

Bottle Variation

By Moe

Why do two wines taste so different when they are supposed to be the same? A likely possibility is simply that one of them is from a bad bottle (cooked or corked). A cooked bottle of wine has had enough temperature applied to it to raise the pressure within the bottle and force some wine to sip out through the cork; as the bottle cools, air replaces the wine and adversely affects the condition of the wine. A corked bottle of wine has a musty or moldy smell not unlike that of your teenager's used gym socks. It is mainly caused by a compound named 2,4,6-trichloroanisole (TCA). Some people claim that less than 1 part per million in a bottle will send you running to rinse out your mouth. Due to TCA, we will all someday be unscrewing bottles instead of uncorking.

Of course, there are many other reasons that wines taste different, and some of them have to do with you or your environment. Here are a few reasons: You have a cold, you were chewing gum, the food was too spicy, one time you had it with steak and another time with halibut, one time you had it with food, and another time by itself, or perhaps one bottle was allowed to breathe (opened ahead) longer than the other.

The temperature of the wine also plays a part in how a wine tastes. Excessively warm wine tastes mushy, and excessively cold wine loses its fruit flavor. Also, pay attention to the wine you're drinking, you may think you are drinking the same wine, when, in fact, you are drinking wine from different years or different sub-labels (i.e., you had a single vineyard Kistler, but not the same single vineyard).

Now, suppose that two bottles have been side by side for their entire existence. There is no cork problem, the food is the same, they were opened at the same moment and everything about them is exactly the same. Although not very likely, they may still taste different. When a wine is bottled (especially unfiltered), there may be different amounts of sediment in each bottle, which will change the intensity of the wine over time. So the next time you have two bottles of the same wine, remember they are only cousins, not clones.

Moe's Fine Wines' Pick of the Month

2001 Torre Muga Spanish Red Wine

This slightly spicy Spanish blend of mostly Tempranillo was a blockbuster from the day it was born (picked), but will significantly improve with a little more time in the bottle. The taste of black cherry, plum and raspberry will fill your nose and mouth. The nose and gorgeous purple color of this completely unfiltered wine may hypnotize you such that you may not notice the tannins that will help this wine stand up for the next 15 years. Drink this with some nice paella or a rack of lamb.

Remember to share.

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