



# Power Entertaining Tips

By  
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*Master Sommelier*

**Eddie Osterland,  
America's 1st  
Master**

**Sommelier**, is an internationally acclaimed expert in the culinary arena of food and wine.



For more than 25 years, he has performed his workshops and given educational and highly

entertaining "*during dinner*" presentations on ***Power Entertaining with Food & Wine***.

Clients use Eddie's lifestyle coaching to strengthen customer relationships, design annual client-appreciation events and execute corporate events that go way beyond people's expectations. They realize how today, more than ever, you cannot afford to be naïve about food and wines-the international currency for connection.

Eddie's educational background evolved from a degree in behavioral psychology to graduating from L'Institut d'oenologie at Université de Bordeaux with the D.U.A.D degree (*diplôme d'aptitude a la dégustation des vins*). He went on to become the first American to pass the grueling Master Sommelier Diploma in London in 1973.

Upon returning to the United States, Eddie worked as Director of Trade Education at the International Wine Center in New York City. He was the wine editor for Restaurant Business magazine for a decade.

Eddie also wrote *Wine and the Bottom Line*, the seminal book on selling wine in restaurants, for the National Restaurant Association.



Over the course of his career, Eddie has worked with organizations and coached leaders from a wide range of prestigious companies, including Citibank, General Mills, Procter & Gamble and IBM. In 2008 he participated in several major corporate entertaining events at the Beijing Olympics.

Audiences everywhere know him as witty, approachable and non-intimidating. He gives them the knowledge and skill they need to enjoy wine, and gives them confidence to entertain.

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## Power Entertaining Tips

**1.** Serve the best first. Appetites are fragile. Super Bowl munchies, run-of-the-mill stuff like peanuts, will only spoil your guests' appetites. Refrain from serving too many hors d'oeuvres. Serve the tastiest items within the first 30 minutes.

**2.** Choose foods and wines that are unfamiliar to your guests. Many people pour only Chardonnay, Cabernet, or Merlot. Be different; serve Sauvignon Blanc (*Sancerre*), Tempranillo (*Rioja*), Sangiovese (*Chianti*), and other "food wines" (**see appendix**).

**3.** Educate your guests about new foods. Allow them to discover new flavors at your home and they will always look forward to one of your invitations. Explore the unique items offered by some of the many *foodie websites* listed **in the appendix**.

**4.** Start with Champagne or sparkling wine. Sparkling wines are frequently associated only with special occasions like birthdays and New Year's. Your guests instantly feel special when you answer the doorbell with a tray of Champagne flutes.

**5.** Explore less expensive alternatives to French Champagne. Try CAVA from Spain, Prosecco from Italy, Sekt from Germany. These are delightful, different, and reasonable.

**6.** Serve sparkling wines with salty and fatty foods. Aged Parmesan (*at least two years*), Pecorino, and Manchego work well. Fried foods like shrimp tempura, calamari, and crab cakes work splendidly.

**7.** Serve something other than the ubiquitous array of crudités and dip, olive oil with bread cubes, toothpick squares of white and yellow cheeses and fruit displays. These are just not special. Try some Ventresca, Scottish smoked salmon, or foie gras.

**8.** Serve two wines simultaneously. Having two wines in a side-by-side comparison adds an intellectual dimension to your dinner party. Serving a Cabernet from France and one from California illustrates how geography plays in winemaking styles. Likewise, serving the same wine from two different vintages demonstrates the importance of age.

**9.** Present the pair of wines prior to the arrival of the food. This way your guests will focus on the wines' flavors. Serve them after the food and you will see that people tend to treat them like beverages. You want them to understand that wine is more than a beverage. Wine is more like a condiment that enhances food flavors.

**10.** Use the concept of side-by-side comparisons for food as well as wines. Teach your guests about exciting new discoveries. Show off how elegant Scottish smoked salmon is by serving it next to Nova. Serve three different versions of the Spanish ham (Jamon) to illustrate that you get what you pay for: Serrano, Iberco, and Iberco de Bellota.

**11.** Taste a young Parmesan cheese (six months) next to an old (*18 months*) or very old (*30 months*). This shows the incredible evolution of flavors and textures.

