

## 1

## VIEWING



Fill a quarter of the glass with wine and take your time for a visual evaluation allowing it to "breathe" before starting to drink. Tilting the glass can make it easier to see the way the color changes from the center to the edges. Hold the glass in front of a white background, such as a napkin.

You can tell a lot about wines by **LOOKING AT THE COLOR**. Older red wines have more brown and orange hues compared to younger reds. Older whites are generally darker and more golden compared with younger whites. **LOOK FOR THE CLARITY OF THE WINE**. Heavy wines will be deeper in color and sweeter wines, are denser, and will leave thick, viscous streaks (called legs or tears) down the inside of the glass when swirled. The wine should not be murky or cloudy in color, as it might indicate chemical or fermentation problems.



## SMELLING

## 2

Lightly twirl the stem of the glass keeping the bottom of the glass on the table and **SWIRL THE WINE** in your glass. This will spread the wine into the glass to help its aromas open up.

Viscosity is how quickly the wine slides back down the glass. More viscous wines are said to have "legs," and are likely to be more alcoholic or contain more glycerol. More "legs" may indicate a full-bodied wine.

Now **SMELL THE WINE**. Initially, you should hold the glass a few inches from your nose. Then let your nose dive 1/2 inch or so into the glass. What do you smell?

**USUAL SCENTS** include:

- **FRUITS:** berries, cherries, and richer fruits for reds and citrus for whites.
- **FLORAL AND HERBS** scents in whites and lighter reds, like Rhône region reds.
- **EARTHY** scents, like soils, minerals, or rocks, are possible in nicer whites.
- **SPICES** and unique smells like vanilla, toast, pepper, chocolate, and coffee come from the wooden barrels used to age the wine, usually oak.

## 3

## TASTING



**SIP YOUR GLASS OF WINE.** Roll the wine around in your mouth, exposing it to all of your taste buds. Pay attention to the texture and other tactile sensations such as the sense of weight or body. Is there any one taste that overpowers the rest? Can you detect the same flavors you smelled now that you are tasting the wine? Great wines are balanced so that they don't attack your taste buds.

**LOOK FOR BALANCE IN A GOOD WINE.** Find the **residual sugar**, that causes a hot sensation on the tip of your tongue, as well as the **astringency**, that is, the drying, roughing and sometimes puckering sensation that is experienced after tasting most red wines. Tannin in red wines can cause astringency. **Alcohol** can be detected on the middle of your tongue while **acidity** can be felt on the sides of your mouth; imagine yourself tasting lemonade and pay attention to how your mouth puckers just from thinking about it. Sweetness decreases the sensation of acidity.

**NOTE THE AFTERTASTE.** How long does the finish last? A good, 60 second or longer flavor in the aftertaste is a good sign of quality. At times, you will pick up things in the finish that was not detectable in the initial taste.