

## *WineRelease.com's Restaurant Wine Survey*

*June 2009*

*WineRelease.com informs wine enthusiasts about upcoming North American wine release dates and publishes a free monthly newsletter.*

*We recently surveyed our subscribers on their Restaurant wine opinions. 570 WineRelease subscribers participated in our Restaurant Wine survey. Below are the results (Some responses do not add up to 100% as some skipped questions).*

### **1. In the past year, when dining at a 'destination' restaurant, how often did you bring your own bottle to open?**

Never (0% of the time): 33%  
Seldom (25% of the time): 27%  
Half the time (50% of the time): 18%  
Most of the time (75% of the time): 16%  
Always (100% of the time): 6%

*WR Comments - Most subscribers didn't bring a bottle of wine to a destination restaurant in the past year.*

### **2. In the past year, when dining at a 'destination' restaurant, how often did you go online and view the wine list before dining?**

Never (0% of the time): 18%  
Seldom (25% of the time): 25%  
Half the time (50% of the time): 21%  
Most of the time (75% of the time): 25%  
Always (100% of the time): 11%

*WR Comments - 57% of the subscribers looked at the wine list at least half the time before dining at a destination restaurant.*

### **3. What is an acceptable, per bottle, corkage fee?**

4% - No charge  
10% - \$5  
30% - \$10  
37% - \$15  
17% - \$25  
1% - \$35  
.5% - \$50  
0% - \$50+

*WR Comments: 37% of subscribers feel a \$15 corkage charge is fair.*

**4. Should the corkage be waived for the bottle you bring in to a restaurant if you order a bottle from the restaurant's wine list?**

74% - Yes

8% - No

18% - No, but a reduced charge should be offered

*WR Comments: An overwhelming 74% believe corkage should be waived when purchasing a wine off the list.*

**5. If your meal was \$100 for two people without wine and the service, food, decor, atmosphere, etc were all good, what would your tip be?**

0% - No tip

0% - 5%

1% - 10%

16% - 15%

76% - 20%

5% - 25%

2% - 25%+

*WR Comments: WineRelease subscribers are generous tippers with 76% choosing to tip 20% on a 'good' dinner.*

**6. At that same meal, you drank a bottle of \$100 wine (total bill was \$200). Wine service was good. What would you tip be on that \$100 portion of wine on the bill?**

3% - No tip

6% - 5%

23% - 10%

25% - 15%

39% - 20%

3% - 25%

2% - 25%+

*WR Comments: The tip is not as high on wine alone (38% tipping 20% on wine vs 76% tipping 20% on food) but 87% are tipping between 10%-20% on the wine portion of their meal.*

**7. Currently when ordering wine in most restaurants, you initially taste and determine if the wine is acceptable. If you don't think the wine is acceptable, the waiter/sommelier tastes the wine. Should the sommelier (or waiter) taste the wine initially?**

69% - I should be the initial taster (current custom).

5% - The waiter/sommelier should initially taste the wine, not me.

5% - Both of us should taste the wine at the same time.

21% - I should be given the choice of who initially tastes the wine.

*WR Comments: Current custom is still the most preferred by 69% although 21% want to be given the choice of who tastes.*

**8. If you believe the wine is flawed and the waiter/sommelier believes the wine to be fine...**

96% - I should be the final decision maker if the wine is flawed or not

4% - The waiter/sommelier should be the final decision maker

*WR Comments: No argument here... 96% believe the customer is always right.*

**9. When ordering wine by the GLASS, is it okay to send it back if you merely dislike it - even if it isn't technically flawed?**

27% - Yes

73% - No

*WR Comments: 73% believe if the wine is not flawed, there is no returning that glass.*

**10. When ordering wine by the BOTTLE, is it okay to send it back if you merely dislike it - even if it isn't technically flawed?**

11% - Yes

89% - No

*WR Comments: A stronger 89% believe if the wine is not flawed, there is no returning that bottle.*

**11. Should restaurant wine lists include (check box if yes);**

87% - Wine descriptions

29% - Wine scores

71% - Food pairing suggestions

*WR Comments: Subscribers want to see wine descriptions and food pairings for wines.*

**12. How do you prefer a wine list be organized?**

56% - By grape varietal

36% - By country/region of origin

8% - By flavor profile

*WR Comments: Majority want by grape varietal, but by country/region of origin is also popular.*

**13. What types of wine flights would appeal to you?**

24% - Not interested in wine flights

48% - Yes, by varietal same country

49% - Yes, by varietal different country

32% - Yes, by producer

*WR Comments: By varietal, same country and by varietal different country are the preferred flights.*

#### **14. During your meal, do you prefer your wine glass to be refilled?**

30% - As you drink it (by the server)

20% - When the glass is empty (by the server)

50% - I prefer to pour my own wine

*WR Comment: Half of WineRelease subscribers want to pour their own wine.*

#### **15. Should restaurants encourage guests to order full bottles by noting that they can be corked, bagged and taken home (where legal) if they aren't fully consumed?**

87% - Yes

13% - No

*WR comments: Seems like a no brainer here... Restaurants should post the local law for "doggie bagging" wine if allowed.*

