

Palate & Structure Guide

What every wine tastes like — structure, mouthfeel, finish & drinking window · kazmicellars.com

Structure bars use ■■■■■ notation (1–5 scale). Tannin and acidity determine food pairing. Body and finish signal age-worthiness and complexity.

RED WINES

Cabernet Sauvignon

RED

Bordeaux

Power and precision — built to age, built for the table.

Tannin: ■■■■■ 5/5 Acidity: ■■■■ 3/5 Body: ■■■■■ 5/5 Sweetness: ■■■■ 1/5 Finish: ■■■■■ 5/5

Palate: Blackcurrant · Dark Plum · Cedar · Tobacco · Graphite · Dark Chocolate

Mouthfeel: Firm, drying tannins. Full body. Grippy on the gums. Finish: Very long — cedar, dark fruit, tobacco linger 45–60+ seconds.

Note: Most tannic mainstream grape. Needs protein, fat, or years to integrate. Drink: Best 5–15 yrs. Great examples 30–40 yrs.

Merlot

RED

Bordeaux

Plush and approachable — the welcoming side of Bordeaux.

Tannin: ■■■■ 3/5 Acidity: ■■■■ 2/5 Body: ■■■■■ 4/5 Sweetness: ■■■■ 1/5 Finish: ■■■■ 3/5

Palate: Plum · Black Cherry · Blueberry · Mocha · Chocolate · Bay Leaf

Mouthfeel: Round and velvety. Soft tannins. Full but approachable even young. Finish: Medium-long. Chocolate, plum, and soft spice.

Note: Softer tannins = most immediately drinkable Bordeaux variety. Drink: 3–8 yrs. Premium 15–25 yrs.

Pinot Noir

RED

Burgundy, France

Silky and expressive — the most delicate of the great reds.

Tannin: ■■■■ 2/5 Acidity: ■■■■■ 4/5 Body: ■■■■ 2/5 Sweetness: ■■■■ 1/5 Finish: ■■■■■ 4/5

Palate: Red Cherry · Raspberry · Strawberry · Cranberry · Forest Floor · Mushroom

Mouthfeel: Silky and elegant. Light to medium body. Low tannin, vibrant acidity. Finish: Long and perfumed. Red fruit, earth, dried flowers.

Note: Low tannin pairs with fish as well as meat. High acidity keeps it lively. Drink: Village 3–8 yrs. Premier/Grand Cru 10–25 yrs.

Syrah / Shiraz

RED

Northern Rhône / Australia

Bold and spicy — pepper, dark fruit, and smoked meat.

Tannin: ■■■■■ 4/5 Acidity: ■■■■ 3/5 Body: ■■■■■ 5/5 Sweetness: ■■■■ 1/5 Finish: ■■■■■ 5/5

Palate: Black Pepper · Dark Plum · Blackberry · Olive · Smoked Meat · Leather · Iron

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied. Firm tannins. Unmistakable pepper hits mid-palate.

Finish : Long and warming. Pepper, smoked meat, dark fruit.

Note : *Rotundone (the pepper molecule) is a chemical fact, not just a descriptor.*

Dri nk: 3–10 yrs. *Hermitage and Côte Rôtie 15–30+ yrs.*

Grenache / Garnacha

RED

Southern Rhône / Spain

Warm and spiced — high alcohol, soft tannins, dried herb complexity.

Tannin: **Acidity:** **Body:** **Sweetness** : **Finish:**

Palate: *Red Cherry · Raspberry · Orange Peel · White Pepper · Licorice · Dried Herbs*

Mouthfeel: Round and generous. Low tannin. Almost sweet texture from high alcohol.

Finish : Medium. Spice and dried herbs linger.

Note : *Aromatic complexity is key. Avoid overripe versions tasting purely of jam.*

Dri nk: 5–10 yrs. *Old vine 15+ yrs.*

Sangiovese

RED

Tuscany, Italy

Tart and savory — the acidity that makes Italian food sing.

