

July 10, 2009

The Sommelier Says....

Hello and welcome to the newsletter for <http://www.wine-sommelier.com/>

Bringing your own wine into a restaurant- what is the proper etiquette?

Restaurants for the most part prefer that you purchase wine at their restaurant since alcohol sales are a big part of their revenue. That said most restaurants have a corkage policy, meaning that you can bring in a bottle of wine with you to the restaurant (or more) but they will charge you a fee to open and serve the wine. Very fair when you think about it since they have expenses and labor costs when providing the glassware, making sure the wine is served at the correct temperature such as chilling a white wine, pouring the wine for you and your guests and any other service up and beyond such as decanting the wine for you.

People ask me "Well don't you feel uncomfortable bringing a bottle of wine to a restaurant?" and my typical response is that it mostly fits the occasion. Since many people now are eating out so much more often, it is pretty common world wide that people are more and more wanting to bring a special wine with them to pair with their favorite chefs, especially people who are really into the wine experience.

I do suggest the following protocol in finding out if your choice of restaurant is wine friendly though. First when you make your reservations and you should make a reservation especially when you plan to bring your own wine, call ahead and ask the restaurant for their corkage policy. Generally they will have one in place and can readily advise you of how much the charge is. An average charge depends on the class and style of restaurant you are going to. Expect that the better the restaurant the higher the cost, just like the regular menu. Charges can range from \$5 or \$10 for your local neighborhood places to \$25 and higher for those establishments that are in the fine dining range.

Next consideration is which wine do you bring? Here restaurants usually appreciate patrons that are bringing in wines that are not already on their wine lists. Also, wines that may be harder to get, not something off the shelf of your grocery store, and wine that compliments the cuisine of the chef, such as a great Italian wine for your favorite Italian restaurant.

Upon arrival to the restaurant it is always best to hand the bottle(s) it to your host or hostess when you check in so they can give it to your server and it doesn't become a scene pulling out your bottle out of a bag and waiting for your server to come over. This way your server is already clear on the instructions, you are

clear on your corkage fee and the evening can proceed just as if you had purchased the wine there.

Last is tipping. The servers make their income on gratuities so if you are bringing in a bottle and the corkage fee is added, it is not out of order if the service was good to leave a little extra. It will be appreciated and you will always be welcome to bring back your next bottle too!

Paso Robles Wine Tour- August 8/9

I will be heading up to Paso Robles on August 8/9 to visit some of the fine wineries in that area. The focus of August 8th will be Justin Winery where they are having their Annual Wine Society Gala. Enjoy wine tasting, food from Restaurante Tacos Tenexpa, and live music from Roughhouse. Casual dress. Taste all current releases plus new releases of 2007 Reserve wines – including SAVANT, Reserve Tempranillo and Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon.

\$15/person for Wine Society members, \$25/person for Guests- Please let me know if you plan on attending so I can purchase your tickets.

I will be staying at The Holiday Inn Express, 2455 Riverside Ave, Paso Robles, CA 93446 (805) 238-6500.

The current itinerary has us leaving Simi Valley at 7am on Saturday morning, stopping in Buellton for Breakfast, arriving at Justin by 11:30 am. Sunday we will visit up to 5 wineries. Transportation to and from the wineries might be arranged if the interest is great enough in this tour. You are responsible for your own transportation to and from Paso Robles.

Rancho Ventavo Wine Classes!

Address: 741 South "A" Street, Oxnard CA 93030

Telephone (805) 483-8084.

I will be teaching a series of Wine Appreciation Classes at Rancho Ventavo beginning on July 22. Contact Rancho Ventavo to sign up and additional details.

July 22- Wine Basics \$15

July 29- The Art of Wine Tasting \$15

August 5- The Judgment of Paris- redux \$25

August 12- Taste like a Pro \$15

Looking ahead

*- *July 17-18 California Wine Festival-Santa Barbara*

<http://www.californiawinefestival.com/>

*- *July 26 A Taste of Camarillo*

<http://www.meadowlarkserviceleague.com/>

- *- August 8-9 Paso Robles Wine Tour*
- *- September 11-13 Wine tour to Willamette Valley Oregon*

Cheers-

Tim

**If you would like to be removed from this list, please reply to me at tim@wine-sommelier.com and request removal from this list.
If you know someone that wants this list, please have him or her send me an email requesting to be included too!**