**12.** Offer new discoveries like fresh shrimp versus frozen, air-chilled organic chickens versus supermarket chickens, farm-fresh eggs versus store-bought. The list is endless.

**13.** Learn about *food wines*. You may be like many people who like to squeeze lemon wedges on your fish. This is because the acidity amplifies food flavors. When you choose a wine for your fish it should serve as a "stunt double" for the lemon. Accordingly, you should choose wines with ample acidity. These are called *food wines*. Some of the best are listed **in the appendix**.

**14.** Educate your guests about the concept of food and wine synergy.  $[1 + 1 = 3]$  is the formula that represents synergy. Simply stated, when wine is tasted with food the combined flavors are better than if each item is tasted separately. People often eat their food and then wash it down with wine. Teach your guests to do this differently and you will impress them.

**15.** Guard against over chilling your white wines. Whites are often served too cold. The subtle aromatics (*floral and fruity notes*) are anesthetized at refrigerator temperatures. Take your white wines out of the refrigerator 15 minutes prior to service.

**16.** Chill your reds slightly. Red wine is frequently served too warm. In order for red wine to taste balanced (**see diagram 1**) the element of fruitiness (*sweetness*) must be significant. Slightly chilling a red wine (62° F.) will enhance its sweetness. Put your reds in the refrigerator 20 minutes before service.

**17.** Leverage the experts. Learning everything there is to know about wine can take a lifetime. Unless it is your hobby, establish a relationship with a good wine retailer. Let them worry about vintages, what tastes best so that they can be your expert. The same goes with forming a similar relationship with a local sommelier. Dedicate your entertaining to a couple of restaurants. They will make you feel like you are a celebrity. (***see Restaurant Wine savvy in Appendix***)

## ***Power Tools***

Keeping within the theme of Power Entertaining, you need to have some Power Tools. To create an experience that goes beyond your guests' expectations, power tools arm you with those subtle distinctions and set you apart.

**18.** Purchase a plastic wine bottle insulator/cooler. Wine insulators (*they don't chill wines*) have a thermal-paned jacket of air which surrounds your wine and keeps it at proper temperature for more than an hour. If you choose to serve two wines, you'll need two.

**19.** Set the proper temperatures. If you own a wine refrigerator -and you should - (*Sub-Zero makes the best of them*), set the whites at 48° F. and the reds at 58° F. They will be at perfect service temperature, i.e. 50° for whites and 62° for reds by the time they reach the dinner table.

**26.** Get a digital wine thermometer. This important tool assists you in making sure that the wines you serve are at proper temperatures.

VinTemp ([www.vintemp.com](http://www.vintemp.com)) is ideal.

**27.** Have a nice wine opener on hand. The waiter's style, Laguiole makes one of the best. You'll want to have an Ah-So opener for difficult or broken corks. Give or throw away that wine angel that was so popular in the '70s. They just do not work as well as the ones I have mentioned.

**28.** Cut the wine capsule carefully just below the lip so as not to ruin the integrity of the capsule. Too often, waiters tear off the capsule leaving frayed edges. This is not acceptable.

**29.** Use the waiter-style opener properly, always making sure the screw is perfectly centered in the cork (*place the point of the screw off-center*). Sink all the turns so you remove the entire cork.

**30.** Keep your glass on the table rather than lifting it if a waiter or sommelier is about to pour you your wine. It's easier for them to pour when the glass remains on the table than aiming at a moving target.

**31.** Have several glass wine bottle coasters handy to keep from soiling a white table cloth. Your bottles may collect dust and dirt as your wine hobby grows and your collection of wines age. Riedel makes some lovely ones.

*Power tools arm you with those subtle distinctions that set you apart. If you don't have them, you're not in the game!*



# Appendix

## Food Wines

One of the most important attributes that a wine offers is its ability to enhance food flavors. Wine plays the role of a condiment much the same as salt, pepper, and a squeeze of lemon. Food Wines have the ability to enhance food flavors thanks to their elevated levels of acidity. Here are some of the best food wines that you should be familiar with.

