

Tasting Monterey

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



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Cannery Row
Sun-Thu 11am-6pm
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BITTERNESS, MOUTHFEEL, AND AGING: EXPLAINING TANNINS



As a wine-lover, we're sure you recognize the term "tannins." You may not know how to exactly explain them, but you know they have something to do with wine. You may believe that tannin's presence in wine is based on its contact with oak barrels during the aging process or perhaps you've heard that tannins are only present in red wine. Maybe you've even been told that tannins are to blame for bizarre headaches and noticeable blushes some people experience after having not consumed much vin rouge.

In truth, there's quite a bit more to it. For example, there are some tannins, even if in very limited amounts, in any wine, aged in oak or not, red or

white. Let's delve a little deeper into this compounding subject.

Tannins are specific type of chemical substances that are astringent plant compounds that bind other organic compounds including amino acids, alkaloids, and proteins. Okay, so if you didn't pay attention in Advanced Biology class, don't worry...a lot of us didn't. Just think of tannins as a natural substance that brings together other important components of a plant's structure.

Tannin compounds are represented in varying forms in many species of plants, some plants having more than others. The roles that are believed to be most essential for tannins are to form a sort of protection for plants and to also regulate growth.

So you know that really astringent, bitter-tasting, mouth-drying red wine you opened some time back that made your mouth cave in like a cartoon character? This was very likely due to the grapes for that wine having been picked while under-ripened. Why would a winemaker do that to you? Well, because tannins smooth out in wines over time, which is one of the reasons some wines are recommended for aging.

Let's think of fruit more generally for a moment. Surely you've taken a bite of a fruit and had a similar puckering of mouth experience. Sure you have; we all have. In fact, we probably do it more often than we realize. Because the thing is, just as with that young wine, it doesn't necessarily mean the pomegranate or strawberries or raspberries are altogether bad tasting - they are just likely not as good as they could be. Most of the time, we'll drink the wine or eat the berries anyway.

Other foods that have high amounts of tannins? Nuts, chocolate, beans, and numerous herbs & spices contain a lot. And for the beer drinker, did you know tannins are also in hops and malt?



And, of course, tannins are prominent in grapes. Tannins are present in their skin, stems, and seeds. This is true for all wine grapes; however, the amount of tannins does vary significantly by varietal and by winemaking techniques.

First: Varietal. Red wine varietals are indeed the most tannic, with Cabernet Sauvignon, Tannat, Syrah, and Nebbiolo representing the four leaders of the pack. Characteristics of a growing region play a role here as well and impact how intense tannins will eventually be in varietals. For example, our own Monterey County's extraordinary long growing season leads to softer tannins exhibited in wines, especially in Bordeaux varietals such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

Second: Winemaking. Having earlier stated that tannins are present in grape skins, it should come as no surprise that red wines are naturally more tannic than white wines as the juice in white wine does not have contact with grape skins during fermentation. A winemaker may further choose to intensify the tannic content of a wine by fermenting a red wine with groundup stems and seeds. Why would they do this? Perhaps there's a poor weather year and the fruit does not develop as fully as had been hoped - one possible explanation.

But...tannins don't end there in winemaking. Tannin compounds are present in trees as well, and exposure to oak during a wine's aging is an additional way to introduce tannins. They may also be

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RESERVE WINE SELECTIONS

LINE SHACK - 2016 *Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon*



Winery: In 2003, Line Shack Winery founders and winemakers, Bob and Daphne Balentine, set out to produce affordable, world-class Cabernet Sauvignon from the new San Antonio Valley AVA in Southern Monterey County. The San Antonio Valley is the site California's second Mission, Mission San Antonio, where some of the first grapes ever planted in California originated.

Vineyard: Their vineyards are located in a high mountain valley within the southern portion of the Santa Lucia mountain range, adjacent to the west side of Paso Robles. Warm days followed by cool nights enable their fruit to achieve extended hang time, maximizing their true varietal characteristics.

