



Does the glass really matter? In short; **Yes it does!** Now that is not saying you cannot drink wine from any receptacle, we are all guilty of the red solo cup, coffee mug or even right from the bottle. The next time you pour yourself a glass of wine, take a moment to study the glass itself: Does it feel light and balanced in your hand? When you hold it up to a bright white surface, does it sparkle? Do you hear the soft chime when toasting your companion? When you swirl the wine, do the aromas linger in your glass? Raise the glass for a taste; do the temperature, texture, and taste of the wine come together in perfect harmony?

Drinking wine is a pleasure for the senses; the eyes, the ears, the fingertips, and the nose, as well as taste (your tongue). If you want the complete experience of enjoying wine, glass shape is essential!

Claus Josef Riedel, who had the idea of designing different wineglass shapes based on the particular characteristics of different wine varietals, invented the functional wineglass. A well-designed wineglass should have an egg shape, a cut and polished lip, and a stem. The tapered egg shape suspends the wine's aromas at the top of the glass and prevents their wafting away when the wine is swirled. The tapered shape also helps prevent spills that might result from vigorous swirling (*which is recommended*). A cut rim permits the wine to flow smoothly onto the tongue, whereas a rolled rim inhibits the smooth flow of the wine and tends to accentuate acidity and harshness. Each glass shape is designed to deliver the wine to the correct area of your tongue, letting the consumer experience the most from the wine.

To allow the wine's color and clarity to be assessed and appreciated, a good wineglass should be colorless, transparent, unadorned, and thin-walled.

There are dozens of wineglass shapes to bring out the subtleties in almost every varietal. It is not necessary to own them all, but it is interesting to understand the effect that each design has on taste and experience. Here are just a few of the shapes that are available:

The **Bordeaux or Cabernet Sauvignon glass** has a large, elongated bowl. The large volume and surface area of the bowl allow for thorough aeration, bringing out complex aromas when the wine is swirled.

The **Burgundy or Pinot Noir glass** also has a large bowl, but one that is less elongated and quite wide. The wide bowl allows for thorough aeration, bringing out the subtle aromas of Pinot Noir when the wine is swirled. The narrow opening captures the bouquet at the top of the glass, and the slightly curved lip delivers a stream of wine directly to the front of the palate.

The **classic white wineglass** has a smaller bowl, but it is still wide enough to allow aeration. The smaller bowl reduces the wine's surface area, thereby preserving the chill and the delicate bouquet of white wine.

The **champagne flute** preserves the bubbles of sparkling wines and also puts them on display. A long stem prevents the hand from warming the chilled wine.

Of course, the shape of the glass alone will not determine whether you enjoy a wine. True connoisseurs of wine, however, will be amazed when they experience how these well-designed wineglasses reveal the depth, complexity, and character of wine.