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Wine

FOR

DUMMIES®

4th Edition

Ed McCarthy
Certified Wine Educator

Mary Ewing-Mulligan
Master of Wine

A Reference for the Rest of Us!



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Wine
FOR
DUMMIES®
4TH EDITION

by Ed McCarthy
Certified Wine Educator

and

Mary Ewing-Mulligan
Master of Wine



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About the Authors

Ed McCarthy and **Mary Ewing-Mulligan** are two wine lovers who met at an Italian wine tasting in New York City's Chinatown and subsequently merged their wine cellars and wine libraries when they married. They have since co-authored six wine books in the *Wine For Dummies* series (including two of their favorites, *French Wine For Dummies* and *Italian Wine For Dummies*) as well as their latest book, *Wine Style* (Wiley); taught hundreds of wine classes together; visited nearly every wine region in the world; run five marathons; and raised eleven cats. Along the way, they have amassed more than half a century of professional wine experience between them.

Mary is president of International Wine Center, a New York City wine school that offers credentialed wine education for wine professionals and serious wine lovers. As U.S. director of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET®), the world's leading wine educational organization, she works to make the courses she offers in New York available in more and more parts of the United States. She is also the long-standing wine columnist of the *NY Daily News*. Mary's most impressive credential is that she's the first female Master of Wine (MW) in the United States, and one of only 22 MW's in North America (with 251 worldwide).

Ed, a New Yorker, graduated from City University of NY with a master's degree in psychology. He taught high school English in another life, while working part-time in wine shops to satisfy his passion for wine and to subsidize his growing wine cellar. That cellar is especially heavy in his favorite wines — Bordeaux, Barolo, and Champagne. Besides co-authoring six wine books in the *For Dummies* series with Mary, Ed went solo as author of *Champagne For Dummies*, a topic on which he's especially expert.

Ed and Mary also share wine columns in *Nation's Restaurant News* and in *Beverage Media*, a trade publication. They are each columnists for the online wine magazine, *WineReviewOnline.com*. Ed and Mary are both accredited as Certified Wine Educators (CWE).

When they aren't writing, teaching, or visiting wine regions, Mary and Ed maintain a busy schedule of speaking, judging at professional wine competitions, and tasting as many new wines as possible. They admit to leading thoroughly unbalanced lives in which their only non-wine pursuits are hiking in the Berkshires and the Italian Alps. At home, they wind down to the tunes of U2, K.D. Lang, Bob Dylan, and Neil Young in the company of their feline roommates Dolcetto, Black & Whitey, Ponzi, and Pinot.

Authors' Acknowledgments

The wine world is dynamic — it's constantly changing. Because three years have passed since the third edition of *Wine For Dummies*, we decided to revise and update the book. We especially felt an obligation to write this fourth edition because of all the readers who have personally told us how valuable *Wine For Dummies* has been to them. We are grateful that we've been able to contribute to your knowledge about this wonderful beverage.

But this book would not have been possible without the team at Wiley. We sincerely thank Publisher Diane Steele, who engaged us to write the fourth edition of *Wine For Dummies*, along with Acquisitions Editor Stacy Kennedy. Really special thanks go to our Project Editor, Traci Cumbay, who made excellent suggestions to improve the text.

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Special thanks to Steve Ettlinger, our agent and friend, who brought us to the *For Dummies* series in the first place, and who is always there for us.

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Contents at a Glance

.....

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Part I: Getting to Know Wine</i>	7
Chapter 1: Wine 101	9
Chapter 2: These Taste Buds Are for You.....	21
Chapter 3: Pinot Envy and Other Secrets about Grape Varieties	35
Chapter 4: Wine Names and Label Lingo.....	49
Chapter 5: Behind the Scenes of Winemaking	67
<i>Part II: Wine and You: Up Close and Personal</i>	75
Chapter 6: Navigating a Wine Shop	77
Chapter 7: Confronting a Restaurant Wine List.....	89
Chapter 8: The Insider's Track to Serving and Using Wine.....	105
<i>Part III: The "Old World" of Wine</i>	125
Chapter 9: Doing France	127
Chapter 10: Italy, the Heartland of Vino	167
Chapter 11: Spain, Portugal, Germany, and Beyond	187
<i>Part IV: Discovering the New World of Wine</i>	211
Chapter 12: The Southern Hemisphere Arises	213
Chapter 13: America, America	231
<i>Part V: Wine's Exotic Face</i>	263
Chapter 14: Champagne and Other Sparklers	265
Chapter 15: Wine Roads Less Traveled: Fortified and Dessert Wines.....	287
<i>Part VI: When You've Caught the Bug</i>	307
Chapter 16: Buying and Collecting Wine	309
Chapter 17: Continuing Education for Wine Lovers.....	327
Chapter 18: Describing and Rating Wine.....	341
Chapter 19: Marrying Wine with Food.....	349
<i>Part VII: The Part of Tens</i>	355
Chapter 20: Answers to Ten Common Questions about Wine.....	357
Chapter 21: Ten Wine Myths Demystified	363

