
TIDINGS

Five Tips for Leveling Up Your Wine Game This Year

Several silver linings emerged from 2020, and American's intake of wine was arguably one of them. Not so much the total amount of wine (we're not here to champion excess), but what the industry defines as "wine occasions" rose by 19%.

In other words, we drank wine in moderation, more often. Sometimes via virtual "hang outs" with friends, other times through virtual tastings, like we've here at the club. This year, many experts are predicting more of a hybrid model when it comes to our wine intake habits.

Whether you prefer your wine at home, out with friends, or both, increasing your knowledge of this venerable libation will lead to more enjoyment no matter where you prefer to sit and sip.



1. Don't give up on virtual

"One thing we've all enjoyed is tasting wine from the comfort of our own homes, usually with the owner of the winery or people actually making the wine. What makes these events shine is really connecting with the families behind the wines. We have seen Farrah Felton's house, which is made entirely from Clinker Bricks!

We sat in Greg Brewer's [Wine Enthusiast Winemaker of the Year in 2020] bedroom with him. This personal connection makes up for the lack face-to-face interactions. By year's end we'll have traveled to Italy, Spain, Chile and Argentina to name a few, and there are no plans to stop, even with the ability to meet in person becoming more of a reality.

My advice is to take part in as many of these as possible, even when you return to bars and restaurants. The people you meet through our virtual wine tastings are amazing and it's truly a once in a lifetime opportunity."



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2. Preserve wine properly to extend enjoyment

“Most of my wine issues during the Covid-19 pandemic revolved around ensuring I had enough wine on hand to drink! Thanks, homeschooling. One of the ways I stretched my wine collection was through the Coravin Wine System.

Initially skeptical, I was a quick convert as I realized its true purpose. I’d been led to believe it was a way to taste super-old, super-expensive wines (those need time to breath and be fully open.) What it actually offers is flexibility. I can now drink Pinot Noir on Tuesday, Syrah on Wednesday and Cabernet on Thursday and not have those wines spoil if I’m working the next few evenings.

Couple with that the option of drinking just one glass of wine (blasphemy I know) and not having to worry about when I might get back to that bottle before it loses its luster. Tools such as this are also here to stay and a great investment for any wine drinker.”



3. Train your palate

“There’s a theory that in order to become an expert at something, you must do it at least 10,000 times. Since wine consumption was up in 2020, it looks like many people were heeding that advice! I found a few cool ways to train your palate to better discern flavors when drinking a glass of wine.

The sugar/alcohol/acidity/tannin test was eye-opening for me and I recommend everyone do at least once. It’s a great way to train your palate to recognize when any of those ingredients are out of balance in a bottle of wine.

It involves taking an inexpensive bottle of wine and pouring three ounces into five identical glasses. The first glass is the host and should be set aside. The remaining four glasses will have an additional ingredient. Sugar is added to one, vodka or any neutral spirit to another, lemon juice to the next and a black tea bag to the last.



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4. Expand your knowledge base

“The Internet can be a great tool for expanding your wine knowledge, as there are numerous websites and videos with great tips and information. My favorite way to develop my wine acumen is through drinking wine. Since all wine is a barometer of place, what better way to learn about something new than by drinking what to locals there would drink on a daily basis.

Earlier this year, we drank some nice little Cote Du Rhone wines (Blanc, Rose and Rouge) and most of you really enjoyed them. This wasn't always the case at the club as in the past, many members wouldn't venture outside of their comfort zones to try wines they weren't familiar with. Kudos to you members for taking the risk and discovering new things. There is indeed life outside of Chardonnay!”



5. Always make it fun

“As 2020 showed all of us, wine is not a serious topic that affects our day-to-day lives, nor should it be. I think many people find wine a bit intimidating and that should never be the case. As you have all heard me say many times, my ‘go to’ question in response to your first wine question is always ‘What do you like?’

“You should always drink wine that you enjoy and forget about the ‘rules.’ As you may know, I’m not a big fan of Chardonnay, so if I were to pair my dinner with a glass of Chardonnay (regardless of how well it paired with the food) I wouldn’t enjoy it. That should always be the case – the enjoyment of the wine, I mean after all, it’s not work, for most of us!”

