

Clemens: Wine questions answered

Answers to whimsical wine questions.

- I am going to a wine tasting and want to look my best. What should I do?

It is imprudent to wear white, but otherwise go with what is comfortable and appropriate for the event. There is one thing you should not do. Do not brush your teeth before going. Toothpaste does not play well with wine.

Toothpastes usually are heavily flavored to cover up the taste of fluoride, detergents, and abrasives. The surfactants that cause toothpaste to foam as you brush are particularly problematic. If you must, brush at at least an hour before the event.

- What does it take to freeze wine in a bottle?

Depending on the alcohol content, most wine will freeze at 15 or 20 degrees, but it must remain at that temperature for some time before freezing solid in the bottle. Wine's freezing point is lower than water, but as wine begins to freeze the water content expands, pushing up the cork and potentially breaking the bottle. Don't put wine bottles in your freezer.

- I've had a bottle of wine for a decade. Has it improved with age, gotten worse, or stayed the same?

It depends on the wine and how it was stored. It is unlikely to have improved, likely has lost flavor and vibrancy, likely will not harm you. Almost all wine today is made to be consumed when you buy it, certainly within a few years of purchase.

As wine ages, its flavors become nutty and earthy. Primary fruit flavors fade. Those changes occur after 3-5 years, and some people enjoy those flavors.

Some wines are made for aging, but typically they are not released until they can be enjoyed soon after purchase. Quality Barolo wines, for instance, often are aged five-to-seven years before release. If you do spend the money for such wines and intend to age them, proper storage is vital. The best temperature is a steady 55 degrees. Keep away from sunlight and vibrations.

Tasting notes

- E. Guigal Côtes du Rhône Red 2018 maintains Guigal's reputation for consistent, delicious, serious wine. Complex, elegant, velvety smooth, charming. \$15-18