

How Wine is Made

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Sample of Content:

Making wine of a consistently high quality can be anything but straightforward. Making top quality wine requires exceptional skills. It all starts with the grapes...

Content:

The first stage in the wine making process is to crush the grapes. In days gone by the grapes would be loaded into a large vat and the wine maker(s) would gently tread on them to break the grapes' skins to release the juice.

Nowadays this procedure is almost invariably carried out using a machine called, unsurprisingly, a crusher.

In the case of white wines, after crushing, the juice is separated immediately from the pulp of skins and stalks and fermentation commences.

When making red (and ros  ) wines, the juice is allowed to remain in contact with the crushed pulp for a while to add color, body and flavor to the 'must' (the juice to be fermented).

Most modern wines are fermented at a relatively low temperature (around 20   C), which results in wine with a fruity character. White wines are commonly made in large, cooled, stainless steel containers but some better quality wines are fermented in oak casks or, alternatively, oak chippings may be added to the must.

Red and ros   wines are usually produced in stainless steel vats or, sometimes, in oak. When the fermenting wine has reached the required color intensity, the liquid is drawn from the vessel, leaving behind the crushed skins and stalks.

Before bottling, wines from different batches may be blended together and matured. Depending on the type of wine, the length of this maturation process can be measured in anything from days to years.

If an "oaky" flavor is desired then the wine can be matured in oak barrels. New oak or old oak barrels can be used depending on the final flavor required.

Even after bottling, the flavor of some quality wines will continue to evolve, albeit at a slower rate. However nowadays, most wines, even expensive wines, are ready for drinking soon after bottling.

Since Neil Best first asked: [who made the first wine](#)? he's been recording his findings at Good Glug. This article forms part of the free [Good Glug Wine Appreciation Course](#). Visit now to get your copy

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