Tannin: **Acidity:** **Body:** **Sweetness** : **Finish:**

Palate: *Sour Cherry · Tomato · Dried Herbs · Leather · Iron · Tobacco · Dusty Earth*

Mouthfeel: Medium body, firm tannins, very high acidity. Genuinely needs food.

Finish : Long and savory. Leather, tobacco, sour cherry.

Note : *High acid and tannin taste harsh alone but transform beautifully at the table.*

Dri nk: *Chianti 3–10 yrs. Brunello 10–30 yrs.*

Nebbiolo

RED

Piedmont, Italy

Massive structure wrapped in perfume — the most demanding Italian grape.

Tannin: **Acidity:** **Body:** **Sweetness** : **Finish:**

Palate: *Sour Cherry · Dried Rose · Licorice · Tobacco · Tar · Leather · Truffle*

Mouthfeel: Ferocious tannins when young. Very high acidity. Needs years to soften.

Finish : Extremely long. Tar, roses, dried fruit, tobacco — up to a full minute.

Note : *Patience of 15+ years is rewarded. One of wine's great transformations.*

Dri nk: *Minimum 8–10 yrs. Great Barolo 15–40 yrs.*

Tempranillo

RED

Rioja, Spain

Earthy and dried-fruit driven — Spain's elegant national grape.

Tannin: **Acidity:** **Body:** **Sweetness** : **Finish:**

Palate: *Dried Cherry · Leather · Tobacco · Tomato · Vanilla (American oak) · Cedar*

Mouthfeel: Medium body and tannins. American oak gives vanilla/coconut sweetness.

Finish : Medium. Tobacco, dried cherry, vanilla, leather.

Note American oak = vanilla/coconut. French oak = cedar/spice. Two very different wines.

Dri nk: Crianza 2–6 yrs. Gran Reserva 10–25 yrs.

Malbec

RED

Mendoza, Argentina

Dark and velvety — violet, dark plum, and smooth chocolate finish.

Tannin:  **Acidity:**  **Body:**  **Sweetness:**  **Finish:** 

Palate: Dark Cherry · Black Plum · Blueberry · Violet · Cocoa · Coffee · Black Pepper

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied and velvety. Tannins rounded and approachable even young.

Finish: Medium-long. Dark fruit, cocoa, and violet.

Note High altitude = more structured. Low altitude Mendoza = jammier.

Dri nk: Entry 1–5 yrs. Premium altitude 5–15 yrs.

Zinfandel / Primitivo

RED

California / Puglia

Jammy and high-octane — bold fruit, spice, and BBQ soul.

Tannin:  **Acidity:**  **Body:**  **Sweetness:**  **Finish:** 

Palate: Blackberry Jam · Dark Cherry · Black Pepper · Cinnamon · Anise · Chocolate

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied. High alcohol (14.5–16%) gives warmth. Can feel almost sweet.

Finish: Medium. Jammy fruit, pepper, spice.

Note Mix of fresh and dried fruit from uneven berry ripening — a feature, not a flaw.


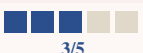


Dri nk: 3–8 yrs. Old vine 10–15 yrs.

Mourvèdre / Monastrell

RED

Bandol / Jumilla

Wild and meaty — the most savory and animal of the mainstream reds.

Tannin:  **Acidity:**  **Body:**  **Sweetness:**  **Finish:** 

Palate: Blackberry · Dark Plum · Black Olive · Leather · Smoked Meat · Iron

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied, firm chewy tannins. Savory, meaty quality is distinctive.

Finish: Long and savory. Leather, smoked meat, and iron linger.

Note In the right hands (Bandol) it is extraordinary. Very sensitive to terroir.

Dri nk: 5+ yrs minimum. Bandol 10–20 yrs.

Barbera

RED

Piedmont, Italy

Bright and juicy — the everyday Piedmontese table red.

