

WSET Level 2 Study Guide

WSET Level 2 Study Guide was assembled by Robert Weidner, and is based on:

Wines and Spirits: Looking Behind The Label, produced and published by the Wine & Spirit Education Trust.

WSET	Wine & Spirit Education Trust	Aroma and Flavor Characteristics	
Level 1	A beginning level introduction to wine.	Floral / Fruit	
Level 2	An intermediate level qualification.		
Level 3	An advanced level qualification.		
Level 4	A specialist qualification providing expert level knowledge.		
Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine		Floral	blossom, rose, violet
Appearance	The appearance of the wine can warn us of faults.	Green Fruit	green apple, red apple, gooseberry, pear, grape
		Citrus Fruit	grapefruit, lemon, lime (juice or zest?)
Clarity	clear, hazy	Stone Fruit	peach, apricot, nectarine
Intensity	pale, medium, deep	Tropical Fruit	banana, lychee, mango, melon, passion fruit, pineapple
Color: white	lemon, gold, amber	Red Fruit	redcurrant, cranberry, raspberry, strawberry, red cherry, plum
Color: rosé	pink, salmon, orange	Black Fruit	blackcurrant, blackberry, blueberry, black cherry
Color: red	purple, ruby, garnet, tawny	Dried Fruit	fig, prune, raisin, sultana, kirsch, jamminess, cooked, baked, stewed fruits, preserved fruits
Nose	Swirl the wine in the glass to release the aromas, and then sniff.	Spice / Vegetable	
		Under ripeness	green bell pepper, grass, white pepper, leafiness, tomato, potato
Condition	clean, unclean	Herbaceous	grass, asparagus, blackcurrant leaf
Intensity	light, medium, pronounced	Herbal	eucalyptus, mint, medicinal, lavender, fennel, dill
Aroma character	e.g., fruits, flowers, spices, vegetables, oak aromas, other	Vegetable	cabbage, peas, beans, black olive, green olive
		Sweet Spice	cinnamon, cloves, ginger, nutmeg, vanilla
Palate	When assessing the palate of a wine you use your senses of taste (for sugar, acid, and bitterness) and smell.	Pungent Spice	black/white pepper, licorice, juniper
		Oak / Other	
Sweetness	dry, off-dry, medium, sweet	Simplicity	simple, neutral, indistinct
Acidity	low, medium, high	Autolytic	yeast, biscuit, bread, toast, pastry, lees
Tannin	low, medium, high	Dairy	butter, cheese, cream, yoghurt
Body	light, medium, full	Oak	vanilla, toast, cedar, charred wood, smoke, resinous
Flavor character	e.g., fruits, flowers, spices, vegetables, oak flavors, other	Kernel	almond, coconut, hazelnut, walnut, chocolate, coffee
Finish	short, medium, long	Animal	leather, meaty, farmyard
Conclusions	We may now form an assessment of the quality of the wine. Is the wine a good example of its type?	Maturity	vegetal, mushroom, hay, wet leaves, forest floor, game, savory, tobacco, cedar, honey, cereal
		Mineral	earth, petrol, rubber, tar, stony/steely, wet wool
Quality	faulty, poor, acceptable, good, very good, outstanding		
Quality Character	e.g., balance, finish, intensity, complexity, expressiveness		

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European Union (EU) Geographical Indications (GI)			Factors on Wine other than Craft	
PDO	Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)	Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)	Noble Grape Varieties	Environment
France	Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC)	Vin de Pays (VdP)	Chardonnay	Climate
Italy	Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC)	Indicazione Geografica Tipica (IGT)	Sauvignon Blanc	Weather
	Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita (DOCG)		Riesling	Carbon Dioxide
Spain	Denominación de Origen (DO)	Vino de la Tierra (VdIT)	Cabernet Sauvignon	Sunlight
	Denominación de Origen Calificada (DOCa)		Pinot Noir	Water
Germany	Prädikatswein	Landwein	Merlot	Warmth
	Qualitätswein		Syrah	Nutrients

Pairing Food and Wine

Food Trait	Food and Wine Taste Interactions	Pair with a wine that is...
Sweetness	Increases the perception of bitterness, acidity, and the burning effect of the alcohol in the wine. Decreases the perception of body, sweetness, and fruitiness in the wine.	At least as high in sugar as the dish.
Umami	Increases the perception of bitterness, acidity, and alcohol burn in the wine. Decreases the perception of body, sweetness, and fruitiness in the wine.	More fruity than tannic.
Acidity	Increases the perception of body, sweetness, and fruitiness in the wine. Decreases the perception of acidity in the wine.	High in acid. Consider pairing acid and fat.
Salt	Increases the perception of body in the wine. Decreases the perception of bitterness and acidity in the wine.	Low risk food. Consider pairing sweet and salty.
Bitterness	Increases bitterness in wine.	White or low-tannin reds.
Chili Heat	Increases the perception of bitterness, acidity, and alcohol burn. Decreases the perception of body, richness, sweetness, and fruitiness in the wine.	White or low-tannin reds, both with low alcohol.

Service Temperatures

Style of Wine	Examples	Fahrenheit
Medium/full-bodied, oaked white	White Burgundy, Fumé Blanc	Lightly chilled 50-55°F (10-13°C)
Light/medium-bodied white	Muscadet, Pinot Grigio, New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, Fino Sherry	Chilled 45-50°F (7-10°C)
Sweet wines	Sauternes, Sweet Muscats	Well chilled 43-45°F (6-8°C)
Sparkling wines	Champagne, Cava, Asti	Well chilled 43-50°F (6-10°C)
Light-bodied red	Beaujolais, Valpolicella	Lightly chilled 55°F (13°C)
Medium/full-bodied red	Red Bordeaux, Rioja, Shiraz, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Barolo, Vintage Port	Room temperature 59-64°F (15-18°C)