The Easy Way to Choose Your Red Wines

Friday 14 September, 2018

Related Sectors:

Food & Drink ::

Related Keywords:

Red Wines ::

Scan Me:

You know how it is. Once you've found a red wine that really hits the spot, that's all you want to buy. If it's a wine you've found on offer, that's great, but you'll be prepared to spend that little bit more when it's not too.

Welcome to the 'wine trap', that vicious circle that keeps you snared, just so long as that wine's available. Wary of straying from your newfound pet wine, when it does finally disappear from the shelves, what are you to do?

The answer is simple. When you know how you'll never have to worry about finding a compatible bottle again.

And, that answer's all about style. Wine style that is, not the latest Prada shoes or Karen Millen top.

Though there is a vague link to fashion because when you're looking at red wines' style, it's all about body.

<h2>What do we mean when talking about a wine's 'body'?</h2>

You can broadly break red wines up into three major styles. A bit like classical, pop, and rock music if you like. Except here we're talking about light-bodied, medium-bodied, and full-bodied. You've probably already worked out that 'body' in wine is all about how heavy (or light) you think the wine is when you taste it.

So, once you've got an idea of what already appeals to your palate (that 'winespeak' word that basically means the sensations you get when you taste), you simply need to know what else fits in that category.

Easier said than done? Not a bit of it. Here's your down-to-earth guide to what to expect, based upon grape varieties.

Light-bodied: these are made from grapes that don't have thick skins, so are the lightest in terms of tannins. Because of this, there's rarely any need for a winemaker to use oak or attempt to make them bolder. You're supposed to enjoy them for their fresh fruit flavours and not store them away for decades.

- Gamay: used in Beaujolais, and its 13 villages that put their name on the label, like Fleurie, Morgon, or Julienas.
- Corvina: the mainstay of Valpolicella, but, be careful, not the Ripasso versions.
- Pinot Noir: a 'noble' grape, found the world over, but particularly fruity and light when from the New World – aka outside Europe – or from less prestigious regions in Europe, like the Languedoc or Loire.
- Cabernet Franc: usually found in the Loire where the northern climate means it rarely ripens into anything 'big' enough to be considered medium- or full-bodied.
- Tempranillo: as a varietal, often from Spain, but from regions that are happy to put the name of the grape on the label, so outside Rioja, Ribera del Duero, etc.

Medium-bodied: as you'd guess, the next step up the ladder, these wines are made from grape varieties with a little more 'oomph', so are noticeably fuller when you sip them. Oak begins to play a part here, especially if the winemaker is looking to make a wine that's going to improve with age. Carefully done, this isn't anything to be wary of.

- Merlot: another 'noble' grape, meaning it makes great wines in many places around the world. Unoaked, you'll expect plum and damson flavours. With a little oak, there's a hint of spice too. Look to countries outside Europe for the 'fleshier', more upfront fruit styles, like Chile and South Africa.
- Nero d'Avola, Montepulciano, & Nero d'Avola: three Italian grape varieties that often offer tremendous bang for your buck. They are made in more serious styles, however, so keep an eye on the price and look for £11 or less for the easy-drinking, medium styled red wines.
- Portuguese red wine varieties, like Touriga Nacional, Tinto Roriz, and Touriga Franca: here you need to find someone who's got a good range of Portuguese red wines on offer. They're often amazingly good value and work with a whole host of dinner options.

- Garnacha, Tempranillo, and Monastrell from Spain: three varieties that, once they've had a little more care lavished on them in the winery, become medium-bodied. They'll still only be around the £10-14 mark though.
- Pinot Noir: once it's had some oak ageing. This tends to lend a little more structure to the wine, lifting it away from the light-bodied category.
- Red wine blends: including those from the Languedoc, Rhône, and the more affordable Bordeaux wines. Mixing more than one grape variety creates interest for us, the drinker, and can soften out the more sturdy grape varieties. You'll have to experiment a little here, but the pay-off makes it more than worthwhile.

Full-bodied: these are the real McCoy when it comes to red wines. Sturdy enough to last years in bottle (though they'll soften with age, as we all do), they're the wines for you if you like to really get stuck in to your red wines. Nothing wimpy here. Oak is often used to add to the wine's structure (aimed at improving its ability to age), though a good winemaker will always have that in balance with the fruit flavours.

- Shiraz or Syrah: they're the same grape variety, but confusingly winemakers use both names. Big and bold, these are seriously concentrated wines that showcase power and strength.
- Cabernet Sauvignon: when it's ripe, there's nothing like the blackcurrant depth of a good Cab Sauv. Oak lends itself to the variety like no other, and it's always a wine which shows at its best alongside food.
- Nebbiolo: the grape variety that makes Barolo, sometimes called the 'wine of kings'. It can live for decades and is always a wine experience to remember.
- Grenache: sometimes by itself, often blended with Syrah, it's a fullish style of grape that has bags of flavour leaving you in no doubt as to its position here.
- Sangiovese: when it's been given the kid gloves treatment, as with top Tuscan wines like the Montalcino family. Its natural acidity helps balance the strength, and it can last for years.
- Blends: once you've passed the £15 mark, you can bet your bottom dollar the winemaker is going for something serious, and that almost always means full-bodied. Think better Bordeaux, Rioja, Amarone and Ripasso wines from northern Italy, classic Australian blends, and those from South Africa, Argentina, and Chile. Wines so intense you almost need to chew them.

Of course, wine's always going to come down to personal taste. But, armed with the lowdown on what you're likely to get from the classic grape varieties, finding the next bottle of red wine you're going to enjoy becomes that much easier.

Company Contact:

_

Rude Wines

T. 0344 561 0543
E. rudewines@g-s-m.net
W. https://www.rudewines.co.uk

View Online

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.rudewines.pressat.co.uk