



TASTING GUIDE

for craft wine, beer, cider, spirits, and more.



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Page 3	Who We Are
Page 4	General Tasting Techniques
Page 5	Style Specific Considerations
Page 6	Applying the Techniques
Page 7	Wine Sensory Mat
Page 8	Whiskey Sensory Mat
Page 9	Beer & Cider Tasting Mat
Page 10	Tasting Events with The Crafty Cask

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Check out our
Tasting Techniques
Playlist!



WHO WE ARE



We Celebrate all things craft alcohol. From the people, to the art and science, to industry innovations. If it's related to craft alcohol and there's an interesting story behind it, we're celebrating and sharing it with all of you through events, articles, videos, and more.

We Storytell because we believe people connect with people. And people connect with stories. People don't connect with products. We're here to tell the stories, draw you in, and help you engage with the beautiful world of craft alcohol.

We Support craft, artisan alcohol producers. Our mission is to support the craft alcohol community so small, amazing makers can have sustainable, even thriving businesses, while remaining independent. When you learn more about enjoying craft alcohol and supporting the makers through purchases, you help us do just that.

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Tasting Techniques

**S
E
E**

Hold your glass up to a white piece of paper with some writing on it and then assess:

Color: often tells you a bit about the source material and the amount of barrel aging.

Transparency: often indicates a level of filtration. Less can mean more complexity, flavor, and mouthfeel...don't be afraid of a little cloudiness or particles falling out of solution!

**S
N
I
F
F**

Smell makes up more than 80% of what you taste, so in our opinion, the two steps with your nose are the most important to maximize your tasting experience! There are three layers of aromas to look for:

1. Aromas from the **source materials** themselves



2. Aromas from the **aging process and materials**



3. Aromas from the **production process**, often considered undesirable if too prominent



**S
W
I
R
L**

Put your glass on the table, hold the stem like a pencil near the base of the glass, and swirl it on the table while pushing down slightly to **get it swirling vigorously**.

This step, which helps open up aromas, is why it's important to only fill your glass up 1/3 full for tastings...because you really want to get it moving in your glass.

**S
N
I
F
F
a
g
a
i
n**

Sniff again...here are a few added techniques to employ to get the most out of your nose:

Deep, slow, sustained inhale – ideal for finding those heavier aromas coming from the aging process and materials.

Short, quick inhales & exhales (steam up your glass a bit – it helps!) – ideal for finding those lighter, brighter, harder to find aromas coming from the source material.

**S
I
P**

Take your **first sip** and “chew it” a bit. Move it all around your mouth so that it coats the entire inside and your mouth gets fully acclimated to this new taste. Don't ever trust your first sip! Take another sip and start to assess:

1. Does it taste how I expected based on the nose?

2. What's happening in my mouth? Does it feel dry or am I puckering or is saliva pooling? All of these different sensations tell you something about what you're drinking.

**S
A
V
O
R**

Swallow & **assess the experience that lingers in your mouth** for the next 60-90 seconds. A long finish that continues to delight your palate is a sign of a well-made product.

Being able to distinguish quality from your own taste preferences means you're becoming a great taster!



A Few Style Specific Considerations

S
E
E



The level of transparency can also give you clues about the type of grape used and, at times, the body of the wine.



Haziness in beer can also be attributed to the types of grains, malts, and added ingredients (milk sugars, flour) used

S
N
I
F
F



Due to the high ABV in spirits, make sure you don't stick your nose into the glass for this step.

Usually right around chin level is close enough so you don't burn out your senses!

S
W
I
R
L



Swirling is not necessary or even recommended by some for spirits, but a light swirl can wake up the aromas.



For all carbonated beverages, rather than swirling, top off your glass to create a bit more fizz and/or head and immediately put your hand over your glass to trap in the aromas. Bring it up to your nose, with your hand over it, and then sniff.

We like 4 oz tasting glasses for beer & cider so we can keep topping off to do this!

S
I
P



Be careful to not "chew" too long as the high ABV in spirits can burn out your palate a bit. But even 5 seconds still helps get the effect you're looking for.



Put What You've Learned Into Practice...

Ready to turn your drinking into an experience? Ready to spend a little time getting to know your palate and that tippie you're sipping on? Excellent!

When you slow down and engage with what you're drinking it allows you to not only enjoy it more, but at times be transported to different memories or places. It also allows you to connect with whomever you're sharing your drinking experience with in a meaningful way.

While we certainly don't do this *every time we drink*, we do tend to do it when:

1. We're drinking something new for the first time or pairing it with a new food.
2. We take a sip of something and it "breaks our necks" and makes us notice it in some way
3. We're having a date night or friends night or otherwise trying to be present.

To put this into practice:

- Print out one of the sensory mats or tasting mats on the following pages. For the sensory mats, if you have multiple bottles open grab a different colored pencil or pen for each different drink you'll be sipping on.
- Walk through the tasting techniques one-by-one, circling back and forth as needed to better understand, appreciate, and enjoy what's in your glass.
- While you do this, map out or write notes about your experience on the sheets you printed out. On the sensory maps, connect the dots to see that drink's "footprint" for your palate.
- If you're drinking with others discuss what you're thinking and experiencing with them. Play a little game of find and seek when it comes to the aromas and flavors. Can you find what they're experiencing or something similar and vice versa?

