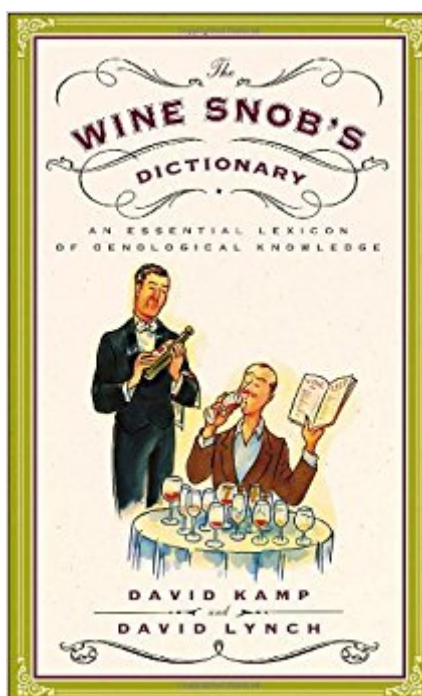


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# The Wine Snob's Dictionary: An Essential Lexicon Of Oenological Knowledge



## Synopsis

A nicely structured, lightly acidic addition to the handy Snobâ™s Dictionary series, decoding the baffling world of winespeak from A to Z. Wine Snob. The very phrase seems redundant, doesn't it? When faced with this snobbiest of snobberies, the civilian wine enthusiast needs the help of savvy translators like David Kamp and David Lynch. Their Wine Snobâ™s Dictionary delivers witty explication of both old-school oeno-obsessions (What's claret? Who's Michael Broadbent?) and such new-wave terms as "malolactic fermentation" and "fruit bomb." Among the other things Kamp and Lynch demystify: Finish: the Snob code-term for "aftertaste." (Robert Parker includes the stopwatch-measured length of a wine's finish in his ratings.) Meritage: an American wine classification that rhymes with "heritage," and should NEVER be pronounced "meri-TAHJ." Terroir: that elusive quality of vineyard soil that has sommeliers talking of "gunflint," "leather," and "candied fruits" Featuring ripe, luscious, full-bodied illustrations by Snob's Dictionary stalwart Ross MacDonald, The Wine Snobâ™s Dictionary is as heady and sparkling as a vintage Taittinger, only much less expensive... and much more giggle-inducing. Cheers!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

DAVID KAMP is a writer and editor for Vanity Fair and the author of The United States of Arugula, The Food Snobâ™s Dictionary, The Film Snobâ™s Dictionary, and The Rock Snobâ™s Dictionary. DAVID LYNCH is a James Beard Award-winning writer, sommelier, and restaurant manager, having served as wine director of Babbo Ristorante for seven years. Both authors live in

New York City. ROSS MACDONALD's illustrations have appeared in many publications, from The New Yorker to The Wall Street Journal.

The Wine Snob's Dictionary symbol indicates a Wine Snob Vanguard item, denoting a person, an entity, or a concept held in particular esteem by Wine Snobs.

**Aaron, Sam.** Revered New York wine merchant (1912-1996) who was the chief evangelist behind Sherry-Lehmann Wine and Spirits, the landmark Upper East Side shop owned by his family. In partnership with his older brother Jack, who purchased the shop shortly after the repeal of Prohibition, Sam, a trained psychologist and protege of FRANK SCHOONMAKER, shepherded in the era of upper-middle-class American wine connoisseurship, writing florid, proto-J. Petermanesque copy for Sherry-Lehmann's catalog and enlisting American-food guru James Beard as a fellow copywriter and sometime in-store greeter. If it weren't for ol' Sam Aaron, bless him, we'd all still be drinking rum toddies and backyard moonshine.

**Acidity.** Crucial, fairly self-explanatory component of STRUCTURE in wine; the cause of the palate-puckering tartness that either excites or repels the Snob taster, depending on whether said Snob is a devotee of more measured, traditional wine styles or a hedonistic guzzler of FRUIT BOMBS.

**Aerator.** Unnecessary status gadget, often fashioned of crystal, that hastens the process of getting a wine to "open up," obviating the arriviste Snob's need for patience or traditional decanting. Most aerators require the user to awkwardly and cumbersomely hold them over a glass while wine is poured through them. Many aerators pass themselves off as objets d'art to justify their steep prices, though they generally resemble the sort of whimsical "folk art" sold by rich men's wives in resort-town gift shops.

