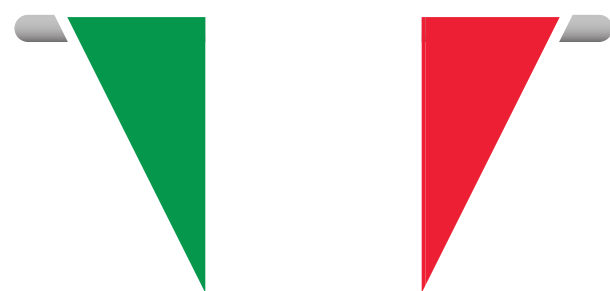




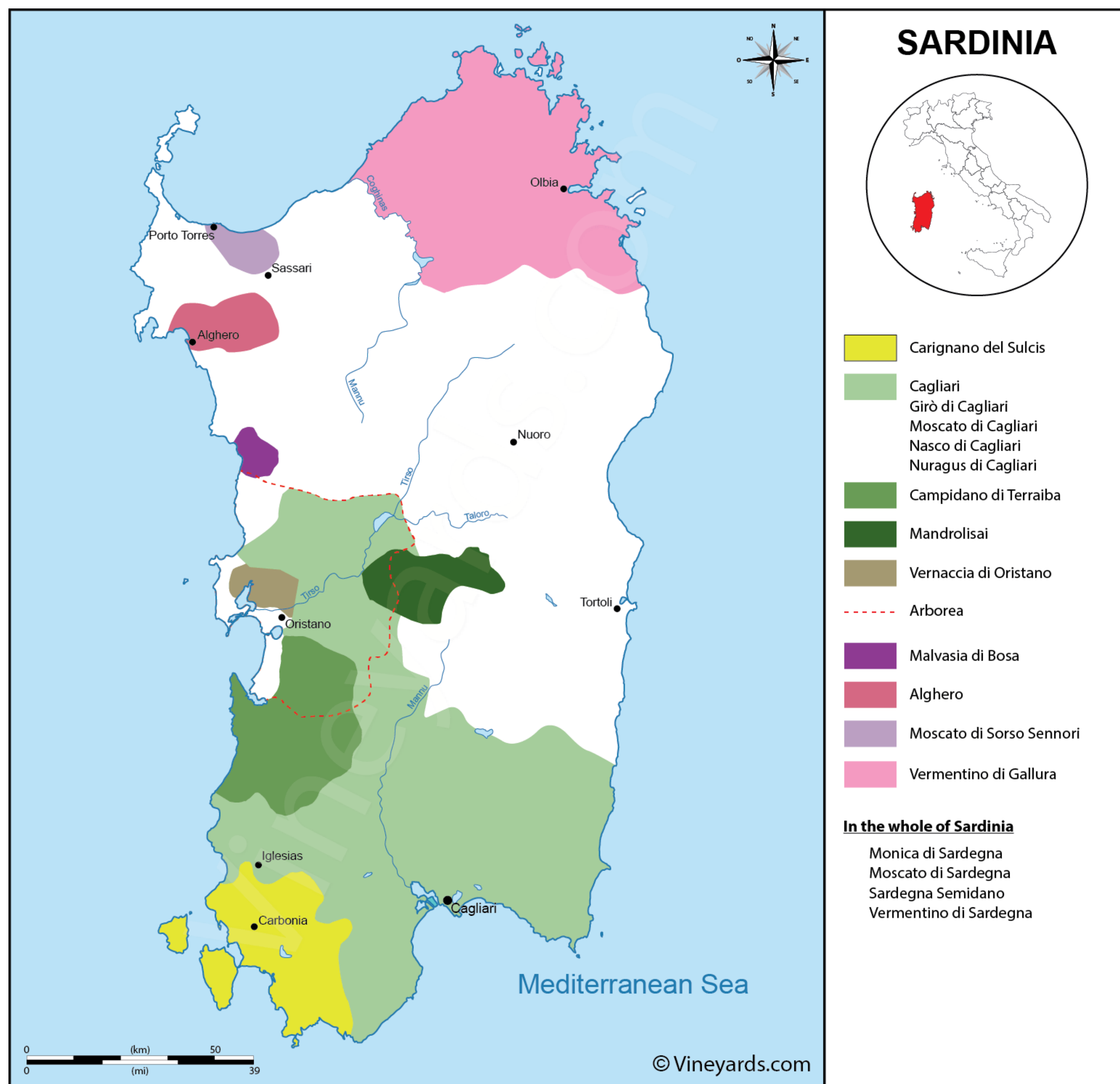
VIRTUAL WINE EXPERIENCE

Colucci's

ITALY



WINE EXPERIENCE REGION



WINE EXPERIENCE GUIDE NOTES



PREPARATION and WINE CARE

Wine is a living, breathing substance. It starts life as a fruit and continues life until it is drunk. During that time, which could be months or years, wine may go through many changes.

