Guglielmo Rocchiccioli
Sommelier

guglielmo.rocchiccioli@gmail.com
www.sommelierguglielmorocchiccioli.com/blog/

**16. Smell**

*The human sense of smell is less developed the the sense of sight and hearing, especially when compared with that of animals. We recall that many species of animals recognize their offspring only by their smell, and moreover, in many animals, procreation itself is initiated when the male uses his sense of smell to determine that the female is in heat. It is also largely the sense of smell that allows many birds and animals to find their food. Perhaps the best known olfactory phenomenon is the selection of pollen that bees and other insects make that result in the fructification of many species.*

*Wine is rich in aromas that evolve constantly over time. Some of the wine's smells come from the bunch, some from the land where it was grown, from fermentation, from the container in which it was aged, some from its surroundings, and some from chemical and enzymatic changes in its components, etc. describing a wine's aroma and bouquet is complex, although some generally accepted definitions allow us to characterize a wine.*

*We have individualized some aromas; we naturally identify the smell of a violet or a rose, the smell of a cabbage, an apple, or a banana, etc. these smells are formed by a number of chemical substances, many of which exist naturally in wine.*

***How does smell influence wine tasting ?*** *There is no doubt that the sense of smell is the most important part of wine appreciation and it has tremendous influence both before we taste a wine and while it is still in the mouth. During the tasting both process, the sensations perceived come from the sense of smell as well as the sense of*

*taste. The nose participates even more than the tongue in forming the impressions that are commonly called the taste of a substance and that in reality are primarily olfactory impressions.*

*During the tasting, the heat of the mouth, the movement of the cheeks and tongue, the slight inhalation of air, and even normal respiration move the volatile substances that constitute the aroma and bouquet of the wine toward the back of the nose. Swallowing provokes a slight pressure in the mouth that pushes the vapors through the nose and stimulates the perception of smell.*

*The sense of smell continues to work even after the wine has been swallowed or expelled. If air is exhaled through the nose shortly afterwards, the smell of the wine can still be perceived; it impregnates the mouth and lingers for a number of breaths. It is very easy to eliminate the olfactory sensations from a wine tasting so that only gustatory sensations remain by pinching the nose shut while tasting. It is surprising to see how few sensations remain, as if one is not really participating in a tasting. A bad head cold produces the same effect by completely blocking the sense of smell, thereby impeding perception. In this case, it is commonly said that one has lost his or her sense of taste, when in reality what is lost is the sense of smell.*

*These simple observations show that in the perception of taste of food – or wine in this case – the sense of smell plays the primary role while the part that corresponds to taste itself is quite weak. When we smell a flower or a wine, we usually perceive the impressions to be received at the tip of the nose, where the nostrils take in air. But the impression zone is actually much higher, immediately below the brain. The nose is the symbol of the sense of smell, so a good taster is said to have a good nose when he or she is sensitive to smells, and a wine has a good nose when it releases intense aromas.*

Profesor Alejandro Hernández – *"Chile Vitivinícola. Un país andino con vista al mar"* – Quebecor World Chile S.A. – Chile – 2006

Guglielmo Rocchiccioli
Sommelier

guglielmo.rocchiccioli@gmail.com
www.sommelierguglielmorocchiccioli.com/blog/

*Normally the sensations of taste are accompanied by aromatic sensations; most foods emit aromatic vapors that enter the nostrils with the air inhaled and play a decisive role in the degustation. This discontinuous phenomenon begins with chewing and acquires its full amplitude after swallowing, and at that moment the walls of the pharynx constitute a vast a vast evaporative surface.*

*We therefore have two possible access routes to the olfactory mucus. The direct nasal route by inhalation through the nasal passage and the retronasal route through the internal passage of the mouth to the nostrils. In the direct route the sensation depends upon the amount of olfactory vapors in the air above the wine and the strength of the inhalation. Therefore the taster's technique and the shape of the glass have an influence on and can improve sensitivity. By the retronasal route, the warming of the wine in the mouth and its displacement due to the movement of the tongue and cheeks accentuate the release of aromas. The movement of the pharynx during swallowing tends to create a slight internal pressure that pushes the vapors from the mouth out through the nose, thereby accentuating the olfactory sensation. Combine with the pleasant tactile sensation in the lower pharynx or esophagus while swallowing, this constitutes the moment of greatest pleasure during the consumption of a drink or a bite of food.*

Profesor Alejandro Hernández – *"Chile Vitivinícola. Un país andino con vista al mar"* – Quebecor World Chile S.A. – Chile – 2006