

*Welcome to the*

*New York State Home Wine Committee*

# HOME WINEMAKING SEMINAR 2014

## METHODOLOGY OF WINE JUDGING



Presented by Holly Howell  
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# Why Judge Wine?



Whatever happened to that good old saying, "The only definition of a GREAT wine is one that you like!"

Well, today's wine market has become overwhelming. With such an incredible selection of wines to choose from, it is nearly impossible for anyone to navigate their way through the sea of wine out there. We need guidance, and that can come in the form of a high wine score from the critics, a recommendation from your friendly wine clerk, or a colorful shelf talker that tells you what food to pair. But nothing says "Buy me" like the accolade of a **Gold Medal** in a major wine competition...

**Wine Competition:** A wine competition is an organized event in which trained judges competitively rate different vintages or styles of wine.

The most common form of wine competition is intended to obtain valid comparisons of wines by trained experts. The awards are given to groups of wines in various categories on the basis of the blind tasting. The awards are frequently bronze, silver, gold, and double gold medals.

Thank you Wikipedia! Seems pretty simple, but over the years, countless methodologies have been developed to best judge wines in the most fair setting possible. And as much as the judges strive to be objective, it is very difficult to keep personal preferences out of the picture. Today, we will judge four wines just as they would be presented as a professional wine competition. Blind, at room temperature, with no other distractions but the sound of pencils (pens) scratching and making notes around you! Let's see how close we come to what the pro's decided...



# Simulating the FLIWC Judging System

- 1) Each wine is judged on its own merit, NOT by how it compares to other wines in the flight.
- 2) Evaluate balance, clarity, bouquet, varietal character, palate, finish, etc.
- 3) While it is common knowledge that wines go through various stages of quality development, each wine entered in FLIWC is judged for what it is at the time of judging—not for what it might become in the future.
- 4) Since it is essentially impossible for any human to be totally objective in sensory evaluations, a short period is provided for discussion among the judges to further evaluate the “pleasure” factor.

Entry	Notes and Comments	Medal	Other Judge's Scores
<b>Chardonnay 274</b>	Score: G+ <input type="radio"/> G <input type="radio"/> G- <input type="radio"/> S+ <input type="radio"/> S <input type="radio"/> S- <input type="radio"/> B+ <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> B- <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/>		
<b>Chardonnay 621</b>	Score: G+ <input type="radio"/> G <input type="radio"/> G- <input type="radio"/> S+ <input type="radio"/> S <input type="radio"/> S- <input type="radio"/> B+ <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> B- <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/>		
<b>Chardonnay 82</b>	Score: G+ <input type="radio"/> G <input type="radio"/> G- <input type="radio"/> S+ <input type="radio"/> S <input type="radio"/> S- <input type="radio"/> B+ <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> B- <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/>		
<b>Chardonnay 2412</b>	Score: G+ <input type="radio"/> G <input type="radio"/> G- <input type="radio"/> S+ <input type="radio"/> S <input type="radio"/> S- <input type="radio"/> B+ <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> B- <input type="radio"/> N <input type="radio"/>		

**Gold:** A GREAT wine!

**Silver:** Good, but not great

**Bronze:** Decent, drinkable, no faults

**No Medal:** One or more faults - not palatable

# The UC Davis 20-Point Judging System

## **CLARITY (2 POINTS)**

- Brilliant, near-sparkly, clear with no haze or particulates 2.0
- Bright, some sparkle, clear with no haze or particulates 1.5
- Dull, mostly clear, perhaps a hint of haze or particulates 1.0
- Cloudy, unclear with a distinct haze or particulates 0.5

## **COLOR (2 POINTS)**

- Appropriate color for varietal/type and age 2.0
- Nearly correct color for varietal/type and age 1.5
- Slightly off color for varietal/type and age 1.0
- Flawed color for varietal/type and age 0.5

## **BOUQUET (4 POINTS)**

- Distinct varietal characteristics, balanced bouquet 4.0
- Simply fruity characteristics, some bouquet 3.0
- Little varietal character, simple bouquet 2.0
- Underdeveloped nose, closed, non-apparent 1.0
- Defective nose, off odors 0.0

