The Wine Aroma Wheel

Ann C. Noble, retired professor and sensory scientist at UC Davis, has created the Wine Aroma Wheel, a tool which can help enhance the enjoyment of wine by creating a lexicon used to describe wine aromas. The descriptors are arranged in three tiers with the most general aroma in the center and the most specific in the outer ring.

Much of the aroma in wines comes from the type of grape or the climate in which the grapes are grown, but the process of the winemaking itself also contributes to distinctive aromas and flavors. Ann Noble’s wine wheel can be purchased at the UC Davis Bookstore, or you can visit her website, www.winearomawheel.com, for more information.

about the garden

This garden was designed to demonstrate the many flavors that can be used as descriptors in wine tasting. From the fig tree to society garlic, all of the plants in this bed can be used for the sensory analysis of wine via their fragrant leaves and flowers or the taste and smell of their fruit.

Wine aroma, taste and mouthfeel are influenced by a number of factors including grape variety, climate, viticultural practices, ripeness of the grapes at harvest, type of yeast, and wine-making practices. Researchers in the Department of Viticulture and Enology here at UC Davis have helped to identify the hundreds of volatile compounds that elicit the aromas perceived in wines as well as the many factors that affect wine flavor. In addition to the fruity compounds formed by yeasts during fermentation of grape sugar to alcohol, some floral or herbaceous aromatic wine compounds come directly from the grape or are produced by yeast from compounds in the grape. Over time, wine aromas evolve further in the bottle; they change during aging and even in the glass. These flavors can be described by aromas similar to those experienced in the world around us, such as those included in the Wine Aroma Wheel.

Please see our garden stakes to identify specific plants in this bed.