The key to wine tasting and wine enjoyment, is knowing how to care for your wine, both before consumption and just before drinking it, and storing any leftover to get the most out of the flavours and the character of the wine.

STORING WINE

The first key to ensuring the longevity and quality of any wine is storage. All wines that have a cork, whether natural or synthetic corks, should be stored horizontally in a cool, dark place until ready to be served. If they have a screw cap then storing them vertically is fine. Also store your wines in a place where they won't get moved around or subjected to vibrations. Never store wines in direct sunlight, like in a conservatory or near a window. And you should not store wines in a wine rack or shelf in the kitchen because it will experience wide temperature fluctuations, which will affect the wine over time. Wine fridges are the best place to store wines, or if they are white or sparkling wines, in a regular fridge, provided they do not get moved around a lot.



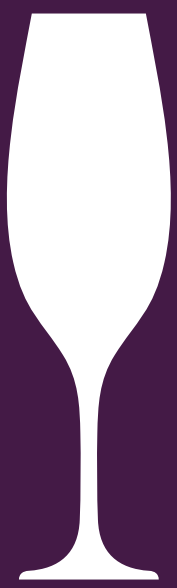
WINE EXPERIENCE GUIDE NOTES



WINE DRINKING PREPARATION

You will hear people talk about serving wine at the right temperature. This is a very important aspect of wine tasting because the temperature has a direct impact on the flavours you experience and the enjoyment of the wines.

Each style of wine has a different optimum temperature at which it should be served. Although some people like to alter these guidelines, we try to give you the information you need to get the very best experience from your tasting.



Sparkling Wines

Take it from your storage and put into a normal fridge at least 4 hours before opening. About 15 minutes before serving (depending on the room temperature), take it out of the fridge and let it stand at room temperature. The optimum serving temperature for sparkling wine is 6-8 Degree Centigrade. If you are going to be consuming the wine outdoors where it's warm, you may fit a bottle cooler over the bottle to help maintain a consistent drinking temperature. Samples are shown in the accessory section at the end.



White Wines / Rosé Wines

White and rosé wines should be put into a fridge at least 4 hours before serving. About 30 minutes before serving, take the bottle from the fridge and let it stand at room temperature. The optimum temperature for serving white and rosé wines is between 10-12°C. A bottle cooler may be needed if you are drinking the wine in a warm setting. An ice bucket works well provided there is a healthy amount of water in the bucket along with the ice. Don't let the bottle sit too long in the ice or it will cool it well below optimum temperatures.

