

From James the Sommelier - The Wine Glass

'Wine honors the soul, so honor it with yours'

Think of social interactions where etiquette plays a part. Diner jacket dos, weddings, graduation ceremonies, polo and cricket are built around strict rules defining social boundaries. Now think of the attire. The penguin suit, wedding gown, mortarboard, polo helmet and cricket whites define their respective events without description, without words. The same is true for the underestimated wine glass. Wine 'wears' a wine glass. Wine dons a wine glass in order to emphasize its presence and its individuality. It also makes it look rather dashing.



But, like special attire the world over there is reason behind the wine glass. As the two-tone penguin suit encapsulates neutrality, the white wedding gown virginity, the polo helmet safety and cricket whites coolness the wine glass also has its own reason, purpose, and function. Imagine, if you will, the general shape of a wine glass. The bowl is distinctly tulip shaped, and for good reason. The narrower top funnels aromas to your nose. The area of widest girth allows the wine to interact with as much air as possible therefore making it easier to develop smell and taste.

The stem also plays its own role. It provides an area to hold the glass other than the bowl itself. The reason for this, however, is undecided. Either, it prevents the wine from warming due to the warmth from your hand or it prevents the bowl from being smudged by greasy fingertips. I suppose you could include both, actually, as the first explanation is particularly true with white wine and as for the second... well put it this way, you wouldn't be present at a ball in a dirty tuxedo now, would you?

I would be doing an injustice to wine's aristocratic cousin, Champagne or sparkling wine, if I did not mention the flute. Like the wine glass, a champagne flute also has its own function. Its tulip shape serves the same purpose as for wine of concentrating aromas to the nose but its elongated shape helps the liquid stay chilled and aids in the development of bubbles. Can you imagine drinking champagne without bubbles!? Well... it would just be wine, wouldn't it?

However, despite the wine glasses functional ability some wines do remain hard to break and tame. Luckily, flashy help is at hand in the form of the decanter. Views range from it being pretentious to necessary but there is no doubt that it propels a closed wine from average to great by giving it the maximum opportunity to breath before being drunk. No doubt about it either, it looks cool.

TIPS: Drink wine out of crystal or good quality glass. The size of the lip around the rim of the glass gives a good indication to its quality. The smaller the better.