

Wine & Dine Part 2: Food from the Heart with Merry Cellars Winery

ALEX MURPHY: Welcome to our Wine and Dine, Part II, event with Merry Cellars Winery. My name is Alex Murphy. I'm the program coordinator with the WSU's Global Connections and I'm here with Patrick Merry. The owner of this wonderful winery that we're at tonight. I hope all of you at home are going to join us with a glass of wine. Patrick's excited to share some tips on wine tasting and etiquette, purchasing wine, everything you need to know. So make sure you ask your questions in the chat box and stay with us through until the end of the event, because we will be giving away a \$100 Merry Cellars gift certificate. So sit back and enjoy, and I'm going to turn it over to Patrick.

PATRICK MERRY: Thank you, Alex. And thank you for joining us today for this webinar. We do have a small studio audience who will be providing some questions. But I would encourage you, the viewers at home, to jump in on the chat box at any point in the discussion. If something piques your curiosity, I'll be more than happy to try to answer it to the best of my abilities. Like Alex said, we're going to be covering a number of different topics this evening, kind of surrounding wine etiquette, but also food and wine pairing.

We're going to try to give you a few pointers on how to pick that perfect bottle. We're also going to look a little bit at wine production briefly as well as wine storage and aging. But again, if you have any questions about any of that, those particulars, we can delve into it in more detail. So let's start off with a scenario where you've got a big night planned and you're going to take that special someone out to dinner. And you're presented with a voluminous wine list. How do you pick the right bottle for the occasion?

If you know or are familiar with the particular winery or vineyard, that is a great place to start. Maybe you like Merlot or like Cabernet Sauvignon, I would highly recommend one of those selections. But let's say you don't recognize anything, and you're a little intimidated. Well, not to worry, relax.

Most higher end restaurants are definitely going to have a wine steward who will be able to assist you and guide you in the selection. Now never feel afraid to ask for help or guidance. That's what they get paid the big bucks for and that's what you're going to tip them 22% for at the end of the night.

So the wine steward comes over. You're going to be required to provide them with a little bit of information and you can do this very subtly, but maybe your budget, maybe the style of wine

that you like, you're new into wine. They'll probably suggest a lighter bodied, maybe a fruitier or fruit forward wine. If you're more experienced, or you know that your date is, they may suggest something heartier, bigger, and bolder like a Cabernet Sauvignon, for example. But don't let the price intimidate you. And make sure that whatever selection you choose or is recommended, is something that you're happy with.

Now, there's a lot of wine etiquette surrounding bottle presentation at a restaurant. And so, we're going to start with a few things. If you want to follow at home, now would be a good time to make sure you have the appropriate supplies, of course, your favorite bottle of wine. Here we have a 2011 Sangiovese. You're going need a wine glass, obviously, a bottle opener. You may or may not choose to pour your wine out or spit. We will here, but you don't have to. And for proper wine evaluation, a blank background, something white preferably.

Now, when the steward brings the bottle of wine to your table after your selection has been made, he will likely present it to you for your approval. What this is, is an opportunity for you to make sure that the bottle they selected is the bottle that you've indeed ordered. Next, they'll go ahead and take the foil off and take the cork out. Usually they will present you with the cork. This is for your evaluation.

Now, a couple of things, a lot of people recommend sniffing or smelling the cork, and the nodding your approval or disapproval to the wine steward. Well, let me show you a couple of examples here. If you get a cork that is saturated all the way through with red wine from the top to bottom, that's an indication that there could be a problem with that bottle. And you may want to spend a little more time evaluating it with your olfactory senses, which we'll do in a moment.

A properly sealed bottle of wine should have no more than a little bit of seepage up the cork. Improper storage, improper sealing technique, can lead to that seepage. So, you can sniff the cork if you want, but I'm here to tell you that a wet cork is going to smell like wet cork. So we're just going to skip that step and go right the most important part.

The wine steward will then present you with a small taste, usually no more than an ounce or so. This is where the fun starts. And it doesn't matter if you're at a restaurant or at home. We recommend a very small pour. You'll have an opportunity to drink all you'd like later. But to begin with, we're just going to do a brief sensory evaluation on this.