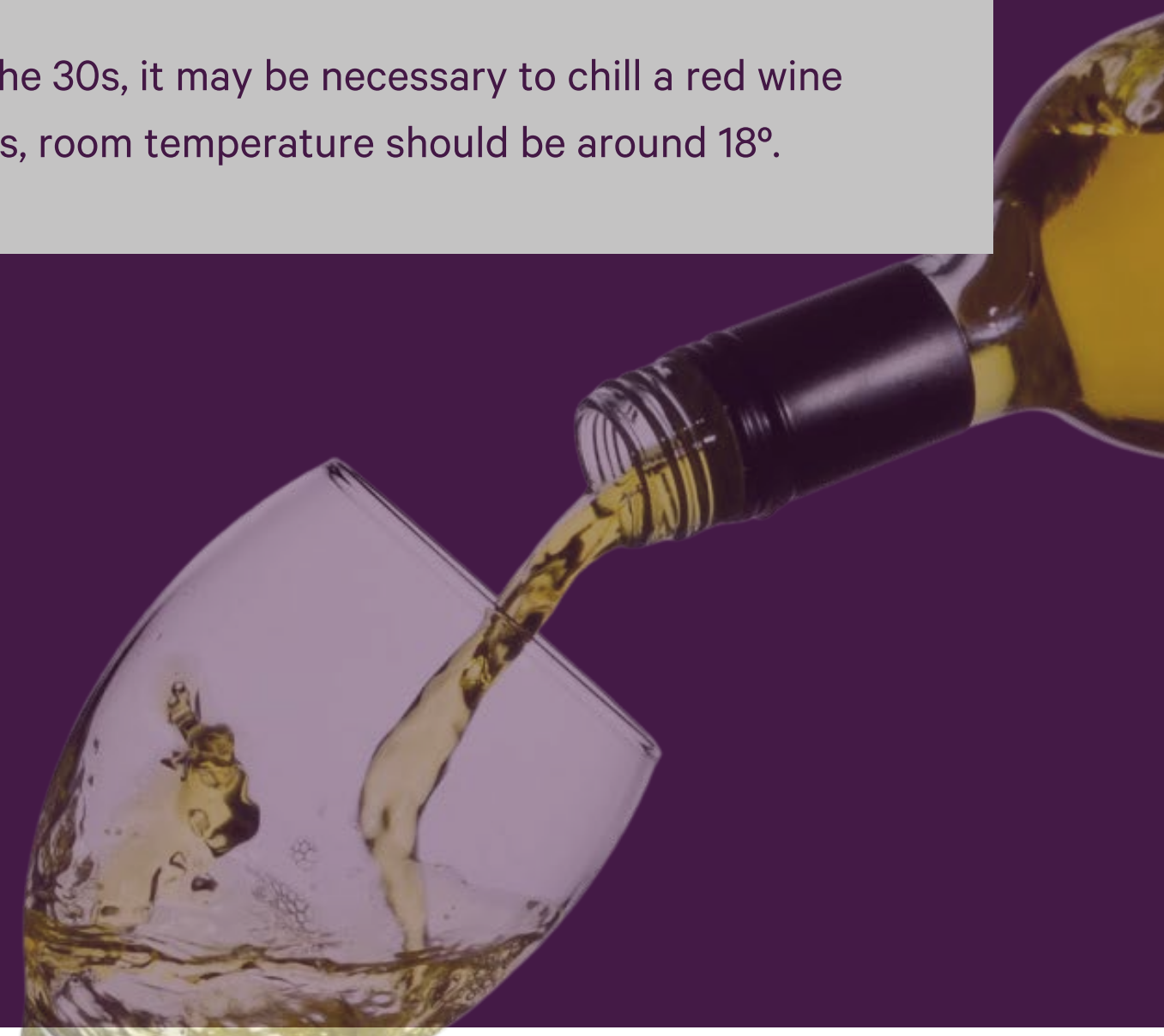


Red Wines

Red wines are best served at room temperature. The definition of room temperature is important as the temperature of a room in summer is much different to that in winter.

Optimum temperature for serving red wine is 16-18°C.

In warmer months, when the outside temperature is in the 20s or even the 30s, it may be necessary to chill a red wine before serving to get it down to 'room temperature'. In normal conditions, room temperature should be around 18°.



WINE EXPERIENCE GUIDE NOTES



PREPARING FOR A TASTING

The full flavours and characters of wines are best experienced with a clean palate. Try not to eat spicy foods or curries before a tasting because that will dull your senses. Also, eggs, mushrooms and asparagus are not good matches for most wines.

Have a glass of water available to sip in between samples to cleanse the palate and prepare for the next wine.

You may want to have a few nibbles like salted crackers, hard cheeses, olives or breadsticks to give you some contrasts during the tasting. It's all about experimenting and finding what tastes good to YOU.

I always recommend a fresh glass for each wine. Make sure the glass is clean and hasn't just come out of a dishwasher. I recommend hand washing wine glasses so they don't pick up food odours from dishwater.

AFTER THE TASTING

You may have wine left over after a tasting, especially when tasting several wines in one sitting. Once opened a wine will start to oxidise. Some initial oxidation is good – this is the “breathing” process that is often heard when opening a bottle of wine. The initial mixing of a freshly opened bottle of wine with oxygen, begins to release the flavours and brings the aromas out of the wine. However too much oxidation will start to taint the wine, making it lose flavours, become flat and eventually turn sour or to vinegar.

There are some good ways, some better ways and some bad ways to store opened bottles of wine.

GOOD WAYS

Keep the corks from the bottles you open.

To reseal an open bottle of wine, push the cork back in part way so that it doesn't leak when laid down on its side, and store the wine in the fridge. Two-thirds should be fine as long as you can pull it out again with your hand. Even open bottles of red wine should be stored in a fridge to slow the oxidation process. Just remember to take it out about an hour before you want to drink it again.