#### **16. Comments, in general, about ordering wine in a restaurant?**

- Generally wine in restaurants is incredibly over-priced as we all know. Everyone deserves to make a profit but it would be nice to see more establishments take a second look at their pricing.
- Most restaurants greatly overcharge for wine. This limits the amount of wine that is purchased.
- A fair corkage is really about \$20. Too many restaurants have too high of a markup on their wines, so often I'll suffer the corkage rather than buy a bottle of supermarket wine for \$45
- I say include score of wine if available and only from Robert Parker and Wine Enthusiast. This will undoubtedly upset many but it's impossible to know all the wines, best and worst vintages at a good restaurant and I deserve a yardstick for determining value on a commodity I'm paying a premium for. Besides, it's very awkward to return a bottle just because it's not a good wine but the price charged clearly dictates it should be decent and ready to drink (although it may need to breath a bit).
- The mark-up on restaurant wine lists is horrid and, unless the wine is very special, I prefer to bring my own special wine or wines for a restaurant meal. That begin said, I generally will order something off the list in addition to whatever wine I have brought.
- Do your homework before you go .
- There are still too many steak & chops houses that have a very poor wine selection.
- Restaurant wine pricing is a major factor in my purchase decision. Too often I am seeing \$30.00 wines being offered at \$90-\$120.00 by some restaurants. Would be curious as to what most people believe to be a "reasonable" markup for a bottle of wine.
- Fully support #15.....
- Great survey, Neil. I am not totally opposed to 'points' on a wine list as long as they are accurate for what is being served (correct vintage). My biggest peeve however is a sommelier that does not listen to the customer and thrusts upon them his selections without consideration to the customer's personal preference. Sometimes it is not easy to settle on a particular wine when shared with 3 or more people with differing tastes. Too often, I see sommeliers dictate a selection in this situation. I welcome thoughtful recommendations, sommelier snobbery, domination and dictation will end my patronage. I am also suspicious when a sommelier is pushing a particular wine (as I overhear him with other customers). What is driving this recommendation? Is there a flaw that he detects (but still largely imperceptible to the average consumer) and he wants to clear his cellar, or does he have a financial incentive?
- some of the wines are below expectation which should not be in the restaurant in the first place.
- The most disappointing thing about wine offered at restaurants besides the 100% + markup is that the majority of the wines are too young.

- I love restaurants like Passionfish in Monterey and Bottle Rock in LA that have unconventional methods to encourage everyone to be drinking wine - the former does not have wines by the glass but has an incredible selection of wines priced at retail; the latter will open any bottle of wine in the store regardless of price if two glasses are purchased.
- I hate the mark up on wine in restaurants, and much prefer BYOB's. I drink better wine that way. It is fun to try wines new to me when it's not a BYOB, but so many restaurants have lousy selections by glass if there are just two of us. And it's not legal in my state to bring wine home.
- #8 - If there are other guests in our party, I would have them taste the wine in question and get their opinion.
- Wine that is 2 - 2.5x the retail price is acceptable. Anything more is usury.
- for the majority of restaurants, the mark up on wines is much too high for the wine service you receive
- I like the idea of tipping a flat rate -- and not a percentage -- on wine service. Say \$10. The wines are already marked up 200 to 300% so you have to assume some portion of that is for service (sommelier, glassware, etc.)
- I am more likely to buy wine at a restaurant if the mark-ups are reasonable and/or if they offer free corkage with purchase.
- All excellent questions.
- It is often over priced, some of the restaurants here have nights where there is no corkage fee, or bottles of wine are half price, etc.
- Waiters/Servers etc... should be educated about ALL The wines on their menu - to a limited degree.
- In sending wine back, if the wine does not fit the description given by the server, a glass or bottle should be sent back.
- If I share a glass or taste with the waiter, then I also expect the corkage to be waived. If it is waived, I'll usually leave a larger tip.
- The end is near.
- Proper glasses, temperature and knowledgeable service are all important. Pricing can be double cost, but not higher.
- Sommelier's need to be more humble.
- I answered NO to the questions about sending wine back if it is not technically flawed, but I think a customer should be able to send it back if it is improperly described or unfairly compared to a better known wine as a reference point and falls short. I like a progressive wine list light-medium-full-bodied, by country different or same, or by varietal is less important as long as the info is all there. I tip 8-10% on wine by the bottle purchased at the restaurant. I tip 15-20% by the glass. I tip 0% on wine I bring to the restaurant, and would cork it myself, if allowed.
- Prices are generally way too high.
- We often choose our restaurants, even when dining casually, by the wine list, both by the glass and by the bottle.
- I believe that knowledge & attentiveness by the waiter/wine "person" is key to their ultimate success.
- Wines purchased should be served at the appropriate temperature.
- make it affordable, don't mark up by more than double
- Would have changed some answers if "waiter" hadn't been grouped with "sommelier." So many waiters are clueless.
- If possible, know the wine list before arriving then hunt for bargains. Read from right to left.
- In general, when compared to my recent trips to Rome and Buenos Aires, I believe wines in restaurants in the US are WAY overpriced. The markup should not be double, triple or more, but instead a set amount of dollars for markup (\$5-\$15 would be acceptable).
- correct TEMPERATURE!!!
- regarding #10, I would return the wine if it didn't match the server's description of what it was supposed to taste like.