First of all, color. Color saturation, we're looking for cloudiness as well. Is it a bright red? Is it

brick orange? Those indicators can tell you a little bit about the wine and its age. Younger red wine will always be darker in the red spectrum. As red wine ages, it will turn a little brick orange around the edges. If there's a bluing or a bluish tint around the edges, it can actually inform you that it could be a co-fermentation of Sirah and maybe Viognier.

But more importantly, let's look at clarity. A properly finished bottle of wine, that's been filtered and commercially put on market should be crystal clear. If you see cloudiness or sedimentation, it could be an indication of spoilage. Could have happened prior to bottling, could have happened post bottling. Again, just take that information in and file it away for moment.

Because the most complex and important piece of equipment you have in your wine evaluation toolbox is your nose. Inhale deeply and richly. You don't want to overdo it. You can actually fatigue your senses. Pay attention to what you smell. Is it fruity? Is it earthy? Is it vegetal?

What do you get out of it? Cinnamon, vanilla, these are all terms that you'll become very familiar with as you continue your education in wine. This wine exudes a fair amount of fresh fruit, a lot of ripe cherry, as well as strawberry, a lovely young Sangiovese, personally, one of my favorites here at the winery.

So once you have some idea of the aroma and you approve, you can indicate that to your wine steward and they will continue to pour for the guests at your table, finishing with you. We do have a question from the audience.

ALEX MURPHY: Yes, Carries says, regarding that small pour, I hear that reds are supposed to breathe before they are drunk. Won't my early on small pour taste different than what I'll be eventually enjoying?

PATRICK MERRY: Excellent question. And the viewer is absolutely right. Wine, red and white, will benefit from a little bit of oxygenation and a little bit of time in the glass. And again, they are absolutely right, that that last taste out of the bottle is going to taste, in some cases, significantly different than the first taste.

So a couple of things that you want to do when that pour is presented, and we're going to get into this a little bit further. You want to swirl the glass. You really want to allow the volatile aromatic compounds that are saturated in the wine the opportunity to come out of solution and

be captured in the bowl of the glass.

And believe it or not, there's actually a lot of design and, I'll say, theory that goes behind designing a red wine glass. There's a reason they're the shape that they are and there's a reason why you never pour more than half of a glass of wine at a time. In part, you need room to swirl, but the other, more important part is that you need space at the top to be able to capture those aromatic compounds.

If you record this 3/4 of the way full or even to the very brim, any volatile aromatic compounds come out of solution are simply going to escape the glass. So that swirling technique is going to do a couple of things. One, it is going to accelerate the oxygenation of the wine, which will simulate letting that wine breathe. And then two, it also allows the volatile aromatics the chance to get kind of captured in that glass for your initial sniff.

We can talk a little bit about decanting. Personally, I don't like it. I think it's unnecessary, and here's why. If you were to just crack open a bottle and pour a glass and drink it, you're not going to get the full benefit of that wine. It's been crafted. It's been stored. It's been cellared. And you've probably paid a good penny for it.

Don't rush it. Pour yourself a glass, swirl it, enjoy the aroma, maybe enjoy the first couple of sips. Set it aside. Come back to it a half hour later. Come back to an hour later. Leave the bottle open. Decanting will accelerate the process of getting that oxygen into the wine and allowing it to open up, but it's not really necessary if you take your time and you're not gulping your wine. And if you are kind of in that hurry up and just give me a bottle of wine mood, I wouldn't recommend an incredibly delicate or a valuable bottle necessarily.

I hope that answers your question. So back to our scenario at the restaurant. Once you've given your approval to the steward and they pour everyone their wine, hopefully you'll enjoy it. You will be faced, of course, with the challenge of pairing a wine with the particular dish that you or your date or your party is enjoying. And we're going to talk about that kind of the second half of the presentation. We'll get into the food and wine pairing part of it more in depth.

Now one thing I didn't do that I really need to, is to make sure that I enjoy this wine. Two thumbs up. So that's a little bit, some nuts and bolts, about choosing one in a restaurant. Bottom line, ask for help. Or if it's a very special night, you can always head out and check a website. And a lot of restaurants do have the wine lists online and you could actually do some

research ahead of time.