Using this method will keep your wines fresh for several days.

BETTER WAYS

There are several good wine storage systems. I will mention just a couple here:

Gas blanket. There are wine preservation systems available that allow you to spray inert gas into the open bottle of wine before putting the cork in. This removes all the oxygen from the top of the bottle and will preserve the wine for quite a long time, provided the cork is re-inserted well.

Vacuum system. There are several vacuum systems available where you can replace the cork with a rubber stopper that has a valve in the centre. With a hand pump you extract all the air from the top of the bottle and creates a vacuum. This helps preserve the wine for longer periods of time. These won't last indefinitely as the stoppers do gradually allow air back into the bottle. **WARNING:** Never use this method with sparkling wines. It will remove all the CO₂ (carbon dioxide) from the wine which actually creates the bubbles.

For sparkling wines, a stopper system is the best way to preserve open bottles. They come in a variety of styles, but if they create a good seal, the wine will keep for a week in the fridge.

NOT SO GOOD WAYS

Silver spoon in the opening of the sparkling wine bottle. This is a myth and has absolutely no truth to it. The spoon does not create a seal needed to keep the air out and the CO₂ in.

Leaving the bottle open on the counter. This is a sure way to waste a perfectly good bottle of wine. Leaving it open will quickly promote the oxidation of the wine, and within a day or two the wine will be flat, have lost its fruitiness and will start to turn sour or to vinegar.

Putting it in a fridge this way is marginally better, but the wine will absorb food odours (not good) and oxidise, although a bit slower than being left out in the open.

VIRTUAL WINE EXPERIENCE

WINES OF SARDEGNA



Monteoro Vermentino

Varietal:
Vermentino Di Gallura DOCG 100%

14% ABV



Cannonau

Varietal:
Cannonau 100%

13% ABV



Terre Bianche

Alghero DOP

Torbato

Varietal:
Torbato 100%

12.5% ABV

WINE EXPERIENCE GUIDE



PREPARING THE WINES FOR TASTING

White Wines:

Chill the white wines thoroughly for at least 4 hours in the fridge. Take out of the fridge 10 minutes before the time of the tasting to allow it to warm up slightly. White wine is best served at between 10 – 12°C.

Red wines:

If you have a decanter, decant the red wines as they will need more time to breath and release the aromas. If you don't have a decanter, then pouring a measure (125ml) of the red wine into a proper red wine glass about 15 minutes before drinking it will aerate the wine sufficiently for you to enjoy the full aromas and flavours during the tasting.

Use a different glass for each wine if possible.

FOOD MATCHING

Most wines are best enjoyed with food. But it is important to match the right food with the wine to bring out the best flavours of both the wine and the food. As a member of our Wine Tasting Club, you will receive a monthly newsletter with some great recipes that you can try, but here are some the basic rules to consider when

These are a few basic tips for ensuring you get the right food with your wines:

Try to match the acidity of the wine with the acidity of the food. Italian wines are generally high in acidity so it's best to match them with foods that share that acidity. That's why tomato based sauces work so well with Italian reds and many white wines. Olives work really well as they have acidity, salt and fat.

Salt is another good ingredient to match with the acidity of the wine. Fish dishes generally contain salt and that works well with the acidity of the white wines. Peanuts and salted nibbles are a great treat to have with wines at a tasting.

Fat is another good essential ingredient to look for when matching food with the wines. A good dish of fish and chips is a great partner to a nice dry white wine. This is where cured meats are ideal in a wine tasting.

If you have a very spicy meal, like an Indian curry, try to get a wine that is higher in sugar to offset the spiciness. Something a bit off-dry would be ideal. Trying to match a dry highly acidic wine with a spicy meal will dull the flavours of the wine and create an unpleasant burning sensation in the mouth.

One other hard to match food ingredient is MSG (monosodium glutamate) an ingredient found in many Asian dishes. This again requires a more careful selection of wines and something off-dry would work better than a dry variety.



WINE ACCESSORIES



These are some of the accessories that we recommend and use in our wine preservation (if in the rare case we have some wine left over!) or to maintain a constant serving temperature. All these are available from Colucci's or from a variety of online shops.



Sparkling Wine Preserver
£10.99



Hand Vacuum Wine Preserver
£10-£15



Reusable Wine Cooler
£15