Tannin:  **Acidity:**  **Body:**  **Sweetness:**  **Finish:** 

Palate: Sour Cherry · Red Plum · Blueberry · Dried Herbs · Light Leather

Mouthfeel: Medium body, very high acidity, low tannin. Juicy. Almost refreshing.

Finish: Short to medium. Bright cherry and herb.

Note High acid + low tannin = works with almost anything on the table.

Dri nk: 3–7 yrs. Best young and fresh.

Cabernet Franc

RED

Loire Valley / Bordeaux

Herbal and elegant — silkier than Cab Sauvignon with more freshness.

Tannin:  3/5 **Acidity:**  4/5 **Body:**  3/5 **Sweetness:**  1/5 **Finish:**  3/5

Palate: Red Currant · Raspberry · Graphite · Pencil Shaving · Green Herb · Violet

Mouthfeel: Medium body and tannins. Silkier and more aromatic than Cabernet Sauvignon. **Finish:** Medium. Herbaceous, red fruit, graphite.






Note: Develops extraordinary earthy complexity over time. Massively underrated. **Drink:** 3–10 yrs. Premium Loire 10–20 yrs.

Carménère

RED

Chile

Smoky and savory — dark fruit with a herbal, paprika backbone.

Tannin:  3/5 **Acidity:**  3/5 **Body:**  4/5 **Sweetness:**  1/5 **Finish:**  3/5

Palate: Dark Cherry · Black Plum · Smoked Paprika · Green Pepper · Chocolate

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied and smooth. Medium tannins. Herbal green note on the palate. **Finish:** Medium. Smoky spice and dark fruit.






Note: Sweet spot: dark fruit + savory spice. Underripe = green. Overripe = jammy. **Drink:** 3–8 yrs.

Aglianico

RED

Campania, Italy

Ancient and powerful — one of Italy's most tannic and age-worthy grapes.

Tannin:  5/5 **Acidity:**  5/5 **Body:**  5/5 **Sweetness:**  1/5 **Finish:**  5/5

Palate: Dark Cherry · Black Plum · Tobacco · Tar · Leather · Iron · Dark Chocolate

Mouthfeel: Enormous — massive tannins, very high acidity, full body. Virtually undrinkable young. **Finish:** Very long. Tar, leather, tobacco, iron. One of the great Italian finishes.

Note: Along with Nebbiolo — the two most structurally powerful Italian reds. **Drink:** Minimum 8 yrs. Great examples 15–30 yrs.

Nero d'Avola

RED

Sicily, Italy

Sun-drenched and bold — dark fruit, chocolate, and Sicilian warmth.

Tannin:  3/5 **Acidity:**  3/5 **Body:**  4/5 **Sweetness:**  1/5 **Finish:**  3/5

Palate: Dark Cherry · Black Plum · Dark Chocolate · Mocha · Licorice · Dried Herb

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied and warm. Medium tannins. Generous, round mid-palate. **Finish:** Medium-long. Dark chocolate, dried fruit, and spice.

Note: Sicily's answer to Syrah — more chocolate-mocha, less pepper. Undervalued. **Drink:** 3–10 yrs. Old vine 12–20 yrs.

WHITE WINES

Chardonnay

WHITE

Burgundy, France

The full spectrum — from electric Chablis to rich buttery Napa.



Palate: Lemon Curd · Green Apple · Peach · Butter · Cream · Toasted Hazelnut · Vanilla

Mouthfeel: Variable. Unoaked: lean, tense. Oaked: creamy, round. **Finish** : Medium-long. Oaked: butter, hazelnut. Unoaked: lemon, chalk, mineral.

Note : Butter = diacetyl (byproduct of malolactic fermentation). MLF = butter; No MLF = crisp. **Dri nk:** Basic 1–3 yrs. White Burgundy 5–15 yrs. Great Meursault 15–25 yrs.