## **TOTAL ACIDITY (1 POINT)**

- Proper balance, appropriate for varietal/type 1.0
- Slightly out-of-balance, high/low acidity 0.5
- Well out-of-balance, tart/flabby 0.0

## **SWEETNESS (1 POINT)**

- Appropriate sweetness, well enhanced/well balanced 1.0
- Slightly off, either too sweet or too dry for type 0.5
- Well off, cloying, out-of-balance for type 0.0

## **BODY/TEXTURE (2 POINTS)**

- Appropriate body for varietal/type and age 2.0
- Nearly correct body for varietal/type and age 1.5
- Slightly heavy/slightly thin for varietal/type and age 1.0
- Too heavy (clumsy)/too thin (vapid) for varietal/type and age 0.5

## **FLAVOR/TASTE (2 POINTS)**

- Complex flavors, appropriate for varietal/type and age 2.0
- Simple flavors, appropriate for varietal/type and age 1.5
- Agreeable flavors, appropriate for varietal/type and age 1.0
- Non-descript flavors, in-appropriate for varietal/type and age 0.5

## **ACESCENCY (BITTERNESS) (1 POINT)**

- Well balanced, no perceptible bitterness 1.0
- Slightly bitter, but still in balance 0.5
- Overly bitter, un-balanced 0.0

## **ASTRINGENCY (1 POINT)**

- Appropriate levels of tannin for the varietal/type and age 1.0
- Somewhat high/low levels of tannin for the varietal/type and age 0.5
- Overly tannic/overly flaccid for the varietal/type and age 0.0

## **OVERALL QUALITY (4 POINTS)**

- Wines of "noble" quality with distinct and distinguishing character 4.0
- Wines that are "charming" with some special character 3.0
- Wines that are typical of the varietal/type and age 2.0
- Wines with no exceptional characteristics, but not flawed 1.0
- Wines with no exceptional characteristics, and possess flaws 0.0

**Gold Medal** = 18-20 (Extraordinary)

**Silver Medal** = 15-17 (Excellent)

**Bronze Medal** = 12-14 (Good)

**Commercially Acceptable** = 9-11

**Deficient** = 6-8

**Poor and Objectionable** = 0-5

# The American Wine Society Judging System



## Wine Evaluation Chart

A  
W  
S

Wine Evaluation Chart								A W S
Wine	Price	Appearance 3 Max	Aroma / Bouquet 6 Max	Taste / Texture 6 Max	Aftertaste 3 Max	Overall Impression 2 Max	Total Score 20 Max	

### APPEARANCE (3 Max)

- 3 - Excellent - Brilliant with outstanding characteristic color.
- 2 - Good - Clear with characteristic color.
- 1 - Poor - Slight haze and/or slight off color.
- 0 - Objectionable - Cloudy and/or off color.

### AROMA AND BOUQUET (6 Max)

- 6 - Extraordinary - Unmistakable characteristic aroma of grape-variety or wine. Outstanding and complex bouquet. Exceptional balance of aroma and bouquet.
- 5 - Excellent - Characteristic aroma. Complex bouquet. Well balanced.
- 4 - Good - Characteristic aroma. Distinguishable bouquet.
- 3 - Acceptable - Slight aroma and bouquet. Pleasant.
- 2 - Deficient - No perceptible aroma or bouquet or with slight off odors.
- 1 - Poor - Off odors.
- 0 - Objectionable - Objectionable or offensive odors.

### TASTE AND TEXTURE (6 Max)

- 6 - Extraordinary - Unmistakable characteristic flavor of grape-variety or wine. Extraordinary balance. Smooth, full-bodied and overwhelming.
- 5 - Excellent - All of the above but a little less. Excellent but not overwhelming.
- 4 - Good - Characteristic grape-variety or wine-type flavor. Good balance. May have minor imperfections.
- 3 - Acceptable - Undistinguished wine but pleasant. May have minor off flavors. May be slightly out of balance,
- 2 - Deficient - Undistinguished wine with more pronounced faults than above.
- 1 - Poor - Disagreeable flavors, poorly balanced, and/or unpleasant texture.
- 0 - Objectionable - Objectionable or offensive flavors and/or texture.