<i>Part VIII: Appendixes</i>	369
Appendix A: Pronunciation Guide to Wine Terms	371
Appendix B: Glossary of Wine Terms	377
Appendix C: Vintage Wine Chart: 1985–2004	385
<i>Index</i>	389

Table of Contents

.....

***Introduction*..... 1**

About This Book.....	1
Conventions Used in This Book.....	2
Foolish Assumptions.....	2
How This Book Is Organized.....	3
Part I: Getting to Know Wine.....	3
Part II: Wine and You: Up Close and Personal.....	3
Part III: The “Old World” of Wine.....	3
Part IV: Discovering the New World of Wine.....	4
Part V: Wine’s Exotic Face.....	4
Part VI: When You’ve Caught the Bug.....	4
Part VII: The Part of Tens.....	4
Part VIII: Appendixes.....	4
Icons Used in This Book.....	5

***Part I: Getting to Know Wine*..... 7**

Chapter 1: Wine 101..... 9

How Wine Happens.....	9
What could be more natural?.....	10
Modern wrinkles in winemaking.....	10
The main ingredient.....	10
Local flavor.....	11
What Color Is Your Appetite?.....	11
(Not exactly) white wine.....	11
Is white always right?.....	12
Red, red wine.....	14
A rose is a rose, but a rosé is “white”.....	15
Which type when?.....	16
Other Ways of Categorizing Wine.....	16
Table wine.....	17
Dessert wine.....	18
Sparkling wine (and a highly personal spelling lesson).....	19

Chapter 2: These Taste Buds Are for You..... 21

The Special Technique for Tasting Wine.....	21
Savoring wine’s good looks.....	22
The nose knows.....	23
The mouth action.....	25



Parlez-Vous Winespeak?	27
The sequential palate	28
The flavor dimension	29
The Quality Issue	30
What's a good wine?.....	31
What's a bad wine?.....	33
The Final Analysis: Do You Like It?	34
Chapter 3: Pinot Envy and Other Secrets about Grape Varieties . . .	35
Why Grapes Matter	35
Of genus and species	36
A variety of varieties	36
How grapes vary.....	37
Grape royalty and commoners	39
A Primer on White Grape Varieties	40
Chardonnay	40
Riesling	41
Sauvignon Blanc	42
Pinot Gris/Pinot Grigio.....	43
Other white grapes.....	43
A Primer on Red Grape Varieties.....	45
Cabernet Sauvignon	45
Merlot.....	45
Pinot Noir	46
Syrah/Shiraz	46
Zinfandel.....	47
Nebbiolo	47
Sangiovese.....	47
Tempranillo	48
Other red grapes	48
Chapter 4: Wine Names and Label Lingo	49
The Wine Name Game	49
Is it a grape? Is it a place?.....	50
Hello, my name is Chardonnay	50
Hello, my name is Bordeaux.....	51
Wines named in other ways	55
Wine Labels, Forward and Backward	57
The mandatory sentence	58
Some optional label lingo	62
Chapter 5: Behind the Scenes of Winemaking	67
Grapegrowing, Winemaking, and the Jargon that Surrounds Them.....	67
Viti-vini.....	68
Vine-growing variations	69
Winemaking wonders.....	70
Even More Winemaking Terms	72

Part II: Wine and You: Up Close and Personal 75**Chapter 6: Navigating a Wine Shop 77**

Buying Wine Can Intimidate Anyone	77
Wine Retailers, Large and Small	78
Supermarkets, superstores, and so on	79
Wine specialty shops	80
Choosing the Right Wine Merchant	82
Putting price in perspective.....	82
Evaluating selection and expertise	82
Expecting service with a smile	83
Judging wine storage conditions.....	83
Strategies for Wine Shopping	84
See a chance, take it.....	85
Explain what you want.....	85
Name your price	87

