

Buying a Pair of White Wines

TASTING GOALS

To compare and contrast a pair of white wines, paying special attention to the differences in acidity and body as well as color and aroma.

THE TWO WHITE WINES

Purchase one bottle each:

- Pinot Grigio from the region of Trentino-Alto Adige or Veneto, in northeastern Italy. The wine style should be crisp and refreshing.
- Chardonnay from California or Australia. The wine style should be big and rich, with some oak.

The wines should be:

- Current releases from a recent vintage or within a vintage or two of each other.
- In approximately the same price range. Fine examples can be found at \$12-\$18 per bottle. More expensive wines don't necessarily provide better illustrations of the points highlighted in this tasting.

Buying a Pair of Red Wines

TASTING GOALS

To compare and contrast a pair of red wines, paying special attention to the differences in body and tannins as well as mouthfeel, color and aroma.

THE TWO RED WINES

Purchase one bottle each:

- Pinot Noir from California or Oregon. The style should be lighter and more elegant, as opposed to being a full-throttle fruit bomb.
- Cabernet Sauvignon from California. The wine should have some evident tannins

The wines should be:

- Current releases from a recent vintage or within a vintage or two of each other
- In approximately the same price range. Good examples can be found for under \$20 per bottle. More expensive wines don't necessarily provide better illustrations of the points highlighted in this tasting.
- From the same producer, if possible.

Setting Up the Tasting

SUPPLIES

- Four glasses per taster. Ideally, all the glasses for all the tasters should be the same. At the very least, each taster's four glasses should be the same
- Printouts of the following PDFs: one copy of each Tutored Tasting (Part A and Part B) plus one copy per taster of the Tasting Journal, Tasting Mat and Expert Tasting Methodology.
- Spit cup (experts usually spit to keep their senses clear)
- Water
- Plain crackers (Save the cheese and nibbles for after you've evaluated the wines. If you do want to finish off with cheese, try hard cheeses such as Parmigiano Reggiano, Cheddar or aged Gouda.

Note that wineries with web sites often provide tasting notes for specific wines. You may want to print out the info so you have it on hand, but don't read the winemaker's tasting note until after you've completed the tasting.

BEFORE YOU START THE TASTING

- Chill the white wines to about 50° F-55° F or 10° C-12° C. The bottles should be cold to the touch.
- The red wines should be at cool room temperature, or about 65° F or 18° C. The bottles should be cool, but not cold, to the touch.
- Fill in the top portion of your Tasting Journal with information about the wine from the label.
- Place a wine glass on each of the circles on your Tasting Mat. Note that the circles indicate the specific wine that will be poured into each class.
- Pull the corks and pour about 2 ounces of each wine into its respective glass, filling each no more than 1/4 full.