

RECENTLY my wife and I drove to a pizzeria in the south of the island. I had a pizza and my wife had a seafood salad. We never eat without wine and as usual we wanted red wine.

The wine list was one of those where the best choice and value for money was La Vallette by Marsovin. I asked if they had any in the fridge. "No, Sir. We keep it at room temperature", was the answer. If I am not mistaken the ambient temperature was about 35°C!

I requested that my bottle of wine be put in the freezer and when it arrived, ten minutes later, at around 25°C, I suggested to the waiter that in this heat they should keep a constant supply in the fridge and that for all intents and purposes, especially in summer, they should treat La Vallette and similar wines like white wine.

I don't think my advice was going to get very far as the waiter abruptly turned round and said that most people preferred their red wine at room temperature. This seemed a bit strange to me when you consider that 75 per cent of this pizzeria is *al fresco*. The pizza and the salad were excellent.

At the other end of the scale, in a five-star hotel, where the wine list is one of those where the price of wine makes you want to drink water, one expects wine to be given the attention it deserves. I recently organised a wine function for 130 people with 13 wines. These were all great wines and because they were from recent vintages we asked for them to be opened in advance. Some were opened two hours in advance and some one hour, but, to my horror, they were left standing in a boiling hot room.

In an emergency you can always put the wines in ice buckets but at this level of pretence and price one expects better. I suggested that for future functions they should air-con-



Hot wine

by Michael Tabone

dition the mentioned room. I hope I am wrong, but I don't think that my advice is going to get very far as the answer was: "We don't hold many functions like this with so many wines".

Without a doubt, serving wine at the right temperature and in the right glass are two most important aspects when serving wine.

The first rule to follow is that different wines show off their best at different temperatures. For example, if you serve a sweet

sauterne or Monbasillac too warm, the wine will appear goopy and flabby while if you serve it really cold, you will be enhancing its natural acidity which balances the natural sweetness. If you serve La Vallette too warm you will be boiling off the acidity, which will appear volatile and ruin the little existing fruit.

On the other hand, if you serve a full bodied Lebanese or a Chateaufeuf Du Pape too cold, you will make the wines appear light and diminish their wonderful aromas and spices. If you serve an elegant wine from Pomerol or Saint-Emilion too warm, you will be ruining the balance of tannins and structure that the wines are famous for. Therefore it is important to know all about ideal temperatures.

Here is a list of ideal temperatures (°Celsius):

Light white wines	8-12
<i>(Pinot Grigio, Soave, Frascati, Simple Alsace, Loire, Bergerac, Chablis, etc)</i>	
Medium white wines	10-12
<i>(Oaked Chardonnays, aged Burgundies, Rhone etc)</i>	
Light red wines	10-12
<i>(Dolcetto, Beaujolais, Loire, Vin de Pays, etc)</i>	
Medium red wines	14-17
<i>(Cotes du Rhone, young Bordeaux and Burgundies, simple Spanish, etc.)</i>	
Full reds	15-18
<i>(Lebanese, Rioja and Ribera, oak-aged New World, classed Bordeaux or Burgundies, Barolo, etc)</i>	
Simple sparkling wines	4-7
<i>(Cremants, Asti, non-vintage champagne, etc)</i>	

Fine sparkling wine 6-8
(Vintage champagne, Franciacorta, etc.)

Rosé wine 6-10
(Bergerac, Tavel, Anjou, Claret, etc.)

Sweet wine 5-12
(Light ones on the cooler side. Fuller on the higher side)

Fortified wines are very complicated, but here is a basic guide: Fino Sherry (9-11), medium Sherry and Port (10-12), full Sherry and Port (15-18).

Nowadays very few houses, and even fewer restaurants have cellars that have a natural stable cool tem-


perature, so to be able to serve wines at the above temperatures one needs to cleverly use his or her fridge. For those who take their wine a bit more seriously and certainly a must for all decent restaurants, one can purchase a special, fridge-like container with temperature and humidity control.

The most popular version of these is called a Eurocave and can be used both for storing wine long term, or to serve wine from. This is ideal for open-air restaurants, especially when serving red wine. The most practical Eurocave for restaurants holds about 160 bottles and comes with three sections at different temperatures. One can use a normal fridge for cooler temperatures.

The second aspect that conditions the serving of wine is ambient temperature. For us Maltese this is a big problem, especially in the hot summer months when many of us eat out. The first rule to remember is that the warmer the ambient temperature is, the cooler wine should be served. It's much better to serve wine too cold than too hot. One other problem that eating out creates is that of keeping wine at the right temperature. This can easily be solved by placing the wine straight from the fridge or the Eurocave into ice buckets with a little water and some ice.

Of course all this also depends on the wine waiter and the restaurant's appreciation and understanding of wine. It's useless knowing the correct temperature of serving wine, unless you know what wine you are dealing with. Although back labels are very useful when correct, these can never be relied on as I come across so many imaginary descriptions. You know, things like full bodied, when the body of the wine resembles that of Twiggy in her golden years and claims of fine balance when the wine is as balanced as Super One or Net TV.

The most reliable way to learn what wine tastes like is by tasting, so for all you lucky wine waiters... *santé!*


UNIVERSITY OF MALTA GOZO CENTRE

**COURSE IN
APPLIED BUSINESS STATISTICS**

The course will be spread over four weekends between 1st September and 23rd September 2000. Lectures will be held on Fridays 6-8 pm and Saturdays 1-3 pm

The course is intended to teach basic statistical techniques and their application for practical business decision-making and management. The emphasis of the course will be on practice, keeping formal theory to the minimum required to understand applied issues. Case studies will be presented, usually drawing from the practical experiences of the course participants.

Further information can be obtained from the University Gozo Centre, Mgarr Road, Xewkja, Gozo, Tel: 564559; 562054; Fax: 564550. Email: ugc@um.edu.mt

Wedding Souvenirs

Sale
at
Coral Print
Constitution Street,
Mosta
Tel: 414601

Starting Monday, 28th August



Deloitte & Touche

Microsoft Certified
Technical Education Center

Deloitte & Touche is pleased to announce that it is currently delivering the following course:

Supporting Microsoft Windows NT 4.0 Core Technologies

This course provides the core foundation for supporting Microsoft® Windows NT® operating system version 4.0. The goal of this course is to provide support professionals with the skills necessary to install, customize, network, integrate, & troubleshoot Windows NT 4.0.

1 Col. Savona Street
Sliema SLM 07
Tel: 335323
Fax: 332606
Email: training@deloitte.com.mt
Web: www.deloitte.com.mt

Gilsons
*Sale & Installation of Air Conditioners
Videos, TV, HiFi, Satellite Systems & more.*

Cooling Solutions

Cleaner and Quieter Air

Where Quality, After Sales Service & Customer Care COUNTS

PJAZZA 7 TA' GUNJU 1919, HAMRUN
TEL 934951 FAX 378580 MOB 0949 4908



MODELS START FROM LM285