



Rick's Grape Skinny



June 2015

"My lips drink water...but my heart drinks wine!"

(A Corruption of an E. E. Cummings quip)

Wine Terms for the Curious!

I could have titled this piece, Wine Terms for Dummies...and I almost did...but I remembered a seminar in diplomacy I once attended eons ago...so I wimped out! Besides, the mere thought of offending any of you made me timbers shiver. Honest! Truly I say! I swear!

The truth is...all of you very likely know a lot more about wine than you might be willing to verbalize – so none of you is a wine dummy! But...because the wondrous world of wine is full of...even fraught with...so many unusual, even unique, terms and expressions etc., every enthusiast – even the most seasoned ones – remain in a constant state of curiosity. Hence, you're not dumb...you're just curious! That's my story and I'm stickin' to it!

Now Test your EKnow!

Take a look at the following 20 wine-related terms and see how many you know. Each term is worth 5 points...so a perfect score is 100. And for the terms you don't know, go ahead and hazard a guess. You might surprised yourself!

*Excelsior – Côte – Ullage – Fining
Chaptalization – Sec – Punt – Stickie
Pétillant – Bunghole – Fiasco -- Cépage
Jeroboam -- Drip Dickey -- Riddling – Meritage
Oenophile -- Lazy Ballerina – Plonk -- Oloroso*

Excelsior – Shaved ribbons and shreds of "Aspen" wood used to create protective nests in packaging wine.

Côte – (koat) – It means slope or hillside – not "coast!"

Ullage – (yew- lij) -- It's the small space between the top of the wine and the bottom of the cork...i.e. the missing wine!

Fining – A process to remove solids in wine to make it clear. Agents include dried blood, clay and egg whites.

Chaptalization – A typically frowned-upon practice of adding sugar to wine to increase the alcohol content.

Sec – A French term for dry -- as opposed to sweet.

Punt – Simply stated -- it's the indented part of the bottom of a wine bottle. Why is it there? The Shadow knows!

Stickie – An broad generic term referring to sweet dessert style wines – coined by those sticky-fingered Aussies.

Pétillant -- (pay-tee-yahn) -- A French term that refers to wine with a barely discernible degree of effervescence.

Bunghole -- The hole in a wine barrel that is used to fill or empty the barrel. It's plugged with a wooden "bung."

Fiasco – The classic straw-encased Chianti bottle.

Cépage – French word for grape variety/varietal.

Jeroboam – An oversized bottle holding 4.5 liters in Bordeaux – or 3 liters in Champagne. Go figger!

Drip Dickey – A cover that's draped around the neck of a wine bottle to catch dripping wine and prevent spillage.

Riddling – In making Champagne, it's a procedure of tilting, shaking and turning a bottle to dislodge sediment.

Meritage – Pronounced like "heritage!!!" It's a US term indicating a red or white Bordeaux style wine...aka Claret.

Oenophile – A wine enthusiast, aficionado or connoisseur.

Lazy Ballerina – A trellis on which grape vines are grown.

Plonk – Originated by the Brits, it's a term to indicate a bad or poor quality wine.

Oloroso – A special dark, rich and nutty style of Sherry.

So how'd you do!?

95 to 100 = Sommelier Smart

85 to 90 = Wineau Wise

75 to 80 = Bordeaux Bright

65 to 70 = Constantly Curious (That would be me!)



Toast of the Month



“Here’s to a toast I used to know, but now I cannot think it. So, let’s fill our glass with anything and just proceed to drink it!” (Anonymous)

Don’t Forget Flag Day!

June 14th



Super Summer Sippers!

White

Pinot Gris (aka *Pinot Grigio*)

King Estate *Domaine* 2013 Crisp & Fruity!
(Willamette Valley AVA - Eugene, OR)/\$16-\$22

This off-dry gem is one of those yummy wines that just makes you say WOW from first to final sip. While this is the same grape as the better known Italian *Pinot Grigio*, that’s where the similarity ends. The unique Willamette Valley terroir provides the ideal environment to grow perfect fruit and produce richly flavored luscious wines. With perfectly ripened grapes from King’s own Organic Estate Vineyards, the fruit for this vintage was whole-cluster-pressed and allowed to ferment for nearly 7 months in 100% Stainless Steel to ensure optimum extraction and expression of flavor. For my palate, this delightfully rich *Pinot Gris* is twice the wine of the typical *Pinot Grigio*! Ed King is the founder and Chairman Emeritus of King Estate Winery but these days, his son and co-founder, Ed King III, holds the reins. Chief Winemaker, Kevin Sommelet, and company have become one of the Pacific Northwest’s most respected and acclaimed winemaking teams. <http://www.kingestate.com/>

Reds

Pinot Noir

Acacia *Carneros* 2012 Rich & Fruit-forward!
(Carneros Appellation – Napa, CA)/\$16-\$22

This wonderfully luscious wine from the “heartbreak grape” (so-called because it’s so tough to grow) is in a class with considerably more expensive *Pinot Noirs*...and it’s as elegant and as

supple as they come. Winemaker, Matthew Glynn, crafted this beautifully structured wine from 100% *Pinot Noir* grapes – 90% of which were taken from vineyards in the Acacia Estate and the balance from nearby, highly-controlled vines. Aged in a combination of 70% French and Hungarian oak (30% new) for only 7 months – this is a marvelous example of perfecting a wine from the fickle and very hard-to-tame *Pinot Noir* grape.

<http://www.acaciavineyard.com>

Red Blend

Terrabianca *Campaccio* 2010

Rich, Smooth, Supple, & Complex!

(Toscano – Italy)/\$25-\$30 – From the heart of the Chianti Classico Region, this “**Super Tuscan**” – the mastermind of Roberto Guldener and his enologist, Vittorio Fiore -- is comprised of 70% *Sangiovese* and 30% *Cabernet Sauvignon* and is most representative of the Estate. It’s aged for 12 months in oak barriques of varying provenance...then for another 6 months in the bottle before being released. This is a well structured and very robust wine with great complexity. Although it’s very enjoyable right now because of its modest tannins, it will nonetheless age well and only get better with time. To be fully enjoyed and appreciated, uncork and set aside for a minimum of 2 hours. This is a very special wine...and you will undoubtedly remember it!

<http://www.terrabianca.com/>

Garnacha (AKA *Tinto Fina* and *Grenache*)

Bodegas Borsao *Viña Borgia* 2013

Fruit-forward, Silky Smooth & Luscious

(Campo De Borja, Spain)/\$7-\$10 – The *Grenache* grape is typically associated with the Rhone Region of France...where it’s also known locally as the *Alicante* or *Carignane Rouse*...and it’s actually the most widely planted grape in the world! Also, it’s essentially the “backbone” or base red varietal for the famous and widely acclaimed blends of *Châteauneuf du Pape*, *Cotes du Rhone* and *Gigondas*. Despite its apparent French pedigree, *Grenache* is actually native to Spain where about three times more *Grenache* is grown. In Spain however, it’s known as the *Garnacha* or *Tinto Fina*...and it’s the most prevalent red varietal in both the Rioja and Catalonia Regions of Spain. For under \$10, and for a varietal that is almost always seen as a blending grape, consider making this little beauty your steal of the Summer!

www.bodegasborsao.com