- With regards to question #8, my guess is that most restaurants would not argue with you over it unless it was over \$150. Also I would accept the opinion sommelier over a waiter. We have had only one corked bottle experience and the sommelier agreed with us that the wine was bad.
- Too often the restaurants with a good wine list have outrageous mark-ups. More reasonable mark-ups would allow patrons to more freely try new wines at restaurants (rather than feel like I need to bring my own bottle that I know I like for the money).
- I wish ALL states would allow corkage. We would rather bring our own to drink with our meals.
- In New York, the prices are still too high and customers should be encouraged to bring their own wine.
- Double the retail price for a bottle of wine in a restaurant is acceptable but more than double is unacceptable.
- I usually appreciate any guidance available. I always determine the food before choosing a wine.
- It is always helpful when the wine waiter / sommelier has previously tasted the wine(s) on the restaurant's wine list.
- Teach wait staff the proper pronunciation of "Meritage." aka "heritage".
- More wine by the glass programs with esoteric or organic or just plain interesting wines.
- The house deserves its margin, but too often gouges. This invites the offended/thrifty diner to bring in his own wine. Better to mark up less and sell more wine.
- Mark-ups are way too high- could sell more if priced reasonably
- if the restaurant has a wine specialist you should figure that they have good information to give you about their particular list no matter how much you may know about wine.
- mostly it depends on whether I ordered the wine or it was recommended - if recommended and i do not like i will return
- Interesting questions and some of them I wanted to select two options but they weren't available. The tipping on the price of the wine is a bit puzzling to me. There is obviously some service that goes with that bottle of wine, but not sure that the usual tipping scale is fair.
- Don't hesitate to ask questions of the staff, and include your friends dining with you in on the decision. Oh, and be sure, should you bring your own bottle, to offer the waiter/sommelier a taste.
- 100% over retail is ridiculous
- I still find far too many top flight wines offered in restaurants that are clearly too young to drink & are far from reaching their peak flavor profile.
- I dislike markups that are exploitation. Over 100% markups!
- With regard to question #6 if there is sommelier service I would tip on the wine, if merely opened and poured by the food wait server, I would be less likely to tip. It also depends on the percentage of mark-up on the wine. If the wine is marked up 20-50%, I will tip higher - if marked up 100% or more, I will not tip on the wine.
- Honesty is appreciated -- if the waiter/waitress doesn't know anything about wine (in general) or a specific bottle, they shouldn't try to bluff their way through a description.
- The "Golden Rule" of the service industry(s) should always reign supreme: The Customer is Always Right. Let's take the customer vs. sommelier on whether a wine is flawed debate. If the sommelier insists the wine is OK and I disagree (even assuming I'm not totally embarrassed by being spoken down to in front of my guest(s) at the table) you can bet your last dollar I won't be visiting that restaurant ever again and will spread the word like the joint has cockroaches running around. My continued patronage to a restaurant will far more than compensate the lost profit on the rare bottle disagreement. If this discrepancy between sommelier and customers is pervasive at a restaurant it's time for that restaurant to get a new sommelier, rethink its wine choices and/or check out the integrity of the storage facility. Poor customer service or snobby, rude, "I'm the sommelier and I know more than you" attitude is unforgivable.
- A small taste of the wine by the glass should be offered 1st. Regarding Q.9
- Rarely order wine in restaurants.