### Whites:

- **Sauvignon Blanc** (*France, New Zealand, South Africa, and California*)
- **Riesling** (*dry style-Germany, Australia, Austria, California, and Washington*)

### Reds:

- **Barbera** (*Italy*)
- **Cabernet Franc** (*France and California*)
- **Pinot Noir** (*California, Oregon, France, New Zealand*)
- **Cabernet Sauvignon** (*California, France, Chile, Washington State*)
- **Sangiovese** (*Italy*)
- **Tempranillo** (*Spain*)

$1 + 1 = 3$  is the equation for synergy.

This illustrates that the sum of two singular items can equal a higher value when properly combined. Food and wine can be in synergy provided you taste them simultaneously. People often swallow their wine after finishing a bite of food. While there's nothing wrong with this, how can a wine's acidity do anything for your food if you already swallowed it?

## **Foodie websites to find unique foods and wines to WOW your guests:**

**[www.wine-searcher.com](http://www.wine-searcher.com)** finds any wine on-line

**[www.farm-2-market.com](http://www.farm-2-market.com)** lobsters, fresh shrimp, unprocessed scallops

**[www.latienda.com](http://www.latienda.com)** Spanish stuff to WOW your guests

**[www.dartagnan.com](http://www.dartagnan.com)** French stuff that will blow minds

**[www.lgourmet.com](http://www.lgourmet.com)** assorted gourmet items that most people never taste

**[www.epicurious.com](http://www.epicurious.com)** recipes, party ideas etc.

**[www.texasgourmetquail.com](http://www.texasgourmetquail.com)** boned, marinated, and butter-flied quail

**[www.russanddaughters.com](http://www.russanddaughters.com)** world's best smoked fish

**[www.splendidtable.publicradio.org](http://www.splendidtable.publicradio.org)** site is companion to the radio series

**[www.chowhound.com](http://www.chowhound.com)** latest, hip, bloggers

**[www.jancisrobinson.com](http://www.jancisrobinson.com)** wine news, tasting notes, great overall wine site

**[www.winespectator.com](http://www.winespectator.com)** one of the best magazine websites

**<http://lizzie.wordpress.com>** The Refined Palate "extraordinary foodie site"

## Restaurant Wine Savvy

**32.** Know the wine list. It's usually on their website. If it isn't, call them and ask them to email it to you.

**33.** Call the sommelier. Discuss the best values or most unique offerings. If at all possible, visit them and taste their suggestions before your event.

**34.** When ordering, avoid salads and heavy hors d'oeuvres. They ruin appetites.

**35.** Ask for a private dining room. Dining rooms are often too noisy.

**36.** Make a habit of comparing two wines. This adds an intellectual component.

**37.** Select wines and foods with which your guests are not yet familiar.

**38.** Serve the wines before the food. Teach your guests something about these wines.

**39.** Chill reds. Decant and have the decanter open on the table.

**40.** Use better glassware like Riedel/Spiegelau. You can rent these.

**41.** Pour from Magnums. This gives a more powerful impact.

**42.** Waive the tasting ritual. Choose a wine that you are familiar with (*one you have tasted recently*).

Then there will be no need to taste it again. It's simply a power play, but effective!

**43.** Never smell the cork. It smells like a cork with wine on its end. Smell the wine in the glass. It's OK to look at the cork to make sure it hasn't dried out.

**44.** Serve mineral water not tap or lemon water ... that's what everybody else does.

**45.** Tip with cash. This includes "*front loading*" the sommelier/captain.

## **Wine Tasting Event Checklist:**

Wine glasses—whites, reds, and flutes. Use best you can afford: Riedel rents these.

Corkage fee at corporate events—negotiate it or have it waived.

Mineral water not tap water with lemon slices. Find some unique ones.  
([www.mineralwaters.org](http://www.mineralwaters.org))

Cocktail reception-keep short (*45 minutes max*) with minimal hors d'oeuvres.

Wine – adequate supply? 2 oz. pours = 12 per bottle, 3 oz. pours = 8 per bottle.

Back up wine? If you have selected an old vintage, make sure to have a back up wine in case it's spoiled or corked.

Ice to chill both whites and reds. Use gray bus pans.

Reds pre-chilled?

Put them in the walk-in refrigerator the evening before, remove one hour before service. Keep them in their cardboard/styrofoam boxes to maintain 58° F. temperature. Serve them at 62°F.

