

WELCOME TO A NEW WAY TO DISCOVER WINES!

AN EVALUATION METHOD THAT MAKES SENSE BECAUSE...
IT'S A SYSTEM OF TASTING AND EVALUATING WINES
THAT ACTUALLY TELLS YOU WHAT'S IN THE BOTTLE.



BUT HOW? WHY IS IT DIFFERENT, HOW DOES IT WORK.,
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY.....
HOW DO YOU MAKE IT WORK **FOR YOU?**

IN THE WORLD OF WINE, WHERE **SUBJECTIVITY RULES**,
IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO MAKE ANY OBJECTIVE DECISIONS – ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE
INFLUENCED BY WHAT YOU READ, OR WHAT MEDALS OR POINTS VARIOUS WINES ARE GIVEN.

ENTER THE “**SWIRLS OF WISDOM**” WINE PANEL!
OUR SOLE “**RAISON D'ETRE**” (REASON FOR BEING) IS TO HELP YOU DISCOVER WHAT **YOU LIKE**
BY IDENTIFYING WITH SOMEONE ON THE PANEL WHO LIKES THE SAME STYLE OF WINES **YOU DO!**

SO...WHAT DO WE DO DIFFERENTLY?

FIRST THE METHOD – or HOW WE TASTE

All wines are individuals and are tasted **individually, one at a time**. That way, each wine is evaluated on its own merits, not how it stacks up against a wine sitting next to it (as in a “flight”). There's a very good reason for this. When wines are tasted side by side, it becomes a 'comparison' evaluation, not an 'individual' one, and every wine influences how the wine next to it is perceived.

In the Panel tasting, after a wine is tasted and silently **evaluated by each taster**, the evaluation forms are collected. Then, and only then, a discussion about the wine takes place. So...what you'll read is each panel members own personal likes and dislikes in their evaluations and comments.

CLEAR AND CONSISTENT TERMINOLOGY

You'll notice an absence of esoteric, non-communicative, adjectives. You will find, instead, each tasting evaluator's “summary”, which is their unrestrained and very subjective impression of each wine – based on what they personally like. We've taken the three most important sensory elements of wine – **Fruit, Acid** and **Tannin**, and assigned them words that say what they mean. Any of those three elements can range from “slightly” to “extremely” – “excessive” or “lacking”.

And yes, the words mean exactly what you would expect them to mean.

When the alcohol level is excessive (a flaw), it will also be noted.

You'll often see the term “**Balance**”. In the evaluations, when you see “ideal balance”, it means that the **Fruit, Acids**, and **Tannins** are perceived as all working together, in well-integrated harmony, none obviously standing out on its own.

Generally, a more balanced wine is a more enjoyable wine.

There's also “**Body**”, starting at 'light', passing through varying degrees of 'medium', to 'full'.

The fuller the body, the less like water it is, and this simply depends on the wine varietal, cellar practices (i.e. time spent on the lees), and the alcohol content.

The “**Finish**” is rated in degrees of 'short' to 'long', based on *length* – or how *long* the taste of wine stays with you – and whether you're happy it does, or not. *Aftertaste* is what you keep tasting, for whatever length of time.

SO WHERE AND HOW TO START?

FIRST, PICK A WINE THAT'S BEEN REVIEWED BY THE PANEL –
AND THERE ARE ANYWHERE FROM SIX TO EIGHT WINES EVERY MONTH.
IT MAY BE A WINE YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH OR IT MIGHT BE ONE THAT JUST SOUNDS INTERESTING TO YOU.

CHOOSE YOUR OPTION OF THE ONES BELOW, AND LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

- ✓ The “**FAVORITE APPROACH**”. When this Tasting Panel launched in July of 2007, we started out with a “**PANEL PICK**” but soon realized the panel was operating exactly as it was supposed to, which meant consensus was very hard to come by. So now every Panel evaluator selects their own “**FAVORITE**” of the tasting. In fact that's what makes this Panel different from all others. It's composed of evaluators who have been selected for their *different* wine style preferences – just like you. You'll find roughly half of the panel likes the bigger, in your face, fruitier (“fruit forward / fruit bomb”) style, while the other half prefers the more elegant, balanced, food-friendly style – just like you.
- ✓ The “**BEST VALUE APPROACH**”. This is yet another way of looking at wine – the best bang for the buck. And “Best Value” doesn't automatically mean the least expensive wine of the tasting either. The evaluator has to really LIKE the wine – even if it's not the least expensive one. A wine can only be considered a “Best Value” if it's one we truly enjoy. If we don't, it can't be the “best Value” – for us. Enjoyment is the other half of the “Value” coin.
- ✓ The “**AFFIRMATION APPROACH**”. You might look at the wines tasted and if you're familiar with any of these, then read what the various Tasting Panel members have to say about it. See who comes closest to saying what you would have said about the wine.
- ✓ The “**RANDOM APPROACH**”. Be brave and choose at random! First read what the various Tasting Panel members have to say about the wines, and with the varying descriptions to go on, go ahead – dive into the (wine) pool and just choose one – at random! The “**RANDOM APPROACH**” is particularly fun and exciting, whether or not you're familiar with any of the wines.

🔑 **THE KEY!** *If, after tasting the wine, and determining whether YOU like it or not, see what the various panel members have to say about that wine and which of them you most agree with. Then...after you've found the panel member you most agree with, the following month try another wine that they like – and so it begins – leading you from one wine you find you enjoy to another. Voilà!*

THE WINES, THE WINES!

Each month, along with the “**Wines we Tasted**”. You'll find **Prices**. The prices listed will be the winery's suggested retail, but, as we've all learned, there are ways to get better prices – through winery Wine Clubs, quantity purchases, or visiting other retailers.

You'll also notice “**Alcohol content**”. Strictly an *awareness* thing. High alcohol level wines are much harder to pair successfully with food since high alcohol levels in a wine can completely overpower a more delicate dish and high alcohol levels give you a 'hot', 'sweet' sensation (alcohol often gives the impression of sweetness!). And beware: the alcohol hotness in the wine can be downright scary with spicy-hot foods, which *magnify* the hotness in the wine. Don't light a match!

GOING FOR IT!

The panel tastes all wines without food, but many of the panel, as you'll see when you read their comments, think of wines **with** food. So, try the wine with and without food. What kind of food? Ah, there's the rub. For in truth, the kind of food you have will influence your perception of the wine – and the other way around.

So back to the beginning. Start as the panel did and taste the wine without food. See what you think of it and how you'd describe it, then read what the various panel members had to say about it. Then, you're going to have to eat anyhow, so take one of their pairing suggestions – or ask a friend – or just take a guess and **GO FOR IT!**