- We almost always bring in or own wine (there has been one occasion this year when it simply wasn't possible) I was in an excellent restaurant with a superb list, and still was able to choose a reasonable bottle. I also check the list to make sure my choice isn't on the list. I will pay upwards of 25/bottle to enjoy a wine I paid 80-100.00 for every time. I prefer a cheaper corkage, but it isn't usually available.
- I would buy more wine in restaurants if the markup were more reasonable ie 2X retail under \$100, 1.5X retail under \$300
- Like a list with good half bottles
- I do prefer pouring my own wine, but in the fancier restaurants would NOT expect to. Regarding question #15, even though its legal, it can be a mess and I'm not keen on having a partial bottle in the car.
- I struggle with markups, I understand the whole argument about keeping inventory, etc. but most wines are excessively marked up.
- Not uncommon, even at well known restaurants, to have wine glass filled 2/3 to 3/4 as waiter is cruising by. Seems unnecessarily to take away from optimal drinking, and encourages wine to be gulped rather than enjoyed slowly through the meal. Also, think most corkage about \$15 is not reasonable: increase the price of the food if income is that dependent on wine consumption
- Depending on the price of the wine I do not feel compelled tip 20%.....I may if it is a lesser value wine .....it has been a bone in my craw that I am expected to give \$20 or whatever for opening a bottle of wine simply because it might be more expensive that the same amount of effort put forward an the next table when that bottle was \$30 !
- If I request a server to suggest a wine for you and I don't like the wine - even if it is not flawed - I don't hesitate to send it back
- some restaurants/waiters will provide/suggest free samples of their wines-by-the-glass, esp. if a customer is a regular or unsure ... nice touch.
- I don't think wine lists should be annotated but that the sommelier should be experienced enough to offer suggestions and gauge the level of detail based on the customer
- The markups are generally too high. I can see adding a certain amount per bottle, not a standard percentage.
- I'm seeing more half-price wine nights, as well as no corkage nights. Good trend!
- two times retail would encourage more purchases. 1 % of restaurants have .375ml bottles available
- I am a member of the wine trade so my tips are a way of thanking the establishment for their business, or in certain restaurants thanking them for reasonable wine pricing!
- I have encountered lists where the wine is marked up more than 3 times retail and choose not to return to those places. Once I got over the fear that they would try to up sell me, I have found new wines by letting the server recommend bottles.
- Most restaurants attitude toward corkage is without foundation. I go to the restaurant for their culinary skills and not for their wine list. Although I don't feel there should be an corkage fee, I could tolerate a modest \$5-10 fee to "cover their cost" of washing a few glasses. I have a nice cellar and as I am past 65, I plan to consume my own wines at most nice restaurants. We have stopped going to a few restaurants with very high corkage charges.
- A knowledgeable sommelier is a definite asset.
- would love to see the results!
- Always feel free to ask questions. Do not be intimidated. There is no shame in not knowing everything about a wine. Nobody knows everything about wine.
- High end restaurants should have more \$40-\$60 bottles of wine available
- I generally don't, because the markup is so ridiculous. We almost order a white wine off the menu, and usually restaurants waive corkage on the red we bring in. Question #10 is a little bit tricky--if a sommelier asked me questions about what I wanted and I ordered what he/she recommended, I would send it back if I hated it. But I wouldn't send a bottle back that I had selected on my own, even if I hated it. We would do more fine dining if the wine prices weren't so ridiculous.

- Wine Pricing – There needs to be a shift in wine cost at a retail level. From PerSe to the local good eats joint in town... Wines should be priced at a reasonable profit margin; 15 to 20% seems to be a very acceptable (and successful) profit margin in any business. Charging 100% or in many cases substantially more is ignorant and simply greedy. It stands to reason that more patrons would purchase a bottle of wine if it were reasonably priced; thusly the restaurateur would sell more. Perhaps there needs to be a movement of sorts where RP and Laube point out successful business practices where a restaurant has a minimum 20.00 mark up on a bottle and if the bottle exceeds 100.00 – they simply add 15% to the number above 100.00. – I purchase a bottle for 125.00 and sell it for 148.75... That's a net 19% profit margin... surly any business would be wildly successful with that size margin!!!
- Most of the time the waiter knows less then me about the wine. Also to many warm wines in restaurants.
- The question regarding the sommelier tasting the wine, a server, etc. should never argue with their guest. An apology as simple as 'I am sorry that you did not like my suggestion, can I help you choose another.'
- Restaurants should always have local wines on their list. Doesn't need to be exclusively local, but some support of local winemakers is as nice a touch as support of other local farmers. (To the extent it matters for this question, I live in Virginia. Plenty of good wines available, if you know where to look.)
- none
- Cost of corkage should depend on the level of the restaurant. Customer service is paramount when dealing with wine returns. Why should wine service be differentiated from food service? All that does is continue the belief that wine is privileged and "special", and alienates regular servers.
- The cost of corkage fee's are getting retarded, and places that serve wine need to be educated about the amount of time a bottle can be open and still taste palatable. Rather than just sending a spoiled glass of wine to the table that has been open for 5 days.
- 10. If the waiter/sommelier has recommended the wine, it is OK to send it back if you don't like it. If you chose it, it's yours. The markup on wine is so high in some restaurants I buy less expensive wines to limit the overcharge.
- Enough with the outrageous mark-ups!
- Restaurants have a tendency to be neglectful when it comes to wine service in general. If I choose to bring my own wine and I'm paying corkage, I expect to get some attention when my glass needs refilling, or have the option of finer glassware.
- As a Wine Director/Sommelier with over 28 years of 3 & 4-star experience I KNOW that 10-12% of the bottles that I open have TCA-contamination making them unfit. (In fact, my resort has a spectrometer which tests bottles for TCA in parts per billion so I'm able to confirm that percentage scientifically.) However I've never seen more than a rare handful of the bottles sold in my career get refused by diners, which means that an awful lot of bad bottles get paid for and consumed by customers. Many of them would probably consider themselves knowledgeable, but unless they're familiar with the effect of smaller levels of TCA contamination on wine, they would probably just think a particular wine was "closed" or "in a dumb phase" and end up drinking a disappointing bottle that should have been refused. When I taste bottles before my customers do, I'm able to weed out bad bottles which the customer might have accepted and spared them the potentially unpleasant experience of tasting them. We expect that same level of quality control from our restaurant kitchens regarding the foods they serve, why not from our wine staff? As restaurateurs and chefs our job is to provide the best possible dining experience to our customers. Ensuring that the wines we serve are correct is part and parcel of that responsibility.
- We have been told if they don't have the wine on their list then we can bring that bottle. This is usually at better restaurants. I think that is a way for better places to allow customers to bring wine.
- I mostly order bottles of wine and take the rest home due to frustration at measly pours at outrageous prices by the glass.
- wine should only be sent back if it is "truly" flawed, not because a customer decides to say order Bordeaux because he likes California Cab, and thinks it smells like a barn for instance... and just doesn't like the way it tastes or smells, period.
- Communicate to the server the price range and flavor profile so that you may find a wine you may not know about and enjoy a new experience.

