



ESL Podcast 326 – Finding the Right Wine

GLOSSARY

empty-handed – without bringing anything; without carrying anything; without having anything

* The child came home from school empty-handed because he accidentally left his backpack and jacket on the bus.

wine – an alcoholic drink made from fermented grape juice

* Would you like a glass of wine with your dinner?

table wine – an inexpensive type of wine that is drunk with meals, not for special occasions

* If you're going to bring a bottle of wine to your boss's house, make sure it's a nice one and not just the cheap table wine that we drink normally.

white – a type of wine that has a very light yellow color and that one can see through easily

* Most people think that white wine tastes best with fish.

red – a type of wine that has a dark red or purple color and that one cannot see through easily

* Red wine is a good combination with steak and other meats.

rosé – a type of wine that has a light pink or purple color and that one can usually see through

* Rosé wines are made by letting the skin of red grapes touch the wine for a short period of time.

label – a piece of paper that is glued to a bottle or jar and has information about the product inside

* Do you read the nutritional information on the labels of the food that you buy?

fruity – with a fruit-like flavor; with the taste and/or smell of many fruits

* Do you prefer fruity desserts or chocolate desserts?

tart – sour; having a sour or acidic taste, often unpleasant

* These lemons are really tart! We'll need to put a lot of sugar in the lemonade.

full-/light-bodied – having a very strong (full-) or weak (light-) taste or smell

* If you're serving food with very delicate flavors, I suggest that you serve a light-bodied wine, because a full-bodied wine might be too strong and not let people really taste the food.



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vineyard – a farm where grapes are grown, usually for wine

* What kind of grapes do they grow on that vineyard?

corkscrew – a tool used to open a bottle of wine; a metal and plastic tool with a spiral metal piece that is used to take the cork out of a bottle of wine

* Craig brought a nice bottle of wine for their picnic, but he forgot to bring a corkscrew, so they weren't able to open it.

six-pack – a group of six cans or bottles that are connected with a piece of plastic and sold together, usually beer but sometimes soda

* Is it cheaper to buy four six-packs or a box of 24 cans?

beer – an inexpensive and popular alcoholic drink that has a yellow-brown color and is made from a grain

* Many people like to drink beer while they watch football games on TV.

champagne – a type of white wine with bubbles that is drunk on special occasions

* How many bottles of champagne should we buy for the wedding?

can't go wrong – can't have a problem by doing a particular thing; a way to refer to something that is appropriate in any situation or at any event

* Even if you don't know what other people are wearing to the party, you can't go wrong with a simple black dress.

special occasion – a special event or memorable happening, such as a wedding, birthday, or holiday

* Grandma uses her nicest plates only on special occasions because she doesn't want them to break.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a full-bodied wine?
 - a) A wine with a strong flavor.
 - b) A wine with a fat bottle.
 - c) A wine used as a table wine.

 2. Where would you expect to drink champagne?
 - a) A weekday dinner at home.
 - b) A baseball game.
 - c) An anniversary party.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

label

The word “label,” in this podcast, means a piece of paper that is glued to a bottle or jar and has information about the product inside: “Some labels on Canadian products are in French and English.” On clothing, a “label” is the small piece of cloth, often sewn into the neck of shirt, that has information about the manufacturer, material, and size: “The label says that this shirt is extra-large, but it’s too small for me.” A “record label” is a company that produces CDs and music videos: “Which record label does Madonna work with?” As a verb, “to label” means to put a label onto something, or to write information on it: “Before you put food in the freezer, don’t forget to label it with the date so you can see how old it is.”

tart

In this podcast, the word “tart” means sour, or having a sour or acidic taste: “These candies are so tart that the children make funny faces while eating them.” Or, “The green apples on that tree are so tart that even the birds won’t eat them!” At a bakery or restaurant, a “tart” is a dessert like a small pie, usually filled with fruit: “This apple-peach tart is delicious with ice cream!” When someone speaks “tartly,” it means that he or she speaks angrily, quickly, or sharply because he or she is annoyed or frustrated about something: “When the boy asked a very basic question, the teacher replied tartly, saying, ‘If you had been paying attention, you would already know the answer.’”



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CULTURE NOTE

In 2003, the United States was the world’s fourth-largest producer of wines. California is the country’s largest producer of wine. Spanish “missionaries” (people who go to another country to teach others about their religions) began growing grapes and making wine there in the late 1700s.

Today, California’s Napa Valley is known as “wine country” (an area where there are many vineyards). Many “oenophiles” (people who love wine and know a lot about it) go to the Napa Valley on vacation to visit the vineyards and participate in “tasting events” (days when visitors go to a vineyard and drink a small amount of many different wines to compare the tastes).

