

DESCRIPTIVE CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

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INTRODUCTION TO TASTING



This volume begins by introducing the nine experts in wine tasting who will be accompanying us throughout the book and providing a personal view of each of the subject areas we explore. They are Tim Atkin, MW, Sarah Jane Evans, MW, Luis Gutiérrez, Julia Harding, MW, Luca Maroni, Thomas Matthews, José Peñín, and James Tidwell, MS, a firmament of stars who generously illuminate the pages of this book.

The Sapiens method always follows the same first steps, regardless of the subject matter. It is time, therefore, to define the subject of study: wine tasting with a focus on the sommelier's art. It is also necessary to define the lexical and semantic aspects of this subject: What exactly is tasting? How and by whom was this term defined? Is tasting the same as degustation?

We conclude the chapter with a general comparative study of tastings: what is tasted, how it is tasted, who tastes, similarities and differences between tastings, etc.

CHAPTER 2

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TASTING AS AN ACTIVITY

Actions lead to activities—in our case, tasting wine and wine tasting. Activities have a purpose, which can be economic, recreational, philosophical, nutritional, etc. What is the purpose of wine tasting?

The intention of the Sapiens method is to place any object or activity within an overall context to ascertain the areas of life where it has the greatest influence. We pose questions of a broad nature: Is wine tasting a necessary activity? Who benefits from this activity?

Wine tasting is both a physical and mental action, not only because it is concerned with instinctively perceiving a liquid, but because there is also an entire mechanism and a set of cognitive processes involved: we compare a wine with others, we think about why it tastes the way it does, we decide whether to purchase it, etc.



CHAPTER 3

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WINE-TASTING CLASSIFICATIONS

We classify in order to facilitate the understanding of any object. Bringing order to reality makes it simpler to memorize content and to record and connect information. For this reason, classifications are an essential part of the Sapiens method. This chapter presents 11 different classifications, grouped into no less than 74 classification criteria that will enable

us to parametrize a wine tasting: by the motivation for the person hosting the tasting, by where it takes place, by the available information, by the profile of the individuals attending the tasting, by the number of wines tasted, etc. This chapter concludes with five paradigmatic examples that will help us to apply the different classifications.



CHAPTER 4

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TASTING TYPES

After analyzing criteria and categories that enable the classification of tastings, we ascertain the different types of tastings. These are paradigmatic examples of this activity that share the same characteristics. A total of 17 tasting types are studied in depth: contextualization tasting, showroom tasting, verification tasting, survival tasting, grape tasting to determine when to harvest, tasting to guide winemaking, *en primeur* tasting, bottle-quality control tasting, tasting linked to the purchase of other products, tasting to ensure

regulatory compliance, comparative tastings of the competition, wine competitions, tasting for wine writers, wine taster competitions, recreational tasting, educational tasting, and academic and scientific tasting. The characteristics and particularities of all of these are explained: the people involved, typical infrastructures, how the event is held, real examples, etc. In addition, the chapter ends with a section devoted to sensometry, or wine tastings to obtain objective sensory data.



CHAPTER 5

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HOW IS A TASTING PROJECT CONDUCTED?

Tasting is an activity generally conducted by humans for a commercial or promotional purpose. A system of tasks and processes is required to enable a wine tasting to be performed correctly. According to the Sapiens method, this is organized under the general planning, organization, and operation system (GPOOS). This chapter deals with the GPOOS for a wine tasting: leaders, strategy, brand, determining factors, communication, purchasing, management and administration, budget monitoring, transportation, safety, cleanliness, mise en place, event staging, and post-tasting follow-up.



CHAPTER 6

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GENERAL TASTING RESOURCES

Resources are all the elements, in any form, that are required and used to meet all the needs derived from an activity—in our case, wine tasting. Human resources encompass the people who offer or supervise the tasting session, as well as those who serve the wines. In this respect, this chapter provides a detailed explanation of how standard tasting panels are formed and their particularities.

Moreover, in addition to the actual wines, wine tasting also requires knowledge, infrastructure, and financial and technical resources. A major part of this chapter is devoted to specific wine-tasting techniques. We will provide an in-depth explanation of the preparation of wines at the appropriate temperature and of how temperature affects aromatic and taste perception. We will also examine other basic wine-tasting techniques: how to prepare the wine for a blind tasting, double decanting, the order of wines, and *glassing*.



CHAPTER 7

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TOOLS

Tools refer to the broad range of concepts and resources that facilitate an activity. These include everything from physical items (for example, a decanter) to the software used to record data from the tasting sessions. However, if there is one tool that has an overriding influence on the tasting process, it is undoubtedly the wine glass. This chapter deconstructs the wine glass and examines it from every possible angle: the materials, techniques, and processes involved in its manufacture; the step-by-step process of making a glass by molding and blowing; a close-up of the bowl of a wine glass; the physical and chemical aspects of how aromas are released by the sides of the glass; and wine swirling (orbital shaking) and its atomization through the entry of air.



CHAPTER 8

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SENSORY ANALYSIS METHODS

The wine-tasting method is an intangible resource used by sommeliers and tasters to organize the information they want to extract. It is a standardized set of guidelines that follows a sensory protocol and results in an assessment. This chapter explains and illustrates 16 different methods that were created through the effort, research, and talent of companies and individuals. Creating a method is undeniably the pinnacle of innovation in wine tasting and provides a framework of knowledge for other wine tasters.

The methods discussed in this chapter are those of the Association de la Sommellerie Internationale (ASI), the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV), the Court of Master Sommeliers (CMS), the five methods of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the consensus method, and the methods developed by the Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET), Outlook Wine (OW), Luca Maroni, Gerard Basset, BLIC, and finally, by Phillip Hills.

CHAPTER 9

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THE WINE-TASTING EXPERIENCE



During a wine tasting, the offering coexists with the experience; in other words, the customer's experience is determined by what is offered to them. This can be likened to communicating vessels. However, we assert that there are as many experiences as there are people, because each individual will experience the wine tasting in a different way depending on the determining factors: prior knowledge, mood, sensory capacity, etc. To illustrate this concept, we describe a wine tasting as experienced by two different tasters: a renowned sommelier with extensive experience and a passionate but novice assistant sommelier. These two individuals will guide us through all the stages of a wine-tasting session: invitation, accommodation, explanation of the tasting session, service and description of the first wine, continuation of the explanation process, debate and questions, closing and acknowledgments, and, finally, the post-tasting follow-up.