- Wine lists should be kept on a computer, updated as inventory changes, and printed daily, weekly, or however often is necessary. Nothing is more disappointing to find out that a restaurant is out of a wine on their list. Second, it's amazing how many restaurants have lousy wine information. You might get the producer and a varietal, but no information on the place of origin or the vintage. It's inexcusable, akin to listing a New York Strip but giving no information about preparation (blackened? with mushrooms?).
- Most restaurants' markups are way too high. I price the wines on my lists to sell.
- Oftentimes, I feel "rushed" when the server hovers around the table to constantly refill wine glasses. If we are a large party, I understand the need for service, but with smaller, intimate gatherings, it is nice to give people some time to appreciate what they are drinking, as well as, each other's company. It is a fine line. As far as corkage fees are concerned, I think if you are bringing more than one bottle to dinner, you should be able to discuss the cost of corkage with the restaurant in advance and it should be negotiable.
- still too expensive
- I am not so concerned about the price of a glass of wine but that the wine by the glass is good, not just average wine!
- wines in restaurants are overpriced (usually three times retail pricing). not a good cost benefit ratio. Restaurants should use good wine pricing to draw wine lovers to their establishments.
- Wine mark-up is priced way too high. They should come down a little and then more would be sold and enjoyed.
- As you know, waiter/sommelier involvement depends on level of education and competence. That uncertainty is why I left them out of the process of tasting & evaluating.
- Prices are generally marked too high
- Sorry to say it but wine knowledge, service and pricing in too many supposedly 'good' restaurants is abysmal!
- When you bring a bottle it should be a special bottle and certainly not on the list. You should offer a taste to the sommelier.
- Questions #7 and #8-- there is a HUGE difference between a "waiter" and a "sommelier."
- must know the persons that you are having dinner with. If you know their preference then it could help make a good choice to fit the crowd.. The most important thing is make sure the mass will enjoy the wine and dinner.
- Mark-ups are too high. When mark-ups are reasonable, I will order off the list. When mark-ups are ridiculous, I will bring my own and pay corkage.
- Stemware style and quality is sometimes inappropriate
- I always ask for a sommelier to help regardless of my knowledge.
- Way, way, way overpriced. So much so that I rarely order bottles at restaurants.
- I would like to see the corkage a standard price not \$10 on one bottle and \$20 on another.
- I realize restaurants don't get rich off wines sales & don't believe it is right to complain about their pricing. I simply order bottles that are only found in restaurants rather than Costco.
- The wine princes can stay home.
- In general, restaurants charge too much for wine. They would sell more if the prices were lowered then people would not be tempted to bring their own.
- I was surprised you didn't include a tip amount question that was premised on a \$100 meal, plus a \$100 bottle brought for corkage. I'm lucky to live in a place where most restaurants welcome corkage.
- When tipping for wine purchased in a restaurant I usually give what the corkage fee is and not a tip based on how much the wine cost.
- glass prices too high should not be used to add to menu not to jack price on bill
- I always call the restaurant before bringing my own wine, to make sure it isn't on their wine list.
- 10 - if staff suggests, I should be able to send back, if I did with no input from staff, it's mine if the wine is ok.
- Wine shops turn a profit, restaurants needn't have much higher profit margins.
- mark up is way too high to enjoy most of the wines but makes challenge to find good wine at reasonable price