One other thing I will mention before moving on to the next section on selecting wine, a lot of restaurants, especially over the past 20, 25 years, have developed very expensive bottle pour programs or glass pour programs, where they may offer 10 or 15 types of wine, where you don't have to commit to purchasing the entire bottle. You can simply purchase an individual glass. That is a great way to experiment and to develop your palate and your repertoire, without committing to necessarily drinking an entire bottle of something that you may or may not like. So give that a chance.

OK, so more often than not, you're going to be at a grocery store, picking a bottle. Industry statistics say that about 98% of the wine that's purchased in America today is consumed today, meaning we're not aging it, we're not putting it down for any length of time, and that most of the wine that we're buying, we're buying for consumption at home. So you're faced with thousands, if not tens of thousands of options at BevMo!, Total Wine, your local Safeway or Albertsons.

It can be a little daunting and a little overwhelming. Nice thing is, most of them are going to have a wide range of prices available, everything from \$5 all the way up to \$100. So how do you choose? Well, higher end wine shops or bottle shops and even some groceries now have wine stewards. And again, you can ask for some help, and tell them what your preferences are, what your level of comfort and expertise is, and they can probably guide you in the right direction.

Without that, stick to varietals maybe you're comfortable with. If you're looking for a solid option, growing regions that you're familiar with, Napa Valley, Columbia Valley, Walla Walla Valley. Or if you're feeling a little more adventurous, invest a little less and pick up a bottle you've never heard from a winery you've never heard of. You might be in for a pleasant surprise.

Couple of things, when you are selecting a bottle at a grocery, there is a lot of information that you're presented with that is not available in a restaurant. Typically a restaurant wine list will have the winery, maybe the vintage, and usually the type of style of wine, if it's a blend or if it's single varietal. And of course price, which can be a helpful guide.

But in a grocery store, in addition to the winery, in this case Merry Cellars, we also have the

vintage, 2012. We have a few other pieces of information here. Stillwater Creek Vineyard, so this is a vineyard designate wine, meaning that at least 95% of the fruit in this bottle came from that vineyard. In addition, it tells us the viticultural area that it is from, in this case Columbia Valley.

According to American law, 85% of the wine in this bottle has to come from that American viticultural area or AVA. And then the varietal, Semillon. Now here's something that a lot of people don't know. If you've got a varietal designation on a bottle, Cabernet Sauvignon, for example or Semillon in this case, only 75% of that juice has to be Semillon. The other 25% could be any other grape. And they do not legally have to put on the bottle.

Some wine makers will choose to tell you if there are additional varietals in there, and if so, what the percentages are, what the composition is. But most people will just pick up a bottle of Merlot, not knowing that it could be up to 25% something else. So there's a fair amount of information there in addition to price.

I would also point out the back of the bottle. Now, we do a little description on this. We talk about how the wine is made, what flavor profile is, and the aromatic are that you should expect in this bottle. Many winemakers choose to do that. Some do not. But check it out. That might give you an indication of whether or not this wine is going to be right for you.

And of course, last but not least, alcohol content. Traditionally New World wines are going to be a little higher in alcohol, usually in the 13 and 1/2 to 14 and 1/2 alcohol content range. Older European, more traditional wines are going to be in the 12 and 1/2% to 13% range. Couple of things, the higher the alcohol content, means the later in the season those grapes were harvested and processed. You're going to get more fruity flavors, more jammy flavors out of higher alcohol content wines, which is one reason why in the US we do that.

They tend to be a little more approachable. People enjoy them more readily right out of the bottle, without long term aging or decanting or storing them. Lower alcohol wines are going to be a little more austere. They might have more subtle flavors to it and definitely benefit from longer term aging. There's a lot of chemistry that goes into that, but we can save that for the next webinar.

While we're talking about varietals and vintage and all of that, I'd like to play you a little bit of a clip about our production process. This was filmed here at Merry Cellars last fall during our 2014 harvest. Most of the people in the video are actually WSU students, and the interns that

assisted us with this. So in the video, you're going to see everything from the hand sorting of our fresh wine grapes to the crushing and destemming, fermentation, pressing, and then ending up with the best part of it, the wine tasting.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

[END PLAYBACK]

So hopefully you enjoyed that little clip. I'll tell you, we do condense that work down significantly. Typically, a day of crushing and destemming and hand sorting is a lot of physical labor. They did a great job with that video, kind of putting it together in such a short package. If you've never had the opportunity to make wine, and you're fortunate enough to live in a grape growing and winemaking region, I would encourage you, if you're at all interested, to approach your local winemakers and see if you can volunteer.

