

Wine Aroma Wheel

The purpose of the wine aroma wheel is to facilitate communication about wine flavor by providing a standard terminology.

Words included on the wheel are terms that are specific and analytical and not hedonic or the result of an integrated or judgmental response. 'Floral' is a general but analytical descriptive term, whereas "fragrant", "elegant" or "harmonious" are either imprecise and vague (fragrant) or hedonic and judgmental (elegant and harmonious).

The wheel has very general terms located in the center, going to the most specific terms in the outer tier. These terms are NOT the only terms that can be used to describe wines, but represent ones that are often encountered.

Novice tasters often complain that they "cannot smell anything" or can't think of a way to describe the aroma of wine. Fortunately, it is very easy to train our noses and brains to easily recognize aromas. The fastest way is to make physical standards to illustrate important notes in wine aroma. With few exceptions, materials available from the grocery store are all you need. One of the few standards that cannot be provided is the floral aroma of Riesling, Muscat or Gewürztraminer wines. For this distinct floral, citrus aroma use Lemon-grass or get handi-wipes®. Put an opened Handiwipe® into an empty covered glass. alternatively, put Froot Loops® (a breakfast cereal) into an empty wine glass.

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DEFECTS

Some of the commonly encountered wine defects can also be illustrated by making standards. However, the BEST standard is the actual example of the defect. Save a spoiled wine which has a moldy odor

Volatile acidity (VA):

caused by oxidation or acetic acid bacteria. Use a few drops of vinegar or nail polish remover

Oxidation:

A few drops of sherry

Sulfur:

Hydrogen sulfid - boiled eggs,
Sulfur dioxide - dried apricots (which were treated with sulfite) Caution: Many asthmatics are very sensitive to it!

Brettanomyces:

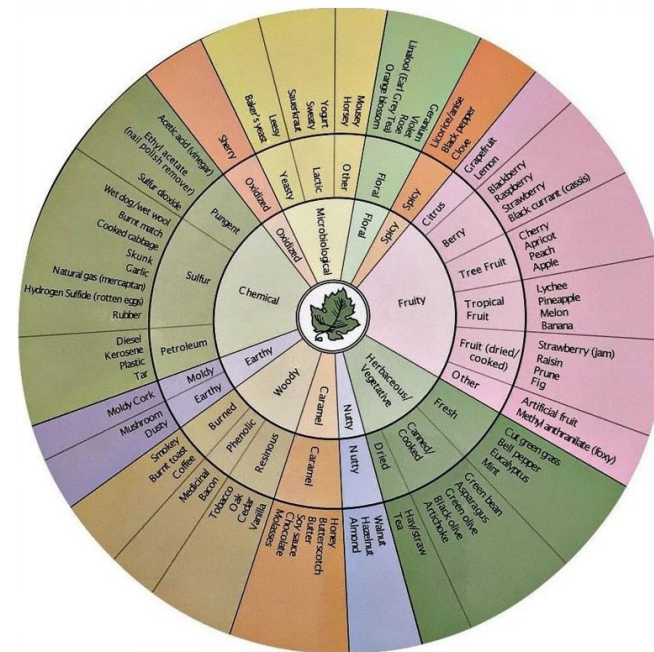
(A wild yeast) Drop of creosote or piece of old fashioned Band-Aid (a horsy, sweaty saddle, barnyard smell)

Wine aroma wheel distributed in Denmark by



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Instructions for use of Wine Aroma Wheel



How you describe the
characteristics of the wine
How to determine and
remember the aroma of
wine.

WHITE WINES

If you are just beginning, it is easier to evaluate white wines; start by selecting some wines with large differences in flavor. For example, include an oaky, buttery Chardonnay (most Australian, or California ones will do), a “vegetative” wine (bell pepper, asparagus - a Sauvignon blanc from New Zealand or cool parts of California) and a floral Riesling or Gewürztraminer from cooler parts of California (North or Central Coast), Oregon, Washington, Germany, Alsace (France). For a fourth wine, try an unoaked Chardonnay or Viognier.