### AFTERTASTE (3 Max)

- 3 - Excellent - Lingering outstanding aftertaste.
- 2 - Good - Pleasant aftertaste.
- 1 - Poor - Little or no distinguishable aftertaste.
- 0 - Objectionable - Unpleasant aftertaste.

### OVERALL IMPRESSION (2 Max)

- 2 - Excellent
- 1 - Good
- 0 - Poor

### TOTAL SCORES

- 18 - 20 Extraordinary
- 15 - 17 Excellent
- 12 - 14 Good
- 9 - 11 Commercially Acceptable
- 6 - 8 Deficient
- 0 - 5 Poor and Objectionable

# The 100-Point Wine Rating Scale

*Decanter Magazine* recently went from a 20-point scale to a 100-point scale. Each panel tasting features three experienced tasters chosen for their ability in the category of wine being rated. All wines are tasted blind and are pre-poured for judges in flights of 8 to 10 wines. The three experts taste the wines individually, but then discuss their scores at the end of each flight. Any wines on which scores are markedly different are re-tasted. Judges are under no obligation to amend their scores. Judges are encouraged to look for "typicity" in wines, rewarding those which are true to their region.

## Decanter Scores:

- 95-100 -- Outstanding
- 90-94 -- Highly recommended
- 83-89 -- Recommended
- 76-82 -- Fair
- 70-75 -- Poor
- 66-69 -- Faulty

Robert Parker is a renowned wine critic and publisher of *The Wine Advocate*. Parker is not the only critic at the Advocate and many wines are tasted by colleagues at the publication. Reviewers include Robert Parker (until late 2011), Antonio Galloni, Jay Miller and Mark Squires and Neil Martin.

Tastings are conducted in peer group, single-blind conditions, which means the same types of wines are tasted against each other and the wineries' names are not revealed, so neither price nor the reputation of the winery influences the rating in any way.

## The Wine Advocate's 100-Point Scale:

- 96-100 -- Extraordinary; a classic wine of its variety
- 90-95 -- Outstanding; exceptional complexity and character
- 80-89 -- Barely above average to very good
- 70-79 -- Average; little distinction beyond being sound
- 60-69 -- Below average; drinkable, but with noticeable faults
- 50-59 -- Poor; unacceptable, not recommended

Each wine region is the sole jurisdiction of one editor at *Wine Spectator* who has developed an expertise in that region's offerings. Other editors can offer opinions, but the final say comes from the region's primary editor. Some examples include: James Laube (California), Harvey Steiman (Washington State, Oregon, Australia, New Zealand), James Molesworth (Bordeaux, Loire Valley, Rhone Valley, South Africa, Finger Lakes).

All tastings are conducted "blind." Tasters are told the type of wine (varietal or region) and vintage. Flawed wines or wines that score very highly are re-tasted. Wine ratings are based on how good a wine will be when it reaches its peak, regardless of how soon that will be.

## Wine Spectator's 100-Point Scale:

- 95-100 -- Classic; a great wine
- 90-94 -- Outstanding; superior character and style
- 80-89 -- Good to very good; wine with special qualities
- 70-79 -- Average; drinkable wine with minor flaws
- 60-69 -- Below average; drinkable but not recommended
- 50-59 -- Poor; undrinkable, not recommended

*Wine Enthusiast* wine ratings are based on tastings by the magazine's editors and other qualified tasting panelists, either individually or in a group setting. Tastings are conducted blind or in accordance with accepted industry practices. Price is not a factor in assigning scores to wines. Only wines scoring 80 points or higher are published. When possible, wines considered flawed or uncustomary are re-tasted.

## Wine Enthusiast Scores:

- 95-100 -- Superb. One of the greats
- 90-94 -- Excellent. Extremely well made and highly recommended
- 85-89 -- Very good. May offer outstanding value if the price is right
- 80-84 -- Good. Solid wine, suitable for everyday consumption