

Aroma Therapy Essay by Jeannie Boutelle

Flowers, shrubs and fruits are my friends when it comes to identifying aromas in a wine glass. They jump out of the glass and brighten my mood. Green almond and herbs, are not so easy when it comes to wine aroma identification. They seem to hide from me in the glass, no matter how far I dig my nose in or how long I sniff the wine.

Drinking wine can be therapeutic. There is the relaxation from the imbibing of alcohol but there is also the affect of the aromas on your psyche. Aromatherapy is considered an alternative therapy, with claims to improving your well-being. I definitely experience aromatherapy when I go to the farmers markets in Chicago and smell the herbs or the buckets of flowers, my mood brightens immediately. The same thing happens when I put my nose into a glass of an aromatic white wine, like a Vermentino,

Jgor Marini of Banfi, correlated the aromas present in a glass of Banfi's La Pettegola Vermentino to their corresponding impact on your psyche, in a Zoom meeting recently. Vermentino is a grape that speaks to you from the glass. It is a grape of the Mediterranean and one of its aromas that comes easily to me to identify is Mediterranean scrub. Jgor attributed the pleasantness of this aroma with seaside and summer memories. Who does not like the seaside or summer? It evokes walks along a narrow path in the sand dunes with intermittent wafts of brambly beach roses and the excitement of jumping in the ocean. Grapefruit and citrus zest aromas were attributed to be stimulating. Grapefruit is a fresh scent, it perks people up. Its found in Sancerre wines as well and Vermentino could be considered a crossover grape for Sauvignon Blanc drinkers. Stonefruit aromas of apricot and peach, he attributed to the processing of a reward. Peach and apricot aromas jump out of glasses of Rias Baixas Albarinos, and Portugese Vinho Verdes too. Peaches, I associate with summertime and farmers markets. Vermentinos from Sardinia, like Giunco, can have more exotic fruit characteristics like mango which evokes images of biting into a juicy, Indian mango.

I love almonds but I find green almond, a phenolic compound, does not jump out of the glass for me, it hides. I love herbs, but thyme and sage seem to hide in the glass as well. Jgor attributed aromas of these herbs to improving concentration, attention and initiative. Maybe I should smell these herbs before I go into a blind tasting exam or attempt to write an essay on aromas? Ironically, these are aromas that require me, to focus, and concentrate on what is in the glass, to be able to identify them.

Oh, the florals, the florals, they make themselves known right away, be it the honeysuckle and acacia of Albarino, the orange blossom of Pinot Gris, the white spring flowers of Lugana DOC. Time for a glass of wine for me, but before I sip I must sniff it!