

JULIEN MOREAU

The Art of Wine

A practical companion

CHOOSE · TASTE · SERVE · ENJOY



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Twenty chapters for choosing with confidence, tasting with attention, serving with care, and making wine a more enjoyable part of the table.

An illustrated guide for curious adults, from the first useful vocabulary to the next unfamiliar bottle.

The best bottle is one you understand well enough to enjoy on purpose.

About this edition

First edition · 2026. Published by BRAINEZ MEDIA LLC. An illustrated educational guide to choosing, tasting, serving, and enjoying wine.

All images in this e-book, including the cover, portraits, and illustrations, are AI-generated. They are illustrative scenes, not documentary photographs. For opening bottles and serving wine, follow the written guidance and work at a comfortable pace.

Flavor descriptions are typical possibilities, not guarantees for every bottle. Pairing exercises are proposals for personal comparison, not claims of laboratory or kitchen testing. Regional and labeling rules can change; consult the producer and relevant authority for a particular wine.

For adults of legal drinking age. Tasting does not require swallowing or finishing a sample. This book does not recommend alcohol for health or provide a safe drinking allowance. Do not drink and drive. People who should avoid alcohol can use aroma exercises, reading, and nonalcoholic comparisons.

Measurements use Celsius and Fahrenheit where useful. Bottle-volume arithmetic describes quantities, not recommended consumption. Sources and further reading appear at the back.

A place at the table



Julien Moreau is introduced here as a 34-year-old French sommelier from Beaune, raised among vineyards and winemaking traditions. His role in this book is an approachable guide to the details that make choosing and enjoying wine easier.

The book begins with the glass in your hand, then travels outward: into the vineyard, the cellar, the shop, the regions, and finally the dinner table. You can follow that route or enter at the question you need to answer today.

You will not be asked to collect impressive words. You will be asked to notice, compare, and make decisions. The reward is a clearer idea of what you enjoy and how to find it again.

Julien Moreau is a fictional guide, not a real sommelier. This e-book was created with AI assistance.

How to use this book

Read for a decision. Each lesson addresses one useful question. Short explanations are followed by an example, a comparison, or a practical action. Use the action when it suits you; there is no requirement to open a bottle for every page.

Compare small amounts. Similar glasses and controlled conditions make differences easier to see. Change one variable at a time when possible. Smelling, spitting, and declining a sample are all valid parts of learning.

Keep your own evidence. A label photograph plus a sentence about the experience is more useful than a score without context. The final chapter includes worksheets for preference, bottles, tastings, pairings, and storage.

Use the routes. For a bottle tonight, start with chapters 4-6. For dinner, turn to chapters 16-17. For unfamiliar labels, use chapters 7-15. For a possible problem, consult chapter 18.

Find it again. Contents entries jump to chapter openings in the full PDF. The index gives physical PDF page numbers. The final reference pages collect serving temperatures, storage decisions, pairing principles, and a glossary for quick consultation.

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Wine without the performance



Wine becomes easier when you stop treating a glass as a test. You do not need to identify a vineyard, name five aromas, or agree with the most confident person at the table. You need to notice what is in front of you and decide whether it fits the moment. That is a useful skill, and it grows through attention rather than performance.

Begin with three questions: Does this feel light or weighty? Does it refresh my mouth or dry it? Would I enjoy it with the food in front of me? These observations already tell a merchant more than a borrowed phrase such as "a very sophisticated wine." A plain description that you understand is more valuable than an impressive one that you cannot use again.

First move: With your next glass, write one thing you like and one thing you would change. Keep both statements concrete: "I like the freshness; I would prefer less drying grip."

Begin with the occasion



A wine is easier to choose when its job is clear. The same bottle can feel generous with a long winter dinner and cumbersome at a sunny afternoon picnic. Before thinking about grapes, picture the setting: the food, the temperature, the number of people, and whether wine is the focus or simply part of the meal.

