm, sunny days followed by strong winds in the late afternoon and very chilly nights. The wide day-to-night temperature differential results in grapes that achieve fully ripened, well-developed varietal flavors with balanced acidity. At the winery, the fruit is carefully sorted then destemmed, crushed, and fermented warm in stainless steel tanks. Gentle punch downs are performed several times a day. Once dry, the must is pressed for settling, then racked clean prior to aging for 12 months on new American and French oak.

This Cabernet Sauvignon is a fruit-driven wine boasting ripe plum, cassis, and dark chocolate aromas. The rich black fruit flavors are deep and concentrated with notes of tarragon and vanilla. The soft, integrated tannins lead into a balanced and elegant finish with a hint of lingering sweet oak.

100% Cabernet Sauvignon

13.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2023

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

MARIN'S VINEYARD - 2016 Viognier



Marin's Viognier was harvested in the third week of August 2016. Their dry Viognier is entirely made up of the free run juice from the grapes to maintain the integrity of the delicate aromatics. It was stainless steel fermented, racked, and then aged for six months. It aged in three stainless steel barrels and two neutral oak barrels. The wine was then blended and bottled in late February of 2017.

This Viognier is a dry aromatic white wine with delicate acidity that lends to an elegant bouquet of aromas. These aromas are a blend of floral characteristics with tropical fruit, juicy nectarine, melon, and a touch of honey. The mouthfeel is smooth with a moderate body that will coat the pallet. The beautiful structure of the wine balanced with these fresh and bright aromatics will pair it perfectly with a savory truffle cheese or spicy ramen soup.

100% Viognier

14.0% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2019

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

DETIERRA VINEYARD - 2014 Puzzler (Club Red)



De Tierra creates delicious, award-winning, and sustainably harvested wines to share from the unique terroir of Monterey County. De Tierra, as their name suggests, focuses on providing the best representation 'of the land'. Great wines begin in the vineyard, and it is their goal to translate the defining flavors of place into great wine! De Tierra sources grapes from several vineyards within the Monterey and San Benito Counties. De Tierra has worked hard to select sights that express both the highest quality of the growing region, as well as a strong commitment to sustainability.

Magenta and purple in color. Nose offers an array of fruit, minerality and spice. Notes of cherry, anise, plum, tobacco and violet dominate the nose. Gentle, well integrated tannins balance well with notes of smoked meat, fig, and earthy notes of mushroom and olive.

60% Merlot, 14% Syrah, 6% Pinot Noir,
6% Syrah, 6% Zinfandel, and 4% Sangiovese

14.2% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2020

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

RYDER ESTATE - 2015 Cuvée 348 Chardonnay



The grapes for this Chardonnay are sourced from Ryder's sustainably farmed estate vineyards situated in the cool-climate region of Monterey County, part of California's renowned Central Coast. The moderate, maritime-influenced conditions — ideal for Chardonnay — produce fresh, rich wines with intense varietal character and balanced acidity. At the winery, the fruit is carefully sorted then chilled, lightly settled and inoculated with select yeast. The juice is slowly fermented in stainless steel at cool temperatures to preserve bright flavors and aromatics. After fermentation, about 70% of the wine is aged in stainless steel tanks to preserve the aromatics and crisp, luscious flavors. The remainder is aged on new French oak for 12 months to add lovely notes of vanilla, spice and toast.

Ryder Chardonnay is bright, focused and elegant with aromas of yellow apple, coconut and lemon zest. Medium bodied with a round mouthfeel, the citrusy fruit flavors are rich and ripe with notes of hazelnut and lingering vanilla.

100% Chardonnay

13.5% Alcohol

Cellar Through 2020

Comments: _____ ◇ Great ◇ Good ◇ So-So

Cover Article Continued



to take a few quick sniffs rather than one prolonged one, as your olfactory senses will be more likely to pick up differing scents in this manner.

So, what are typical primary and secondary aromas that we notice in certain wines? There is grassiness and herbs in Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc. Floral aromas are often associated with Riesling and Gewürztraminer. Berries are commonly detected in many red wine varieties; black pepper/spice is also a primary aroma in some. Citrus elements are common in many white wines.

Typical tertiary aromas, which we now know to refer to as “bouquet characteristics” as they develop in the post-fermentation process, include: mushroom, caramel, coffee, leather, smoke, prune, toast, roasted nuts, smoke, butter, chocolate and cedar. A few aromas included on this list are direct results of a wine’s contact with oak during the aging process

prior to bottling. Can you guess which ones?

We would be remiss to not also address another term that is often lumped together with any discussion of aromas that is not so pleasant to our sense of smell and taste. This would be the subject of odors, which are scents perceived as unpleasant and can also indicate a fault in a wine. Vegetal aromas were previously mentioned, whose presence in a wine’s presentation do not overtly signal a fault, but too much veggie in a wine is rarely perceived as beneficial, very rarely.