- Digital wine thermometer (*VinTemp*)
- Wine openers, pourers, decanters, iceless chillers
- Music Cds or mp3 (*on flash drive*). Try GOVI "No Strings Attached" or "Andalusian Nights"
- Menu with wines printed. Give guests a small menu card explaining what wines (*with vintages*) they tasted so they remember them later. Handouts
- Client appreciation gifts

## MAJOR GRAPE VARIETIES ON WINE LIST

*Need to know:*

- ◆ Pronunciation
- What it tastes like
- What countries/regions produce it

### ***Cabernet Sauvignon***

- ◆ Cab-air-nay So-veen-yawn
- Black currants, green or black olives, mint, old mushrooms
- Calif., Wash., Oregon, New York, Bordeaux, Italy, Australia, Spain, Chile

### ***Pinot Noir***

- ◆ Pee-no Nwahr
- Cherries, strawberries, prunes, spice, barnyard
- Calif., Oregon, Wash., France, Germany, Italy

### ***Riesling***

- ◆ Reece-ling
- Apricots, peaches, honeysuckle, geraniums, petroleum
- Calif., New York, France (*Alsace*), Germany

## **Chardonnay**

- ◆ Shar-doe-nay
- Apples, lemon, pineapple, melon, vanilla, butterscotch, slightly burned toast
- Calif., Wash., Oregon, Idaho, New York, France, Italy

## **Chenin Blanc**

- ◆ Shen-non Blahn
- Apples, pineapple, guava, vanilla
- Calif., Texas, France (*Vouvray*), S. Africa

## **Gamay**

- ◆ Gam-may
- Raspberries, strawberries, violets
- Calif., Oregon, France (*Beaujolais*)

## **Gewurztraminer**

- ◆ Ge-wortz-tram-me-nair
- Cloves, cinnamon, lychee nuts, geraniums
- Calif., Oregon, France (*Alsace*), Italy, Austria, Germany

## **Grenache**

- ◆ Gren-ahsh
- Grape jam, violets, rose petals
- Calif., France (*Rhone Valley*), Spain, Australia

## **Merlot**

- ◆ Mer-low
- Blackberries, black olives, chocolate, plum - softer wine than Cabernet Sauvignon
- Calif., Wash., New York, France, Italy, Australia

## **Muscat**

- ◆ Mus-cat
- Peaches, apricots, nuts, raisins, citrus
- Calif., France (*Alsace*), Italy

## ***Sauvignon Blanc***

- ◆ So-veen-yawn Blahn
- Herbs, hay, citrus, grapefruit
- Calif., Oregon, Wash., Texas, France (*Loire Valley, Graves*), New Zealand, Australia

## ***Semillion***

- ◆ Say-me-yown
- Honey, milk, cream, melon, fig
- Calif., Wash., France (*Bordeaux*), Australia

## ***Syrah***

- ◆ See-rah
- Black pepper, violets, plum, berries, licorice
- Calif., France (*Rhone Valley*), Australia (*Shiraz*), S. Africa

## ***Zinfandel***

- ◆ Zin-fan-del
- Berries, raisins, plums, chocolate
- Calif.

## **WINE WITH FOOD**

Wine acts like a condiment. Like salt and pepper, wine enhances/amplifies food flavors.

### ***Guidelines:***

1. With simply prepared foods, use simple wines. Keep things in perspective!
2. With older, more complex wine, serve less intensely flavored to show off the wine.
3. Opposites attract. Try contrasting flavors (*i.e., sweet vs. salty*). Riesling with smoked salmon, Port with Stilton cheese.

**4.** Reds with beef. If using a "great" wine, the simpler you prepare the beef, the better you will showcase the wine.

**5.** With dessert wines, the higher the quality of wine, the simpler the dessert. Always make sure the dessert is less sweet than the wine.

## **CLASSIC WINE & FOOD RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WILL DAZZLE YOUR GUESTS**

**1.** Smoked salmon on pumpernickel with halb-trocken (*half-dry*) Mosel Rieslings. (*Low alcohol, sweet wines go well with salty foods.*)

**2.** Parmigiano-Reggiano (*at least 3 years old*) with sparkling, bone-dry Brut Champagnes. (*Oiliness, saltiness & crunchy, granular texture are unbeatable! With reds, it subdues tannins and brings out the fruit.*)

**3.** Grilled marinated shrimp with classic Chablis (*from France...with no wood influence*). Nervy, racy acidity amplifies shrimp flavors.