Sauvignon Blanc

WHITE

Loire Valley / New Zealand

Vivid and zesty — the sharpest, most refreshing white at the table.



Palate: Grapefruit · Lime · Lemon Zest · Gooseberry · Passionfruit · Cut Grass · Green Herb

Mouthfeel: Light to medium. Very high acidity — makes the mouth water. Lean and crisp. **Finish** : Medium. Citrus, green herb, mineral. Marlborough: tropical + thiol character.

Note : Thiols give Sauvignon its passionfruit character — same sulfur compounds as in grapefruit peel. **Dri nk:** 1–3 yrs most. Sancerre 3–8 yrs.

Riesling

WHITE

Mosel, Germany / Alsace

Laser precision — the highest acid-to-sweetness balance in white wine.



Palate: Lime · Green Apple · Apricot · White Peach · Mineral · Petrol (aged) · Honey

Mouthfeel: Light but intense. Defining: tension between high acidity and residual sweetness. **Finish** : Very long. Mineral, citrus, apricot. Aged: petrol and honey.

Note : Acidity can balance 300+g/L sugar — a TBA never tastes cloying. Acidity is its superpower. **Dri nk:** Kabinett 5–20 yrs. Auslese/TBA 20–50+ yrs.

Pinot Gris / Pinot Grigio

WHITE

Alsace / Northern Italy

Two styles — crisp Italian lightness vs. rich, smoky Alsatian depth.



Palate: Pear · Green Apple · Lemon · White Peach (Alsace) · Honey (Alsace) · Almond

Mouthfeel: Italian: light, crisp, neutral. Alsatian: full-bodied, round, almost oily. **Finish** : Italian: short and clean. Alsatian: medium-long with smoke, honey.

Note : Same grape — opposite ends of the spectrum. Origin on the label matters. **Dri nk:** Italian 1–3 yrs. Alsatian 3–10 yrs. Grand Cru 10–20 yrs.

Gewurztraminer

WHITE

Alsace, France

Explosive and exotic — lychee and rose hit the palate like nothing else.

Tannin:		Acidity:		Body:		Sweetness:		Finish:	
Palate:	<i>Lychee · Rose Water · Ginger · Grapefruit · Apricot · Turkish Delight · Spice</i>								
Mouthfeel:	Full-bodied and almost oily. Low acidity. Off-dry to slightly sweet even when labelled dry.				Finish:	Medium. Spice, rose, exotic fruit. Slight bitter grapefruit pith at the very end.			
Note:	<i>Low acidity is both charm and weakness — needs equally intense food to match it.</i>				Drink:	<i>3–8 yrs. Vendange Tardive 10–20 yrs.</i>			

Viognier	WHITE	Northern Rhône — Condrieu							
<i>Lush and heady — stone fruit and florals with an almost oily richness.</i>									
Tannin:		Acidity:		Body:		Sweetness:		Finish:	
Palate:	<i>Apricot · Peach · Honeysuckle · Ginger · Orange Blossom · Cream · Mango</i>								
Mouthfeel:	Full-bodied with distinctive oily texture from glycerol. Low acidity.				Finish:	Medium. Stone fruit and florals. Sometimes bitter almond at the very end.			
Note:	<i>Texture comes from natural glycerol — same compound that creates legs on the glass.</i>				Drink:	<i>3–5 yrs. Condrieu 5–10 yrs.</i>			

Chenin Blanc	WHITE	Loire Valley / South Africa							
<i>Extraordinary range — bone dry to lusciously sweet, always great acidity.</i>									
Tannin:		Acidity:		Body:		Sweetness:		Finish:	
Palate:	<i>Quince · Green Apple · Honey · Lanolin · Chamomile · Dried Apricot · Wax</i>								
Mouthfeel:	Defining feature: acidity. Even very sweet styles have refreshing tension.				Finish:	Very long. Mineral, quince, honey. Aged Vouvray: 30–50 second finish.			
Note:	<i>Most age-worthy white grape. Same acidity that makes it lean when young protects it for decades.</i>				Drink:	<i>Dry 5–20 yrs. Sweet (Quarts de Chaume) 20–50+ yrs.</i>			