It's a lot of fun. It's a lot of work. I guarantee you're going to go home sticky, if not maybe not as sober as when you showed up. But, if anyone has any questions about that, please just enter it into the chat room, and I'd be happy to go into more detail.

So a little bit about wine storage and aging. One of the most common questions I'm asked as a winemaker, is when will this wine be ready to drink, how long should I store this, and is it true that all wine gets better with age? So let me start with the last question first. All wine will change with age, including whites, but especially reds.

Now white wine and red wine are built very differently and for different purposes really. If you think about it, all grape juice is clear. All the color in wine comes from the skin. So you can make a white wine out of any grape. You can only make a red wine out of a red colored grape. So the white grapes are immediately pressed. Any white wine you want to make, I should say, even if it's a white Zinfandel, you're going to press those skins off of the juice as quickly as possible, leaving you with a white or near colorless juice.

With red wine, you're going to actually ferment the juice on the skins with the seeds in the slurry or the must as we call it. There's a couple of things, in addition to giving you the color, it also extracts a fair amount of tannins, which are the astringent components that we kind of get that drying sensation in our mouths from. Because of that extended maceration or time on the skins and the seeds, you're putting a lot more chemistry and compounds into red wine than you are in white.

Whites tend to be more delicate for that reason. You're not going to have the body. You're not going to have the astringency. In addition to not having the color. White wines will never age as long and as well as a red wine, due to just a lack of all the chemical compounds that are present in red wine. Now having said that, winemaking technique and chemistry as far as pH and well, the concentration of acid in the wine is going to determine, to a great extent how long any wine, red or white, will age.

It looks like we do have another question from the audience.

ALEX MURPHY: Yes. Aaron would like to know when does Merry Cellars start accepting volunteers or interns?

PATRICK MERRY: That's a great question. Believe it or not, we have interns pretty much throughout the year. We work closely with the Viticulture and Enology Department here at WSU to facilitate enology internships. We also even have mechanical engineers. We've had business majors do internships here. So we would love to have you inquire locally. Give us a call or stop by. And we could certainly chat.

We do rely heavily on volunteer labor. As I alluded to earlier, if you want to ever get your hands dirty and your feet wet. We would certainly take your assistance during harvest and crush and even bottling. So throughout the year there are opportunities for both internships and volunteers. So we would welcome anyone who's interested.

So where was I? OK, so aging red and white wine. White wine, given that doesn't have the concentration of molecular compounds that red wine does, it's not going to age as long in general as a red. What will happen to all wines. As soon as you bottle it, the quality is going to improve. And it's going to plateau, and then it is going to fall off.

Now the trick is being able to, as a consumer, figure out when it has plateaued and begin to enjoy those wines before they start to decline in quality. If you know nothing about where the wine is from or how it is made, there are very few rules of thumb. Most wines, again in the United States but in the New World, Western hemisphere in general, they're not meant to be aged. They're not built to be aged.

Again, that statistic that 98% of wines purchased today are consumed today. We're Americans, darn it, and we kind of like that sense of immediate satisfaction and gratification. So with that in mind, trying to find a red wine or white wine made in the Western hemisphere that you want to put down and save for 20 or 30 years is going to be very difficult. And we

can't really get into those details right now.

But what you can do as a consumer is taste the wine and if you like it, do a little research. How was the wine made? Learn about the winemaking style. Is it a low pH wine or a high pH wine? The lower the pH, the longer it's going to last, period, hands down, red or white, doesn't matter. Low pH will give you a lot more longevity.

If it's a higher pH wine, again that probably means it's going to be fruitier, easier to drink, more approachable. Those wines will not hold up as well. Typically you're looking between 5 and 10 years for that plateau before it begins to decrease in quality. So one thing I would highly recommend is never let a good bottle go to waste.