**4.** Smoked trout with fuller-bodied Rieslings from Alsace.

**5.** Spicy dishes (*i.e. Vietnamese*) love sparkling wines, provided the spiciness is not overwhelmingly hot.

**6.** Sweet Rieslings (*Spätlese, with good acidity*) with sweet spare ribs. Acidity cuts through fat, while sweetness blends the two.



**7.** Pinot Noir with poached or marinated salmon (*marinated in the Pinot Noir*). Make sure to choose a Pinot Noir high in fruitiness in order to dominate any tannin in the wine. (*California excels here.*)

**8.** Goat cheese with Sauvignon Blanc, especially Sancerre. Magnetic!

**9.** Grilled meats with "*tannic style*" Cabernet Sauvignon. Bitterness of char-broiling cancels out or off-sets the bitterness of the young tannic Cabernet.

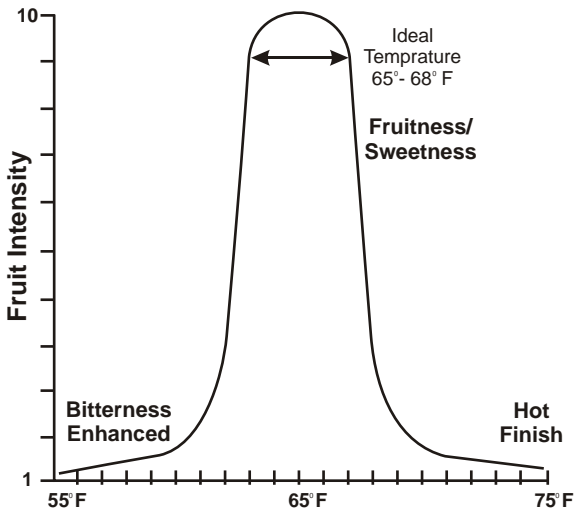
**10.** Grilled lamb or beef with Chianti Classico - the best you can afford. The high acidity in the wine becomes less apparent as it amplifies meat flavors and, hence, the fruitiness in the wine is allowed to come through.

**11.** Dolcetto with pizza...provided the pizza isn't loaded with overwhelming flavors. Keep it simple and you'll see these two were made for each other!

**12.** Reisling is the most versatile white wine with food that I know, provided you choose it with the perfect sugar/acid balance.

**13.** "*Mind-altering experience.*" Ask your retailer for a half bottle of German Eiswein (*expensive!*) and fasten your seat-belt. Do not serve any food with this. The wine stands alone.

# Effect of Temperature on Red Wine



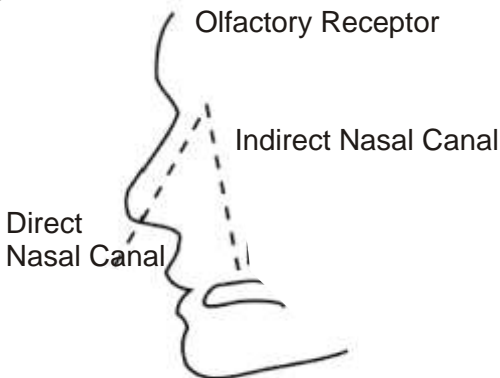
Red wines with no tannic astringency (*i.e. Beaujolais, Dolcetto*) can be served slightly cooler than 65°F.

High alcohol wines (14.5%+) benefit most with slight chilling because the caustic bite (*hot finish*) of the alcohol is lessened. Ideal temperature 63°F.

(go to [www.eddieosterland.com](http://www.eddieosterland.com) for actual graphic animation)

## STIMULUS-OLFACTORY

When you smell a wine, the fragrance is registered at your olfactory receptor near the brain.



Real tasters breathe backward

(go to [www.eddieosterland.com](http://www.eddieosterland.com) for actual graphic animation)

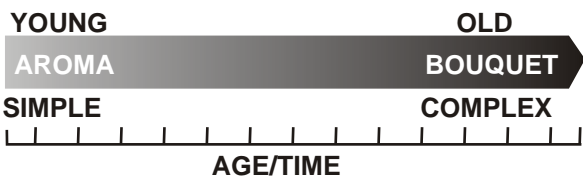
# SWIRLING



Why Swirl?