Tasting Notes: Rich and elegant, with a full, balanced body, medium tannins and smooth lingering finish. Flavors of black cherry, currants and plum complement aromas of mocha, vanilla and leather. Made from a blend of 4 clones of Cabernet Sauvignon and 8% Petite Sirah.

Line Shack
2016 Reserve
Cabernet Sauvignon

Alcohol
15.0%

AVA
San Antonio Valley

Composition
92% Cabernet Sauvignon,
8% Petite Sirah

Aging Potential
8-10 years

DE TIERRA VINEYARDS - 2015 '5 by 5' *Bordeaux Blend*



Winery: 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!

Vineyards: Red grapes from De Tierra Vineyards are grown on their estate vineyard, Russell Estate, as well as sourced from a handful of small growers throughout the Monterey County. De Tierra Vineyards is committed to hand harvesting and boutique

production of all their wines.

Tasting Notes: Deep burgundy in color. Nose promises jasmine, vanilla and brown sugar. Robust tannins and vibrant acidity lead to flavors of blackberry cobbler, plum, and black currant.

DeTierra Vineyards
2015 '5 by 5'
Bordeaux Blend

Alcohol
14.7%

AVA
Monterey

Composition
10% Merlot,
40% Malbec,
40% Petite Verdot,
7% Syrah,
3% Cabernet Franc

Aging Potential
8-10 years

CARMEL ROAD - 2015 *North Crest Pinot Noir*



Winery: Where vines meet ocean winds. Where the foothills meet the valley. Where a tranquil state of mind meets artisan style. This is Carmel Road Winery. There's a back road that stretches from the town of Carmel by the Sea, traversing the Arroyo Seco and through scenic gaps in the Santa Lucia hills, connecting the inland growing region with to the ocean. This winding trail was the inspiration for their name, their own Carmel Road. Carmel Road's winemaking team seeks to capture the vibrant, bright flavor profile

of Monterey - where the triumvirate of fog, wind and sun forge distinctive wines with vivid complexity, superb acidity and a pronounced minerality that have become the hallmark of Carmel Road wines.

Vineyard: Rising from the wide mouth of the deep, cold Monterey Bay, the Arroyo Seco AVA is located 40 miles up the Salinas Valley, nestled to the west on the foothills of the Santa Lucia Mountains. Directly in the path of the ocean's relentless influence, fog and fierce winds sweep over the vineyards, making this one of the coldest wine regions in California. The maritime climate combines with well-drained, alluvial gravel soils to produce Pinot Noir with bright, vibrant fruit flavors.

Tasting Notes: The 2015 North Crest Pinot noir starts with lively aromatics of cherry, strawberry and framboise. The wine has juicy red fruit flavors on the palate with subtle hints of vanilla bean and cocoa. Bright acidity leads to a clean and balanced finish.

Carmel Road
2015 North Crest
Pinot Noir

Alcohol
14.5%

AVA
Arroyo Seco

Composition
100% Pinot Noir

Aging Potential
5-6 years

Cover Article Continued

added with a synthetically-produced tannin powder.

So why is it desirable for a winemaker to promote or even introduce tannins? After all, they are not something that can really be smelled or tasted...but they can most certainly be noticed and appreciated. Tannin levels can influence a wine's color and will have a direct impact on the "mouthfeel" and texture of a wine. Furthermore, the gradual breakdown of tannins will have huge implications on how wine ages, directly impacting how wines taste when uncorked.

Yes, tannins can sometimes be harsh to the senses, especially for those new to red wines. But if you think about it - Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Tannat, Nebbiolo... these and others like them are all varietals that beg to be paired with hearty food. Match them with equally rich dishes and you won't notice the tannins as much as they will be balanced with the food.

And lastly, let's get to that theory that tannins are to blame for headaches and allergic reactions to red wine. The short answer is that, yes, it's possible that tannins are to blame. However, it is not known for sure and there are most likely a few other factors involved.