- Regarding item 10, if I choose the bottle and don't like it, that was my choice. If it was recommended and I don't like it, then I should be allowed to return it. Wine glasses are important. I hate buying a nice wine and getting cheap glasses. Corkage fee makes a big difference when choosing a restaurant.
- Questions 5 & 6: I tip 18 to 23% of the food bill. I tip 10 per bottle for wine service. Question 14. I made the assumption that the wine was decanted. If not decanted fill when glass is empty.
- I like to know the vintage.
- The server should always ask before topping up a glass of wine.
- The % markup is ridiculous. There are so many great values, I'd like to see more of those wines on restaurant lists. Descriptions would be great too...
- Wine prices are way to high. 2 to 3 times retail is too much. Restaurants do not pay retail. They get from 35% to 50% off retail. Retail plus 10% is acceptable
- Corkage is more often than not a rip off. Horrible glassware, mostly waiters pouring (and over pouring in the hopes of having more restaurant bottles ordered), and many of the "destination" restaurants treat you like you have the plague if you bring in your own bottle. Be nice, and we would share. Wave corkage and it goes in your tip!
- In some restaurants I feel like the server is refilling my glass so often and aggressively that he is trying to push another bottle - sometimes it works, but it is always annoying!
- Wine service is incredibly important to me as a knowledgeable wine customer, and I appreciate when restaurants train staff in the etiquette so as to make the wine experience exceptional. Too many restaurants don't do this. I love when nice restaurants waive corkage fees to encourage diners to bring in a special bottle; I will be far more likely to dine in that restaurant time and time again. Additionally, if I do bring in wine, I will typically share with my server/sommelier so as to share in the experience with someone who appreciates it.
- wish the mark up was not so high
- I am appalled by the markup on wine in restaurants, so as a result I drink little there. I view 15% as an acceptable markup.
- The staff should only their expertise on a wine choice when the patron asks for their opinion. They should never assume by your look or manners that you are not "wine literate".
- I want a restaurant with wine-knowledgeable staff. I don't know everything, and I hate having to fall back on something I already know just because there's no guidance with the list. However, my palate is my palate, and the final decision should always rest with me.
- the current practice of tripling the cost of a bottle, makes the experience less special, we just went to a steak house, on the spectators list, that wanted \$92. For a bottle of Honig cab is someone nuts?
- New Jersey doesn't allow you to bring wine into an establishment that sells liquor or wine. You're at the mercy of the owner or manager, who THINKS they sell good wine, for your selections. Most restaurants have no clue how to sell or present wine.
- 1. most restaurants way over price their wine 2. Question on returning wine if dislike was difficult - feel 50/50 3. not sure how true recommendations are from server on one wine versus another
- If I am ordering wine by the glass, I always ask for a taste first to make sure I like it.
- In general, tip on wine is more dependent upon the skill/knowledge of the sommelier. As such, a simple number is difficult to give.
- It just costs too darn much!
- Markups are ridiculously high and not justifiable. Higher-end restaurants should have better stemware.
- I much prefer to and, whenever possible do, take my business to restaurants that have a reasonable markup on their wine offerings instead of 3 - 4 times retail. Markups should be around 1 1/2 times retail since restaurants are not paying retail for the wine in the first place.
- #6 answer based on fairness of bottle prices. If a restaurant takes selection and pricing seriously versus an opportunity to gouge customers then the tip is higher. I do not believe a 20% tip should be given to a wine marked up 3-4 wholesale/retail. Suggested retail plus \$15-25 is more than fair.
- I tend to frequent restaurants that only expect a reasonable profit on their wine.

- In general should be more "consumer friendly" - I am paying the bill so it should be more about me. Lower corkage, greater flexibility, etc.
- Regarding question 9, if the sommelier strongly suggested a wine and I disliked it, I would send it back.
- I appreciate a restaurant that has a minimal corkage especially when a large group. To pay a fixed gratuity on a corkage fee seems excessive.
- Most everyday restaurants have very limited, below average wine choices. At these places, I seldom order wine as price mark-ups are not worth it.
- For about 4-5 years, I have always brought my own wine, which may or may not be a modestly priced wine for a modest restaurant and which is generally a much nicer wine for a nicer restaurant. I have almost never encountered a problem although apparently some people believe this is a breach of some unwritten rule of etiquette. If there is an unwritten rule, I don't understand what it is or why it exists. I bring my own wine because I have a large collection and pair my wine with my restaurant choice in advance. I choose these wines for a reason and do not want to spend money on a meal only to find that the wine list presents too many unknown producers and/or pricing is off the chart. I would rather experience unknown producers through tasting events or restaurant flights, which is a nice alternative to being offered the choice of an unknown bottle.
- Corkage is not available in my state of Texas if they have a wine license. I would love to bring my own wine, not to save money but to have what I want and like.
- Not sure about how I feel regarding tipping on a bottle I brought myself, but had to pay a corkage fee for. I feel like I would be tipping twice. But if the server did the pouring, I might go from 20% to 25% tip.
- On questions 9 & 10, if the wine is recommended and described by the server or sommelier, then I feel it would be OK to send it back.
- House Wines offered in restaurants has hit an all time low.
- Usually it is too expensive.
- They need to bring restaurant wine priced down to a more reasonable mark-up!
- Mark-ups need to be reduced for wines that retail for over \$50/bottle. Restaurant wine list pricing for most interesting and/or allocated wine is generally much too high to get me to not bring my own wine(s). I accept that restaurants need to be profitable, but many people that will spend \$50+ retail are knowledgeable about pricing and do not want to spend \$150+ for the same bottle in a restaurant. It seems that smart restaurants find the right balance between pricing higher-end wines at a level that does not discourage consumption for those on anything other than a company-paid expense account and pricing at a level that forces the consumer to only drink a glass or bring their own wine.
- outrageous pricing generally precludes ordering from the restaurant . They seem to assume that you are rich if you order wine, but alas, not always so!
- It makes no sense to tip 15-20% on wine. Really, does the waiter do more work to open a \$30 bottle than a \$300 bottle? A \$3000 bottle? Rarely to never in my experience. 5-10% tip for wine up to a certain dollar value and then fixed above that is MORE than generous. The reason that many people (at least me) bring my own wine to a restaurant is that many restaurants still are gouging people on markups. How can anyone justify charging \$30 for a bottle of wine I can get at Vons for \$10-12, especially when that means their wholesale cost is about \$5-6? I can see charging high wine by the glass prices since if you open a bottle and only sell one glass you have to eat the rest of the cost but this doesn't apply when selling whole bottles. I think that many restaurateurs are simply applying the same liquor mark up that they apply to spirits and beer when pricing wine by the bottle but that is short sighted and obvious to the obvious differences between the types of drinks. I love drinking wine with a nice meal but generally lately just cook at home and enjoy what I want rather than pay the enormous wine mark ups when dining out or choosing to forego wine with my meal.
- ask the sommelier for suggestions after I tell him my general likes
- Some restaurants bring BOTTLE to the table when we order by the GLASS. I like this way.
- My biggest problem bringing my own wine into a restaurant is cork problems due to incorrect opening technique for older wine.

