



# WINE GUIDE



# Ordering Wine on a Date

**Y**ou picked the perfect restaurant, the appetizer is ordered and the only thing left is to select the perfect bottle of wine.

To splurge or not to splurge? That is the question when it comes to finding an appropriate wine to impress your date.

## RESEARCH IS KEY

Most restaurants post their wine selections online, so a bit of due diligence will equip you with the knowledge of which wine works with which food. You don't have to become an expert to feel prepared – just get to know the basics.

Which wines are considered light and can complement a nice chicken or pork dish? Which ones are darker and meant to be sipped before and after a meal? Knowing the wine's producer, the grape variety and the region in which the wines you're interested in are produced also can help you decide.

Also figure out your price-point and see if you'll be able to find a bottle of wine in that range. Ordering a full bottle can help score you points in the spending category.

## RESTAURANT STAFF

If you don't have time to fully prepare yourself, don't be afraid to use your lifeline – the restaurant staff. Many



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top-tier restaurants feature a wine specialist who is available to answer any and all wine-related questions you can think of.

These sommeliers are the

people who actually put together the wine list and know it like the back of their hands. This is who you want to track down.

If your restaurant doesn't

boast a wine expert, ask your server or manager for some details. The key is toeing the line between being a conversational customer and one who won't stop asking ques-

tions. The latter will likely bore your date and make you seem indecisive. And if this is a first or second date, then that is not the image you want to portray.



# A Look at Pinot Grigio

**H**ailed as Italy's most popular white wine, the Pinot Grigio has established quite a footing in the United States, as well.

The wine is produced from the Pinot Grigio or Pinot Gris grape varietal, which gives off a crisp, lighter flavor. Sweet in taste and light in color, Pinot Grigio leaves quite an impression on the palate. Additionally, Pinot Grigio can be an excellent partner in the kitchen. Use it in place of water when steaming shellfish or for sautéing shrimp, scallops and tender vegetables. Pinot Grigio can also be a broth or stock substitute used for braising meats.

## FLAVOR PROFILE

Boasting a flavor ranging from pear to melon, Pinot Grigio has smooth overtones that pair nicely with lighter fare, such as seafood, pasta and many cheese and cracker combinations. Since this wine is fairly acidic, experts advise against pairing it with foods with high acid contents, such as citrus fruits and tomato-based recipes.

## FRENCH ROOTS

According to The Wine Institute, Pinot Grigio is the Italian synonym for the grape also commonly known as Pinot Gris. It gets its nomenclature roots from the French words for pine (Pinot) and grey (Gris). Pinot could be a naming nod to how the grape is grown, which, according to the Wine Institute, is in a pinecone-like clustered shape.

## POPULARITY

The popularity of Pinot Grigio is definitely on the rise in the United States. The acreage in California dedicated to growing these grapes has more than quadrupled from a reported 2,692 in the year 2000 to 12,907 in 2010, according to the most recent California Grape Acreage Report. The variety does best in cooler climates but can be grown in other climates, yielding varying styles of wine.





# Recycle: Show Off Those Bottles

**I**n a world of reusing, repurposing and recycling, wine bottles have become a staple of many Americans' home décor.

And why not? Their versatile shape and colored glass (depending on the brand) makes them a powerful weapon in any designer's arsenal. And wine bottles are dynamic enough to make an impact in any room of the house, as well as outside to complement a well-designed patio.

## DRIED FLOWERS

One of the most popular ways to repurpose a wine bottle is to use it as a vase. Fill it with dried flowers, foliage, small branches or straw, and you have

a long-lasting decoration. If you have a colored glass bottle, choose flowers that accentuate its tones for a visual masterpiece. And just like a vase full of flowers, your wine bottle can be placed on top of any table, shelf or entertainment stand.

## WINE BOTTLE ARTWORK

For the artist in you, use your wine bottle as a forum for great artwork. Paint your wine bottle with chalkboard paint to make it an interactive piece of art that allows you to continually change messages and drawings. You can also wrap a wine bottle in colored yarn to give it a three-dimensional look. From stickers to paint, the options to create a fully customized piece of wine art are endless.

## OUTDOOR USE

Wine bottles can be used outdoors to surround a patio, garden or flower bed. Bury them partially underground to create an interesting border for any purpose.

Their glass structure will bounce off natural light during the day and catch rays from the sun at dusk, giving off a beautiful array of sights and enhancing the beauty of your outdoor area.

You can also mount wine bottles to exterior walls for an Italian-influenced design. Choose different colors to give your patio a diverse look that guests will rave about.



# Wine and Cheese Parties

No matter the season, it's always a great time for wine and cheese. Novices and experts alike enjoy the challenge of putting together a memorable wine and cheese party, one that leaves their guests raving about the food, drinks and overall atmosphere.

With a little planning and research, your party could be one of these unforgettable experiences that you actually turn into an annual — or even monthly — event.

## THE CHEESE

One of the first steps to pulling off the perfect party is finding the right kind of cheese. Visit your local gourmet food shop or grocery store to weigh your options. Ask for professional recommendations based on your friends' tastes in cheese. Yes, you should get a little more upscale than Cheddar and American cheese, but you may be able to find a fancier-sounding variety that is pretty close in taste.

## THE WINE

The following wine and cheese pairings are recommended by [foodandwinepairing.org](http://foodandwinepairing.org), which features an interactive pairing guide to help you in your party selections.

- **Merlot:** Mild cow and goat cheese
- **Port:** Blue Cheese
- **Amarone:** Parmigiano Reggiano
- **Cabernet:** Colby and



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Gouda

- **Chianti:** Mozzarella and parmesan
- **Gewurztraminer:** Swiss and chevre

## THE PARTY

From the invitations to the decorations, your party is

limited only by your imagination. Choose a theme and incorporate it across all of your party materials, including plates, napkins, table-setters and even table centerpieces. Depending on what time of year your party will take place, use natural decorations such as tree

branches, leaves or flowers. This combination of natural elements, wine and cheese will emit a classic elegance for your party.

