



Do You Like Wine, *But ... It Doesn't Like You?*

Diana Todd-Banks

Former Int'l Wine Marketing Consultant and & US Wine Importer

Finding a suitable wine for you and your body can seem like a fruitless exercise certainly when you continually experience negative reactions to wine.

You could do some complex time consuming research on this entire topic, if you knew what to search for, or to save you time and money, you could read this article. For 28 years I was an international wine consultant and Australia's first female wine importer in the US.

In this article you can read about the results of my continuing personal research on this wine topic, which began well over 4 decades ago as I constantly experienced nasty reactions to wine. Yet I persisted and even today I still explore looking for what I call 'friendly wines.'

Because of my professional involvement with wine, I had the pleasure of regularly associating with Australian and American oenologists – wine scientists - who

studied all aspects of wine and winemaking except growing and harvesting. This association gave me the wonderful opportunity to discuss with these specialists the reasons behind why many wine drinkers have adverse reactions to wine.

While many people do appear to have reactions to wine, they blame wine as the culprit rather than delving deeper.

For your exploration on this topic, grape variety is without doubt the first area to address but I'll mention that last. However brand, wine style and wine maker are other important issues to address.

This article addresses varying styles of red wine including a surprising ingredient as a preservative – sulphites from **petroleum ... yes petroleum!**

To provide you with practical useable information let's look at a list of most of the possible triggers followed by a simple explanation about each.

Barring any clearly defined allergic responses, there are numerous points each person does need to explore in order to fully enjoy the pleasures of wine.

Major Triggers

Here are the major triggers - and it's important for each person to identify and know which trigger(s) affect them. How to identify those is an interesting issue to explore ... later. In the meantime your body will tell you what it doesn't like so *listen to your body.*

Histamines

Tannin

Vintage - Age

Yeast

Sulphites

Percentage of Alcohol By Volume

Umami

Oak

Sugar / Baume

Acid

Grape variety is the first and possible culprit

Here is a brief explanation about each trigger:

Histamines – compared with most foods that contain histamine, wine is much lower in histamine. However, in general red wine has more histamines than white

wine that's because white wine is made without skin contact. While red wine sits on skins for some time, cheap red wine sits on seeds and stalks as well as skins and it is these that can cause reactions along with the wine being of a cheap quality or poorly made.

Tannin - primarily comes from grape skins, seeds and stems but ALSO from oak or oak barrels and will be high in young wine.

Age – Vintage – Read the label, as this is certainly worthwhile understanding. Generally young (current vintage) that denotes the latest release of a wine; but later in a year (i.e. October on) when some wines are released. Stay away from these if acid and tannin is an issue for you, the same applies if a white wine is described as crisp and green.

Yeast - some people may have allergies to yeast *if* they consume unrefined wine and possible reactions to the refining agents that 'clear' the wine.

Sulphites are Preservatives. Sulphites are found in all wines, as they are a natural product of fermentation and because of that and the fact many people are allergic to some form of sulphites, and processed meats are a serious culprit, and are served antipasto platters and in snacks at cocktail or casual dinner gatherings and yes with wine. They're a cheap solution to providing cheap food with wine.

Now look at these two points:

- 1) More sulphites are found in white wine, but are higher in sweeter styles.
- 2) When sulphites are used in cheap mass produced wine they are usually derived from *petroleum* and added in high quantities and **these wines certainly can/do cause headaches.**

Naturally derived sulphites produce far less reaction unless you drink excessively.

Percentage of Alcohol By Volume - If you have reactions to wine, stay away from wine higher than 13.5 alcohol by volume, or preferably don't go above 13%. Wines higher in alcohol than this, are some red grape varieties and fortified wines. BUT be aware the low alcohol wines will not keep for more than two days even with a good stopper.

Umami – a new essentially fifth taste to western scientists and gourmands, - it was discovered over 1200 years ago by the Chinese. Mushrooms, consommés, long cooked meats, shrimp, dried tomatoes, soy sauce and the real culprit, cured meats, all contain umami. As well this 5th taste tends to enhance tannins or the oaky character in wine and a known trigger.

Oak – can be a problem for some people as it contains high levels of strong tannins that are the astringent component of timber. If this is the case do not consume a wine, if you read or see the word Oak, on the wine bottle label.

Sugar or Baume: Since wine is made from the fermentation of sugary solutions there is residual sugar and is another possible issue for some people.

Grape Variety, (*the first and common culprit*). Here is a list of grape varieties in descending order of tannins, histamines, and other major triggers. While it is hard to obtain a list in accurate order, this list is a good guide for you to identify what grape variety is better for you to consume and what to avoid.

The list begins with the worst offenders:

Shiraz
Cabernet
Merlo
Syrah
Tannat
Petite Sirah
Mouvedre (Mataro, Monastrell)
Sagrantino
Bobal
Aglianico
Cabernet Franc
Merlo
Petite Verdot
Carignan
Montepulciano
Monastrell
Tempranillo
Grenache
Carignan
Malbec
Nebbiolo
Zinfandel
Pinot Noir

The Bottom Line Notes for Drinking White, Red or Sparkling Wine:

**If you know you will consume wine during the day or evening, before doing so, or during the day *do not consume, foods or beverages* high in histamines and tannins.

**Good wine doesn't always mean expensive but it does generally mean well made.

**Be aware some wine producers, do consciously use far more sulphites and preservatives than others, as their major market, is overseas.

**By learning to read a label thoroughly then nosing a wine well, you will easily detect most if not all of the triggers that could cause you concern before any wine touches your tongue.

**When you do drink wine, plan on consuming protein rich foods or snacks at the same time. Do not consume any processed food or cured meats, as these are normally high in histamines.

**Do not drink wine on an empty stomach, as it will enhance your reactions to wine and the alcohol content.

**Salicylates and Amines are very specific issues for some people but are not addressed in this article.

**With sparkling wine try to select a product with the smallest bead (bubble).

**With white wines avoid wine that is described as young and crisp.

**In case you're wondering which red grape variety I can consume without any side affects, ... that is a young low alcohol (12 – 13%) pinot noir.

IF ALL ELSE FAILS ... HERE'S THE FAIL SAFE SOLUTION:

There is one generally accepted full proof solution to trigger free sensible wine consumption. Consume in moderation.

On a light note, this famous quote is worth mentioning and it is by Madame Lily Bollinger - who ran the famed champagne House of Bollinger after her husband Jacques died in 1941.

After answering many questions about champagne, from a little cadet reporter from the London Daily Mail, the young girl posed a final question "*Madame, do you drink champagne yourself?*"

Her wonderful reply was:

"I drink it when I'm happy and when I'm sad. Sometimes, I drink it when I'm alone. When I have company I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it if I'm not hungry and

drink it if I am; Otherwise, I never touch it - unless I'm thirsty." By Madame Lily Bollinger

On a serious note "real" champagne, that is only Champagne produced in the French Champagne region, can be referred to as Champagne. As well French champagne is considered the most reliable in not producing any negative effect, because it is *the* purest wine made. As a point of interest countries outside France, which produce a similar style wine, must use the term sparkling wine. ©

As a footnote more can be written on this topic certainly in relation to white and fortified wine, but that's for another day....

Diana

Diana Todd-Banks

**** Int'l Award Winning Best Selling Author***

**** Speaker * Interviewer***

**** Life Change Coach***

<http://dianatoddbanks.com>