I personally have had this happen. And I've had friends and family members that this has happened to. They bought several bottles of a wine saving it for that special occasion, only to find out 10 years down the road, that that bottle is no longer good. It's turned. And it's a shame. So open it a little earlier rather than a little bit later. Don't hold on to that special bottle for that particular occasion that you're hoping for. Rather, what I would encourage you to do is create the special occasion sooner rather than later.

A resource on wine aging is always the winery. If you have a couple of bottles from our winery or another winery, call the winery. They'll tell you. It's drinking very well right now, or we would recommend another six years. So feel free to bother us. That's what we do. So we're happy to help.

As for storage is concerned, a lot of people make a mistake, and they're more concerned about temperature than temperature fluctuation. We recommend 60 to 65 degrees for both red and white storage. But what's more important than hitting a particular temperature is that it doesn't get to 50 degrees in the winter and 70 degrees in the summer.

I would rather have you store your wines a little bit warmer, even 70 degrees, but keep it at 70 year round, if that's all you can do. Now, the cooler your storage temperature, the better and the longer the aging process will take. You'll get more longevity out of it.

So, all right now, the part we promised you earlier, wine pairing. This is the fun part. This is the kind of the mysterious part of food and wine. It's also the part that can be the most enjoyable, or frustrating, if you're trying to do it professionally. There are few rules of thumb that I can give you might be of assistance.

Number one, pick complementing flavors, acid levels, and textures in your wine. Now, a couple of examples. If it's a maybe a flaky white fish a lemon sauce on top, I would recommend maybe a Sauvignon Blanc, something that mirrors that citrus character. If it's a little bit heartier. Maybe a fettuccine Alfredo, so a nice cream sauce on it. Go with something that has some body to it, maybe a Semillon or a Chardonnay.

What you don't want to do is have the food and the wine fighting each other. And the wine should always be a little above the food as far as characteristics. As an example, acid, if you've got maybe a mild marinara, or a red sauce, Pinot Noir would be a good choice, depending on what's underneath that. But you want something just slightly above the food in whatever level it is.

Another example, if you're going to do a nice fatty dish, maybe something, steak, grilled outside. You're going to need something with some tannins to it to really cut through that fat. Because the fat will literally coat your taste buds and inhibit your ability to enjoy the other flavors of the wine. The tannin and acid, in say, a Cabernet Sauvignon own or maybe a very hearty Merlot, will literally cleanse your palate of that fat, and you'll be able to enjoy both the steak and the wine a little bit more. If you're thinking more earthy characteristics, like maybe a pizza with some wild mushrooms on it, something that just tastes of the earth, Pinot Noir is a great one to pair with that as well.

The number one rule with food and wine pairing is, don't worry. It's only wine. And the wine that you enjoy is the right wine for the occasion. I've gone into situations where I knew exactly what the perfect pairing was, and when I put the food on the plate, and I had the wine in the glass, I was wrong. You can be surprised. And I've had other occasions where I just opened a random, I'll say cheap, bottle of wine that paired exceptionally well, by surprise.

So, experiment. Get out there. Try different wines. Try it with your favorite food. Again, back to the restaurants, try wines by the glass. You might be very surprised by what you find. So again, just make sure that your wine and your food, they're not fighting each other, that they're complementing each other. And have fun, good luck. That's the most important part.

Any questions from our studio audience today? Carra, I see you have one.

AUDIENCE:

So, my question is relating to the barrels that you use. I'm curious to know what you prefer to age the wine in, reds versus whites, in a barrel. And then what type of barrel you prefer to use

and why, meaning what region they come from.

PATRICK MERRY: Certainly. great question. Hopefully, you all heard that at home. Basically barrel aging reds and whites, what kind of cooperage I prefer to use and what impact that has on the wine. So here at Merry Cellars, we rely predominantly on a combination of Hungarian and American oak. We do have a smattering of French in here.

And I like about one third of my cooperage to be new at any given time, maybe 25% to 33%, somewhere in there. And the balance of it to be one, two, three, even four-year-old oak. Now barrels, in and of themselves will impart certain aromatic compounds and flavors to the wine that you will not get from the grape itself. For example, cinnamon, vanilla, nutmeg, all of those aromas come from the wood and the toast level in the barrel.