- I am now targeting BYOB restaurants (no corkage fee) for 80% of my dining out. If I go to a restaurant with a wine list, I am very picky and will not even bother to order wine unless there is something I like at a good value. If I don't see anything I like, I will often accelerate the meal (skip the appetizer and dessert) and go home to have some wine. Restaurants would benefit from either having good wine value and choices, going BYOB or having reasonable corkage fees.
- Red wine too warm (placed in an area that emits hot air) and white too cold producing ordering and tasting flaws that are not the intention of the winemaker.
- I generally don't view the wine list if I have been to the restaurant before. I don't need big descriptions of the wines, but a short description on wines which do not list varietals is useful. Corkage in this area is technically illegal so it is rarely done.
- The markup on wines is much too high. 2X retail is the most I am willing to pay.
- I only dine at restaurants that allow patrons to bring wine, even if I end up ordering off the wine list
- lack of consistency and balance in most wine lists- and then you find something good and they're out of it!
- All of my answers were relative; there are many circumstances where my answers would be different. Most of my problems come from hip restaurants who have no real wine expert on staff and you get kids who can't even pronounce the grape telling what I should pair with my special. I understand corkage fees; I know that I'm also paying for wine service, and the restaurant's glass service, but I still get offended at high corkage fees. A restaurant that has a modest corkage fee AND great food, is the restaurant that earns my loyalty and repeat visits. With the wide range of quality in service, knowledge and varied storage quality, I prefer to bring my own bottle these days. I've had wine served too cold and too warm a lot more this year than any other year; methinks it's due to a cutback of trained staff.
- way too expensive! I know what the wholesale prices are. People would buy more wine if it was more reasonably priced.
- I am a 20+ year veteran of the wine business, wholesale and retail. Restaurants simply mark up the wines too much, serve it in a mediocre glass, don't refill your glass and expect a huge tip. Give me a break. If the food is great and dining service is great I give them 20% on the bill, but now I dine out infrequently because of the cost. I can cook filet mignon and 3 other courses plus wine for 4 in my home for \$100. In a top flight restaurant I'd be spending \$500.
- I live in Monmouth County NJ and we have the wonderful advantage of many fine BYO restaurants (liquor licenses are limited). As a result, we're able to bring our own bottles as a matter of course.
- If I ever encounter a restaurant whose wine list included scores, I would order tap water, and let management know of my decision. That is, unless they also rated their dishes; The coconut shrimp has been rated 84 points. At that point, I'd leave without ordering and look for an In 'n Out Burger
- The most disturbing thing: Adding 18% to a \$150+ bottle with groups of 6 or more.
- DON'T GIVE ME 75 DEGREE RED WINE !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- High corkage fees and high mark-ups discourage wine consumption. This definitely comes into play when I choose where to dine.
- My number one issue with wine in a restaurant is the significant mark up in some places. 2 to 3 times retail is still a bit high, but over three times retail generally means a nice cocktail with dinner instead of wine.
- reds should not be served at room temp.
- The cost has become exorbitant. It has prevented me from ordering wine out as much as I'd like.
- D'oh! Just thought of some other questions . . . Like: Knowing that restaurant wines are priced AT LEAST 200% above retail, how do you spot Values? a) They're always the first wine listed in their category b) They're always the least expensive wines in their category c) They're always promoted the most aggressively d) They're usually available by the glass as well as by the bottle e) There are no wines values in restaurants

