

Wine Terminology

General Definitions - Common definitions used when speaking about wine:

Appellation – A designated wine growing area governed by specific rules regarding the wine grapes grown and wine produced in the specific appellation areas.

Breathing – When wine is decanted, allowing it to react with air.

Designation – A controlled area of wine production that is governed by laws specific to the production of wine in that area.

Lees – The seeds, stems and skins of the grape.

Maceration – The part of the winemaking process in which the lees are steeped and interact with the wine must. This process extracts tannins, phenol compounds and fruit flavors.

New World – A term often used to refer to wines not produced in Europe.

Oenology – The study of wine and wine making.

Old World - European wines made from vineyards that were established many years ago.

Oxidation – Wine that has spoiled or gone bad, due to exposure to air.

Non-Vintage – Wine made from grapes harvested from a combination of years and/or a combination of vineyards.

Residual Sugar – The amount of sugar left in wine after the fermentation process.

Tannins – Tannins are caused by the lees (seeds, stems and skins) of the grape.

Terroir – Refers to the soil in which the wine grapes are grown. The terroir imparts its flavors into the wine.

Vintage – Refers to the year the grapes were harvested for a particular bottle of wine and *not* the year the wine was bottled.

Vitis Vinefera – A term used for wine grapes.

Descriptive Definitions - Common descriptive terms used when tasting wine:

Acidity – Flavors from the natural grape acids as well as the acids created during the fermentation process.

Backward – This term is used to describe wine that is high in alcohol content and tannins.

Big – Used to describe full bodied wines that fill and coat the palate.

Balanced – A wine that strikes a balance between acidity, tannic structure and fruit flavors.

Bouquet – The overall smell a wine gives off after poured into the glass.

Complex – A positive term used to describe a wine that has many different taste and aromatic qualities.

Earthy – A term used for wines in which its flavor and aromatic characteristics reflect that of the terroir in which it was grown.

Fading – When a wine is described as fading, it means it is losing its color, body and flavor characteristics.

Finish – Used to describe how long the flavors of the wine stay on the tongue after it's swallowed.

Flabby – A negative term used to describe wine lacking in acid structure.

Flinty – Used to describe wine that denotes flavors aromatic characteristics of metal or steel.

Heady – Used to describe wine that has a high alcohol content and an overwhelmingly alcoholic aroma.

Lean – Wines described as lean present little or no fruit flavors

Mouth feel – Refers to how the wine feels when held in the mouth.

Masculine – A descriptive term used to explain a big, full-bodied wine.

Supple – A descriptive term used when referring to wine that has a balance of fruit flavors and tannic structure.

Tannic – A wine described as tannic has dry mouth feel.

Texture – A term often used to describe the weight and sensations of the wine on the palate.

Velvety – Refers to a wine that is rich in flavors and texture.