

WINE TASTING ETIQUETTE

Welcome to Hawke's Bay. Here are a few tips about wine tasting to help you make the most of your wine tour....

☞ Choose the wineries you want to visit and plan your route

Hawke's Bay is one of the biggest wine regions to travel around and all the wineries have something different to offer. Don't try to see everything in one day – perhaps pick a part of Hawke's Bay and check opening times in the Hawke's Bay Winery Guide.

☞ Tasting Charges & Purchases

This is at the discretion of the individual winery – some do, some don't and it may depend on the size of your group. If this is the case charges are made directly to the visitor. Cellars doors are like any retail outlet and samples are provided with the expectation that you will buy if you like what you have tasted in most cases. Tasting fees are modest and recoup some of the costs associated with providing a tutored tasting or tour. Many of the wines you experience are only available at the cellar door or a limited release, so don't miss the opportunity to take something special home.

☞ Trying the Wine

Each winery will have someone to host your tasting and guide you through the wines available to taste. They will pour the wines for you and explain a little about them – it is an interactive experience so feel free to ask questions and engage with cellar door staff. If you only wish to try one or two of the wines please wait until those wines are poured as part of the tasting. Please keep in mind this is a tasting experience not a drinking experience.

☞ White before Red?

Wines are generally tasted with white wines first, red wines to follow and dessert wines last. There is usually a tasting order which is designed to show the wines at their best – be guided by your host and resist the temptation to jump around the list. If you don't wish to try a particular wine that's fine – although you may have to wait before you are able to try the wine you are interested in.

☞ Spit or swallow?

This is absolutely a personal choice – although if you want the day to last it's probably a good idea not to swallow everything you taste! The winery will have a vessel for this purpose called a "spittoon" or will indicate where you may spit. Wineries are licensed premises and as part of their legal and responsible host obligation, they can and will refuse service or admittance to people who are intoxicated.

☞ How much do I need to know?

All you need is the willingness to try. Wine tasting is subjective and there are no right or wrong answers, so have a go even if it's new to you. Consider the others tasting with you in your group and other visitors to the cellar door. Allow everyone to enjoy their tasting and ask questions. Be courteous to your hosts – the cellar door is like an extension of their home, they are passionate about the wines they produce and welcome you to the experience.

☞ **Groups are generally welcome but if you are organising your own group tour please call the winery in advance to book.**