## THE GUESTS

You can ask your guests to show up in business casual or

even suit-and dress attire, depending upon the formality of your party. Make sure to notify your guests ahead of time, because a get-together that is too formal may not be everyone's ideal event. Include the desired dress code on your invitations so everyone is on the same page.



# Wine at Weddings

**B**eer and champagne, sure. But are you looking to really set your wedding apart? If you're a wine lover – and know plenty in your wedding crowd who are, too – why not add a few wines to your menu?

There are plenty of options to consider when putting together a wine list and devising the perfect pairing with your wedding fare.

## HOW TO CHOOSE

Maybe you have a special connection with a specific wine. Did you and your future spouse meet over a Chardonnay or Merlot? Is your region well known for a certain type of varietal? If so, that is reason enough to include a wine option for you and your guests. Talk over your options with your wedding planners, who surely have some experience in building menus, drink lists and even wine-themed parties.

## MARRYING FOOD AND WINE

No matter what your guests will eat at your reception, you can find a general range of wines to please their palates and enhance their meals. Stick with a combination of popular whites, such as Chardonnay, and reds, such as a Cabernet Sauvignon. Pinot Noir and White Zinfandel are a couple of light-bodied wines that can be ideal for a party atmosphere.



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## THE TOAST

Champagne is the traditional option for toasting to the future, but remember, this is your special day. You can choose to have your guests raise glasses of sparkling wine or another wine

of your choice to celebrate your wedding. The choice of wine over champagne will be just one more reason your wedding will stand out as a memorable occasion to your guests.

## WEDDING FAVORS

Bolster the wine theme with similarly spirited wedding favors. From wine goblet place-card holders to complimentary (miniature) bottles of wine, your tables can be decorated in full-on wine

gear. And even before the wedding, your invitations can be designed with wine in mind. From wine bottles to stoppers, wine is synonymous with many visual cues that will make your wedding theme instantly recognizable.



# Coollest Wine Careers

**W**ine isn't all about relaxing. Millions of people make serious careers within the explosive wine industry, and job prospects only look to expand.

Wine sales continued to grow in 2012 and 2013, according to the Wine Market Council, an independent, nonprofit trade association. Wine is more popular than ever and will likely continue to provide stable, profitable career choices for workers young and old.

A recent search through the online job board, winejobs.com, found these dandies. Some of the positions required a college education; others requested only an energetic spirit and strong work ethic. Reach out to your local wineries, restaurants and distributors to find employment options near you.

## TASTING ROOM ASSOCIATE

**Key Skills:** Customer service, wine knowledge, interpersonal capabilities

The right candidates for positions such as this are articulate, knowledgeable and able to explain the complexities of many different wines in a fast-paced setting. They are also cordial and skilled in working with the public, as many tasting rooms are located within high-volume wineries, art galleries and on-site events.

## CELLAR MASTER

**Key Skills:** Team leadership, strategic forecasting, logistics oversight

This job just sounds important. Administrative in nature, a cellar master handles all operations, employee performance, documentation and strategic planning for busy winemaking operations. They are able to keep production on track, even in high-stress seasons, when demand can be overwhelming.

## ENOLOGIST

**Key Skills:** Research, data analysis, documentation control

If ever there was a behind-the-scenes winemaking job that garners limited attention, it is that of an enologist. Responsible for influencing the actual growing of the grapes, the enologist reviews wine analysis, tank inspection reports and fermentation activity. Most enology positions require a bachelor's degree in plant or food science.

## PEST CONTROL OPERATOR

**Key Skills:** Analytical approach, issue resolution, basic chemistry and science

Another science-related position, pest control operators are in high demand at wineries and anywhere grapes are grown. Nothing can ruin a harvest of perfect grapes like an insect infestation. A degree in horticulture, viticulture or a related field comes in handy for these positions.

## SALES MANAGER

**Key Skills:** Relationship building, business acumen, communications

Once healthy grapes make it through the growing season and are turned into wine, someone has to sell it! Sales jobs in the wine industry are trending, primarily because there is still so much room for revenue growth within the field. Customer tastes change often, and a capable salesperson is quick to realize and capitalize on these trends, making money for themselves and their wine distributor.





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# Wine: By the Numbers

It's no secret ... wine is on the rise. But numbers recently released by Gomberg, Fredrickson & Associates – a major wine industry consulting firm – convey just how popular wine has become around the world. Even more exciting, research suggests wine-industry growth won't down any time soon. Here is a peek at some of most recent numbers.

## **\$34.6 BILLION**

Wine sales in the United States increased 2 percent in 2012 from the previous year to a record 360.1 million 9-liter cases — an estimated retail value of \$34.6 billion.

## **207.7 MILLION CASES**

Of those 360.1 million cases, 207.7 million were sold in California – 58 percent of U.S. wine sales.

## **19 YEARS**

These numbers are not surprising. The United States is the largest wine market in the world, with 19 consecutive years of volume growth, according to the Wine Institute.

## **50% GROWTH**

Wine shipments to the United States market have climbed by nearly 50 percent since 2001. The Wine Institute expects consumption to continue to expand over the next decade.

## **21% SHARE**

In 2012, Chardonnay remained the most popular varietal, with a 21 percent share of volume, followed by Cabernet Sauvignon at 12 percent.

## **175,000 OUTLETS**

Wine-selling locations expanded by more than 50,000 in the past five years, according to Nielsen. There are now 175,000 retail outlets across the nation.