For the most commonly encountered white and red wine aromas, the approximate recipes are provided below, but they all need to be tweaked so the aroma is detectable but not overwhelming. Add more if the aroma is not identifiable; dilute with the base wine if it is too strong.

The most important standards for white wines are made as follows: ½ dl of neutral white wine is poured into a row of wine glasses. The following are then added:

- **Asparagus:** Several drops of brine of canned asparagus
- **Bell Pepper:** Tiny pieces of bell pepper (don't leave in too long)
- **Vanilla:** 1 drop of vanilla extract
- **Butter:** 1 drop of melted butter
- **Clove:** 1 clove (don't leave in too long)
- **Citrus:** ~1 teaspoon of fresh orange and grapefruit juice
- **Peach/apricot:** A couple of teaspoons of peach or apricot puree or juice
- **Pineapple:** A couple of teaspoons of juice
- **Honey:** 1 – 2 Tablespoons
- **Basic wine:** Neutral standard white wine with no added elements

Put the standards in wine glasses, cover with drink lids, plastic petri dish lids or even saran wrap. Covering the glass increases the intensity of the aromas and prevents the odors from permeating the entire room.

Having an unspiked wine makes it easy to identify the spiked aromas by contrast. Smell the standards first, smell the wines. Which terms describe each wine? If you come up with NEW aromas such as lichee/lychee - make a standard!

RED WINES

For the first red wine tasting choose wines with very different aromas such as a Pinot noir (Carneros or very cool central coast area of CA, Oregon, or red Burgundy), a Cabernet Sauvignon (for vegetative, get a wine from a cooler CA region; for a less vegetative wine, try Napa, Sonoma, Washington) and a black peppery Zinfandel (CA), Syrah or Shiraz.

The most important standards for red wines are made as follows: ½ dl of neutral red wine is poured into a row of wine glasses. The following are then added:

- **Asparagus:** Several drops of brine of canned asparagus
- **Bell Pepper:** Tiny pieces of bell pepper (don't leave in too long)
- **Vanilla:** 1 drop of vanilla extract
- **Butter:** 1 drop of melted butter
- **Clove:** 1 clove (don't leave in too long)
- **Soy sauce:** A few drops, great for older reds
- **Berry:** Fresh/frozen berries and/or jams
- **Berry jam:** 1-3 tablespoons strawberry jam (mostly for Pinot Noir's)
- **Synthetic fruit:** A few crystals of red Kool-aid powder
- **Black pepper:** A few grains of black pepper

- **Anise, black licorice:** a few drops of extract
- **Basic wine:** Neutral standard red wine with no added elements

Again, smell your mixtures to make sure you can pick up the desired scent and that it is not too strong

SPARKLING WINES

For sparkling wines, different terms are required than those found on the Wine Aroma Wheel. In addition to the citrus and berry standards, some of the most relevant terms for sparkling wines are listed below. This applies especially to wines that have been aged for a long time with yeast before being disgorged.

Important standards for sparkling wines are made as follows: ½ dl of neutral white wine is poured into a row of wine glasses. The following are then added:

- **Lime:** A few drops of Rose's lime Juice or squeezed lime juice
- **Apple:** Sniff freshly cut apple or try applejuice
- **Toasted hazelnuts:** Crushed nuts alone without the neutral wine
- **Sour cream/yogurt:** Try 1 tablespoon in an empty glass and 1 in the neutral wine
- **Malt Extract:** 1 tablespoon of extract
- **Vermouth:** A few drops
- **Vegemite® or marmite®:** A small amount in the bottom of the glass, then add the neutral wine
- **Cherry/strawberry:** Few drops of flavored juices or extracts
- **Nutmeg:** A few grains
- **Caramel:** Crush one Kraft® caramel in the glass
- **Vanilla:** 1 drop of extract