So while many of us know someone who flushes quickly or gets intense headaches after seemingly small doses of red wines (or even gets serious migraine headaches not long after or the next day), let's not bad-talk tannins. They play a very important role with something we adore. Besides, these friends don't necessarily need to stick with white wines that are clearly lower in tannin levels. Try them out on less-tannic red wines such as Pinot Noir, Sangiovese, Gamay, Tempranillo, Barbera, or Dolcetto. Once again we are reminded of the wonderful diversity that wine offers!

Bryce Ternet - contributing editor and is the author of three books. See <http://www.mbryceter.net.com/> for more.



VISITING Varietals



PETITE SIRAH

Pronunciation:

peh-TEET sih-RAH

Petite Sirah earned its name from the small size of the berries and not the name of the wine. Petite Sirah is one of the biggest, most powerful and tannic wines produced in America. Until the early 1960's, Petite Sirah was one of the most popular grape varieties planted in California. Since that point in time, it's fallen from favor, while the popularity of Cabernet Sauvignon continues to grow. However, over the past decade or so, there has been a resurgence in the popularity of Petite Sirah in California, as well as Monterey County, as plantings have continued to increase.

Petite Sirah is the American name for the Durif grape. Durif takes its name from Dr. François Durif, who created the new grape variety when he successfully crossed Syrah with a grape called Peloursin. At the time the experiments were taking place, Dr. Durif was searching for a way to make Syrah more resistant to powdery mildew. While the new, resulting vine was more resistant to disease, due to the compact way the fruit grew in bunches, the grape clusters are so tight, they were susceptible to bunch rot.

Flavor Profile: Petite Sirah produces inky dark, purple colored wines that offer flavors of black pepper, blackberries, blueberries, spice and licorice. Do not confuse this grape with wine produced from the similarly named Syrah variety. They are not the same grape, and they do not deliver similar taste sensations. Petite Sirah wines are often, massive, intense, chewy, masculine wines that when they are young, provide massive amounts of tannin and high levels of acidity. Wines made from Petite Sirah have the ability to age and improve for decades.

RECIPE

Perfect ~ PERFECT FILET MIGNON FOR TWO

Ingredients:

2 (6 oz) beef tenderloin filet mignon steaks, trimmed of fat
olive oil cooking spray
kosher salt
fresh cracked pepper

Method:

1. Let the steaks rest on the counter to come up to room temperature at least 30 minutes before ready to cook
2. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
3. Spray the steak lightly all over with olive oil, then season both side generously with kosher salt and black pepper.
4. When the oven is ready, heat the skillet over high heat until the pan is very hot.
5. When hot, add the steaks and cook, without moving for 2 1/2 minutes. Turn over and cook an additional 2 to 2-1/2 minutes.
6. Sear the sides of the steaks for about 1 minute so it's browned all over.
7. Place the steaks in the oven for about 4 to 5 minutes, then check them with the meat thermometer inserted into the side of the steak.
8. Remove when the steaks read 125° F for Medium Rare, or 130° F for medium.
9. Let them rest 5 to 10 minutes before serving (meat temperature will rise 5 to 10 degrees after it is removed from the oven).



CHEESE *Varietals*



MAHÓN

Pronunciation: mah-HONE

Mahon is a Spanish cheese from one of the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean, Minorca. Although widely exported, many people aren't familiar with Mahon. Next time you go into a cheese shop, take a break from the other famous Spanish cheese (Manchego) and ask for Mahon (pronounced mah-HONE) instead.

Mahon is made from cow's milk. Both raw and pasteurized versions are sold, although the pasteurized tends to be less flavorful, so keep an eye out for raw milk versions.

Mahon has a natural rind. Young wheels of Mahon (and, usually, pasteurized versions) have rinds that are an eye-catching orange color. As the cheese ages, the color of the rind fades to gold, brown or rust colored. The shape of the cheese is square, with rounded edges.

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PLEASE NOTIFY US BY CALLING (888) 646-5446.
















Any information received after the 20th of each month will not take effect until the following month. Change of address updates, for the upcoming shipment, called in after the 20th, may be subject to a special handling fee.

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