Albariño / Alvarinho	WHITE	Rías Baixas / Vinho Verde							
<i>Saline and citrusy — the ocean on the palate.</i>									
Tannin:		Acidity:		Body:		Sweetness:		Finish:	
Palate:	<i>Lemon · Lime · Grapefruit · White Peach · Saline · Almond · Mineral</i>								
Mouthfeel:	Light to medium body. Good acidity. Distinctive saline, briny quality.				Finish:	Medium. Citrus, almond, saline mineral. Sea-spray stays through to the finish.			
Note:	<i>Saline character is genuinely terroir-driven — Atlantic soil chemistry shapes the wine.</i>				Drink:	<i>1–4 yrs for freshness. Premium 5–10 yrs.</i>			

Grüner Veltliner	WHITE	Wachau & Kamptal, Austria							
<i>Peppery and mineral — Austria's unmistakable signature on the palate.</i>									
Tannin:		Acidity:		Body:		Sweetness:		Finish:	
Palate:	<i>White Pepper (the defining taste) · Grapefruit · Lemon · Green Herb · Mineral</i>								

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body. Good acidity. White pepper is tasted on the palate.

Finish : Medium. White pepper, mineral, citrus — the most distinctive white wine finish.

Note : *Rotundone* — same molecule as Syrah's black pepper. Austria's terroir signature.

Dri nk: *Federspiel* 1–3 yrs. *Smaragd* 5–15 yrs. Great examples 15–25 yrs.

Assyrtiko

WHITE

Santorini, Greece

Electric and saline — volcanic intensity with extraordinary acidity.

Tannin: 1/5 **Acidity:** 5/5 **Body:** 3/5 **Sweetness** : 1/5 **Finish:** 4/5

Palate: *Lemon · Lime · Grapefruit · Saline · Volcanic Ash · Mineral · Flint*

Mouthfeel: Medium body, very high acidity — almost electric. Distinct saline, rocky quality.

Finish : Long and mineral. Volcanic mineral and saline persist.

Note : *Volcanic pumice soil gives an ashy, saline character unreplicable anywhere else.*

Dri nk: 3–8 yrs. *Barrel-aged Nykteri* 8–15 yrs.

ROSE

Rosé — Provence Style

ROSE

Provence, France

Delicate and dry — fresh strawberry, mineral, and Mediterranean elegance.

Tannin: 1/5 **Acidity:** 3/5 **Body:** 1/5 **Sweetness** : 1/5 **Finish:** 2/5

Palate: *Strawberry · Raspberry · White Peach · Citrus · Dried Herb · Mineral · Rose Water*

Mouthfeel: Light-bodied, dry, refreshing. Very clean and crisp. Almost no tannin.

Finish : Short to medium. Citrus, mineral, fresh herb.

Note : *Pale color = intentional quality marker in Provence. Minimal skin contact is the standard.*

Dri nk: *Drink within 1–3 years for freshness.*

SPARKLING

Champagne

SPARKLING

Champagne, France

Effervescent and complex — brioche, citrus, and the finest bubbles in wine.

Tannin: 1/5 **Acidity:** 5/5 **Body:** 2/5 **Sweetness** : 2/5 **Finish:** 4/5

Palate: *Lemon · Green Apple · Brioche · Toast · Cream · Chalk · White Cherry · Almond*

Mouthfeel: Effervescence carries flavors differently than still wine. High acidity balanced by dosage.

Finish : Long for sparkling. Brioche, citrus, chalk. Prestige cuvées: extraordinary.

Note : *Fine mousse (tiny bubbles) = quality indicator. Serve at 8–10°C.*

Dri nk: *NV within 3 yrs. Vintage 8–20 yrs. Prestige cuvées 15–30 yrs.*

DESSERT

Sauternes

DESSERT

Bordeaux, France

Liquid gold — botrytis creates sweetness balanced by extraordinary acidity.

