



MERLOTTA
VIGNAIOLI DAL 1962

LESSON 8

**WINE TASTING
TECHNIQUES - 1**
(BY FRANCO DALMONTE)



APPEARANCE AND AROMA

The analysis of sensory characteristics is that analysis that is carried out through the senses of taste, in other words sight, smell and taste.

TEST OF APPEARANCE

This represents the first phase of the analysis, through which the wines gives us some information regarding the type and its characteristics.

LIMPIDITY

The absence of floating particles is evaluated; linked to the concept of limpidity is that of transparency, in other words the property of a liquid to let light pass through it. A wine that doesn't have floating particles and has maximum transparency is defined as brilliant; with an increase of particles the wine becomes gradually less limpid until it is hazy and cloudy.

The test of limpidity allows us to verify the level of chemical, physical and biological stabilisation of the wine (absence of alterations or diseases); today it is rare to see a wine which isn't limpid.

COLOUR

An important phase of sensory testing, over and above the seductive factor.

The intensity, liveliness and tonality are evaluated.

The colour of white wines

- Pale green yellow: characteristic of young, light and fresh wines
- Straw-yellow: young wines with a balance between acidity and softness
- Golden yellow: found in wines produced with slightly over mature grapes or aged in wood
- Amber yellow: a characteristic of dried grape wines or liqueur wines

The colour of rosè wines

- pale rose: the tonality has purplish reflections
- cherry rose: similar to the colour of cherries
- claret rose: similar to the colour of red wine, but less dense

The colour of red wines

- purple red: very young wines with high tannic-acidity
- ruby red: young balanced wine
- garnet red: wine of average ageing
- orangey red: mature,aged wine

FLUIDITY AND VISCOSITY

This phase involves observing how the wine flows into the glass and with what "heaviness" it moves in the glass.

The drops or legs that form inside the glass are an indication of the greater or lesser presence of alcohol (the Marangoni effect) and not, as one often hears, from the presence of glycerine.

EFFERVESCENCE

The effervescence is due to the presence of CO₂ in the wine which, at the moment of pouring is released, developing bubbles and mousse (the perlage or beading)

The following are evaluated:

- The size of the bubbles or grain
- The number of bubbles
- The persistence of the bubbles
- The foam, mustn't be either too thick or too creamy and disappear in a few seconds
- The mousse or froth that forms when the wine comes into contact with the glass

L'esame visivo, per il quale occorrono condizioni di luce idonee, si esegue in differenti fasi.

The examination of the appearance, which requires the right light conditions is divided into different phases. First of all the wine is observed at the moment of pouring to verify the presence of effervescence or possible anomalies regarding the fluidity. Secondly the glass is brought to eye level and looked at against the light to evaluate the transparency and limpidity.

The glass is then lowered and the intensity is evaluated in the part of major density and the tonality in the part of lower density. The glass is then brought back to eye level and after a slow rotation the fluidity of the movement of the wine is evaluated as well as the presence, dimension and descent of the legs/tears.

AROMA TEST

The second phase of the aromatic analysis helps, on the one hand, to confirm the impressions of the wine in the examination of the appearance but, above all, to verify that there aren't defects.

The aromatic sensations come from the presence of volatile substances of a chemical nature which can be sub divided into three categories:

YOUTHFUL FRAGRANCES OR AROMAS: are those which come from the grape and are linked to the grape varieties which are referred to as "aromatic"; (Muscat, Malvasia, Gewurztraminer, Brachetti and a few others); from a chemical point of view these substances belong to the group of terpenes.

SECONDARY AROMAS: these are formed during the alcoholic and malolactic fermentation (fruity, floral)

TERTIARY AROMAS OR BOUQUET:

those that develop during the maturation and ageing phase (spicy, toasty, animal/gamy, evolved).

Bibliographic references:

Il sommelier – Tecnica della degustazione - AIS

L'assaggio del vino – ONAV

Il piacere del vino – Slow Food Editore

The following are evaluated:

- **Intensity**, the impact of the aroma
- **Length**, how long the stimulus lasts
- **Quality**, pleasantness
- **Nature**, recognised aromas

The aromatic evaluation also follows different steps.

First the glass with still wine ??? is brought to the nose and the cleanliness of the aroma is evaluated, to check absence of defects. Continuing with the still glass the first test of the scents is carried out. Agitate the glass and evaluate the intensity, the presence of other scents and the length.

During the analysis it is important not to get used to the aromas