Chapter 7: Confronting a Restaurant Wine List 89

The Restaurant Wine Experience.....	89
How Wine Is Sold in Restaurants	90
The choice of the house	90
Premium pours	91
Special, or reserve, wine lists	92
The (anything but) standard wine list	93
How to Read a Wine List	94
Sizing up the organization of the list	94
Getting a handle on the pricing	96
What the wine list should tell you.....	96
Assessing the list's style.....	97
Digital browsing.....	97
Ordering Your Wine	98
Handling the Wine Presentation Ritual	100
Restaurant Wine Tips	102

Chapter 8: The Insider's Track to Serving and Using Wine 105

Getting the Cork Out.....	105
The corkscrew not to use.....	106
The corkscrew to buy	107
Other corkscrews worth owning.....	108
Waiter, there's cork in my wine!.....	110
A special case: Opening Champagne and sparkling wine	111
Does Wine Really Breathe?	113
How to aerate your wine	113
Which wines need aerating?	113

Does the Glass Really Matter?	115
The right color: none	116
Thin but not tiny.....	116
Tulips, flutes, trumpets, and other picturesque wine-glass names	117
How many glasses do I need, anyway?	119
Washing your wine glasses	119
Not Too Warm, Not Too Cold.....	119
Keeping Leftover Wine	121
Entertaining with Wine	122
First things first	123
How much is enough.....	123

Part III: The “Old World” of Wine 125

Chapter 9: Doing France 127

The French Model	127
Understanding French wine law	128
Fine distinctions in the ranks	129
France’s Wine Regions.....	130
Bordeaux: The Incomparable	131
The subregions of red Bordeaux.....	133
The Médoc mosaic	134
Classified information.....	135
Bordeaux to try when you’re feeling flush	137
The value end of the Bordeaux spectrum	138
Practical advice on drinking red Bordeaux.....	140
Bordeaux also comes in white.....	141
Burgundy: The Other Great French Wine.....	142
Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Gamay.....	143
Districts, districts everywhere	143
From the regional to the sublime	144
The Côte d’Or: The heart of Burgundy	146
Côte Chalonnaise: Bargain Burgundies	152
Chablis: Unique white wines	153
Mâcon: Affordable whites.....	154
Beaujolais: As delightful as it is affordable	155
The Hearty Rhônes of the Valley.....	158
Generous wines of the south	158
Noble wines of the north.....	159
The Loire Valley: White Wine Heaven.....	160
Alsace Wines: French, Not German.....	162

The South and Southwest	163
The Midi: France's bargain basement	164
Timeless Provence	164
Southwest France	165
Other French Wine Regions	166
Chapter 10: Italy, the Heartland of Vino	167
The Vineyard of Europe.....	167
The ordinary and the elite	169
Categories of Italian wine, legally speaking	170
Italy's wine regions.....	170
Reds Reign in Piedmont	172
Weekday reds	173
Whites in a supporting role.....	175
Tuscany the Beautiful.....	175
Chianti: Italy's great, underrated red	175
Monumental Brunello di Montalcino	177
Vino Nobile, Carmignano, and Vernaccia	179
Two more reds and a white.....	179
Super-Tuscans	180
Tre Venezie.....	182
Three gentle wines from Verona.....	182
The Austrian-Italian alliance	183
The far side: Friuli-Venezia Giulia.....	184
Snapshots from the Rest of Italy	185
Chapter 11: Spain, Portugal, Germany, and Beyond	187
Intriguing Wines from Old Spain	188
Rioja rules the roost.....	189
Ribera del Duero challenges	191
Priorato: Emerging from the past.....	191
Five other Spanish regions to watch.....	192
Portugal: More Than Just Port	194
Portugal's "green" white	195
Noteworthy Portuguese red wines	195
Germany: Europe's Individualist	197
Riesling and its cohorts.....	197
Germany's wine laws and wine styles.....	198
Germany's wine regions.....	200
Switzerland's Stay-at-Home Wines	203
Austria's Exciting Whites (and Reds)	204
The Re-emergence of Hungary	205
The Glory That Is Greece	207

Part IV: Discovering the New World of Wine.....211**Chapter 12: The Southern Hemisphere Arises213**

