

Newsletter Blog

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

Wine's Subjectivity

Wine has always separated itself from other beverages by the apparent snootiness of its drinkers. But that snootiness is nothing of the sort - it is just the inherent capability of people to determine what they like and what they don't like.

So, it's not quite the same as deciding if you prefer sweet or savory, whether you like chocolate or whether your preference is a stout or a larger beer. It tends to be much harder. For those who drink wine as a necessity rather than a preference, getting to grips with your preferred grape, region, producer and all of those coupled with differing vintages is near impossible... not worth the effort... it's snooty. Even for those people who would prefer to drink wine than anything else, these distinctions still cause doubt, confusion and intrigue. It is difficult.

But wine *is* incredibly subjective. Like art (a cliché comparison, I know, but the similarities are startling), different wines stir things in different people. With wine, some find the most difficult thing to determine is WHY one likes a particular taste even if others don't. The answer; its subjective.

And the reason for that subjectivity, according to new research, is very interesting. The first point is that your first receptor influencing the judgment of a wine is the robe or appearance of it - proven by 54 wine experts tasting two whites at the University of Bordeaux, one of which was laced with red colouring and subsequently described as 'jammy.' But, the immediate, true perception is on the nose. Chemical compounds in wine (of which there can be up to 400) determine the perceived flavours exuded from different bottles; such as the grassiness of Sauvignon Blanc being caused by methoxypyrazines or the flowery aroma of Muscat and gewürztraminer produced by a class of alcohol compound called monoterpenes. These include linalool – a substance also used in perfumes and insecticide – and geraniol, a pale yellow liquid that doubles up as an effective mosquito repellent and gives geranium its distinctive smell.

All complicated stuff, but important in understanding the preferences people have for different styles of wine. The link below goes into the science of it in more depth but it is safe to say that those subtleties in wine are not just erroneous interpretations by the eccentric and flamboyant. These are true visual, olfactory and gustatory perceptions which convince the brain into giving a wine the thumbs up or the chop.

Go to this link to find a more in-depth analysis of wine's subjectivity:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2013/jun/23/wine-tasting-junk-science-analysis>

For more information about wine join our wine classes at That Little Wine Bar, 54 Chow Thye Road,
George Town, Penang

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