There's a great deal that goes into crafting the perfect barrel that we probably don't have time to get into today, but what barrel aging does for reds in particular, you want to age those before you put it into a bottle. And doing it in a barrel in small cooperage, gives you a little extra depth and a little extra personality. While that wine mellows, it's also gaining structure, meaning the tannins that we enjoy in red wine. Some of that is extracted from the wood. And it just develops some complexity.

So we have another question from the chat room.

ALEX MURPHY: Yes, we've got quite a few questions here. Dave wants to know if wine ratings really matter. And Bill would like to know what about pairings with chocolate.

PATRICK MERRY: Ah. Excellent questions and easy to answer. Wine and chocolate, horrible idea. Horrible idea. I know it sounds romantic, but they're just not really meant for each other. The exception is, if you're doing a very, very dark chocolate, you can get away with a very hearty red wine like a Petite Sirah would be a good red wine that you could try to pair with chocolate.

But generally speaking, when people choose to pair a red wine and chocolate, they're going to choose a milk chocolate. And the fat content is just not conducive to really enjoying that wine. Now everybody loves chocolate and everybody loves wine. And your sweetheart is going to love you if you treat him or her to a wine and chocolate evening.

But it isn't really ideal. What we would suggest is enjoy great chocolate and enjoy great wine, but not necessarily do them together. You're probably not going to get as much out of that pairing.

The other question, and refresh my memory. I apologize.

ALEX MURPHY: Do wine ratings really matter?

PATRICK MERRY: Ah, wine ratings. So wine ratings are an interesting beast. And I'll expand this to say wine ratings and wine reviews. Ratings are your numbers, the 92 points, 97 points. Reviews could be gold medal, bronze medal, double gold medal. And you get those medals, you get those reviews by entering competitions that are usually paid for by the winery, meaning anyone can enter, but only those that are entered are evaluated. So it's not exactly a true and unbiased opinion.

You can basically buy as many gold medals as you would like if you enter enough competition. So we're going to set that aside. It's not really a value. It does give the winemaker a nice warm feeling to get a double gold, but it doesn't really educate the consumer.

Now wine ratings, the numbers themselves, these are a good guideline. But they're not the be all and end all of wine. I kind of equate it to movie reviews. If you really agree with Siskel or Ebert, and I know only one of them's around right now. But if you know what their taste in movies is, and you agree with them, then you can rely on that, and say all right, two thumbs up, I'm going to see that film.

Same thing's true with ratings. If you know that the Wine Spectator, for example, or Robert Parker, gives consistently high review to wines that you enjoy, it's a good guideline. But there are highly paid consultants that are available for hire by wineries that will come to your facility, and teach you how to build a 100 point wine.

They will source the fruit for you. They will tell you what equipment to buy. And they will literally craft you a very highly rated wine, just for the sake of getting a score. Now why would they do that? It's because consumers put a lot of weight in, well, it's 99 points. It must be worth the price that we're demanding.

But what it comes down to is, do you enjoy the wine personally? And again, if you don't like it, it's not a good wine. And if you enjoy it, regardless of the price or the rating, then it's a good wine for you. So take that kind of with a grain of salt when you see those high scores.

We have another question from the chat room.

ALEX MURPHY: Yes. Carrie would like to know, is there a place online that I could find a list that matches these taste adjectives you mentioned to the types of wine, Merlot, Cab, et cetera?

PATRICK MERRY: Absolutely. There are several great resources on the web. I couldn't rattle them all off right now. But if you were to Google Merlot characteristics or Cabernet Sauvignon characteristics, you will come across probably half a dozen sites that will break down, not only the history of that varietal, but aromas that you should expect, flavors that you should expect, as well as potential pairings with food.

Now, one thing I will mention that gets a little bit more technical is something called typicity. When we, as winemakers, are trying to craft a single varietal wine, for example, our Sangiovese, or our Semillon, we need to hit a certain target. And that's consumer expectation. When you purchase a Cabernet Sauvignon, you are looking for particular characteristics. And if we don't have those, or we have characteristics that are outside of the norm, we say that it does not exhibit typicity, it is not typical of that varietal.

