

Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) Level 2 Award in Wine Practice Exam (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

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SAMPLE

Questions

- 1. What is the name of the grape variety used in the production of both dry and sweetened styles of Sherry?**
 - A. Palomino**
 - B. Tempranillo**
 - C. Muscatel**
 - D. Pedro Ximénez**
- 2. What is the primary characteristic of Gran Reserva wines in terms of flavor?**
 - A. Strong primary fruit flavors**
 - B. Prominent secondary and tertiary characteristics**
 - C. High acidity and minerality**
 - D. Distinct floral notes**
- 3. For an Alsace Grand Cru AOC Pinot Gris, what are the typical acidity, body, and flavors?**
 - A. High acidity, medium body, apple flavors**
 - B. Medium acidity, full body, peach and mango flavors**
 - C. Low acidity, light body, berry flavors**
 - D. Medium acidity, light body, citrus flavors**
- 4. What is the name of the famous cool climate region in France known for high-quality Chardonnay?**
 - A. Champagne**
 - B. Bordeaux**
 - C. Chablis**
 - D. Loire Valley**
- 5. What is the most important region in France for Gamay production?**
 - A. Bourgogne AOC**
 - B. Champagne AOC**
 - C. Beaujolais AOC**
 - D. Loire Valley AOC**

- 6. What is the primary characteristic of Cava compared to Champagne?**
- A. Cava is more acidic**
 - B. Cava is often sweeter**
 - C. Cava uses different grape varieties**
 - D. Cava is generally more expensive**
- 7. What is the Italian name for the Zinfandel grape?**
- A. Barbera**
 - B. Primitivo**
 - C. Sangiovese**
 - D. Nebbiolo**
- 8. What conditions are needed for noble rot to develop?**
- A. Dry, hot afternoons and cool evenings**
 - B. Damp misty mornings followed by warm dry afternoons**
 - C. Cold, rainy days with minimal sunlight**
 - D. Consistently high humidity and low temperatures**
- 9. What is the primary outcome of alcoholic fermentation?**
- A. Water and sugar**
 - B. Alcohol and carbon dioxide**
 - C. Glycerol and acids**
 - D. Heat and oxygen**
- 10. When considering the aging potential, what does Gran Reserva imply for Spanish wines?**
- A. Requires no oak aging**
 - B. Can be consumed young**
 - C. Is aged for a longer period than Crianza**
 - D. Always made from white grapes**

Answers

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1. A
2. B
3. B
4. C
5. C
6. C
7. B
8. B
9. B
10. C

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Explanations

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1. What is the name of the grape variety used in the production of both dry and sweetened styles of Sherry?

A. Palomino

B. Tempranillo

C. Muscatel

D. Pedro Ximénez

Palomino is the primary grape variety used in the production of both dry and sweetened styles of Sherry. This grape is particularly well-suited to the unique climatic and soil conditions of the Jerez region in Spain, where Sherry is made. Palomino grapes contribute to the characteristic dry styles of Sherry, such as Fino and Manzanilla, which are known for their delicate and complex flavors. In the context of sweetened Sherry, Palomino plays a role in the blending process. While the grapes used in creating sweet styles like Cream or Pedro Ximénez Sherry can include other varieties, the base for these blends often begins with Palomino due to its excellent structure and ability to age well. This versatility is what allows Palomino to serve as the foundation for both dry and sweet styles, showcasing the versatility of the grape and the skill of the winemakers in the region.

2. What is the primary characteristic of Gran Reserva wines in terms of flavor?

A. Strong primary fruit flavors

B. Prominent secondary and tertiary characteristics

C. High acidity and minerality

D. Distinct floral notes

Gran Reserva wines are known for their extended aging both in oak barrels and in the bottle before release. This prolonged maturation process allows for the development of complex flavors that go beyond the primary fruit characteristics typically found in younger wines. As a result, Gran Reserva wines prominently exhibit secondary characteristics, such as those derived from oak aging—like spice, vanilla, and chocolate—as well as tertiary characteristics that emerge from bottle aging, including leather, tobacco, and earthiness. These layers of flavor complexity are what define Gran Reserva wines, setting them apart from other categories that might focus more on fresh fruit flavors or vibrant acidity. Thus, the primary characteristic of Gran Reserva wines is the prominence of these developed secondary and tertiary flavors, which reflect the wine's extensive aging process.