**Ah So.** Generic term for a two-pronged wine-bottle opener that, given that it isn't technically a screw-pull device, is better described as a "cork extractor" than a corkscrew. The Ah So's user slips one prong between the cork and the bottle, and then the other, rocking the opener back and forth until it shimmy down the length of the cork. Classicist Snobs prefer the Ah So to such devices as Metrokane's chic, expensive Rabbit corkscrew because it grips the cork from its sides rather than the middle, an especially valuable trait with old, wet, quick-to-crumble stoppers that cling stubbornly to the interiors of aged trophy bottles.

**Appellation d'Origine Controllee (AOC).** Strict, government-regulated classification system used in France since the 1930s to delimit the geographical origins of the country's more prestigious wines (as well as certain Franco-exalted foods, such as cheese). Despite the phrase's literal translation as "controlled appellation," the rules determining which wines qualify for AOC status have been assembled with all the clarity and consistency of tax code--a circumstance exploited by Snobs and Frenchmen, who count on the system's impenetrability to retain mystique and keep novitiates out of the Snob club. AOC

appellations extend beyond mere geography, functioning as prescriptions for all facets of production: the types of grapes used, the allowable grape yields, and even winemaking and aging techniques.

**Asher, Gerald.** Authentically writerly wine writer, British-born but spiritually and physically based in the Bay Area, where, like ROBERT FINIGAN, he served as a firsthand witness to the Napa-Sonoma grapequake. A refugee from the midcentury London wine trade, where he bucked BROADBENT-ian mores by focusing on France's less hoity-toity, better-value wines, Asher found himself Stateside in the early 1970s and found his metier as the wine sage of *Gourmet*, a role he holds to this day.

**Attack.** Martial term deployed by machismo-minded Snobs to describe the first impression a wine makes as it storms the sensory beach that is one's palate. Used especially in reference to the sweetness that is naturally picked up by receptors on the tip of the tongue. The attack on the '99 Chambolle was an intense blast of ripe, round, red fruit, followed by a generously proportioned mid-palate and a long, lingering finish of East Asian spices and beechwood smoke.

**Balance.** The quality achieved in a wine when its fruit, ACIDITY, alcohol, and TANNIN are all in good proportion to one another. While a reasonably straightforward term, especially by wine-talk standards, balance nonetheless sounds obtuse or off to the non-Snob ear, somehow evoking strange images of balloon glasses fitted with calipers.

**Barnyard.** Counterintuitively positive adjective for wines with a pronounced earthiness; the Wine Snob analog to the Food Snob term *lusty*. There's a healthy dose of barnyard funk on the nose of this Echezeaux.

**Barrel tasting.** Literally, a sampling of a wine drawn directly from the barrel in which it is aging; socially, a means by which wine critics and other professionals may flaunt their access and avidity. While it is common for the winemaker himself to sneak a peek of a wine as it matures in its oak vessel, the better to keep tabs on its evolution and quality, it's a more rarified occasion for the non-winemaker, who prizes the experience as much for its me-firstness as for the insight it provides. The 2005, which I had occasion to try at a barrel tasting with Jean-Michel this past spring, promises to be one of the greatest releases of the last twenty-five years from this fabled chateau.

**Barrique.** A 225-liter oak barrel used to age wine. In the olden days of winemaking, a wood barrel was simply a vessel in which to transport wine, but after it was realized that oak imparts pleasing flavors and textures to wine, *barriques*--especially new ones custom-built from French oak--became the ultimate symbol of vintnerific sophistication. Depending on a Snob's persuasion, *barrique* aging is either a glorious source of oak-derived notes of vanilla, PAIN GRILLE, and toffee (progressive modernist with a second home in Sonoma) or a vile abomination (aging classicist who publishes his own newsletter).

**Bead.** Winespeak term for the bubbles in a glass of Champagne, which are purported to string together into a beadlike formation--ideally, a formation that is daintily delicate (the smaller the bubbles, the better) and

persistent (the bubbles should still be snaking upward as you take your last sip). The mature, straw-gold color of the '95 Krug was accentuated by a lovely, finely woven bead and a nose of baker's yeast and Seckel pears.