Australian Wine Power	215
Winemaking, grapes, and terroir	215
Australia's wine regions.....	216
The Rise of New Zealand	219
Chile Discovers Itself	221
Chile's wine regions	222
The face and taste of the wines	223
Argentina, a Major League Player	225
Regions and grapes	225
Names to know	226
South African Wine Safari.....	227
South Africa's principal wine regions	227
Steen, Pinotage, and company.....	228

Chapter 13: America, America231

The New World of American Wine	231
Homegrown ways	232
Playing by their own rules	232
California, USA.....	233
Where California wines grow	234
When the wines are good	236
Napa Valley: As Tiny as It Is Famous.....	236
The grapes of Napa	237
Who's who in Napa (and for what)	237
Down-to-Earth in Sonoma	241
Sonoma's AVAs	241
Sonoma producers and wines	242
Mendocino and Lake Counties	244
San Francisco Bay Area	245
Santa Cruz Mountains.....	246
What's New in Old Monterey	246
Thar's Wine in Them There Foothills	248
Contrasts in San Luis Obispo	249
Santa Barbara, Californian Paradise.....	250
Elsewhere in California.....	251
Oregon, A Tale of Two Pinots	252
Oregon's other Pinot	252
Who's who in Willamette Valley.....	253
Two other Oregon wine regions	254
Wine on the Desert: Washington State	255
Washington's wine regions	256
Who's who in Washington	257

The Empire State.....	259
Upstate, downstate	259
Who's who in New York	260
Oh, Canada.....	261
Ontario.....	261
British Columbia.....	262
 Part V: Wine's Exotic Face	263
 Chapter 14: Champagne and Other Sparklers	265
All That Glitters Is Not Champagne	266
Sparkling Wine Styles	267
How sweet is it?	267
How good is it?	268
How Sparkling Wine Happens.....	269
Tank fermentation: Economy of scale.....	269
Bottle fermentation: Small is beautiful	270
Taste: The proof of the pudding.....	271
Champagne and Its Magic Wines	272
What makes Champagne special.....	273
Non-vintage Champagne.....	273
Vintage Champagne	274
Blanc de blancs and blanc de noirs	276
Rosé Champagne	276
Sweetness categories.....	277
Recommended Champagne producers	277
Other Sparkling Wines.....	279
French sparkling wine.....	280
American sparkling wine	280
Italian spumante: Sweet or dry.....	282
Spanish sparkling wines (Cava).....	283
Southern stars	284
Buying and Serving Bubbly.....	284
 Chapter 15: Wine Roads Less Traveled: Fortified and Dessert Wines	287
Timing Is Everything.....	287
Sherry: A Misunderstood Wine	288
The Jerez triangle	288
The phenomenon of flor	289
Communal aging.....	289
Two makes twelve	290
Serving and storing Sherry	292
Recommended Sherries.....	293
Montilla: A Sherry look-alike.....	294

Marsala, Vin Santo, and the Gang	294
Port: The Glory of Portugal	295
Home, home on the Douro	295
Many Ports in a storm	296
Storing and serving Port.....	298
Recommended Port producers	299
Long Live Madeira.....	300
Timeless, indestructible, and tasty.....	300
Endless finish.....	301
Sauternes and the Nobly Rotten Wines.....	303
Sauternes: Liquid gold	303
Mining the gold	304
Recommended Sauternes.....	304
Letting baby grow.....	306
Sauternes look-alikes	306

Part VI: When You've Caught the Bug.....307

Chapter 16: Buying and Collecting Wine309

Wines That Play Hard to Get.....	309
Playing Hardball	310
Buying wines at auctions.....	310
Buying wine by catalog or Internet	312
Some U.S. wine stores worth knowing.....	313
Wine online.....	315
The Urge to Own: Wine Collecting	316
Balancing your inventory.....	317
Organization is peace of mind	320
A Healthy Environment for Your Wines	321
The passive wine cellar	321
If you can't be passive, be bullish	322
Wine caves for apartment dwellers	325

Chapter 17: Continuing Education for Wine Lovers327

Back to the Classroom.....	327
One wine school in action	328
Wine tastings of all shapes and sizes.....	329
When in Rome	330
Dinner with the winemaker	332
Visiting the wineries.....	333
Armchair Travel	334
Recommended books	334
Wine magazines and newsletters	337
Internet newsletters and interesting sites	338

