

## Book Review: “Hip Tastes”

Courtney Cochran brings her hip know-how to solid introductory wine guide

Millennials, there’s much to celebrate. Not only did wine out sell beer last year, but you are officially the fastest growing segment of the wine consumer market. Good times, indeed.

So if you’re young and trendy – or both – and looking for a solid introduction to wine, you’ve found it in Courtney Cochran’s “Hip Tastes: The Fresh Guide to Wine.” Cochran is the brains behind the uber-popular San Francisco-based Hip Tastes events, where 20-somethings relish PB & J and Tater Tot pairings against a techno beat. She’s infused her first book with much of the same verve.

Cochran, a certified sommelier, shares her enthusiasm for wine – exclamation point phobes, be warned – with the novice, organizing the book with intuitive, easy-to-follow chapters (“The White Stuff,” “It’s a Red, Red World,” “Bubbly Basics and Sweet Treats”). From there, it’s Wine 101 – more fabulously irreverent pairings, storage, navigating lists and shops, and wine gear must-haves. She’s pro foil cutters; anti Rabbit.

“Hip Tastes” is one of few wine books that doesn’t make you feel like a loser for lacking the cash or know-how, for that matter, to invest in Chateauneuf-du-Pape or even a temperature-controlled cellar. Cochran assumes you live in a shoebox of an apartment – she does – and validates closets and other cool, dark nooks for bottle storage. She’s practical, and it’s refreshing.

Furthermore, she introduces cult value wines sure to impress (“Dr. L” Riesling, Bon-Bon Shiraz Rose) and peppers the book with loads of boxed-off Hip Tips: the low-down on organic wines and how to make nice with a sommelier (always offer a taste of a special bottle you’ve brought to dinner). In return, he’ll no doubt be happy to customize a flight for you.

No wine manual would be complete without a handy index, and “Hip Tastes” has one, in addition to a thorough appendix organizing European wines by their place names and grapes by their difficult pronunciations. There’s even a vintage guide.

For those curious about winemaking and its various umbrellas, Cochran offers clear explanations of everything from extraction and lees stirring to malolactic fermentation without losing her fresh, light voice. It’s just enough technical lingo to entice a person to further their wine studies.