

Wine Terminology: A to Z

(NAPSA)—With food and wine pairing becoming an exciting aspect of dining, and wine tasting parties a rapidly increasing trend, Americans everywhere are becoming more knowledgeable about wine. Still, understanding wine terminology can be a challenge for both wine novices and connoisseurs alike.

Get a taste of the ins and outs with this A to Z list from the award-winning Gallo of Sonoma Winery:

Acidity—The sour or tart taste in wine.

Body—The weight of the wine (light-bodied, medium-bodied, full-bodied), which should be matched with the weight of food when pairing food and wine together.

Cabernet Sauvignon—A full-bodied red that pairs well with hearty dishes, such as beef or pork.

Decanter—Used to separate sediment from aged wine when serving.

Experiments—Conducted by wineries on a regular basis, to produce new and different varieties.

Family—A family-owned winery is one you can trust. Gallo of Sonoma has become one of the world's most awarded wineries under the leadership of Gina and Matt, third-generation winemaker and winegrower. And this year, the winery celebrates the family's 70-year heritage of winemaking.

Gold Medal—In wine competitions, when a panel of judges are in agreement to a wine's exceptional quality.

Harvest—Period of time in which grapes are picked and crushed.

Imports—Wine produced in other countries and brought to the United States.

Judging—Wine competitions are an important part of the wine industry, in which experts blindly taste and judge hundreds of wines.

Keep cool—Store wines at room temperature (55°F) and chill white wines for approximately 45 minutes before serving.

Labels—When wine shopping, select a bottle with a medal on the label; it may be an award-winner.

Merlot—A full-bodied red wine varietal, with blackberry and plum flavors.

Nose—The scent of a wine.

Oaky—Describes the taste and aroma of oak in a wine.

Pinot Gris—A light-bodied, crisp and refreshing white wine grape, grown in California, Oregon and France. It is also known as Pinot Grigio in Italy. Gallo of Sonoma's 2002 Sonoma County Pinot Gris was named best New World Pinot Gris at the 2003 New World International Wine Competition.

Quality—Depends on the grapes and the caretaking of the grapes.

Region—The location of a vineyard where grapes are grown and made into wine. Sonoma County is one of the world's most awarded wine regions.

Sommelier—The wine expert on hand at fine dining establishments to guide guests in making wine selections.

Tasting room—Allows a winery's visitors to taste several offered wines in a relaxed atmosphere.

Unique—Every wine drinker has unique tastes and preferences, therefore, drink what you like.

Varietal—Grape type. Common varieties include Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir.

Weddings—Serve both red and white wine to suit guests' preferences.

Excellent—Pinot Noir is an excellent alternative to traditional red wine. For a delicious meal, try pairing it with grilled salmon.

Year (or Vintage)—The year in which the grapes were harvested.

Zinfandel—An intense red wine varietal.

Once equipped with basic wine terminology, it's simple to understand the world of wine. For more wine terms and information, visit www.gallosonoma.com.