- In general, although I understand the profit expected from offering wine, I am very discouraged to see very simple under \$10 retail wines being offered at \$30+. It is my opinion that 2 times retail is reasonable..anything more is too much, considering the restaurant will likely not be paying retail but at some discount based on volume. I will normally avoid restaurants with a +2 times markup.. and I always buy one with dinner.
- I usually invite the waitperson to sample the wine, if they would like. This is often rewarded with the waitperson waiving the corkage fee. When that happens, I usually add that amount to their tip.
- Quick marking the bottles up 100%
- The corkage fee is really depends what type of restaurant or wine bar. A nice restaurant w/ a great wine list, it is reasonable \$20 and up corkage fee, but a wine bar and the same time retail store, I think \$10 is more reasonable.
- On sending the wine by the glass or bottle back if you don't like it: I think it depends on whether the bartender or server has advised you on the wine or not. If I've had a discussion about the wine and it's been recommended, I should be able to send it back. If I've just taken a flyer on something I don't know, then it's my own fault and I should just drink it.
- The waiter needs have a basic to good knowledge of the wine list, just as they should for the menu
- Very few restaurants have staff who know anything about wine. I sell wine and prefer to bring my own.
- If there was a certified Sommelier, I would invite them to taste. Just a "waiter" no...
- re: question #7 Do waiters take a bite out of your steak before serving it to you merely to make sure that it is cooked properly??? Since when do wine waiters taste MY wine before I do??? they should give me a tip for the opportunity to taste my wine for free! re: questions #9+#10 Does the Chef come out of the kitchen to argue with customers who do not like a dish from the menu?? Since when do I have to argue with a wine waiter on whether the wine I just ordered is technically sound?? The crux of the matter is: I do not like the wine and I would appreciate the wine waiter to realize that his/her best option is to guide me towards a wine that I will like and purchase. When I am disappointed with food in a restaurant usually the manager comes over to apologize profusely and to help me find something else that I will enjoy. Why isn't this standard applied to wine (especially when the wine being returned could easily be sold by the glass, whereas the food I have just sent back cannot be resold to someone else! Thank-you. great survey...much needed
- i seldom frequent restaurants who will not allow me to bring my own wine.
- Markups are outrageous
- Too highly priced wines discourage me from ordering off the list...unfortunate.
- Tipping is far from arbitrary.
- I find that in most restaurants their wine service falls off dramatically after the first pour (excluding wine specific restaurants).
- Even as someone who has been involved with wine professionally and personally for years, I continue to be astounded by the huge markups on wine in restaurants. Especially at casual restaurants or on informal occasions, I usually find myself ordering beer rather than wine by-the-glass, because I can get 12-16 oz of a top quality beer for less than the price for 5 oz of often run-of-the-mill wine.
- When ordering wine by the glass the server should offer a small taste before pouring the whole glass to allow you to decide if you like it or not.
- I live in Ohio, so bringing bottles to a restaurant is, unfortunately, not an option. Thus, I find myself eating at home more often because bottle prices are marked up beyond reason.
- I also feel that if you offer the waiter/sommelier a taste of your wine and he/she accepts they should at least reduce the corkage fee. Most do, but some don't. I did have one sommelier give us free deserts, that was nice too.
- Great survey, though incomplete; some questions too vague or unspecific; given the markup restaurants should replace any wine not liked whether flawed or not; I would dine out, and order from wine lists more, if not for the high price of restaurant wine; especially for wines that are too young to serve anyway; I understand that wine is a profit center - but if corkage were more reasonable I'd dine out more often; also, if corkage is charged then decent acceptable wine glasses should be provided; wine by the

glass is great - but oftentimes, not very good at restaurants or not up to par with wine lists; One notion that restaurants might consider is using the 'frequent' dinner model - for repeat business - if you dine with them three times a year, you get a discount - or, for favorite restaurants - you pay an upfront amount and get three or four meals that year (obviously on non-holiday weekends); this concept needs to be extended to given corp entities or providers a better cash flow and the customer some price release (just like a transit fast pass - but too few in the private sector can eschew either greed or the exigencies of cash flow to make the leap, and gain the rewards (think about this with airfare too...Mark

- Bring down the markups! 150% markups is way to expensive. Have a reserve list, and a regular list with a 50% markup.
- Staff in general need to improve their knowledge. Most of them are clueless, yet expecting to make tip on wine ( I do tip on wine). Even in good restaurants the wait staff lack info. The sommelier is not always readily available. Training, Training and training.
- Glassware provided by the restaurant should be equal to or better than the level of their wine and/or corkage pricing. Also, Customers should not bring in wine that is on the restaurant's wine list.
- I tend to spend my "destination dining" dollars in restaurants with excellent wine selection/service. So my overall impression of the experience is positive. If I have a bad experience... I simply don't go back :-)
- I like "specials" when wine from the restaurant's wine list priced down.
- needs to have good stem ware
- If I bring an expensive BYOB, I expect appropriate stemware. That's why I pay corkage.
- 1) the staff needs to be knowledgeable. By doing the initial tasting with you, they will learn as well as making me feel they are really interested. 2) I like to pour my own wine.
- thanks for initiating this..
- 8 isn't a realistic question. If only in an ultra high end restaurant or somewhere with extensive training it would make sense. Otherwise, even nicer places don't train well on wine. Not a good assumption they do. Sometimes there is an additional wine list or bottle that doesn't get offered or discussed. Enjoy your day.
- Indiana does not permit to bring in wine...you should revise one of your earlier questions
- Restaurant wine prices tend to be way out of line.

*This survey brought to you in part by a sponsorship from WineBlueBook, a wine buying guide that groups the major critics' wine ratings, then lists them by price to determine overall value – the Quality Price Ratio for wine.*