

# 21 DAYS TO WINE: DAY 4

## Colors of Red Wine

WINE: Domaine Clos de la Chapelle Beaune Premier Cru Champs Pimont 2016 (Red Burgundy)

SCENTS: Mushrooms, Dirt

SUPPLIES: A white napkin or piece of white paper (to observe)

21 DAYS TO  
WINE

## HOW DOES WINE GET ITS COLOR?

Wine's color comes from the skins. During the winemaking process grapes are crushed and then fermented. For red wine, the skins remain in contact with the juice for days, weeks, or months. Skin contact also produces more intense color, flavors and tannins. We cover tannins in Day 11.

*More skin contact = more color*

### SHADES OF RED

Color is a spectrum of course, and we all see shades slightly differently based on perspective and experience.

The main colors to look for, or distinguish between are the following:

*Violet Red*

*Ruby Red*

*Garnet Red*

*Brick Red*

*Rusty or Copper*

There are a lot of color charts available on the internet, but the best way to understand color is to look at wines next to each other and compare them.

**Remember to always look at your wine with a white background.**

### OPACITY/DENSITY OF COLOR

Another element of the visual analysis of wine is the opacity or density of the color. How compact is the color? The color can tell you a lot about what the grape might be as well as what to expect in the wine.

Wines that look compact and dark are more likely to feel heavier on the palate.

Grapes like Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah tend to produce deeper and more compact color, whereas Pinot Noir, Nebbiolo and Sangiovese are relatively transparent. The former tend to produce more full-bodied wines and the latter lighter-bodied wines.

### WINEGROWING AND WINEMAKING BOTH AFFECT THE COLOR

AOC and DOC-style winemaking regulations and classification dictate (among other things) how many grapes per plant the winemaker can harvest.

For top level classifications of wines that are designed to age (and ideally improve), smaller percentages of the harvest are allowed. This forces the wine grower to use only the healthiest grapes with the most luscious, healthy skins.

That translates to deep color and intensity of flavor and body.

DOMAINE  
CLOS DE LA  
CHAPELLE  
BEAUNE PREMIER  
CRU CHAMPS  
PIMONT  
2016

Wineries with a lot of money and land can afford to prune back their vines all season. That means fewer, but plumper, healthy, big, fat, juicy grapes, which translates to big, fat, juicy wines.

Bigger doesn't always mean better. It's a stylistic choice. Keep that in mind when shopping for wine. Sometimes the price has everything to do with the size of the winery, and the cost of producing only a portion of their harvest.

Bigger doesn't always mean better. Balance is the hallmark of quality wine. A perfect blend of super ripe grapes and grapes harvest earlier will maintain enough acidity and tannin to stay fresh for years.

### WHITE WINES DARKEN WITH AGE. RED WINES LIGHTEN UP.

The color pigment found in the skin that gives red wine its color eventually separates from the wine (sediment).

Freshly crushed grapes and new wine have a violet-tint, especially around the edges where the light hits it. As they age they darken from Violet → Ruby → Garnet → Brick → and eventually a copper or rusty color.

### VIOLET > RUBY > GARNET > BRICK > RUSTY



They also lose opacity and the pigment begins to thin and fall. In wines that can age for decades, like Bordeaux, you might not see these changes for decades. In other wines these changes happen more quickly.

In the case of Nebbiolo, the grape used for Barolo and Barbaresco, the wine starts on the verge of darker brick red color. That doesn't mean it's aged or necessarily ready to drink. Wines made from Nebbiolo are very tannic in their youth. If you see the vintage is recent, but the color is a somewhat transparent brick red, it could be made from Nebbiolo.

If you are an experienced Nebbiolo drinker you might look for notes of black licorice and tar, and that will be your confirmation. If you know what to expect, you can order these wines or stay away from them, but color is your first clue.

# BURGUNDY

PRONUNCIATION: Burr-Gun-Dee // Pee-No - No-Are

Burgundy is a region of France as well as a historically sought-out winemaking region. The actual Burgundy (Bourgogne) appellation and sub-appellations are located in the north, along the slopes and valleys west of the Saône river, and are predominately made from Pinot Noir (Red Burgundy) and Chardonnay (White Burgundy). The area was historically delineated by villages and monasteries, which gave rise to the number of sub-appellations that exist within Burgundy. These are the most vexing to memorize for the Sommelier exam.

A very basic understanding Burgundy wine classification begins with four categories:

*Bourgogne*  
*Village*  
*Premier Cru*  
*Grand Cru.*

**Bourgogne** and **Village** are general indications that the wines were grown and produced within the Burgundy winegrowing area. **Premier Cru** and **Grand Cru** come from specific vineyards, are harvested in limited quantities, and are historically considered to have specific soil types that impart elegance, ageability, and specific flavors. These wines are among the rarest and most expensive in the world.

Top shelf Burgundies can age for decades and their aromas evolve from searing bright red fruit to earthy, floral and leafy notes and even some minerality. Pinot Noir from Burgundy is known for its delicate color and consistency and bright red fruit.

Pinot Noir made in more modern wine regions like the USA is often a bit weightier on the palate and aged in oak barrel longer. Earthy notes like the mushrooms and dirt that we brought to this lesson are more common in younger, NEW WORLD-style Pinot Noirs.

\* *Chablis is a sub-appellation of Burgundy, famous for Chardonnay.*

\* *In the south of Burgundy is the sub-region of Beaujolais, where wines are more commonly made from Gamay.*

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# TASTING NOTES

**LOOK:** Medium-dark, Ruby red color, medium transparency

**SMELL:** Bright red fruit including raspberry and a delicate wood spice

**TASTE:** Vibrant and tannic on the palate with a medium-long fruity, mineral finish

## DISCUSS

For lovers of bright red fruit, drink this wine young. It has years ahead of it and will develop deeper earthier notes. Try it now with roasted chicken. Try it later with roast meats.

*Cheers!*  
**ANNIE**

## WINE NOTES

### WINERY

The Clos de la Chapelle vineyard is named for a nearby chapel and is documented as producing wine since the 15th Century. Family owned and operated for years, they once filled an order for Louis Pasteur!

### WINEMAKING

This Burgundy is made from 100% Pinot Noir. Grapes are hand-harvested from 45-year-old vines from a historic CRU vineyard. Briefly aged in mostly older barrels so as not to affect the natural flavors of the wine.

*my notes*