Chapter 18: Describing and Rating Wine	341
Words Cannot Describe	341
When It's Your Turn to Speak	343
Organizing your thoughts	343
Writing tasting notes	344
Describing wine: Purism versus poetry	346
Rating Wine Quality	347
Chapter 19: Marrying Wine with Food	349
The Dynamics of Food and Wine	349
Tannic wines	351
Sweet wines	351
Acidic wines	351
High-alcohol wines	352
Birds of a Feather, or Opposites Attract?	352
The Wisdom of the Ages	354
 Part VII: The Part of Tens	 355
Chapter 20: Answers to Ten Common Questions about Wine	357
What's the best wine?	357
When should I drink this wine?	358
Is wine fattening?	358
What grape variety made this wine?	359
Which vintage should I buy?	359
Are there any wines without sulfites?	360
What are organic wines?	360
What is a wine expert?	361
How do I know when to drink the special older wines I've been keeping?	361
Do old wines require special handling?	362
Chapter 21: Ten Wine Myths Demystified	363
The best wines are varietal wines	363
Wine has to be expensive to be good	363
Dark-colored reds are the best red wines	364
White wine with fish, red with meat	364
Numbers don't lie	365
Vintages always matter/vintages don't matter	365
Wine authorities are experts	366
Old wines are good wines	367
Great wines are supposed to taste bad when they're young	367
Champagnes don't age	368

<i>Part VIII: Appendixes</i>	369
Appendix A: Pronunciation Guide to Wine Terms	371
Appendix B: Glossary of Wine Terms	377
Appendix C: Vintage Wine Chart: 1985–2004	385
<i>Index</i>	389

Introduction

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We love wine. We love the way it tastes, we love the fascinating variety of wines in the world, and we love the way wine brings people together at the dinner table. We believe that you and everyone else should be able to enjoy wine — regardless of your experience or your budget.

But we'll be the first to admit that wine people, such as many wine professionals and really serious connoisseurs, don't make it easy for regular people to enjoy wine. You have to know strange names of grape varieties and foreign wine regions. You have to figure out whether to buy a \$20 wine or an \$8 wine that seem to be pretty much the same thing. You even need a special tool to open the bottle once you get it home!

All this complication surrounding wine will never go away, because wine is a very rich and complex field. But you don't have to let the complication stand in your way. With the right attitude and a little understanding of what wine is, you can begin to buy and enjoy wine. And if, like us, you decide that wine is fascinating, you can find out more and turn it into a wonderful hobby.

Because we hate to think that wine, which has brought so much pleasure into our lives, could be the source of anxiety for anyone, we want to help you feel more comfortable around wine. Some knowledge of wine, gleaned from the pages of this book and from our shared experiences, will go a long way toward increasing your comfort level.

Ironically, what will *really* make you feel comfortable about wine is accepting the fact that you'll never know it all — and that you've got plenty of company.

You see, after you really get a handle on wine, you discover that *no one* knows everything there is to know about wine. There's just too much information, and it's always changing. And when you know that, you can just relax and enjoy the stuff.

About This Book

If you already have a previous edition of *Wine For Dummies*, you may be wondering whether you need this book. We believe that you do. We wrote

Wine For Dummies in 1995, and the world of wine has changed a lot since then. It has even changed since our third edition in 2003:

- ✔ Dozens of wineries have opened, a few have gone out of business, many have improved, and a few have slipped. Web sites on wine have come and gone. The wine auction scene bears almost no resemblance to what it was. Our recommendations reflect all these changes.
- ✔ Remember those prices that we listed for your favorite wines in our earlier editions? Well, big surprise: Just about all those prices have increased. But we point out some bargains, especially in Parts III, IV, and V.
- ✔ Several new vintages have occurred; we give you the lowdown on them throughout the book, and especially in our vintage chart in Appendix C.
- ✔ Great wine regions of yesterday, such as Spain, Hungary and Greece, have revitalized themselves, and we tell you about them. Also in this edition, we've updated the wine regions of Italy, California, Washington, Chile, and Argentina, among others.

We wrote this book to be an easy-to-use reference. You don't have to read it from cover to cover for it to make sense and be useful to you. Simply turn to the section that interests you and dig in.

Conventions Used in This Book

To help you navigate this book, we've established the following conventions:

- ✔ *Italic* is used for emphasis and to highlight new words or terms that are defined.
- ✔ `Monofont` is used for Web addresses.
- ✔ Sidebars, which are shaded boxes of text, consist of information that's interesting but not necessarily critical to your understanding of the topic.

