

## TASTINGS CHECKLIST

### What Every Tasting Experience Should Include

Infrastructure and people aside, there are some simple things that complete the tasting experience to ensure it works for you and your visitors.

Glassware	International Standard tasting glasses are the absolute minimum. Print a plimsol line to indicate the tasting amount (assists in portion control and responsible service) and brand your glasses. Use variety-specific glassware for your special wines and private tastings. Ensure your glasses smell fresh and are lint (and lipstick) free. Best to use soft linen napkins for polishing glasses.
Spittoons	These are an absolute necessity, but remember that some visitors find their presence extremely offensive. Others find them intimidating and embarrassing to use. Choose from plumbed in varieties, freestanding spittoons that can be moved around and tabletop models. Anything on the bar needs to be discreet – make sure the “dregs” aren’t visible and empty and clean regularly.
Tasting Notes	Provide information sheets that are relevant to the type of tasting on offer. A “master” folder is useful, which can include all sorts of information about the winery as well as the wines and winemaking process. Simple, laminated sheets are effective for counter tops and any seated tasting should include a tasting mat with the wine clearly identified.
Order Forms	Make it easy for people to purchase. Your order form can also double as your tasting sheet with a little imagination. Allow room for visitors to record their impressions or rate each wine. Make sure the price per bottle and case is clearly evident and detail any special offers, such as free delivery. Encourage people to fill in the form as they progress through the tasting. Perforate the order section and allow people to take home their notes section for future reference. Don’t forget the pencils or pens!
Freight Rates	Create a list of domestic and international destinations and detail the cost of shipping the wine to these locations. Identify any limitations for international market entry and provide information about insurance. Take the guesswork out of the cost of getting your wine right to your customer’s door.
Retail Availability	Encourage post-visit purchases by offering a list of retail outlets and restaurants stocking your wine in the visitor’s home city, state or country.
Water & Palate Cleansers	For cleansing the palate between wines. Have jugs of water on the bar, full glasses for seated tastings or a self-serve water filter. You might also want to consider alternative palate cleansers such as crackers, fresh bread or almonds. Keep serving plates full and contents fresh.
Winery Information	Provide brochures or flyers about upcoming events, additional services and facilities and your wine club or mailing list. Make it easy for people to form a relationship with you and clearly articulate the benefits.
Feedback Mechanism	This can be as simple and unobtrusive as a Visitors’ Book placed near the exit or sales area. You may also have dedicated Customer Satisfaction forms or a technology centre where people can input data directly into your database. This can serve a dual purpose by encouraging visitors to join your mailing list too.