

~~21~~ ways to get more out of a bottle of wine

24

*The World's
Shortest*

*Wine Book**

**maybe...*
**THE MISSING
CHAPTERS**

Simon Woods

The World's Shortest Wine Book:

The Missing Chapters...

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Introduction

Hope you're enjoying The World's Shortest Wine Book. The fact that you're reading this tells me that you're aware that I wrote three more chapters which for a variety of reasons I excluded from the book. Here they are - enjoy...



By the way, you did buy a copy of The World's Shortest Wine Book, didn't you? If not, shame on you. Read all about it at <http://www.simonwoods.com/shortest>, then go and buy a copy!

Wine is nice, but it is not medicine

I'm not going to go all scientific on you and outline the many studies citing the health benefits of wine because a) I'd probably miss a few of them out, and b) I'd probably get told off for ignoring the many other studies in which wine doesn't come out so well.

It seems like every week, a news story appears that either cites wine as the new wonder drug or condemns it for causing various diseases. So what's the truth? Is wine good for you or bad for you?

The answer is 'yes'. Throughout history, there have been tales of both the positive and negative effects of fermented grape juice, and I can't see any reason for that to cease in the near future. For example, one part of the Bible recommends someone to drink some wine to sooth their poorly tummy, while another part says, 'Wine is a mocker (and beer a brawler).'

My overall view is best expressed in an old Russian proverb that says, 'Drink a glass of wine after your soup and you steal a rouble from the doctor.' In other words, little and often is the way to go. It's far better to drink two or three bottles of wine over the course of a week than the same amount in a binge session followed by six days of abstinence.

I'm also going to break the news to you that sadly, despite being made from grapes, wine doesn't count as one of your Five-A-Day fruit & veg. In fact, while wine can help you digest your food (it's them probiotics, don't you know), in itself, it has hardly any nutritional value.

And it's not great news on the calorie front either. The number of calories in a standard bottle of wines is in the 600-700 range, depending on the alcohol level and sweetness – so port and other sweet fortified wines can get to around 1200 per bottle.

But if you eat sensibly, most diets can accommodate a couple of glasses a day without skimping on other foods. And not many foods are as enjoyable or as sociable as wine. So I say fill up that glass and keep stealing those roubles.

PS A final word about sulphites. They occur naturally in fermentation and most winemakers add extra as a preservative, with whites getting more than reds. They're often blamed – incorrectly – for causing headaches. If you think your throbbing head is a result of that glass of wine you drank, ask yourself whether you have the same reaction to eating a handful of dried apricots, which if anything have more sulphites than a standard glass of wine. If you do, then blame the sulphites. If you don't, then look elsewhere for the cause – and have another glass of wine.



Purging those stains

This book's supposed to be about ways to get more out of a bottle of wine, but what if you've got too much out of that bottle? So much that you've spilled it down your front or on the carpet?

Here I defer to my father-in-law who spent a lifetime in the flooring business. Some people – if it's red wine – pour white wine on the stain. No, say the F-I-L. Some people swear by salt, as in pour it on the stain, wait and then vacuum it up. Not really, say the F-I-L. And some people bring out the popular cleaner of the moment and spray it on. Ish, say the F-I-L.

His solution? Just plain water, but lots of it, and as soon as possible. I've seen him in action. He sticks the item of clothing under the cold tap, or pours large amounts on the carpet and then dabs the stain – no scrubbing – with a clean towel. Then he does it again. And again. And again, until it's clean. It might interrupt proceedings for a while, but the morning after, his shirt/carpet is clean.

While we're on the subject of stains, a word about oral hygiene. Deeply coloured red wines cling to your tongue and teeth, and after a few glasses, you can look like an extra from a bad homage to *Twilight*.

Best way to deal with it? Avoid it in the first place. Have a sip of water in between every sip of wine, and not only will the staining be less, but you'll reduce your chances of having a hangover.

If your mouth has turned blue-y black, whatever you do, don't rush for the brush. The acid in the wine will have softened the enamel on your teeth, and vigorous brushing puts you in danger of stripping it off.

It's better to chew some gum after a big wine session, as the saliva you produce will neutralise that acidity. No, it won't turn your teeth pearly white, but isn't it better to have stained teeth for an evening than sensitive teeth for a month?

When you do eventually brush, do your tongue as well as your teeth – it'll diminish the chances of you waking up with that dry-bottom-of-parrot-cage mouth.



Taste as much as possible Part 3

I don't think it's just me that has encountered this situation. It's usually at a wedding or a party where someone's hired a family-friendly DJ – in other words, one who's not into Rammstein, Anthony Hegarty and oOoOO (who play witch house music, if you're not familiar with their work). No, this DJ has a catalogue spanning several decades, which occasionally veers towards the rebellious ('Oooh, Green Day') but generally settles for comfortable fare in the Britney-Whitney-Gene Pitney mould.

Then suddenly a fast drum beat is heard, followed by Chubby Checker's invitation: 'Come on everybody, clap your hands, are you lookin' good?' Cue the dance-floor filling up with people who should know better swivelling their hips to 'Let's Twist Again.'

All is fine for the first half-minute or so. Things start to go amiss when the 'round and round and up and down we go again' bit kicks in. Most people manage the 'down' bit, but not a few struggle with the 'up'. And those who do manage to get vertical suddenly start clutching their sides. For this is a dance that isn't called 'The Twist' – its real name is 'The Stitch.' By the end of verse 2, only the fit and the foolish remain – everyone else has retired to the bar/toilet/first aid post.

What's all this got to do with wine? Well, apologies for the grammar, but there are wines that taste good that don't necessarily drink good. They're usually big powerful wines, ones that are packed with rich ripe fruit, aren't shy in the alcohol department and often have a fair dollop of sweet new oak in there for good measure. You often don't need to swirl your glass, as they leap up to grab your nostrils and assault your tastebuds.

In a tasting where you're trying a number of different wines, it's very easy for these bodybuilder bottles to dominate proceedings, and trample over wimpier wines. But before you rush down to the shops to stock up, remember that wine's made to be drunk, not tasted. These monsters may seem like a good idea to start with, but they offer the wine equivalent of 'The Stitch.' A couple of sips is fine, but trying to polish off even one glassful can be more of a challenge.

Tasting wines by themselves is good but perhaps a better indicator of the quality is what I call The Empty Bottle Test. Not, 'Did the first sip taste good?' but, 'Did the last sip make me wish there was some more?' Don't be surprised to see the bottles of the beefcake wines still half full, while some of the quieter, less showy wines have been polished off with pleasure.



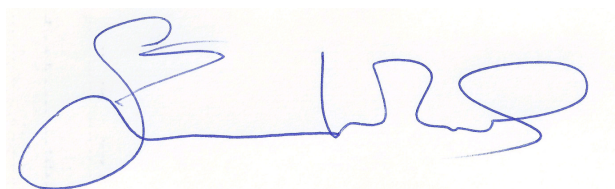
And to finish...

'Fraid that's it - for the moment at least...

But I'm already working on a follow-up book, working title Wine FAQ - the things you've always wanted to know about wine but were afraid to ask.

If you've any questions you think should go in the book, you can contact me through shortest@simonwoods.com or through Twitter on <https://twitter.com/woodswine>.

Bye for now



Simon Woods

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About the author



Wine Consultant, Author and Speaker Simon Woods has won awards for his writing, his website and his can-can dancing. While he spits out most of the many thousands of wines he tastes each year, he does confess to swallowing a few of them.

When he's not visiting vineyards, tasting with importers and retailers, or hosting one of the dozens of wine events he conducts each year, he can be found at home in Saddleworth in the north of England with his wife & two children.

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