So when you're reading those websites, when you're looking at, this is what you should expect, keep that in mind. And it can kind of help you build your vocabulary, as well as educate you about the next time you enjoy a Merlot, does this really show us-- is it a good example of Merlot or not. But do a little research online, you can come across some great sites.

We have another question.

ALEX MURPHY: Yes, John would like to know in the background behind you, he can see numbers and letters on all of the barrels. What do those mean?

PATRICK MERRY: OK. Now we're going to need to get a closeup here. Got a lot of information stored on the head of a barrel. For us, we have a serial number of the year that the barrel was put into service. I mentioned that I like one, two, three, four-year-old oak, but I do have some older. So for example, this barrel was put into service in 2009. It was two of some number that year. [? Marshive ?] is the cooper. It is made in France, coopered in France. And it is American oak. So it's actually harvested in Pennsylvania, shipped to France, where the barrel is finished. And then it is shipped back.

The information down here, which you probably couldn't see earlier, this tells us that the toast level-- when they build these barrels, they actually char the interior. This tells us that we have a medium toast and toasted heads. It's probably a little hard to make out. But it says TH. That

means that not only are the staves or the body of the barrel charred, but the heads are as well.

Now the information you were looking for. On all the pieces of white duct tape, way to decode that in our winery is going to be the vintage, 2014. It's going to be the name of the vineyard, Seven Hills in this case. And then the varietal or type of wine. In this case, it is Carmenerere. If you look at some of the other barrels, there will be a suffix, usually two digits. That's going to denote the block.

So for example, from a vineyard called Stillwater Creek, we get Merlot from two different blocks, block 11 and block 15. So we need to designate that. All of those are processed separately when we bring them in in the fall. And we want to keep them separate until the very end, and decide if we're going to blend them back together, and if so, how much and what percentages. So hopefully that answers your question.

We have another ne.

ALEX MURPHY: All right. We've got a question from Vince. He wants to know-- he says, you mentioned pH. Can this be found only at the winery's website? I don't see pH values on my wine bottle.

PATRICK MERRY: Typically, it used to be if you went back 30 years, you may find pH TA, titratable acidity. You might find bricks listed on the bottle, harvest dates, bottling dates, reducing sugars. Wineries, I think, used to put a lot more information on the label than they do currently, more technical information. But generally speaking, no, you will not find that on your average bottle, certainly not in the Northwest and even the New World wines.

Winery web websites are a wonderful resource. They will all have technical data sheets available for you to review. And you'll usually have winemakers notes. They'll talk about what kind of cooperage they used, how long it was in barrel, how they made it, why they did it. It's a lot of fun. If you want to pick up a bottle at the grocery, and take it home and do a little research online, it can kind of enhance and enrich your consumption, your drinking experience with that bottle. So, good question.

And I think-- ooh we are just about do our drawing. So hopefully, you've enjoyed tonight's presentation. Your homework is to go out there and continue educating yourself on wine and don't be afraid to explore and experiment. There's a whole world waiting for you. And don't let anyone ever tell you that-- or make you feel like a novice. We all have to start somewhere.

And it's a fun journey, so don't be afraid to try. And get your friends together, do some wine tastings. If you are near a winery, pop your head in, explore what they have to offer, and just start that discussion with people. And keep it going.

So thank you again. Right now we have our drawing for \$100 gift certificate to Merry Cellars. And Alex, what do we got here? Oh, am I doing the drawing?

ALEX MURPHY: Yes. So Patrick is going to do the drawing. I just want to let everyone in the chat box knew, due to legal restrictions, we unfortunately can't give the gift certificate away to WSU employees or their relatives. But we've tried to keep it strictly to community members and students. So good luck. Go ahead.

PATRICK MERRY: All right. Erin Cooper. Erin Cooper. Well, congratulations. You've won a \$100 gift certificate to the winery. Give us a call or shoot us an email and we'll get that arranged and filled for you. And hopefully, send you a couple nice items that you can enjoy.

ALEX MURPHY: Yes. And Erin, if you can just make sure you send your name and mailing address to global.connections@wse.edu, just for our own purposes. And congratulations. Thank you, everybody, for attending tonight. We hope you learned something new. And we hope you had some fun, and hopefully some wine. And make sure to check out our website at connections.wsu.edu for any upcoming events. Everyone, have a great night.