

21 DAYS TO WINE: DAY 12

FULL AND LIGHT BODY WINE

WINE: Vinho Verde Gazela (nv)

SCENTS: Watermelon, Honeydew, Lime

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

21 DAYS TO WINE

REVIEW

In the past couple of lessons we discussed tannin and acidity: where they come from, how they affect the wine, and how to describe them. We also discussed viscosity on DAY 6, as part of a visual analysis. Viscosity plays into the body of wine as well.

A BALANCED BODY

As always balance is the goal. A fine wine is defined as a balance of all elements: intensity of aroma, flavor, texture, and finish. The body of wine is a component of this.

BODY AND WINE PAIRING

A big, robust, full-bodied wine will overpower more delicate dishes. A light-bodied wine may not stand up to powerful, heavy or extremely flavorful dishes.

WHAT IS THE BODY?

When we talk about the body, ex. Light-bodied, medium-bodied, full-bodied, or robust, we are talking about how the wine sits on your palate, how it fills your mouth. It is a weight issue.

The body of wine comes from **alcohol** and **extract**.

Alcohol molecules are more viscous than water molecules, and wine is at **least** 75 to 80% water. Just like our bodies! Viscosity, in simple science, is a molecule's ability to hold it together under stress.

Alcohol is less susceptible than water, which is why water washes off your palate, and alcohol sticks around longer. It's also why water freezes faster and alcohol stays fresh longer. That is viscosity, and you can feel it.

EXTRACT

Extract is everything you get from the grape during winemaking, besides water and alcohol. It includes a lot from the skins, like tannins, polyphenols, and acids,

along with sugar and glycerol from the juice. All of those elements contribute to the feel and flavor of the wine, so the more intense they are, the fuller body you have.

Imagine grapes grown in a hot sunny climate that ripen until they are bursting with sugar. Press the grapes and leave the skins on. All of those color molecules contribute to a deep, rich color. All of that sugar transforms into quite a bit of alcohol. That means **less water**.

Now imagine a wine grown in a cool, mountainous region, light-skinned and delicate. That wine is likely to be crisp and clean and minus all of that ripeness and skin.

HOW DO YOU DETERMINE THE BODY?

On DAY 6 we watched the way wine hits the sides of the glass and how it falls. Does it wash away quickly like water or take its time, more like syrup or honey?

When you taste wine, swish it around in your mouth slowly. See how it feels. Does it fill up your mouth and weigh on your palate or does it rinse away clean?

The body is a measure of this sensation. With some practice comparing wines you will definitely begin to notice.

WINE NOTES

WINERY

Gazela is a label created by a larger Portuguese winery conglomerate focused on making traditional and high-quality wines with an emphasis on export with the goal of encouraging and supporting wineries throughout the country.

WINEMAKING

The wine is made in a traditional style with Loureiro, Azal, Trajadura and Pedernã grapes.

VINHO VERDE

PRONUNCIATION: Veen-Yo Vayrd

Vinho Verde translates in Portuguese to “green” or “young. They actually come in many colors, though the white versions are the most common.



Vinho Verde is produced mainly in the northwest. The area is one of the most historic wine growing and producing areas in Portugal and there are still thousands of small wineries making a variety of Vinho Verde wines.

Ancient Roman records show evidence of winemaking in what is now the Minho province of Portugal, and the wines spread throughout Europe during the Middle Ages and up until the 16th century.

At that point New World crops like corn (maize) were encouraged and many vineyards were uprooted to make space. A new style of grape cultivation called *enforcado* was created by training vines to grow vertically high above the ground. It's no longer pervasive, but some wineries still implement the practice out of tradition.

In 1984 Vinho Verde received official DOC status (Denominação de Origem Controlada) and regulations on quality control and production were put into place.

Today there are close to 20,000 growers making Vinho Verde Portugal's largest wine region. Combined they produce around 80 million liters of wine and export to more than 100 countries.

Vinho Verde is traditionally made from a blend of grapes in the cooler northwest part of Portugal.

Vinho Verde grapes for the white version include: Alvarinho, Arinto, Avesso, Azal, Batoca, Loureiro, and Trajadura along

with several others. The aromatic characteristics of the wine range from creamy peach and apricot to apple, pear, melon and citrus depending on the blend.

Typically these wines are extremely fresh and have a clean and simple nose. They are dry, and pale yellow, so there's not much sugar or color extract inside. They are meant to be enjoyed very young.

They can even be a little fizzy, and alcohol is rarely more 11.5%.

Vinho Verde is a great example of a light-bodied wine.

TASTING NOTES

LOOK: Pale, green-tinted yellow color with delicate effervescence

SMELL: Bright notes of white peach and lemon

TASTE: Spritzy and clean on the palate with a fruity-mineral finish

DISCUSS

Serve this wine very cold and with simple seafood dishes, or sip by the pool!

Cheers!
ANNIE

my notes

