

Session 1: Sleuthing White Wines

- I. Vineyard Tour—Bud Break 2021
- II. Tasting of Chardonnay 2018 & Riesling Doyle Fournier 2021
 - A. Fermentation
 - B. Elevage (aging in the wine cellar)
 - C. Bottle Aging
 - D. Acidity
 - E. Alcohol
 - F. Residual Sugar
- III. Question & Answer



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Hand-harvested Estate Chardonnay, known for producing wines with citrus and tree fruit aromas, moderate acidity and alcohol, and medium body.

GRAPES CONTRIBUTE VARIETAL CHARACTER

SILVER THREAD 
Wine Sleuth



Hand-harvested Riesling from Doyle Fournier Vineyard, known for producing wines with tree and stone fruit aromas, high acidity, low to moderate alcohol and light to medium body.

FERMENTATION & AGING AROMAS

Primary Aromas	Secondary Aromas	Tertiary Aromas
Youthful, from the grape and primary fermentation	From secondary fermentation and aging in the winery (yeast lees, malolactic fermentation or oak)	A.K.A. “bouquet” or “development”, from bottle age
Tree fruit: apples, pears, quince Citrus fruit Stone fruit Flowers Herbs Vegetal (rhubarb, grass)	Biscuit Yeast Cream Butter Vanilla Coconut Smoke Cedar	Dried fruit Marmalade Nuts Nutmeg, ginger Petrol Earth Mushroom Tea Hay