Tannin:  1/5 Acidity:  4/5 Body:  5/5 Sweetness:  5/5 Finish:  5/5

Palate: Apricot Jam · Honey · Peach · Crème Brûlée · Vanilla · Saffron · Ginger

Mouthfeel: Very sweet but never cloying — high acidity cuts through. Unctuous and viscous. Finish: Extremely long. Honey, apricot, saffron. Great Sauternes can finish for minutes.

Note: Botrytis concentrates sugar, acidity, and glycerol simultaneously — sweet but never flabby. Drink: 5–20 yrs. Great vintages (d'Yquem) 50–100 yrs.

Tokaji Aszú

DESSERT

Tokaj, Hungary

Apricot and fire — ancient sweetness with volcanic mineral spine.

Tannin:  1/5 Acidity:  5/5 Body:  4/5 Sweetness:  5/5 Finish:  5/5

Palate: Apricot · Orange Marmalade · Honey · Ginger · Roasted Almond · Saffron · Volcanic Mineral

Mouthfeel: Sweet and viscous with vibrant, almost electric acidity. Distinctive orange peel bitterness. Finish: Very long. Apricot, honey, mineral, spice. Volcanic note distinguishes Tokaji from all others.

Note: Puttonyos system measures sweetness (3–6+). Each level = different sugar and concentration. Drink: 5–20 yrs. Essencia 50–100+ yrs.


FORTIFIED

Ruby Port

FORTIFIED

Douro Valley, Portugal

Dark and sweet — fortified fruit with rich chocolate and dried berry.

Tannin:  3/5 Acidity:  2/5 Body:  5/5 Sweetness:  5/5 Finish:  4/5

Palate: Dark Cherry · Blackberry · Chocolate · Plum · Dried Fig · Coffee · Cinnamon

Mouthfeel: Full-bodied and sweet with significant tannin. Warming from 20% ABV. Viscous. Finish: Long. Dark fruit, chocolate, warming spirit.

Note: Fortified mid-fermentation with grape spirit — stops fermentation, locks in grape sugar. Drink: Ruby: drink now. LBV 5–10 yrs. Vintage Port 20–50 yrs.

Tawny Port

FORTIFIED

Douro Valley, Portugal

Nutty and oxidative — caramel, dried fruit, and rancio complexity.






Tannin:  2/5 Acidity:  2/5 Body:  4/5 Sweetness:  4/5 Finish:  4/5

Palate: Caramel · Toffee · Dried Apricot · Walnut · Orange Peel · Coffee · Rancio

Mouthfeel: Silkier than Ruby. Nutty and complex. Sweetness balanced by nutty, bitter rancio. Finish: Long and nutty. Caramel, roasted nuts, dried fruit. Rancio = distinctive bitter finish.

Note: Oxidative aging transforms Ruby to Tawny — color shifts from ruby to amber, fruit to caramel. Drink: Ready when bottled. Once opened, refrigerate — drink within 3 months.

STRUCTURE BARS — WHAT EACH ELEMENT MEANS

	Tannin:	1=silky/Pinot Noir → 5=mouth-coating/Nebbiolo. Drying grip from grape skins and oak. Tannin needs protein and fat to integrate.
	Acidity:	1=flat/Grenache → 5=piercing/Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Nebbiolo. Makes the mouth water. Determines food-friendliness and age-worthiness.
	Body:	1=light/Provence Rosé → 5=full/Cabernet, Amarone, Port. Weight and texture — like skim milk through cream.
	Sweetness:	1=dry/most reds+dry whites → 5=dessert and Port. Off-dry wines score 2–3. Not the same as fruit flavor intensity.
	Finish:	1=fades immediately → 5=flavors evolve 45–90 seconds. One of the most reliable quality indicators in all of wine.