

Chapter 5

Grading Procedures

In the following chapter I will explain how to grade wines by using the 100 point system. In addition the 20 point grading scale will also briefly be addressed. As discussed in chapter 3, there is a norm of tasting and grading procedures accepted in the world today. These procedures are usually conducted in sequence, so you start with the wine's **Appearance**, move on to **Aroma**, **Taste** as well as **Current Condition and Storage Potential** and finally create a **Summary**.

Variables Affecting a Wine's Grade

The following variables should be considered when grading the wine:

1. **Grape varieties** are important for the wine's balance and storage potential.
2. **Climate conditions** affect the wine's balance and fruit quality.



Fig. 5.0. An advanced class at the Wine Academy.

3. **Growing conditions** affect its quality and grade as follows:

- **Soil** (mineral content, pH levels, etc.) affects the acidity and storage potential.

- **Water levels** in regard to irrigation, drainage and rain fall, prior to picking, affect the quality of the fruit by changing the acid/tannin balance of the grape.

- **Viticulture practices** in relation to pruning, use of pesticides and the timing of the harvest all directly relate to the fruit quality and balance. Fruit structure at picking is decisive for: pH, acidity, sugar and phenolic (grape skin) quality.

4. **Winery operations** and procedures directly influence the wine's quality. The grape's chemical balance directly affects the selection of the enzymes and yeast strains to be used, the length of the extraction period as well as fermentation temperatures.

5. The use of **oak barrels or steel tanks** during fermentation and the maturation stages of wine production affect the quality of the product and the potential storage time. Wines matured in oak and/or receiving some kind of oak treatment all benefit from tannin enhancement.

6. **Filtering techniques** are of vital importance to the quality of the wine. Exaggerated filtering reduces the amount of flavor compounds, thus weakening the character and balance of the wine. Some filtering is recommended, as it removes unwanted and unsettled elements prior to bottling. Lees, consisting of spent yeast and other small particles, such as grape skins, can be used during maturation.

7. **Adjustments** to the wine during fermentation and after directly affect the quality of the aroma, balance, and length of the wine. Additions of tannin, tartaric acid, aroma enhancers, micro-oxidation amongst others all play major roles in the character and quality.

8. **Varietal grading, selection and blending** affect the end product in regard to character, balance and storage potential.

Wine Type	
White Wines	
Red Wines	
Sweet Wines	
Fortified Wines	
Champagne / Sparkling	
Total Storage Points	
Unbalanced, Off:	
Extra Points	
Aroma:	Attraction, Soft, Supple,
Vintage:	
Wine:	
Vineyard:	
Additional Comments:	