TEAMBLENDING: Blending Wines, Building Teams With Jonathon Alsop

What do you get when you give teams of ordinary people four different wines, a hundred wine glasses, and challenge them to blend a better wine?

First of all, you get to sample a lot of very tasty wines, which is great on its own, but more meaningfully, people start to taste wine in a completely new way. By blending together their own signature wine from four components, the teams enter a world where wine is not a product anymore but a live thing becoming something different, new -- and in the case of blending wine -- often better than the sum of its parts.



The wine blending seminar begins with an explanation of the program and timeline followed by a brief technical tasting introduction: sniffing, swirling, sipping, and perhaps most importantly, using the spill buckets. We will sample the four component wines together briefly, then the blending begins.

One or more persons can be designated to document the process the team goes through deciding what kind of wine to blend and then doing it. Forty-five minutes later, each team should be executing its final blend and writing its 100-word marketing plan and description. The teams present their wines and descriptions to the whole group, and we break for lunch.



Behind the scenes, we shuffle the order of the blended wines so everyone is tasting all the wines blind again after lunch! We print up a new tasting sheet with marketing plans and challenge the individuals to match up their wines with their descriptions. After everyone has tasted through all the wines, we unveil their identities (and the component wines too) and discuss our reactions to what we were tasting then and what we know now.



During the debriefing, people can compare their wines, share the various processes they used, and ultimately learn something about each other through how they created their wines and how they reacted to them.

TIMELINE

10-10:15 am	Intro and explanation of program
10:15-10:45	How To Taste Wine, And Why!
10:45-11:30	Blend wine
11:30-11:45	Write 100-word marketing plan and tasting note description
11:45-noon	Present wines, marketing plans, and descriptions
noon-1 pm	Lunch
1-1:45	Blind tasting of blended wines
1:45-2	Unveil wines' identities
2	Debrief

MATERIALS

Wine 4 different wines, 6 bottles each

plus backup wine for final blending

Wine glasses 1 dozen per team

Blending tools Measuring cup

Magnum flask

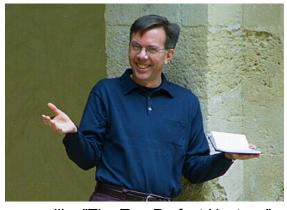
Funnel Spill bucket

Food options Bread

Olives

Light cheese

Jonathon Alsop is a Bostonbased wine writer covering wine, food and travel since 1988. He is author of the wine column "In Vino Veritas" as well as numerous articles for the Associated Press, Frequent Flyer, La Vie Claire, Beverage Business Magazine, Mobil Travel Guides, Fodor's Travel Guides, Boston Globe, and others. He wrote Fodor's Dining Guide to Boston, Cape Cod, and The



Islands from 1994-99. His best-known essays like "The Too-Perfect Hostess" and "Raise High The Wine Bar, Oenophile!" subject the wine world to the eccentric scrutiny of his unique critical personality. In addition to wine writing, Jonathon teaches wine, cooking and writing classes in Boston.

Wine Classes

How To Taste: An Introduction To Wine Fine Wine On A Tight Budget Around The World With Wine Champagne & Sparkling Wine Intensive Wines Of Southern France Dude, Where's My Carneros? Zinfandel: America's Best Red Wine Modern Italian Wines Que Syrah Shiraz

Food Classes

Simple Food & Wine Matching The Ultimate Cheese Course German Food & Wine Wine & Food of Provence

Writing & Literature Classes

The Language Of Food Writing For Magazines Poetry of Dylan Thomas Literary History of Wine