

The importance of presentation

There's a reason you don't serve wine in any old glass. Presentation matters. Here, resident wine guru **Neil Fortes** explains why



Neil Fortes is an industrial psychologist and certified mediator by profession, but a wine guru at heart. He has a 25-year history in the wine business, consulting for many wine companies and marketing wines across Canada and the U.S. Please visit www.wineguru.ca for more information.

While the choice of wines on your wine list is important, presentation counts when it comes to your customers.

Two things commonly overlooked by restaurant owners are the presentation of their wine list and the stemware they use.

THE WINE LIST

Try to use a creative printing establishment to suggest a selection of fonts and layout. Make the list personal with the image of your restaurant in mind. A wine list needs to be attractive, informative and easy to read. Your customer's ability to read a clearly laid-out menu where the details of the wine are seen in print form in some attractive and informative format will help the client decide what wine to order.

Many restaurants do not have the budget and cannot help a customer individually with their choice of wine. They may rely on wait staff to 'sell' the wines on the wine list. However, the wine list should be the sales vehicle for wines in your establishment.

It's important, then, to separate your wine menu from your food menu. The wine list has its own integrity and can be presented to the customer with special attention. Don't forget that your wines are a separate profit centre and therefore should be given the deserved attention.

Make sure you have all the information on the wine that is needed in the wine list namely: wine name vintage (year), varietal (shiraz, chardonnay, etc.), a brief description of the wine plus food matching and country of origin. It is also important to separate the 'Wines By The Glass' category from your 'Wines By The Bottle' on your wine list. Finally, you'll want to have an individual binder for the wine list, which will remain clean and unstained.

STEMWARE

The wineglasses you choose are very important. They carry the commodity you are selling and are the container which will certainly make an impression on your restaurant customer. When choosing the type of stemware to use in your restaurant, consider the size of your dishwasher machine. Dishwashers are able to accommodate a certain height of wineglass. Older dishwashing machines sometimes can only accommodate a short-stemmed glass. In addition, you'll need to choose stemware that will endure dishwasher breakage or general handling.

Choosing wineglasses for your establishment can be expensive because there are many different brands and price tiers to consider. Wineglasses need to be of a uniform type – a mixture of shapes and sizes does not

WINEGLASSES

Here is a list of wineglasses that I have sampled based on the above criteria:

Brand	Supplier	Cost	Brim	Comment	Length of stem	Bowl size
Libbey 7520SR*	Libbey Glass	\$7.98	Medium	Very robust	3 inches	18 oz
Libbey 3011	Libbey Glass	\$6.20	Thick	Very robust	3 inches	14 oz
Accademia Luigi Bormioli 09231/06.2 Palace*	Libbey Glass	\$10.00	Thin	Medium robust, elegant	3 inches	20 oz
IKEA 963.111.00	IKEA	\$2.49	Medium	Medium robust	4 inches	20 oz
IKEA300.919.23*	IKEA	\$2.99	Medium	Medium robust, elegant	4 inches	15 oz
IKEA 763.112.00	IKEA	\$2.49	Medium	Slightly robust	4 inches	19 oz
Riedel Overture Magnum	Stems Canada	\$4.75	Thin	Fragile, elegant	2.5 inches	18 oz
Spiegelau Festival Bordeaux*	Stems Canada	\$5.17	Thin	Fragile, elegant	3 inches	16 oz
Riedel Extreme Restaurant	Stems Canada	\$6.95	Thin	Fragile, very elegant	4 inches	28 oz

*Recommended by Neil Fortes

help in creating an impression on your client.

My criteria for choosing a wineglass include the cost of the item, the length of the stem (not less than 3.5 inches), the bowl of the glass (an ideal bowl will add aeration to the wine improving the nose and feel of the wine), uniformity (there is no need to have separate red and white wine glasses. Choose one wine glass that fits all), the thickness of the brim (wine needs to be drunk out of a thin brim). A thin brim encourages sipping, which is part of the culture of wine. Sipping allows the taster to enjoy the pleasantries and nuances of the wine. Lastly, consider the robustness, as the thicker the brim, the more robust the glass.

So, in conclusion, the subject of presentation is the answer to optimizing your wine list. The beauty of your wine list as a document of note and style, and the wineglass which follows through on the message together with the wine, will make an impression which should add dollars to your wine section.

Happy drinking! 🍷

NEIL'S COMMENTS

- Wineglasses are normally available by the dozen
- The good thing about IKEA wineglasses is that they are available at most IKEA stores and can be bought individually. I particularly like the IKEA 300.919.23 which is elegant and well priced
- The Libbey 7520 SR is a good, robust glass with a medium brim
- The Spiegelau Festival Bordeaux is an up-market wineglass with a good stem and bowl
- Riedel is, of course, the well-known German brand that has a wineglass for almost every varietal – they also happen to own Spiegelau
- The Riedel Extreme is a beautiful glass with a big bowl and should be handled carefully
- The Luigi Bormioli Palace is an exceptional glass which is both robust and has a good bowl for aeration but is at a higher price level
- All prices shown are approximate depending on the area of Canada where you are and the distributor network for the product

Neil recommends the Spiegelau Festival Bordeaux available at Stems Canada





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