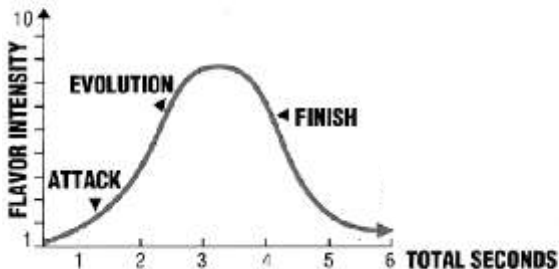
Evaporating alcohol intensifies the wine's scent in the center of the glass for approximately 1 second.

## AROMA/BOUQUET (RED WINES)



You need to age a fine red wine to allow its aroma to mature into bottle bouquet.

## THE SYSTEMATIC APPROACH



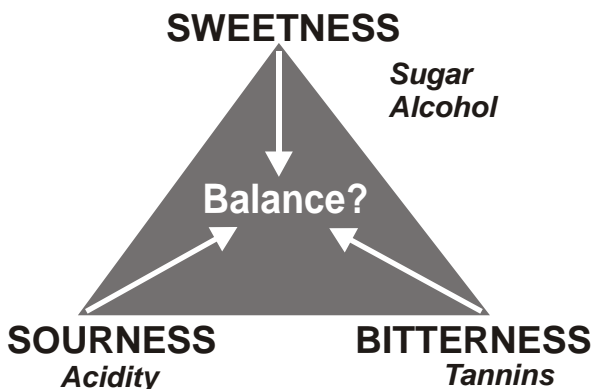
Fine wines distinguish themselves with a surge of flavor (*evolution*) and a lengthy aftertaste (*finish*)

When tasting wine, hold it in your mouth long enough to experience the attack, evolution and finish.

(go to [www.eddieosterland.com](http://www.eddieosterland.com) for actual graphic animation)

## TASTING RITUAL

- Always make a taste comparison between two wines.
- Always conduct this in a blind format.
- Attempt to discover flavor distinctions with the nose first, then on the palate.
- Formulate your conclusions: Is the wine ready to drink now? Is it a good value?
- Reveal the identity of the wines, discuss price/value and re-taste them.
- Now try the wines with food (*crackers, mild cheese, chicken, beef, etc.*) And notice how food changes the taste of Wine.



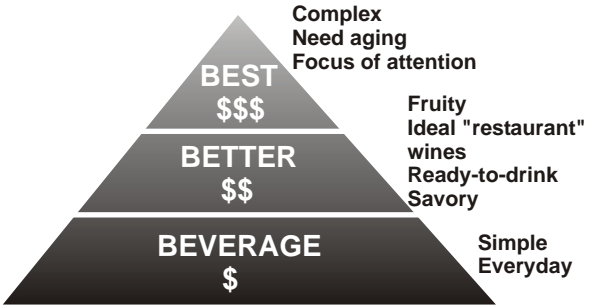
The winemaker attempts to balance the 3 elements of:

- **Sweetness**
- **Sourness**
- **Bitterness**

A wine is either balanced or not, tasting determines this.

Wine is made to "*provoke pleasure*".  
Some wines provide more pleasure than others...this has to do with balance.

# HIERARCHY OF WINES



Wine	Where Consumed	Reasons
<p><b>Best</b> Complex Intense \$\$\$</p>	<p>At home At some restaurants</p>	<p>Wine becomes center of attention: food should be chosen to show off the wine; food should be ample, yet subordinate to the wine.</p>
<p><b>Better</b> Fruity, Savory \$\$</p>	<p>Special meals at home When entertaining</p>	<p>As dining experience heightens, so does importance of wine and food, which serve as partners having equal importance. Ideal as "restaurant" wines, being moderately priced and integrating well with the food menu.</p>
<p><b>Beverage</b> Simple \$</p>	<p>In restaurants On picnics At beach With daily meals In restaurants</p>	<p>In this case, food is more important than the wine, which serves essentially to wash it down; simple wines are all the situation requires; ideally suited to serve as restaurant house wines.</p>



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