Foolish Assumptions

We assume that you picked up this book for one of several reasons:

- ✔ You know very little about wine, but have a strong desire to learn more.
- ✔ You do know something about wine, more than most people, but you want to understand it better, from the ground up.

✔ You're already very knowledgeable but realize that you can always discover more or want to see whether we've made any mistakes so that you can brag to your friends that you caught us in a flagrant error. (Maybe you think that a particular vintage in Bordeaux wasn't nearly as good as we said, for example.)

We also assume that you don't have a lot of ego invested in wine — or maybe you do, and you're buying this book “for your sister-in-law.” And we assume that you are someone who doesn't appreciate a lot of mumbo-jumbo and jargonistic language about wine, and that you're someone who wants straight talk instead.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is a wine textbook of sorts, a user's manual, and a reference book, all in one. We've included very basic information about wine for readers who know nothing (or next to nothing) about wine — but we have also included tips, suggestions, and more sophisticated information for seasoned wine drinkers who want to take their hobby to a more advanced level. Depending on where you fall on the wine-knowledge gradient, different chapters will be relevant to you.

Part I: Getting to Know Wine

The five chapters in Part I get you up and sipping even if you've never tasted wine in your life. We tell you the basic types of wine, how to taste it, which grapes make wine, why winemaking matters, and how wines are named.

Part II: Wine and You: Up Close and Personal

This part deals with practical wine matters — in the wine shop, in the restaurant, and in your home. Find out how to handle snooty wine clerks, restaurant wine lists, and those stubborn corks. In addition, we show you how to decipher cryptic wine labels.

Part III: The “Old World” of Wine

Visit this part for a tour of the major wine regions of Europe: France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, and Greece.

Part IV: Discovering the New World of Wine

Here we adventure to Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Argentina, and South Africa, and then take a look at the major wine areas in the United States — California, Oregon, Washington, and New York — and end with a quick look at Canada's wines.

Part V: Wine's Exotic Face

Some of the most exciting and fascinating wines are in this part, including Champagne, Sherry, Port, Sauternes, and other exotic dessert wines.

Part VI: When You've Caught the Bug

You find a wealth of practical advice in this part, including recommendations on where and how you can buy wine beyond your local wine shops. We tell you how to describe and rate wines you taste, and how to pair food and wine. We also tell you how to store wine properly, and how to pursue your love and knowledge of wine beyond this book.

Part VII: The Part of Tens

What *For Dummies* book would be complete without this part? It's a synopsis of interesting tips and recommendations about wine to reinforce our suggestions earlier in the book. We're particularly happy to debunk ten prevalent myths about wine so that you can become a savvier consumer and a more satisfied wine drinker.

Part VIII: Appendixes

In Part VIII, we show you how to pronounce foreign wine words, and you can look up unfamiliar wine terms in our glossary. You can also consult our vintage chart to check out the quality and drinkability of your wine.

Icons Used in This Book



This odd little guy is a bit like the two-year-old who constantly insists on knowing “Why, Mommy, why?” But he knows that you may not have the same level of curiosity that he has. Where you see him, feel free to skip over the technical information that follows. Wine will still taste just as delicious.



Advice and information that will make you a wiser wine drinker or buyer is marked by this bull’s-eye so that you won’t miss it.



There’s very little you can do in the course of moderate wine consumption that can land you in jail — but you could spoil an expensive bottle and sink into a deep depression over your loss. This symbol warns you about common pitfalls.



Some issues in wine are so fundamental that they bear repeating. Just so you don’t think that we repeated ourselves without realizing it, we mark the repetitions with this symbol.



Wine snobs practice all sorts of affectations designed to make other wine drinkers feel inferior. But you won’t be intimidated by their snobbery if you see it for what it is. (And you can learn how to impersonate a wine snob!)



A bargain’s not a bargain unless you really like the outfit, as they say. To our tastes, the wines we mark with this icon are bargains because we like them, we believe them to be of good quality, and their price is low compared to other wines of similar type, style, or quality. You can also interpret this logo as a badge of genuineness, as in “This Chablis is the real deal.”



Unfortunately, some of the finest, most intriguing, most delicious wines are made in very small quantities. Usually, those wines cost more than wines made in large quantities — but that’s not the only problem; the real frustration is that those wines have very limited distribution, and you can’t always get your hands on a bottle even if you’re willing to pay the price. We mark such wines with this icon, and hope that your search proves fruitful.

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