



Blind Tasting – Semillon/ Sémillon

Blind Tasting Series

This series gives you tips, tricks and techniques to elevate your tasting skills to the next level, led by our Madame Bollinger Award winning Master of Wine, Justin Martindale

The Wines

1. Tyrrell's Vat 1 Semillon, 2011, Hunter Valley, Australia

Vat 1 Semillon only ever comes from our best old vine, dry grown vineyards. These blocks feature ideal sandy, free draining soils that give these wines their unique character. The oldest of these blocks was planted in 1923. Vat 1 Semillon is Australia's most awarded white wine, having won almost 5,500 medals and more than 330 trophies.

- Grapes picked in the early hours of the morning;
- Fruit into the crusher in the best possible condition;
- Gentle pressing;
- Through the crusher and press as quick as possible, "so it doesn't oxidise and you don't get any coarseness out of the skins or stalks";
- Add 30% of stems in the press to create drainage channels amidst Semillon's notoriously slippery skins;
- Separate the free-run juice;
- Settle for 24 hours, then "rack off the mud";
- Use neutral yeast, "stir and let it go";
- Relatively cool fermentation in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks;
- No malo, no oak – "the aromatics are delicate, oak will destroy them";
- Minimal time on fine lees, no stirring;
- Fining with casein and bentonite;
- Then filtering and bottling within six months of the harvest "to maintain its freshness".

2. Ch. Suduirat 2010, Sauternes, France

Premier Cru Classé in 1855, is one of the great historic vineyards of Sauternes. A rigorous selection in the vineyard and in the cellars ensures the production of Château Suduiraut's wines, which are the accomplished expression of this exceptional terroir.

The 2010 vintage is a blend of 90% Sémillon together with 10% Sauvignon Blanc. Deep golden in colour, on the nose, woody, acacia honey, roast apricot and candied notes. Luxuriously opulent on the palate, with flavours of plum, wood and candied fruit, concluding on a smooth ginger and vanilla led finish.

3. De Bortoli 'All-Rounder' Dry Botrytis Semillon, 2002, Australia

100% Semillon from Australia's Riverland.

This is light orange in colour, indicating maturity and development. On the nose, there's enhanced marmalade, botrytis character and sweet fruit. The palate has unctuous silky honey, balanced with crisp acidity. A very charismatic dry botrytis, with great personality. Long, dry finish.

Further Info

If you enjoyed this introduction to red wine techniques, you may be interested in in these related videos:

- [Beyond the Basics: Sweet Winemaking](#) with Nova Cadamatre MW

Justin Martindale MW, Membership & Community Manager, WSG