**Betts, Richard.** Dreamy, swishy-haired, new-paradigm MASTER SOMMELIER who serves as the wine director at the Little Nell, a swank Aspen inn and resort. The antithesis of the imperious, TASTEVIN-wearing sommelier of yore, Betts, a mountain biker and trained geologist, exudes a hempy, Perry Farrell-ish looseness and cultivates envy among year-round restaurant floor-patrollers by not only overseeing a GRAND AWARD-winning list but also enjoying a six-month-long off-season during which he makes private-label wines in France, Australia, and elsewhere.

**Biodynamics.** Intense, holier-than-organic farming movement inspired by the lectures given in the early twentieth century by the philosopher and education innovator Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). The ethos of choice for Wine Snobs who think that even the organic movement has gone too corporate, Biodynamics is based on the concept of the farm as a self-sufficient, mixed-use organism dependent on the interrelations of the realms animal, mineral, vegetable, and, indeed, cosmological. (Adherents believe that interplanetary relations play a role in healthy plant growth.) Though the French dominate biodynamie discourse as it relates to wine, thanks to such noisy testifiers as Nicolas Joly in the Loire Valley and Chapoutier in the Rhine, the movement is increasingly embraced by progressivists and infrequent bathers the world over.

**Bohr, Robert.** Wunderkind member of the celebrity-sommelier constellation who established himself at Cru, a New York City restaurant that became an instant Snob mecca when it opened in 2004. A Francocentrist despite his New Jersey roots and English-yobbo appearance, Bohr has adeptly cultivated wealthy collectors and assembled a wine list of such breadth that it takes up two massive leather-bound volumes. Known in Snob circles for his fetish for trophy wines in large-format bottles, which he conspicuously totes around at industry events, dispensing pours to colleagues he deems worthy.

**Botrytis cinerea.** Pesky fungus that arises in wet, humid conditions, destroying wine grapes or, in controlled circumstances, concentrating their sugar by sapping them of water. In this latter scenario, Botrytis infection is known as "noble rot," a phrase trotted out by plummy connoisseurs of expensive dessert wines like Sauternes and TBA (Trockenbeerenauslese). Still, Botrytis blight is generally a nuisance to most winemakers and is even the cause of a rare respiratory ailment known as winegrower's lung.

**Breed.** Supremacist-redolent term used in describing a wine of obviously ritzy pedigree--a wine whose luxurious, refined personality indicates to its knowing appraiser that it is the product of an aristocratic vineyard site, such as a Grand CRU in Burgundy or a First Growth in Bordeaux. The finely grained tannins, the deep core of cassis fruit, and the exceptionally long and perfumed finish all mark this effort as a wine of great breed.

**Brett.** Abbreviation for *Brettanomyces*, a

strain of yeast that, when present in wine, causes the wine to smell metallic and taste a bit "off

Who would want to? If you find Oenology somehow interesting but also ridiculous and pretentious at the same time then this is the book for you. It's obvious, but for reviewing purposes I'll just state that this book isn't for wine snobs, but rather pokes fun at them while being informative and witty at the same time. It's a delightful read, the first few pages I glanced at online were enough to let me know that this was the book I was searching for.

The book is helpful, there is no doubt there. However, it focuses on personalities and descriptive terminology with little to no coverage on wine regions or varietals.

This book and its companion were exactly what I was looking for! THANKS!!! Will definitely look to them for purchases again in the future!

This is definitely a fun but accurate book. It provides quick and easy education regarding wine. It is by no accident that the author presents a "snobby" tone, but this is part of the fun. Witty and worthwhile.

this is a very informative and enjoyable read for anyone who enjoys wine and or just to learn about the drink

I gave this book as a gift with the Vinturi wine aerator. I looked thru it & if you're new to wine it is helpful if you take the time to read it. Good conversation piece.

I just ordered this book for my son who will soon be graduating from college. He loves wine and is just learning as well as being in a very progressive and affluent social group. I think this book looks great! Hope he is not offended by the title "sob" !!! :)

Really enjoyed this almost-back-pocket-sized guide to wine snob minutia. The authors do a great job of introducing lots of obscure wine terminology (and wine personalities) while poking fun at wine snobs and neophytes alike. Take this gem, for example: Spoofalated. Scornful term invented by old-line winemakers to describe any wine so bombastic and overmanipulated by man--usually via excessive oak usage, but sometimes by way of overripeness or MICRO-OXYGENATION--that it

lacks any discernible VARIETAL character. Ex. "I couldn't bring myself to tell Dad that the Chilean wine he so proudly gets by the case from Costco is a ghastly, overbearing, spoofalated grape beverage." Highly recommended!

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