Washington State is America’s second-largest producer of wine, with more than 500 “wineries” (companies that make wine). The Columbia Valley and Yakima Valley are probably the best known wine-growing regions within Washington. The state is most famous for its Riesling, Chardonnay, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon. The State of Oregon also produces many wines, especially in the Willamette Valley, where the weather is very good for growing grapes. Oregon is most famous for its Pinot Noir, a wine made from dark red grapes, and Pinot Gris, a wine made from white grapes.

Michigan has many vineyards that “specialize” (do one thing very well) in table wines and sweet wines that are made from grapes that are “native to” (originally grown in) North America. Grapes grow best in the vineyards near Lake Michigan, where the “climate” (weather) is “milder” (calmer, without hot and cold extremes) than in the rest of the state.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – c



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 326: Finding the Right Wine.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 326. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Visit our website at eslpod.com, and while you're there download a Learning Guide for this episode that contains all of the vocabulary, definitions, sample sentences, cultural notes, comprehension checks, and a complete transcript of this episode. You can also take a look at our ESL Podcast Store, which has some additional premium courses for business and daily English.

This episode is called "Finding the Right Wine." Let's get drinking!

[start of dialogue]

Antonio: Why are we stopping here?

Melanie: We can't go to the dinner party empty-handed. We need to bring a bottle of wine.

Antonio: I don't know anything about wines. You'll need to pick a bottle.

Melanie: I don't know much about wines, either. I just know we need a good table wine. Do you think we should get a bottle of white, red, or rosé?

Antonio: I don't know.

Melanie: The label on this one says that it's fruity and not too tart. This other one says that it's full-bodied, but I think we want a light-bodied one, right?

Antonio: I have no idea.

Melanie: The label on this one says that it's from a California vineyard. Is that good or bad?

Antonio: I don't know. Stop asking me. Here's a corkscrew. Why don't you take out the cork and we'll have a taste?



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Melanie: That's very funny. You're not helping me at all.

Antonio: I say we just bring them a six-pack. I know I'd rather have beer than wine any day.

Melanie: Stop fooling around. We need to pick out a bottle of wine.

Antonio: I have an idea. Let's bring them a bottle of champagne. You can't go wrong with champagne.

Melanie: Champagne? It's not a special occasion.

Antonio: We'll tell them that being invited for dinner in their home is a special occasion for us. They'll be happy to hear that.

Melanie: I don't know about that.

Antonio: Trust me. Grab a bottle and let's go. We're late!

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue is between Antonio and Melanie. They are going to a party – they've been invited to someone's house for dinner – and they want to bring a bottle of wine. It's traditional if someone invites you to dinner at their house to bring a bottle of wine or some small gift for them.

Antonio begins by asking Melanie, "Why are we stopping here?" – why are we parking our car and stopping at this place? Melanie says, "We can't go to the dinner party empty-handed." To be "empty-handed" means not to have anything, to come with no gift, with nothing. Melanie says, "We need to bring a bottle of wine." "Wine," of course, is an alcoholic drink that is made from a fermented – a specially processed type of grape juice. Wine is a popular drink at dinner in many countries, in Europe, in the U.S., and other parts of the world. I am not actually a wine drinker. I like the taste of wine, but it often gives me a headache. So, I think my body is telling me that I don't need wine to talk or to be a little crazy; I'm crazy enough! So, I don't drink wine myself, but it is very popular, and in our dialogue, Antonio says he doesn't know anything about wines – he's just like me!

Melanie says, "I don't know much about wines, either. I just know we need a good table wine." A "table wine" is an inexpensive – a not expensive type of wine that you drink with your meal. It's not for special occasions; it's the common wine



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that you would find in a restaurant. Not the best wine, but still probably, we hope, a good wine. Melanie says to Antonio, “Do you think we need a bottle of white, red, or rosé?” These are three types of wine. A “white” wine has a very light yellow color that you can see through easily. A “red” wine, you can guess, has a dark red or purple color. A “rosé” is a type of wine that has a light pink or purple color; you can usually see through, in the glass, a rosé wine.

Melanie says that the label on one bottle that she’s looking at says that it’s “fruity and not too tart.” The “label” (label) is the piece of paper that is, in this case, glued to the bottle of wine that gives you more information about it. A “label” is any piece of paper – anything that is put on something else to give you more information about it. When you buy milk, for example, there’s a label on the back that tells you how many calories and how much fat and other nutritional information. This is a label that is telling Melanie what kind of wine this is. For some additional definitions of this word “label,” take a look at our Learning Guide.