3. For an Alsace Grand Cru AOC Pinot Gris, what are the typical acidity, body, and flavors?

A. High acidity, medium body, apple flavors

B. Medium acidity, full body, peach and mango flavors

C. Low acidity, light body, berry flavors

D. Medium acidity, light body, citrus flavors

For an Alsace Grand Cru AOC Pinot Gris, medium acidity, full body, and flavors of peach and mango are characteristics that align well with the profile of this wine. Alsace Pinot Gris often benefits from a warmer climate, which contributes to a fuller body and riper fruit flavors. Medium acidity is typical for this style, as it provides balance without being overwhelmingly sharp, allowing the richness of the wine to shine through. The peach and mango notes are indicative of the ripe fruit character that can develop in Pinot Gris from this region, often enhanced by the region's unique terroir, which brings complexity and depth to the wine. This combination of attributes reflects the characteristics of Pinot Gris from Alsace, making it distinctively flavorful and well-structured, which resonates with the expectations of the Grand Cru designation in this region.

4. What is the name of the famous cool climate region in France known for high-quality Chardonnay?

A. Champagne

B. Bordeaux

C. Chablis

D. Loire Valley

Chablis is renowned as a premium cool climate region in France, particularly celebrated for its high-quality Chardonnay wines. The climate in Chablis is characterized by cold winters and relatively cool summers, which is ideal for producing wines that reflect the crispness and minerality associated with Chardonnay. The region's unique Kimmeridgian limestone and clay soil imparts distinctive flinty flavors that are often described as "steely," enabling the Chardonnay grapes to develop their acidity and intense fruit character without excessive ripeness. This expression of terroir, combined with the climate, makes Chablis a standout for this varietal, leading to wines that can age beautifully and showcase a remarkable balance between acidity and flavor. The other regions, while notable for various wines, do not have the same reputation specifically for high-quality Chardonnay as Chablis does. Champagne, for example, is primarily known for its sparkling wines, and while it does produce Chardonnay, it is not exclusively identified with this grape. Bordeaux is predominantly recognized for its red blends, primarily made from Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, and the Loire Valley, although it produces some excellent white wines, is more associated with varieties such as Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc than with Chardonnay.

5. What is the most important region in France for Gamay production?

- A. Bourgogne AOC**
- B. Champagne AOC**
- C. Beaujolais AOC**
- D. Loire Valley AOC**

The most important region in France for Gamay production is the Beaujolais AOC. This region is renowned for its cultivation of the Gamay grape, which thrives in the unique terroir of Beaujolais, characterized by granite soils and a relatively warm climate. Beaujolais is particularly famous for producing light-bodied red wines that are often described as fruity and fresh, with low tannins. The region has established a strong identity around Gamay, with several designated crus that highlight the varying expressions of the grape, such as Morgon and Fleurie. In contrast, Bourgogne AOC is primarily known for its Pinot Noir and Chardonnay production. While Gamay is permitted here, it is not the focus of the region. Champagne AOC is exclusively recognized for its sparkling wines made primarily from Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Pinot Meunier, with no significant Gamay production. The Loire Valley AOC, home to a diverse array of grape varieties like Chenin Blanc and Cabernet Franc, also does not emphasize Gamay. Thus, Beaujolais AOC stands out as the premier region for Gamay wines in France.

6. What is the primary characteristic of Cava compared to Champagne?

- A. Cava is more acidic**
- B. Cava is often sweeter**
- C. Cava uses different grape varieties**
- D. Cava is generally more expensive**

Cava is primarily characterized by the use of different grape varieties compared to Champagne. In the production of Cava, especially those from the traditional Catalonia region in Spain, the predominant grapes used include Macabeo, Xarel-lo, and Parellada. This differentiates Cava not only from Champagne but also contributes to its unique flavor profile and style. While both Cava and Champagne undergo secondary fermentation in the bottle, the differences in grape varieties lead to variations in taste, aroma, and mouthfeel. Champagne typically relies on the traditional grapes of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Pinot Meunier, which impart distinct characteristics associated with the Champagne region, such as richness and complexity. Understanding the grape varieties used in each sparkling wine is essential for recognizing their regional styles and characteristics. This focus on grape varietal differences underscores why the correct answer highlights Cava's distinction based on its primary grape composition.

