

To heighten wine's flavors, you need the right glass

By Dave McIntyre

For The Washington Post

I previously discussed the debate over whether decanting benefits wine by allowing it to breathe when exposed to air. The verdict was mixed. Decanters can be expensive and unwieldy, and difficult to clean. They are useful for pouring older wines off their sediment, and the ritual of decanting can add to our enjoyment of wine, especially in more formal settings.

For improving a wine's flavor, however, the glass is more important than a decanter. The size and shape of a wine glass will affect the aromas and flavors, not just as you swirl and sip, but throughout your meal.

This doesn't mean you need to invest in expensive crystal stemware or a variety of differently shaped glasses. "You don't really need any other type of wine glass beyond an all-purpose glass," writes Maryse Chevriere, a sommelier and the James Beard Award-winning wine satirist of Fresh Cut Garden Hose on Instagram, in her new book, "Grasping the Grape: Demystifying Grape Varieties to Help You Discover the Wines You Love." "Especially, if you're just starting to get into wine."



Deb Lindsey / The Washington Post

A selection of wines in different wine glasses.

So, if you are new to wine, or considering a gift to someone who is, what should you look for in an all-purpose glass? Chevriere lays out a few basic criteria.

"If you only get to pick one, a clear, thin-lipped, 'cut rim' all-purpose glass should be it," she writes, describing it as "a stemmed glass with a U-shaped bowl that is wider at the stem and narrows slightly as it gets up to the rim."

She adds: "It's the wine glass equivalent of the perfect pair of jeans."

That U-shaped bowl is often called a tulip because of its resemblance to the flower. The narrower rim focuses the aroma and guides the wine to your palate rather than down your shirt. The thin "cut rim" is favored over a thicker "rolled rim" for the same reason.

Different sizes, with glasses for white wines smaller than those for reds, evolved for a reason. White wines, such as a riesling or sauvignon blanc, tend to be acidic, and a smaller, narrower tulip will direct them

toward the tip of your tongue, while a bigger, wider glass will direct fleshier, tannic reds, such as cabernet sauvignon, to the middle of your palate — all in the hopes of balancing the wine and showing it at its best. Those bigger glasses may be ideal as well for full-bodied white wines, such as oaky chardonnay or skin-fermented "orange" wines.

Some stemware is marketed as all-purpose. "The One," by master sommelier Andrea Robinson, is actually two, with a white-wine version and a slightly larger red-wine glass. They sell for about \$15 a stem on Amazon.

A fancier glass by British wine writer Jancis Robinson and designer Richard Brendon goes for \$112 a pair. It's delicate, precisely balanced and intended for use with sparkling and fortified wines, as well.

But, of course, you can find your own "all-purpose" wine glass. Find one you like, with the specifications above for best results. You'll want something that not only fits your budget, but also feels good in your hand as you swirl the wine and tip the glass to your lips. That's not as silly or pretentious as it sounds: I've used glasses that felt top-heavy,

when swirling seems dangerous and the glass less steady on the table. These are most likely inexpensive department store stemware.

If you drink a lot of sparkling wine, be it champagne or prosecco, I suggest investing in a set of special glasses for bubbly. It's perfectly acceptable, even trendy, to drink sparkling from a regular glass, but smaller tulip-shaped stems, or even straight and narrow flutes, focus the bubbles — which, after all, put the sparkle in sparkling wine. They also help with portion control — important, given the price of champagne.

I'm not dismissing fancy, expensive wine glasses. They have elegance, and can help express the nuances of fine wine. And different-shaped glasses can draw out fruit flavors or emphasize oak. As with many aspects of wine, there's a lifetime of exploration for all of us.

If you're just starting out on your wine quest, find an all-purpose glass that suits you. Then branch out. As your love of wine develops, you'll want to explore different glassware, too. It can get expensive. But it doesn't have to be.

Novel explores the many challenges teenagers are facing in today's world

Sentenced to Shakespeare
Milford House Press
By Iris Dorbian

Loneliness, bullying, sex.

Iris Dorbian takes a look at these challenges of adolescence in "Sentenced to Shakespeare," a young adult novel about a teen who faces them all and comes through intact.

Dorbian calls her novel her homage to a Massachusetts program that aimed to help at-risk youths through Shakespeare workshops.

She delivers a heart-rending portrayal of innocent and isolated Leah Friedman's suffering at the hands of an eighth-grade bully, a girl who turns on the weak to the amusement of an entourage of devotees. "With each insult, Leah felt like she was shrinking more into herself until there was nothing left but a shell of a person."



Lee Giguere

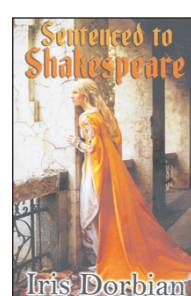
bowels of a staircase that'd slope into the subterranean entrance of the building, she'd seek refuge. Her legs splayed out on the concrete, Leah would huddle in the corner, staring at her watch, waiting for each minute to pass into the oblivion of another minute until she knew her parents were out of the house and on their way to work. Then she'd return to the safety of

"Sometimes, if the weather was permitting, Leah would hide near the local VFW hall rather than go to school, which was within walking distance to her house. It was safe to play truant there as usually, no one was around on the weekdays. Within the

her home, away from Dede and the harassment. Free and happy."

When finally Leah can take no more and turns on her tormenter with a penknife, she finds herself in the juvenile justice system, no longer a victim but an offender. And there the story really begins.

Leah, in fits and starts, constructs a new persona no longer framed by bullying, but by her own choices with new friends and her first infatuation with a boy — an infatuation that brings to the surface her adolescent fear that she'll never have a sexual relationship. As she becomes involved with a boy in the program she decides "to go for broke: she wanted to see what the big deal was about."



And after they have sex, "she felt a perverse sense of pride that she had gotten rid of this albatross she'd feared would shadow her the rest of her life. If she never had sex again, at least this onus of virginity would be permanently removed. ... At least she had tasted the fruit and could spend the rest of her days knowing that."

Of course the Shakespeare workshops don't solve all of Leah's problems, but performing surrounds her with a fresh set of peers with whom she learns a more mature meaning of friendship and gives her self-confidence she's never felt before.

Dorbian has written a story that opens a door to introspection for both teens and parents alike.

Lee Giguere is a former editor at the Journal Inquirer.