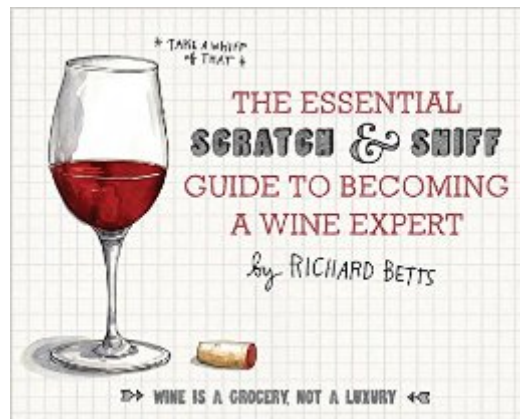


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The Essential Scratch And Sniff Guide To Becoming A Wine Expert: Take A Whiff Of That



Synopsis

Richard Betts is one of fewer than two hundred master sommeliers in the world, but he's no wine snob and he hates wine-speak. In the first book of its kind, he helps readers scratch and sniff their way to expertise by introducing the basic components of wine—the fruits, the wood, the earth—enabling anyone to discover the difference between a Syrah and a Sangiovese and get the glass they love every time. Humorously illustrated, with 16 scents, this irresistible gift puts the fun back in wine fundamentals.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A scratch and sniff guide to wine? Really? It seemed like a silly concept at first. Then I thought about how many times I have heard other drinkers talking about what they smell in their glasses while I felt a little left out. This book instantly made me smarter about wine. From identifying the range of fruits in the nose to understanding more about how the wood barrels and the dirt affect the scent, I learned so much. In the back is a fold out map to understand the smells of the entire wine world. You start in the middle and "sniff" your way out to the edge learning how to identify the types of wine you like most. I love this book. Keeping it close by as I open more bottles and definitely picking up copies for friends. Highly recommend.

I've had other wine books before but frankly, they were so complicated I needed to pour myself a glass of wine just to keep reading. This funny, engaging and quick scratch and sniff book was

fantastic. Who knew a Master Sommelier could (or would) use such a humorous format to share his passion to the masses of us who enjoy wine. This book is enjoyable even after a few drinks. It would be great at a get together with a few good bottles uncorked to educate yourselves with while your reading. Thanks Richard Betts!

I've been tasting--and drinking!--wine for decades. My friends tend to think of me as something of a connoisseur. But when I read descriptions like "undertones of rose petals beneath burnt shoe leather" I roll my eyes. This book, on the other hand, oversimplifies, decomposing wine into a handful of aromas. I think that's a good starting point, and I applaud the author for cutting through the crap of wine puffery. But there is another level or two of subtlety beyond this book, and it won't make you an "expert". In format it's a 22 page board book, much like you'd give a small child. But the text, as well as the subject, is grown up. It walks you through the basic categories of wine smells--the biggest components of taste--and lets you "scratch & sniff". As such, it's a great starting point for understanding wine. What's peculiar is that while the author does noble service in cutting through the pretense that surrounds--and inflicts--wine tasting and wine descriptions, he feels the need to posture his brief, otherwise excellent, introduction as a guide that will make readers experts. In that, he's actually pretentious in attacking pretension. If you are a beginner trying to understand what wine people are talking about, this book is a good starting point, as well as a good corrective to snobbery. But it's not an expert guide.

Most of the reviews have described this book as a great gift but I actually wanted it as learning tool. I am a newbie to the world of wine and I'm trying to improve my palate. I don't mind that it looks like a child's pop-up book because the information is very good. For example, I didn't realize that only certain red-color fruits are found in red wines, that is, the author explains that you won't find lemon or pineapple in red wines. This is news to me because I thought any fruit aroma was game to appear in any wines. Narrowing the field for me helps, but this is where the author stops short! On the page where he talks about red wine, there is an illustration of the fruits and then the scratch and sniff thing, but not one mention of the fruits! There are illustrations of cherries and what looks like strawberries, but not one fruit is mentioned by name, even though the title of this section is "What fruit do you smell in red wine?" It would have been nice to be able to name some of the fruits. By far the most disappointing part is the scratch and sniff. They were just too faint to get any sense of what I should be smelling. If the picture weren't there, you'd have little idea what you were smelling. With many of the illustrations in the book there are quarter-size, clear stickers on top that supposedly

carries the aroma. At first I thought I was supposed to remove the stickers and the smell would be underneath, but I think there would have been instructions if that were true. Not every illustration has a sniffer. In all, these are the aromas that are available in this book: pear, mixed fruit, red fruit, black fruit, stone fruit, another pear, vanilla, dill, dirt, leather, bacon, butter, and grass. Towards the end Mr. Betts talks about, and there are illustrations for what to look for in faulty wine such as wet dog smell, burnt rubber and mold. Where are those sniffers? It's like teaching bad words in a foreign language class -- you need to know the bad stuff in order to recognize them when they occur. I have a lot of respect for this area of expertise especially after I saw the documentary, "Somm". The information in this book is very clear and arranged in a way that makes the wine tasting journey not so vast and never-ending. Mr. Betts says that all wines fall into four main categories and the explanation of terroir is clear. I appreciate the different and big fonts, the colors and the illustrations. But I was actually a serious purchaser of this book for myself since my palate is so poor; I actually want to identify the gooseberries (inside book joke) someday. I've purchased other wine books of course and I'm taking an online CSW class (living in a very small Southern town, no wine tastings here!). I hope he comes out with a second edition!

I found out about this book through friends associated with the folks responsible for the book coming into existence. I started out doing the normal thing that friends do in supporting their creative projects and immediately realized that the book is of incredible value and exceptionally fun to boot. The idea of taking something as complex as wine and simplifying it into the format of a children's book for adults is amazing and the execution outstanding. A 21-page book teaches everyone how to understand the most important things about wine, where all of it comes from, and the nuances that train your palate to favor one kind over another (and what it means). This is a whole new generation of "for dummies" that really makes everyone into a knowledgeable wine expert in their own right in short order. Bravo!

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