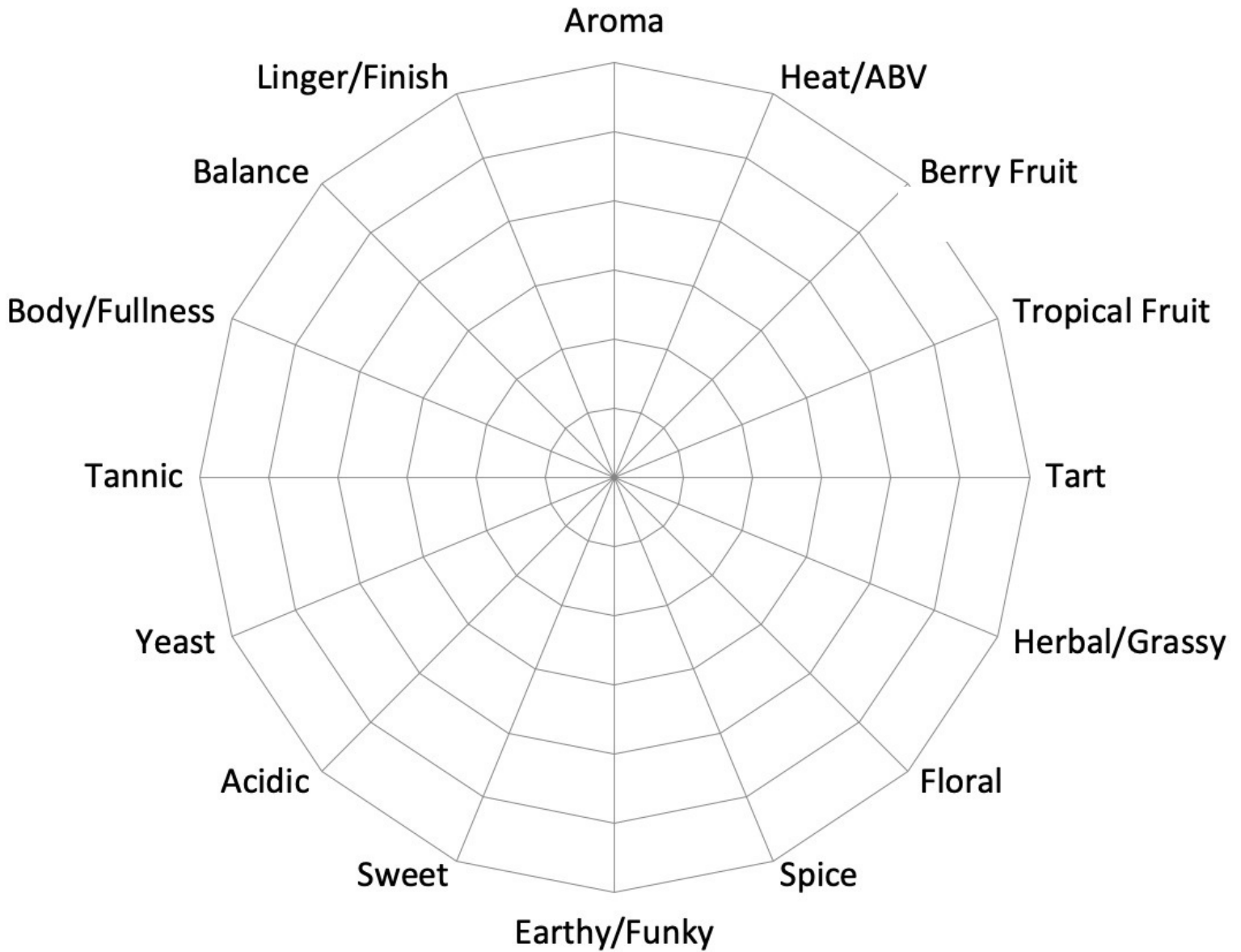
Remember - there is **NO WRONG ANSWER** with any of this stuff. What you are smelling and tasting is subjective and based on your own life experience and memories. The weirder or the more specific the aroma or taste is that you're thinking of the more you should share it and explore it!

Try to push yourself past "fruity" to "cherries." Use an aroma wheel, which you can find online, to help here. Is it fresh cherries, stewed cherries, cherry pie, cherry candy, etc...

Don't forget to tag us in any photos you take [@thecraftycask](https://www.instagram.com/thecraftycask) or message us with questions!