For a quiet weeknight, familiarity and convenience may matter most. For a tasting, contrast matters more than prestige. For a mixed group, two different styles can be more useful than one expensive bottle chosen to impress everyone. This does not reduce wine to a formula. It gives your curiosity a direction and stops the shelf from making the decision for you.

A working brief: "A fresh, dry white for roast chicken, to open tonight, within my budget" is enough to start an excellent conversation. Add a disliked feature, such as heavy oak, if it matters.

The six useful styles



An everyday wine map needs fewer categories than a wine shop. Start with sparkling wine, fresh light whites, fuller whites, rosé, lighter reds, and fuller reds. Sweet and fortified wines deserve their own later exploration. These are practical families, not official classifications; a bottle may sit between two of them.

The point is to predict an experience. A fresh white suggests lift and a lighter feel. A fuller red suggests more weight and often more drying texture. Neither is inherently better. Once you can place a bottle roughly on this map, grape and place names become ways to refine the choice instead of facts to memorize in isolation.

Build the map: Use a bottle you already know as an anchor in each family you have tried. Leave the unfamiliar spaces empty. A map with honest gaps is more useful than one filled with assumptions.

Dry is not the opposite of fruity



"Dry" describes the impression of little or no sweetness. "Fruity" describes aromas and flavors that remind you of fruit. A wine can smell strongly of ripe peach and still taste dry. Confusing the two can send a shopping conversation in exactly the wrong direction.

Imagine smelling a peach without eating it. The aroma suggests sweetness, but you have not tasted sugar. Wine can create a similar expectation. When you take a small sip, ask whether sweetness remains on the tongue, rather than whether the aroma was ripe or fragrant. Acidity, temperature, and alcohol can complicate the impression, so treat your first answer as a working observation.

At the shop: If you want fruit without noticeable sugar, ask for "dry, with expressive fruit." If you dislike sharpness, say that separately; asking for a sweeter wine may solve a different problem than the one you have.

Acidity is freshness



Acidity gives wine a sour, mouthwatering quality. It is one reason a sip can feel refreshing beside a rich dish. Think about the difference between ripe pear and lemon: both are fruit, but they stimulate the mouth differently. In wine, the useful question is how acidity sits within the whole, not how much sharpness you can tolerate.

A lively white may seem severe by itself yet feel beautifully proportioned with dinner. A softer wine may be comfortable alone but lose definition beside a creamy sauce. These are observations about context, not proof that one wine is superior. If you describe every refreshing wine as "dry," you miss the feature that helped you enjoy it.

Notice the response: After a small sip, pause. Does your mouth water? Compare this sensation with the drying grip discussed on the next page. They can occur together, but they are not the same sensation.

Tannin is texture



Tannin is easier to understand through texture than through a dictionary. It creates a drying, sometimes gripping sensation on the gums and inside the cheeks. Strong plain tea offers a familiar comparison. Red wines commonly show more of this sensation because their making involves contact with grape skins and seeds; some white wines made with skin contact can show it too.

Tannin is not simply a defect to eliminate. It can give a wine shape, especially beside food. But abundant tannin without enough fruit or other balancing qualities may feel hard to you. "I prefer less grip" is a useful preference. "All tannic wine is bad" closes a door before you have explored what a meal or a different style can change.

Separate the terms: Sourness encourages saliva. Tannin can leave a dry, grippy feeling. Bitterness is a taste. A single sip may involve all three, so describe them separately.

Body is weight



Body is the overall impression of weight in the mouth. A light-bodied wine feels relatively delicate; a full-bodied wine feels broader or richer. Color is an unreliable shortcut. A pale red can have substantial structure, while a dark wine may feel softer and less weighty than expected.

Alcohol, sugar, extraction, and texture all contribute to the impression. You do not need to identify their individual shares to use the idea. The important decision is whether the wine's weight suits the meal and your mood. Delicate fish can disappear beside a very powerful wine, just as a light wine can become anonymous next to an intensely flavored sauce.