7. What is the Italian name for the Zinfandel grape?

- A. Barbera
- B. Primitivo**
- C. Sangiovese
- D. Nebbiolo

The Italian name for the Zinfandel grape is Primitivo. This grape is primarily grown in the Puglia region of Italy, where it has been cultivated for many generations. Though genetically similar to Zinfandel, Primitivo has its own distinct characteristics that are influenced by the terroir and winemaking practices in Italy. The grape is known for producing rich, full-bodied red wines with a fruity profile, often featuring notes of black cherry, plum, and sometimes a hint of spice. Understanding this connection between Zinfandel and Primitivo is important, as it highlights the grape's versatility across different climates and winemaking traditions.

8. What conditions are needed for noble rot to develop?

- A. Dry, hot afternoons and cool evenings
- B. Damp misty mornings followed by warm dry afternoons**
- C. Cold, rainy days with minimal sunlight
- D. Consistently high humidity and low temperatures

Noble rot, or *Botrytis cinerea*, thrives under specific climatic conditions that foster its development, primarily in the context of wine production. The ideal conditions involve damp, misty mornings that create an environment where humidity is high. This moisture allows for the initial growth of the fungus. As the day progresses, warm, dry afternoons are crucial because they help to dry off the excess moisture on the grape skins, allowing the *Botrytis* to dehydrate the grapes. This process concentrates the sugars and acids in the fruit, enhancing the flavor and complexity of the resulting wine. The warm, dry conditions after the damp mornings are essential for promoting the beneficial effects of noble rot while preventing other, more harmful types of mold from taking hold. In contrast, other options describe conditions that are not conducive to the development of noble rot: cold, rainy days or consistently high humidity with low temperatures do not provide the warm, dry conditions needed to effectively support the botrytized grapes. Thus, the combination of damp, misty mornings followed by warm, dry afternoons is essential for achieving the phenomenon of noble rot and subsequently producing sweet wines with unique character and flavor profiles.

9. What is the primary outcome of alcoholic fermentation?

- A. Water and sugar
- B. Alcohol and carbon dioxide**
- C. Glycerol and acids
- D. Heat and oxygen

The primary outcome of alcoholic fermentation is the production of alcohol and carbon dioxide. During this process, yeast converts sugars present in grape juice (or other fermentable substances) into alcohol through anaerobic respiration. The yeast consumes the sugars and, as a byproduct of its metabolism, generates ethanol (the type of alcohol found in wine) and carbon dioxide. This is fundamental to winemaking, as it transforms grape juice into wine, giving it its alcoholic content and contributing to its overall flavor profile through various fermentation byproducts. The other options do not represent the primary products of alcoholic fermentation. While water and sugar might be components present before fermentation, they are not the main outcomes. Glycerol and acids can indeed be produced during fermentation, but they are secondary byproducts rather than the primary ones. Heat is released during fermentation, but it is not a desired product or the main purpose of the process, and oxygen is generally avoided or limited during fermentation to prevent spoilage.

10. When considering the aging potential, what does Gran Reserva imply for Spanish wines?

- A. Requires no oak aging
- B. Can be consumed young
- C. Is aged for a longer period than Crianza**
- D. Always made from white grapes

Gran Reserva for Spanish wines indicates that these wines require longer aging periods before release, both in oak and in bottle. Specifically, red Gran Reserva wines must be aged for a minimum of five years, with at least two of those years in oak. This extended aging process allows for the development of complex flavors, deepened aromas, and greater integration of tannins, contributing to a richer, more sophisticated profile. This aging requirement distinguishes Gran Reserva from lower classifications like Crianza, which mandates shorter aging times—Crianza wines typically must be aged for a minimum of two years. Therefore, the focus on longer aging is a key indicator of expected quality and depth in Gran Reserva wines, making option C the correct choice regarding aging potential.