

Chapter 8

Decanting and Aerating Wine

On a number of occasions I contemplated on whether or not to include this chapter in the first edition, and finally, I came to the conclusion that the understanding of serving wine is quite important, especially when it comes to decanting or aerating.

The wine's current condition is by far the most important factor to take into account when contemplating on whether or not to decant the wine. Certain features are vital to keep in mind, otherwise you could damage the wine.

How do you like your wine? This is obviously a very important question to answer. Do you like it young and fruity or mature and smooth? Would you like wine to be matched with a situation or with food? Have you been storing it in your own cellar or have you just purchased it? How old is the wine? What is the style and present condition of the wine? If you have the answers to these questions then you're on the way to resolving the long debated issue of decanting.

Some people are staunch believers that you should never decant a wine but drink it the way it is presented. In my opinion, however, the scent of a well-made wine at its top is worth its wine in gold. A wine, style or variety at its peak, where its acid, tannin, fruit, sweetness, and alcohol levels are in harmony with one another is very hard to beat. You may prefer a wine at its peak, but reality does not always match preferences.



Fig. 8.1. Perfect decanter shape with a wide base providing good air contact with the surface of the wine. On the other hand, the surface of a wine in the bottleneck is 24 mm; therefore, just uncorking a wine and leaving it in the bottle does not do very much because the space between the wine and the cork (ullage) is limited.

We need to know what happens to the wines when they are decanted/aerated. First we must consider the wine's temperature. The colder the wine the faster the oxygen degenerates or oxidizes the wine. If, as an example, a wine has a temperature of 0°C (32°F) it will absorb about 15mg/l,