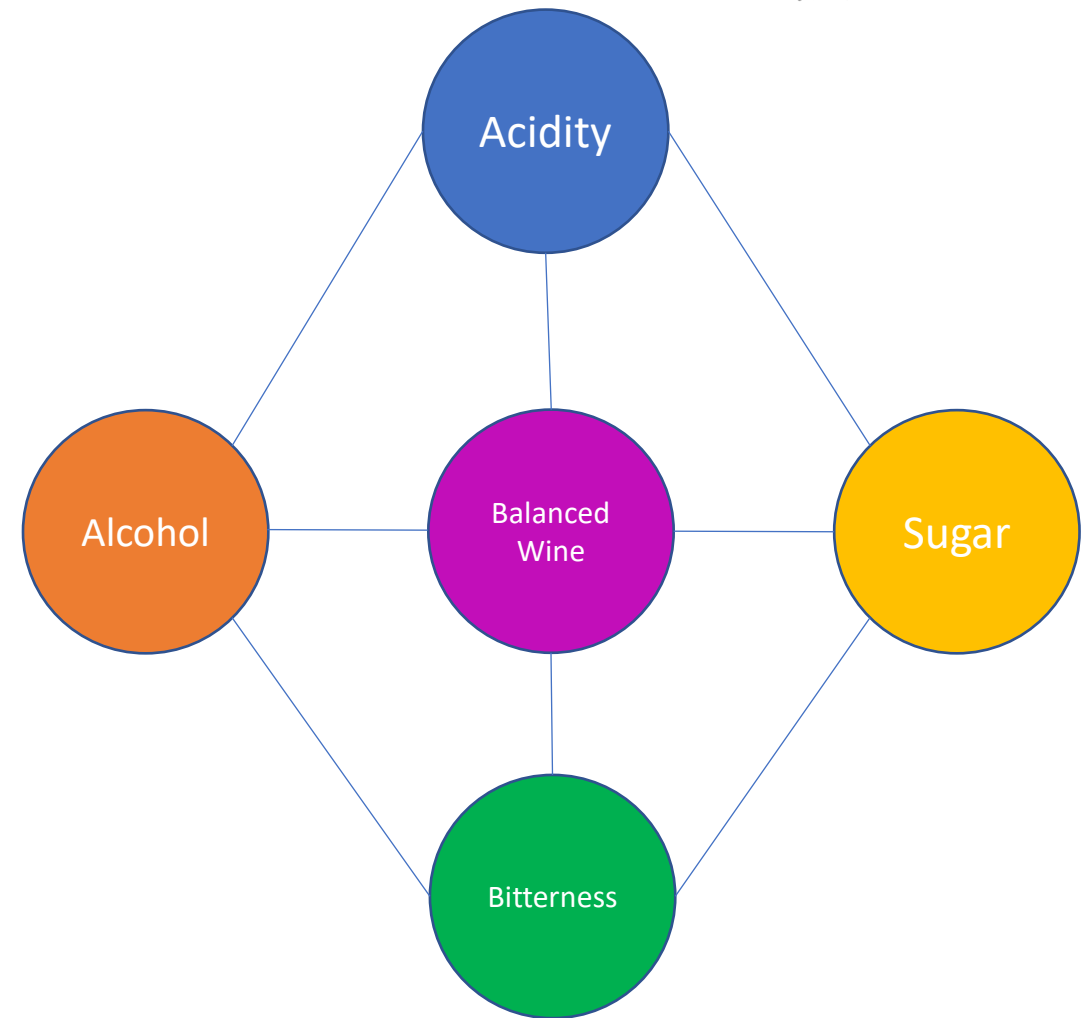
COMPONENTS OF WINE STRUCTURE

Acidity/pH	Phenolics/ Bitterness	Alcohol	Residual Sugar (RS)
<p>Fresh, tart or sour taste produced by natural organic acids</p> <p>Perceived by a prickling sensation on the sides of the tongue</p>	<p>Chemical compounds found in stems, seeds, skins and pulp of grapes, including tannins and many flavor compounds</p> <p>Perceived as tasting astringent or bitter, usually as an aftertaste that builds on the palate</p>	<p>Ethanol produced by fermentation, ranges from about 9-16% in table wines</p> <p>Perceived by exhaling through the nose with your mouth open. Low alcohol wines will taste “juicy.”</p>	<p>The total quantity of sugars remaining unfermented in a finished wine</p> <p>Perceived immediately when the wine touches your palate.</p>
<p>Helps wine age, preserves color</p> <p>Excessive acidity from less-than-ripe grapes or acidification makes wines sharp or unpleasant to drink</p> <p>Too little acidity from picking too late or too much heat makes wines that are flat and “flabby”</p>	<p>Contribute texture and flavor to a wine</p> <p>Less common in white wines, but an important component in wines like Gewurztraminer that are made using skin contact</p>	<p>Higher levels result in more body and weight; lower levels in more delicacy</p> <p>At high levels, the wine may taste “hot” or noticeably alcoholic</p>	<p>Wines without RS are described as “dry.”</p> <p>Wines with RS may taste dry due to high acidity or the presence of phenolic bitterness.</p>

Balance

Alcoholic strength, acidity, residual sugar, tannins and fruit complement each other so that no single one of them is obtrusive on the palate.

This extremely important wine characteristic is quite unrelated to flavor.



Definitions: *Oxford Companion to Wine third ed.; Robinson J.; 2006*

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Glossary of Terms: *Oxford Companion to Wine third ed.; Robinson J.; 2006*

Fermentation Vessel—the container in which alcoholic fermentation takes place, it can vary enormously in size, material and design from an oak barrel to a vast stainless steel tower. **Stainless steel** has the advantage that both cleaning and temperature control are much easier.

Wooden vessels are harder to keep clean, but are traditional and offer natural stabilization/clarification, and maintain a higher fermentation temperature.

Fermentation Temperature—is of critical importance in making good quality wine. Cool fermentations take place more slowly and desirable flavor compounds are retained.

Aroma—volatile compounds which are sensed by the nose, usually referring to a simple smell such as that of a grape or young wine, or those arising from fermentation

Bouquet—complex aromatic compounds which result from extended bottle age, sometimes called tertiary aromas

Elevage—a French term with no direct English equivalent, roughly means “rearing.” Elevage refers to the series of cellar operations that take place between fermentation and bottling.

Lees—dregs or sediment that settle at the bottom of a fermentation vessel, made up of dead yeast cells and other insoluble solids.

Lees Contact/Lees Stirring—popular winemaking practice of leaving newly fermented wine in contact with the fine lees, usually in a small oak barrel and for one year or less. Lees and wine may be mixed or stirred occasionally with a stick. Both techniques improve the mouthfeel and complexity of the wine.

Malolactic Fermentation—a conversion (not literally a fermentation) of malic acid into lactic acid, usually occurring after alcoholic fermentation. Sometimes called secondary fermentation, it is desirable in wines with excessive acidity, or when flavor and complexity are desired, and is known for producing buttery-smelling diacetyl.