



PRINT INSTRUCTIONS

USING YOUR CRUSH COURSE© TASTING TOOLS

Crush Course© **Wine Evaluation Sheet** + Crush Course© **Wine Tasting Mat**

PRINT INSTRUCTIONS:

Click the blue bars on the “download-tools” page to download or print your materials.

6-Ring Tasting Mat: Formatted for LEGAL paper, but 11x17 works. Print one per-person. Use WHITE paper to assure a neutral background for assessing Color and Appearance.

6-Wine Evaluation Sheet: Formatted for LETTER paper. Print one per-person. WHITE paper recommended. Hold it under/behind your glass for an instant neutral background!

USING THE TOOLS:

THE CRUSH COURSE© WINE TASTING MAT:

The **Tasting Mat** accommodates a flight up to 6 wines. Use it for your next tasting party or just for you, to give structure to your own tasting discovery or self-study.

- The white background from the paper is in itself a tool to help you assess the true color and depth of the wine.
- Labelled A-F, the mat is perfect for Blind Tastings (when the wines are unknown). But use it for all your tastings. For non-blind tastings, write wine name or other identifier (appellation, producer, or variety) on the mat at each circle.
- Plan your tasting order from left to right (counter-clockwise) around the sheet
- Set the tasting mats as a place-setting per person. Set an empty wine glass on each ring.
- Pour the wines, being careful to pour the correct wine in the correct A-F glass for each tasting mat! It’s a surprisingly easy to notice too late you’ve been holding (pouring) the wrong wine!
 - You can invest in a wine pour spot if you like, but those thin “Drip-stop” silver pour discs are handy for pouring ease. Amazon sells some for about 70c each for a pack of 10.

THE CRUSH COURSE © WINE EVALUATION SHEET:

The Crush Course© **Wine Evaluation Sheet** is designed for professionals and enthusiasts alike. It gives structure to your tastings using the same proven 5-step tasting method pros use to evaluate wine.

Assessing a wine requires all your senses. Each of the 5 steps, taken in order left to right, draws your attention to a sense at a time, to reveal not only descriptors, but valuable clues and information about the wine. When you use the sheet often, you apply the same sensory evaluation method consistently across all wines. It will improve your ability to taste wine, describe it, and assess for quality.

FOLLOW THE 5-STEP TASTING ORDER the pros use

LET'S TASTE!

- From left to right, follow column headings to assess each wine in 5 categories. Jot your notes
- Complete entire 5-step tasting process for *Wine A* before advancing to *Wine B*

The 5 Steps to tasting wine

1. **Appearance** (What you SEE)
2. **Nose** (What you SMELL)
3. **Palate 1 – Structure** (What you TASTE in terms of FEEL: Texture, Mouthfeel, the 5 Basic Tastes)
4. **Palate 2 – Flavors** (What you TASTE in terms of FLAVORS and finish)
5. **Overall Impression** (What you SAY. Your final Assessment & Summary of the wine)

FOR EACH STEP – What are we assessing? What goes in each box? ...

- The TOP of each column lists the **elements** to evaluate. Ex, Under *NOSE*, describe the wine's *Condition*, its dominant *Aromas*, and the *Intensity* of those aromas
- The BOTTOM of each column gives **evaluative, descriptive terms** per element. Use them as a guide. But don't let these few terms limit you! Jot down anything that comes to your mind that's meaningful to you.
- This progressive method and these terms are a standard for assessing all wines similarly. Let them guide your analysis for structure, consistency and learning, but don't let them limit you. Don't worry about using "correct" terms when taking your notes. Use your own words.
- And don't worry too much about detail. Even very broad descriptive terms really say something about the wine – about what YOU find in the wine – and that's what's most important.
- Reserve the left column for wine name, appellation, vintage, price

EXAMPLES – Things to look for in Step #2 - NOSE:

- Under the element, *Condition* (top of column), does the wine smell *clean* or *faulty* (bottom of column)? Under *Intensity*, would you describe the aroma as *light*, or *medium*, or *intense*?
- Under *Aroma*, are you noticing *fruit* and *spice*? Or maybe the wine leads with more *vegetal* and *herbal* aromas. These broad findings give you great clues to the grape/wine itself or the growing region, help you differentiate wine style, and key in on your personal flavor preferences.
- Use this same method (starting with broad terms) to identify *Flavors* too (found in Step 4: PALATE 2)
- With practice, see if you can get more specific – what *kind* of fruit are you noticing? (is the fruit citrus? Tree fruit? Tropical?). Identifying these broad groupings of fruit is hugely helpful.
- You might also note the *quality* of the fruit – is the fruit you’re noting more fresh fruit, ripe, overripe, or baked? If the flavor reminds you more of the rind or peel of the fruit rather than the flesh or juice itself, jot it down.

THE PROS KNOW:

No need to name specific individual fruits or herbs. “Spice” is very informative! Getting a bit more specific, noting “baking spices” vs. “pepper” is powerful. Similarly, if you notice loads of fruit (over herbs or oak), write “fruit.” If you notice the fruit seems like “Bramble Berries, that’s huge and all you really need! If you happen to note the berries seem like tart red ones rather than dark (blue/black) ones – that’s gravy! All are clues to grape, region, and learning your wine preferences. But don’t struggle to name the exact berry, or it’s a Meyer vs. Eureka lemon or Thyme (vs. Rosemary) unless it really hits you. “Green Herbs” will do. Generalities tell MOST of a wine’s story!

SO WHAT ELSE can you write in each box?

Anything that comes to mind! Your grandmother’s powder room? A wet sidewalk on a hot day? Warm apple cobbler? Cut grass? Even “Pow!” “Zippy,” “SweetTarts candies” or “Dr. Pepper.” Use your *sense memory* and life experiences to describe what you see, smell, feel, taste in your own words. This helps you recall the wine later, in your own terms, based on what’s meaningful to you.

For More on the 5-Steps to Wine Tasting

... and what to look for at each step

Read my ***5 Steps to Tasting Like A Pro***

<https://crushcoursewine.com/how-to-taste-wine-like-a-pro-the-5-step-crush-course-guide/>

WANT MORE? ...

LET'S TASTE LIVE!

Want to Sniff, Swirl, Sip, and Speak wine with ease?

Want to learn wine tasting with friends?

Need to polish your deductive tasting skills?

Schedule a private tasting class for your group:

Intro to Wine Tasting -or- Tasting Wine Like a Pro -or- Deductive Blind Tasting

Plus many more wine topics available for you or your group!

<https://crushcoursewine.com/seminar-topics/>

<https://crushcoursewine.com/services/>

Watch your inbox for upcoming virtual classes, new wine learnings, wine recommendations and alerts to my latest postings in ***Crush Notes***

Mary Beth

Your Crush Course Guide

*LEARN * TASTE * DISCOVER*