Melanie says that the label says that this wine is “fruity and not too tart.” There are different ways that people sometimes describe the taste of wine; one way is to say that it is “fruity” (fruity). Something is “fruity” when it has when it has a fruit-like flavor; it tastes or smells of many kinds of fruits or a particular kind of fruit. If a wine is “tart” (tart), we mean it’s sour. “Sour” is the opposite of “sweet.” So, a “tart” wine is a sour wine; often, for some people, not good tasting, but some people like that kind of taste. Melanie says the other bottle she’s looking at is “full-bodied.” When we talk about a “full-” or “light-bodied” wine, we’re talking about having a very strong taste if it’s “full-bodied.” If it’s “light-bodied,” it would have a weaker taste or smell. If ESL Podcast were a wine, I would describe it as “full-bodied” – a strong taste!

Back to our dialogue: Melanie says that she thinks they want a light-bodied wine. Antonio says, “I have no idea” – I don’t know. Melanie continues, “The label on this one (she’s obviously picked up another bottle of wine – a different bottle) says that it’s from a California vineyard.” A “vineyard” (vineyard – it’s spelled like “vine-yard” but pronounced “vin-yard”) is a farm where grapes are grown, usually for wine. The grapes grow on a plant, and a plant is called a “vine.” Wine is made in many different parts of the world. Italy and France and Germany, Spain are all famous for their wines, but there are other countries, also, that make good wines. Here in the United States, California has a large wine producing section. It’s up in Northern California, north of San Francisco. There was a popular movie a few years ago called Sideways in English, and it was, in part, about people going and visiting the wine areas in Northern California. I, of course, have never been there, because I don’t drink wine!



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Melanie says, “Is this good or bad?” – being from a California vineyard, is that a good thing or a bad thing? Antonio says, “I don’t know. Stop asking me.” Then he makes a joke, he says, “Here’s a corkscrew. Why don’t you take out the cork and we’ll have a taste?” A “corkscrew” (corkscrew – one word) is the tool you use to open a bottle of wine. It usually has a piece of metal that goes into the top of the wine bottle; the wine bottle, on the top, has something called a “cork.” The cork is like the cap; it keeps the wine in the bottle. So, a corkscrew takes the cork out.

Antonio is joking here, saying well, let’s just taste the wine here in the store, which, of course, you normally cannot do. Well, you could do it, but you’d have to buy the bottles of wine first! Melanie says, “That’s very funny.” The expression “that’s very funny,” said in that intonation – said in that tone – is meant to give you the idea that it’s not funny – “I don’t think that’s funny.” It’s a strange expression; someone makes a joke about you and you say, “Oh, that’s very funny,” you mean you don’t think it’s funny.

Antonio says, “I say we just bring them a six-pack.” A “six-pack” refers to six cans, usually, of beer or some other sort of liquid, usually beer. Someone says, “I’m going to go get a six-pack,” they mean they’re going to go buy six cans of beer. Usually the cans come together in a plastic-like container that holds them together. A “six-pack” would be something you would buy for going to, say, a party with your male friends, watching the football game or the soccer game. It’s not something that you would bring to a dinner party. Once again, Antonio is sort of joking, but he says, “I know I’d rather have beer than wine any day.” He’s saying, “I would rather have beer,” which is made from a grain; it is a popular alcoholic drink. He would rather have a beer than a wine any day, meaning “I would always prefer a beer over a wine.”

Melanie says, “Stop fooling around (stop joking). We need to pick out a bottle of wine.” Antonio says, “Let’s bring them a bottle of champagne.” “Champagne” is a type of white wine with bubbles in it that people usually drink on very special occasions. True champagne comes from the area in France, that is the real champagne, but many companies now make champagne, and call it champagne. It’s a type of bubbly wine.

Antonio says, “You can’t go wrong with champagne.” The expression “you can’t go wrong” means you will never have a problem if you decide to use this particular thing. Melanie says, “Champagne? It’s not a special occasion,” or special event – special happening, like a wedding or a holiday or a birthday; it’s just a normal dinner party.



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Antonio says, “We’ll tell them that being invited for dinner (to their house) is a special occasion for us.” Melanie’s not sure if this is a good idea, but Antonio says, “Trust me (meaning “believe me”). Grab a bottle (meaning “pick up a bottle”) and let’s go. We’re late!”

Now let’s listen to the dialogue again, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

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Melanie: I don’t know much about wines, either. I just know that we need a good table wine. Do you think we should get a bottle of white, red, or rosé?

Antonio: I don’t know.

Melanie: The label on this one says that it’s fruity and not too tart. This other one says that it’s full-bodied, but I think we want a light-bodied one, right?

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Antonio: Trust me. Grab a bottle and let's go. We're late!

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by Dr. Lucy Tse. I don't think she was drinking wine when she wrote this script, but I'll have to ask her!

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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