

WSET Level 3 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®

APPEARANCE

Clarity	clear – hazy (faulty?)
Intensity	pale – medium – deep
Colour	<i>white</i> lemon-green – lemon – gold – amber – brown <i>rosé</i> pink – salmon – orange <i>red</i> purple – ruby – garnet – tawny – brown
Other observations	e.g. legs/tears, deposit, pétillance, bubbles

NOSE

Condition	clean – unclean (faulty?)
Intensity	light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced
Aroma characteristics	e.g. primary, secondary, tertiary
Development	youthful – developing – fully developed – tired/past its best

PALATE

Sweetness	dry – off-dry – medium-dry – medium-sweet – sweet – luscious
Acidity	low – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – high
Tannin	low – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – high
Alcohol	low – medium – high fortified wines: low – medium – high
Body	light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – full
Mousse	delicate – creamy – aggressive
Flavour intensity	light – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – pronounced
Flavour characteristics	e.g. primary, secondary, tertiary
Finish	short – medium(-) – medium – medium(+) – long

CONCLUSIONS

ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY

Quality level	faulty – poor – acceptable – good – very good – outstanding			
Level of readiness for drinking/potential for ageing	too young	– can drink now, but has potential for ageing	– drink now: not suitable for ageing or further ageing	– too old

Notes to students:

For lines where the entries are separated by a hyphen – You must select one and only one of these options.

For lines starting with 'e.g.' where the entries are separated with commas – These are entries that you should consider when writing your tasting note. You may not need to comment on each entry for every wine.



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WSET Level 3 Wine-Lexicon: *supporting the WSET Level 3 Systematic Approach to Tasting Wine®*

DESCRIBING AROMA AND FLAVOUR

Think in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary

Primary Aromas and Flavours

The aromas and flavours of the grape and alcoholic fermentation

Key questions	Clusters	Descriptors
Are the flavours delicate or intense? simple or complex? generic or well-defined? fresh or cooked? under-ripe or ripe or over-ripe?	Floral	acacia, honeysuckle, chamomile, elderflower, geranium, blossom, rose, violet
	Green fruit	apple, gooseberry, pear, pear drop, quince, grape
	Citrus fruit	grapefruit, lemon, lime (juice or zest?), orange peel, lemon peel
	Stone fruit	peach, apricot, nectarine
	Tropical fruit	banana, lychee, mango, melon, passion fruit, pineapple
	Red fruit	redcurrant, cranberry, raspberry, strawberry, red cherry, red plum
	Black fruit	blackcurrant, blackberry, bramble, blueberry, black cherry, black plum
	Dried/cooked fruit	fig, prune, raisin, sultana, kirsch, jamminess, baked/stewed fruits, preserved fruits
	Herbaceous	green bell pepper (capsicum), grass, tomato leaf, asparagus, blackcurrant leaf
	Herbal	eucalyptus, mint, medicinal, lavender, fennel, dill
	Pungent spice	black/white pepper, liquorice
	Other	flint, wet stones, wet wool

Secondary Aromas and Flavours

The aromas and flavours of post-fermentation winemaking

Key questions	Clusters	Descriptors
Are the flavours from yeast, malolactic conversion or oak?	Yeast (<i>lees, autolysis</i>)	biscuit, bread, toast, pastry, brioche, bread dough, cheese
	Malolactic conversion	butter, cheese, cream
	Oak	vanilla, cloves, nutmeg, coconut, butterscotch, toast, cedar, charred wood, smoke, chocolate, coffee, resinous

Tertiary Aromas and Flavours

The aromas and flavours of maturation

Key questions	Clusters	Descriptors
Do the flavours show deliberate oxidation, fruit development or bottle age?	Deliberate oxidation	almond, marzipan, hazelnut, walnut, chocolate, coffee, toffee, caramel
	Fruit development (white)	dried apricot, marmalade, dried apple, dried banana, etc.
	Fruit development (red)	fig, prune, tar, dried blackberry, dried cranberry, etc. cooked blackberry, cooked red plum, etc.
	Bottle age (white)	petrol, kerosene, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, toast, nutty, mushroom, hay, honey
	Bottle age (red)	leather, forest floor, earth, mushroom, game, tobacco, vegetal, wet leaves, savoury, meaty, farmyard

Note to students: The WSET Level 3 Wine-Lexicon is designed to be a prompt and a guide which you do not need to memorise. You can pass the tasting examination with distinction if you use the descriptors in the Wine-Lexicon but you do not need to limit yourself to these terms and the examiners will accept other descriptors so long as they are accurate.