Make it practical: Describe body with three words only: light, medium, or full. Then add whether that weight felt welcome. "Full and comforting" is a different buying brief from "full and tiring."

Alcohol changes the balance



Alcohol contributes warmth and can add to a wine's sense of body. A wine with a high stated alcohol level is not automatically unbalanced, and a lower-alcohol wine is not automatically delicate. Judge how the warmth fits the fruit, freshness, sweetness, and texture in the glass.

The number on the label still matters for another reason: the same volume of stronger wine contains more alcohol. In the United States, the reference standard drink contains about 14 grams of pure alcohol, roughly the amount in 5 US fluid ounces of 12% wine. This is a measurement, not a recommended allowance or a guarantee of safety. An oversized glass can conceal a substantial pour.

At the table: Use modest pours and make water easy to reach. You can study aroma, take tiny samples, spit, or choose not to drink; learning does not require finishing the glass.

Sweetness has a place



Sweetness can be a deliberate part of a wine's balance. In a good sweet wine, freshness may keep the richness lively; aroma and texture give the sweetness something to do. Dismissing the category as beginner wine misses some of wine's most interesting styles.

The useful distinction is between sweetness you enjoy and sweetness that overwhelms the occasion. A small pour of a concentrated dessert wine may feel complete with a simple fruit tart, while the same wine in a large dinner glass would be excessive. Conversely, a gently off-dry wine can be useful at the dinner table. The label and the producer's description help, but the actual sensation in your mouth is the final reference.

Try the question differently: Instead of "Do I like sweet wine?" ask, "How sweet, with how much freshness, and alongside what?" That creates several possibilities where a yes-or-no answer creates only two.

Aroma is a memory



Wine aromas are comparisons to things you know. When someone says "pear," they are describing a resemblance, not claiming that pears were added. Your own memory bank will differ from another person's, so the same wine may evoke different examples without either person being dishonest.

Start broad. Is the impression fruity, floral, herbal, spicy, earthy, or something else? Then become more specific only if the association is clear. "Fresh citrus" is a useful observation even when you cannot decide between lemon and grapefruit. The goal is to make a note that helps you recognize the wine later, not to fill a page with every aroma you have ever heard named.

Build memory: Smell ordinary ingredients while cooking. Compare lemon zest with lemon juice, fresh apple with baked apple, and fresh herbs with dried herbs. These inexpensive references make later wine descriptions more precise.

What balance feels like



Balance is a relationship, not the absence of strong character. A wine can be vividly acidic, richly sweet, or firmly tannic and still feel coherent. The question is whether one feature overwhelms the others in a way that makes the wine less satisfying for its purpose.

Consider a young red whose drying texture arrives before you can notice much fruit. With a suitable meal, that firmness may become welcome. If the wine still feels stripped and harsh, it may simply not suit you at this stage. Avoid declaring that time will fix it; aging is not a universal repair service. Balance is something to assess now, with a clear account of the conditions.

A useful sentence: "The acidity is high, but there is enough fruit to make it feel lively" says more than "balanced." Name the competing features and explain why they work, or why they do not.

Quality and preference



Preference asks whether you enjoy a wine. Quality asks how successfully it expresses its style: whether it is coherent, clear, and satisfying, with enough interest to reward attention. The two judgments overlap, but they are not identical. You can recognize careful work in a style you do not want to drink often.

This distinction makes you a more useful buyer and a kinder tasting companion. Someone who loves aromatic sweetness may reasonably choose a different wine from someone who wants a quiet, savory red. Neither needs to win. You also do not need to force yourself to enjoy a highly regarded bottle just because it has a reputation.

Record two conclusions: "Well made, but not my preferred style" and "simple, but exactly right for dinner" are both valid. Keeping quality and preference separate protects you from buying someone else's palate.