You’ll often hear a winemaker say that while they have a vintage bottled, they are holding off on releasing it as long as they can. For those eager to try their new exciting-sounding wine, it may at first be confusing to hear that a winemaker doesn’t want their wine to be sampled just yet. However, keep in mind that the winemaker is only trying to safeguard their work- they want their wine to be given a chance to develop as much as possible before being opened.

As mentioned earlier, unless they are of spectacular quality, young wines will lack in bouquet. Mass produced wines are not intended to offer endearing bouquets and are designed to be enjoyed for what they are; not having this element present in a wine envisioned to offer a flourishing bouquet is a grave injustice! A winemaker, after all, is a bit of an artist who wants their best work on display.

RECIPE

Pasta with Scallops, Zucchini and Tomatoes

Ingredients

1 pound	dry fettuccine pasta
1/4 cup	olive oil
3	cloves garlic, minced
2	zucchini, diced
1/2 teaspoon	salt
1/2 teaspoon	crushed red pepper flakes
1 cup	chopped fresh basil
4	roma (plum) tomatoes, chopped
1 pound	bay scallops
2 tablespoons	grated Parmesan cheese



Directions

In a large pot with boiling salted water cook pasta until al dente. Drain.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet heat oil, add garlic and cook until tender. Add the zucchini, salt, red pepper flakes, dried basil (if using) and saute for 10 minutes. Add chopped tomatoes, bay scallops, and fresh basil (if using) and simmer for 5 minutes, or until scallops are opaque.

Pour sauce over cooked pasta and serve with grated Parmesan cheese.

Visiting Varietals



VIOGNIER

Pronunciation: vee-oh-NYAY

Viognier is a full-bodied white wine that originated in southern France. Most loved for its perfumed aromas of peach, tangerine and honeysuckle, Viognier can also be oak-aged to add a rich creamy taste with hints of vanilla. If you love to brood over bolder white wines like Chardonnay, Viognier is definitely something you’ll like to swirl.

Viognier is for those who love to stop and smell the flowers. Viognier ranges in taste from lighter flavors of tangerine, mango and honeysuckle to creamier aromas of vanilla with spices of nutmeg and clove. Depending on the producer and how it’s made, it will range in intensity from light and spritzzy with a touch of bitterness to bold and creamy. If you like Chardonnay you’ll like the weight of Viognier and notice it’s often a little softer on acidity, a bit lighter and also more perfumed.

On the palate, the wines are typically dry although some producers will make a slightly off-dry style that embellishes Viognier’s peachy aromas. Viognier wines are almost always noted for an oily sensation on the middle of the tongue which is a characteristic of wines made with this grape. The drier styles come across less fruity on the palate and deliver subtle bitterness almost like crunching into a fresh rose petal.

The trick to pairing foods with Viognier wine is to fully respect its delicate floral notes and medium acidity. Thus, as a general rule, focus on embellishing and expanding the wine’s core flavors while making sure that the foods you pair with it aren’t too acidic or bold. The aromas in the dish should heighten the fruit flavors and creaminess in the wine.

CHEESE

Varietals



PECORINO ROMANO

Pecorino Romano cheese, whose method of production was first described by Latin authors such as Varro and Pliny the Elder about 2,000 years ago, was first created in the countryside around Rome. Its long-term storage capacity led to it be used for marching Roman legions' rations. A daily ration of 27 grams was established to be given to the legionaries, as a supplement to the bread and farro soup. This cheese gave back strength and vigour to tired soldiers, giving them a high-energy food that was easy to digest. It was produced in Latium up to 1884 when, due to the prohibition issued by the city council of salting the cheese inside their shops in Rome, many producers moved to the island of Sardinia.

It is produced exclusively from the milk of sheep raised on the plains of Lazio and in Sardinia. Most of the cheese is now produced on the island, especially in Gavoi. Pecorino Romano must be made with lamb rennet paste derived exclusively from animals raised in the same production area, and is therefore not compatible with vegetarianism.

Pecorino Romano is most often used on pasta dishes, like the better-known Parmigiano Reggiano. Its distinctive aromatic, pleasantly sharp, very salty flavor means that in Italian cuisine, it is preferred for some pasta dishes with highly flavored sauces, especially those of Roman origin, such as bucatini all'amatriciana or spaghetti alla carbonara. The sharpness depends on the period of maturation, which varies from five months for a table cheese to eight months or longer for a grating cheese.

It should not be confused with Pecorino Toscano (from Tuscany) or Pecorino Sardo (from Sardinia). Unlike pecorino Romano, these cheeses (which are not particularly salty) are generally eaten by themselves or in sandwiches. Many stores in the United States sell "Romano cheese", which should not be confused for genuine Pecorino Romano which is an Italian product recognized and protected by the laws of the European Community. Unlike the Italian cheese, American Romano is milder and uses cow's milk instead of sheep's milk.

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