

DESSERT WINES



Dessert wines blend perfectly with sweeter foods or can be consumed without garnishes, aiding digestion and giving the taster great pleasure.

In the category and find wines that naturally have high concentrations of sugar and can be red, white, rosé or even sparkling. In addition, they can be full-bodied or light, young or aged and bringing an incredible array to disposition.

People confuse sweet wines with dessert wines, as both have striking sweetness. However, there are very distinct characteristics that include the elaboration techniques up to the aromatic load and the perceived flavors and in relation to the flavor. Dessert wines have more intense sweetness and are more concentrated than soft wines. Made with the natural sugar of the fruit itself and in dessert wines is added exogenous sugar at the end of winemaking.

The Techniques Used in Dessert Wine Making

There are some methods used in making dessert wines that give distinct flavors, aromas and structures.

Late Grape Harvest



In the late harvest method, the grapes are left on the vine and harvested after the normal ripening time. Thus, grapes lose water and concentrate more sugars and make the must very sweet and acidic, being a method widely used in New World countries.

Grape Passification



In the pacification method the concept is the same as the late harvest method, but the grapes are harvested at normal ripeness and dehydrated on sunlit and ventilated mats, the method being used in Europe and especially in Italy.

Noble Grape Rot

In the method of noble rot and although the name seems unattractive the process is curious. The wine is the result of grapes attacked by a fungus called *Botrytis cinerea*, where the skin of the grapes is broken and allowing the water to evaporate.

The *Botrytis cinerea* fungus micro-punctures the fruit and removes all the water and keeps only sugars and acids and what is called rot. The method is used on the large dessert wine labels produced in France and Hungary.



A good example of the noble rot method is Sauternes wine and considered one of the best dessert wines in the world is produced south of Bordeaux in France with the Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and Muscadelle varieties, attacked by the fungus *Botrytis Cinerea*.



Grape Freeze



The freezing method occurs in certain places where vines are hit by snow and grapes still at the plant's foot are frozen. The water naturally present in the fruits is crystallized and during crushing the extracted must presents an incomparable richness of sugary compounds. The phenomenon is more common in Germany and Canada, being known as Ice Wine.

Natural Ice Wines require a severe temperature and by law at least -8°C in Canada and -7°C in Germany. Temperatures need to occur sometime after the grapes ripen which means that the grapes can stay on the vine for several months after the normal harvest. If the freezing is not fast enough the grapes can rot and if it is too severe no must can be extracted.

Wine Fortification



The fortification method initially consists of a process similar to that of dry wine, but alcoholic fermentation is stopped long before the sugars run out. Thus, the goal is only achieved by adding a brandy known as vinous alcohol and the wine remains sweet, because yeast cannot completely consume sugar. The method is widely used in Portugal, Spain and Italy.

Grapes Used for Dessert Wines

The grapes used vary by winery location. Thus, in Bordeaux, Semillon is used, in Hungary, Furmint, in Germany, Riesling, in the New World, Chardonnay and in Portugal, Touriga Nacional.

Dessert Wine Harmonization

As for the body - the first step is the consistency of both dessert and drink, as they must be proportionate. So, for lighter pastries like jams and fresh fruit pies the wine should also be light. The opposite also happens and in desserts with higher content of sugars and fats such as those containing sour cream, yolks and condensed milk the wine should be fuller.

As for sweetness - the rule is clear and wine should always be sweeter than dessert. However, the taste should not stand out from the dessert served or should complement the taste to maximize the flavors and provide a great experience.

In order not to get too sweet you can always serve cold wine, because sugar is less evident and makes the combination even more harmonious.

The Wines Suitable for Each Type of Dessert



With fruit - For cheesecake with fruit syrup, fruit salads and apple pie you can pair with light wines with the same sugar content and citrus notes as a Muscat wine.

With chocolate - for brownies, mousses and chocolate pies the ideal is to invest in full-bodied wines with a striking flavor. Thus, whites are discarded and Port wine is a good

indication.

With dulce de leche - the desserts that have the dulce de leche as protagonists are extremely sweet and to harmonize and break the sweetness the most acidic wines are a good indication as an Ice Wine.

With coffee - tiramisu, frapuccino and other desserts that have coffee as an ingredient deserve wines that have similar flavors and characteristics like Marsala wine.



With milk and eggs - the puddings, delicacies and brulee creams have velvety textures and soft touches and to harmonize if they should be consumed accompanied by late harvest wines.