Wine Sensory Mat

1. See 2. Sniff 3. Swirl 4. Sniff again 5. Sip 6. Savor



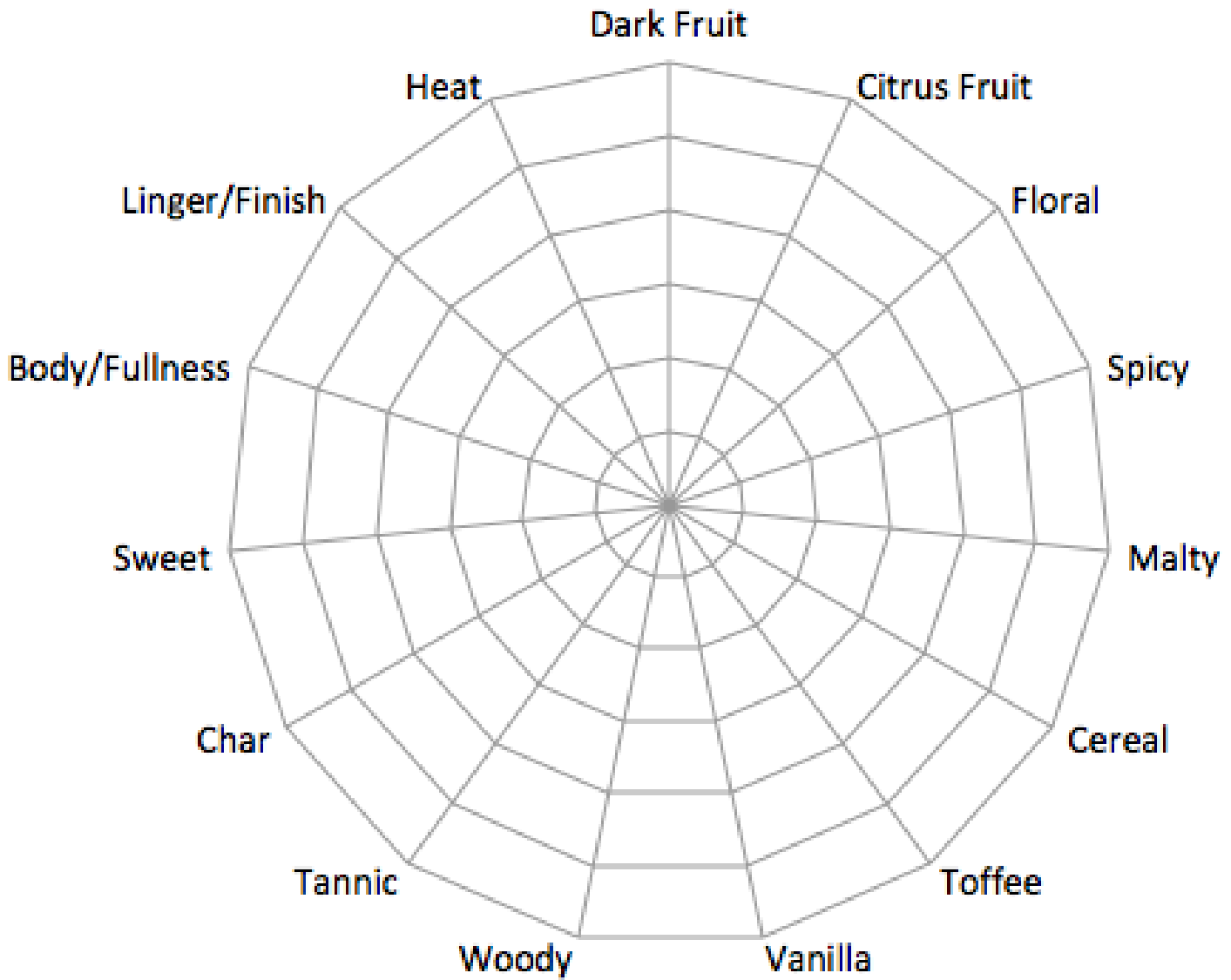
Additional Notes (color, clarity, ABV, mouthfeel, etc...)



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Whiskey Sensory Mat

1. See 2. Sniff 3. Swirl 4. Sniff again 5. Sip 6. Savor



Additional Notes (color, clarity, ABV, mouthfeel, etc...)



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Beer/Cider Tasting Mat

1. See

2. Top Off
(foam/effervescence)

3. Sniff

4. Sip

5. Savor

Drink 1:

Drink 2:

Drink 3:

Drink 4:

Additional Notes (color, clarity, ABV, mouthfeel, etc...)



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Want to Practice with Us Live?

Join a public virtual tasting

We often have public virtual tastings, mixology classes, and meet the maker events that you can join in on for free!

During these events you are encouraged to unmute yourselves, share your perceptions, and get your questions answered from us, other featured guests, or the community participating. We'd love to see you there!

CHECK OUR UPCOMING PUBLIC VIRTUAL EVENTS CALENDAR HERE.

j.mp/TCCVirtualTasting

Host a private event with The Crafty Cask

Whether it's a virtual event for family or friends, lead generation, or client or employee engagement for work, or an in-person event or tour in the Bay Area, hosting amazing private events is our specialty.

SUBMIT A PRIVATE EVENT INQUIRY TO START PLANNING

bit.ly/TCCeventoptions

 *Don't forget to check out our Tasting Techniques Playlist on YouTube for video tutorials as well!*

