

A question of taste

International wine fair Vinexpo lands at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre next Tuesday and is expected to draw 15,000 visitors, many of whom will be hoping to take part in the nation's burgeoning wine market. The *Post* offers a crash course in wine appreciation for those planning a trip to Wan Chai for a taste of the action.

Wine servings

Serving temperature
 18°C to 15°C



Large red wine
 Glass shape with a wider mouth offers more exposure to air, allowing wine to breathe

Wines/grape varieties
 Older red wines with complex aromas such as pinot noir, burgundy, Médoc, Rioja

14°C to 13°C



Small red wine
 Narrower glass directs the bouquet to the nose

Light red wines such as Beaujolais, shiraz

14°C



Fortified wine
 Smaller than a wine glass, but with a rounded bowl. Allows concentration of aromas on nose

Port, Madeira, mistelle, Marsala

14°C to 11°C



Sherry
 Even smaller than a port glass, perfect to accentuate fruity aromas

Fino, manzanilla, pale cream, amontillado, dark cream

12°C to 11°C



Large white wine
 A little smaller than a small red wine glass, but with a wide bowl

Chardonnay, white bordeaux, verdejo, burgundy

11°C to 10°C



Small white wine
 Glass shape traps the aromas of the wine

Aromatic light whites: riesling, gewürztraminer

10°C



Rosé wine
 Large opening directs wine to tip of the tongue, increasing sensitivity to sweetness

Young rosés: syrah, weissherbst, carignan, Cigales

8°C



Sweet wine
 Rounded bowl allows the wine to be directed towards the back of the mouth

Sweet, unfortified wines: muscat, ice wine

9°C to 7°C

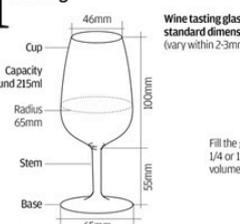


Flute
 Tall narrow bowl keeps wine cold, allowing appreciation of the bubbles

Champagne, cava, vinho verde, Asti Spumante

Tasting, step by step

1 Serving



Wine tasting glass standard dimensions
 (vary within 2-3mm)

Cup: 46mm
 Capacity: around 215ml
 Radius: 65mm
 Stem: 35mm
 Base: 65mm

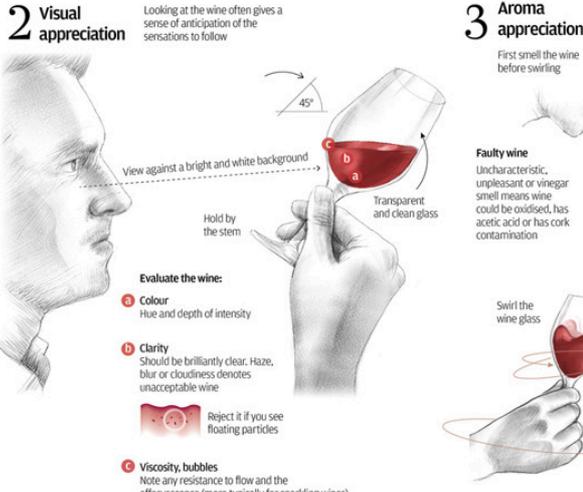
Fill the glass to 1/4 or 1/3 of its volume



The wine bottle
 Most common volume is 75cl (750ml), but sizes vary

2 Visual appreciation

Looking at the wine often gives a sense of anticipation of the sensations to follow



View against a bright and white background

Hold by the stem

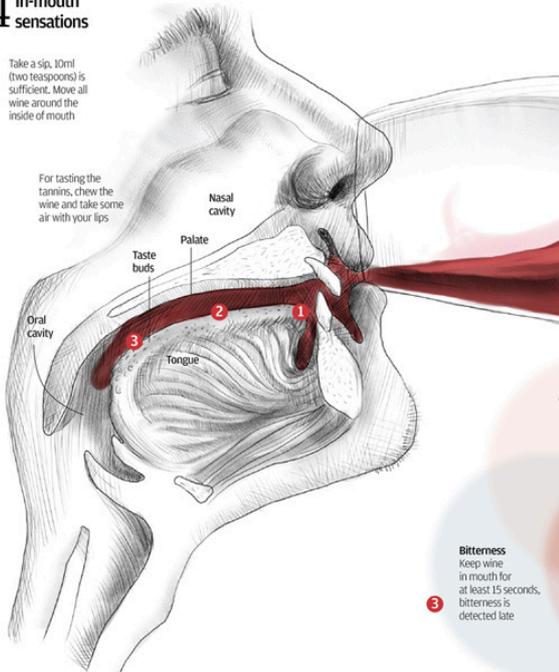
Transparent and clean glass

Evaluate the wine:

- Colour**
 Hue and depth of intensity
- Clarity**
 Should be brilliantly clear. Haze, blur or cloudiness denotes unacceptable wine
 Reject it if you see floating particles
- Viscosity, bubbles**
 Note any resistance to flow and the effervescence (more typically for sparkling wines)

4 In-mouth sensations

Take a sip, 10ml (two teaspoons) is sufficient. Move all wine around the inside of mouth



For tasting the tannins, chew the wine and take some air with your lips

Nasal cavity
 Palate
 Taste buds
 Tongue
 Oral cavity

1 Area of tongue
 2 Sweetness
 3 Bitterness

Sweetness
 You appreciate this at the tip of the tongue

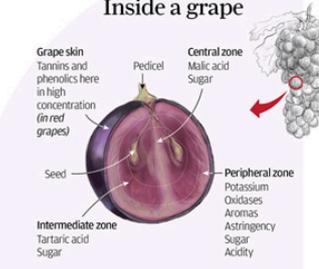
Bitterness
 Keep wine in mouth for at least 15 seconds, bitterness is detected late

Sourness
 Feel the contrast with the sweetness along sides of the tongue

Finally
 If you want to taste further wines, best to spit the sample out and clean your mouth with some water to neutralise your palate

Wine should be perfect combination

Inside a grape



Grape skin
 Tannins and phenolics here in high concentration (in red grapes)

Central zone
 Malic acid
 Sugar

Peripheral zone
 Potassium
 Oxalates
 Aromas
 Astringency
 Sugar
 Acidity

Intermediate zone
 Tartaric acid
 Sugar

Seed

Pedicle

Where wine comes from



First smell the wine before swirling

3 Aroma appreciation

Most volatile aromas

Faulty wine
 Uncharacteristic, unpleasant or vinegar smell means wine could be oxidised, has acetic acid or has cork contamination

Swirl the wine glass

This movement releases the less volatile aromas

Most aged wine
 Smells of spices, wood, leather

Immediately smell the swirled wine

Young wine
 Flowers, fruits

The colours of wine

White wines										Rosé wines			Red wines						
Greyish yellow	Greenish yellow	Pale yellow	Lemon yellow	Light gold	Golden yellow	Gold	Brownish yellow	Amber	Brown	Onion skin	Salmon	Raspberry	Copper	Brick red	Ruby	Garnet	Cherry	Purple	Blackish red
Pinot grigio	Sauvignon blanc, verdejo	Colombard, grüner veltliner	Riesling, gewürztraminer	Chenin blanc	Chardonnay, vognier, semillon	Dessert wines, manzanilla	Sherry, mature white burgundy	Vin Santo, Tokaji	Málaga, Marsala	Rosé champagne	Rosé syrah	Rosé grenache, white zinfandel	Aged grenache	Mature pinot noir, aged bordeaux	Young pinot noir, tempranillo	Cabernet sauvignon, merlot, nebbiolo	Sangiovese, zinfandel	Barbera, amarone	Shiraz, vintage port