

Winemaker/Enologist Job Interview Questions And Answers



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Winemaker/Enologist Interview Questions And Answers Guide.

Question - 1:

Do you know how many grape vines can be planted per acre?

Ans:

In a wide spacing of 566 vines per acre one would ask each vine to ripen 44 clusters (11 pounds) to achieve a 3.1 ton yield per acre. However, in a dense spacing of 2,723 vines per acre you would ask each vine to ripen only 9 fruit clusters to achieve the same yield per acre.

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Question - 2:

Tell me where grapes are grown?

Ans:

Talk to other vineyards about the availability of vineyard workers. While grapes will grow in most climate zones in the United States, the types of grapes grown for wine, eating or juices are have a much more limited growing area. Before planting any commercial vineyard, consult an expert in viticulture in your area.

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Question - 3:

Tell me how do you grow grapes?

Ans:

Wine grapes are grown outdoors, in a warm, sheltered, sunny site, such as a south- or southwest-facing wall or fence. Grapevines grow on any soil, providing it is well drained. When planting a row of vines, a south-facing slope is desirable with the rows running north to south.

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Question - 4:

Tell me what is vinification process?

Ans:

Winemaking or vinification, is the production of wine, starting with selection of the grapes or other produce and ending with bottling the finished wine. Although most wine is made from grapes, it may also be made from other fruits or plants.

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Question - 5:

Tell me what do you look for when you make wine?

Ans:

I'm looking for wines that taste good. That's obvious, but I am looking for that. I'm also looking for wines that are in balance. I want some wines to be ready to drink right away and others that can be laid down to age for awhile. I'm looking for the parameters and ingredients that can create that process and scenario.

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Question - 6:

Explain me what does a viticulturist study?

Ans:

As a Viticulturist, you're in the business of growing grapes. The art of grape growing is part science and part intuition, commonly known as "trusting your gut." With your knowledge and skills, you grow grape vines that produce large quantities of juicy, mouth-watering grapes.

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Question - 7:



Tell me what is the season for grapes in India?

Ans:

Wine grapes in India are harvested during February-April, versus September-October elsewhere in the northern hemisphere, in this sense we are like the industry "down under" (the southern Hemisphere - Australia, South Africa, South America) where, too, the 2013 harvest is currently going on.

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Question - 8:

Tell me what is the meaning of plant pathologist?

Ans:

Plant Pathology is defined as the study of the organisms and environmental conditions that cause disease in plants, the mechanisms by which this occurs, the interactions between these causal agents and the plant, and the methods of managing or controlling plant disease.

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Question - 9:

Tell me what is your favorite wine that you've made and what makes it your favorite?

Ans:

Throughout my career the wineries I've worked at have been mostly Cabernet oriented wineries and I've made a lot of really good Cabernet. When I make a reserve style Cabernet from a great vintage and it turns out just right, I'm really proud of that. But what I like the most is when I make a really good Pinot Noir. Pinot Noir is a tricky wine to make and I probably drink more of it than any other kind.

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Question - 10:

Tell me how long does it take for grapes to ripen?

Ans:

Most grapevines give you fruit in their third season. Your backyard grapevine can take up to three years to produce viable grapes, but that timeline is based on several environmental factors as well as how you care for the plant. Sunlight and well-drained soil are key to grape production, as is proper pruning.

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Question - 11:

Tell us what do you like best about your job?

Ans:

I like that I get to work inside and outside and that on any day it might go either way or both. I like the smells of my job - the smells of the vineyards and of the winery. I like that there is science, craft and art all blended together. I like that throughout the year I do different things at different times. It's not the same thing every day. I like the lifestyle and I meet a lot of interesting people. Ultimately, at the end of the year, I like that I have something tangible to show for what I did all year. Even after we sell the wine I can still watch it as it ages, I'm still in touch with it.

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Question - 12:

Do you know how much do enologist make?

Ans:

Enologist Salaries. As of 2011, wine industry magazine Wine Business Monthly reports that workers with the specific title of enologist earned average salaries of \$51,000 to \$55,000 per year. Median salaries for enologists working at most wineries were around \$50,000 per year.

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Question - 13:

Tell me how does your approach differ from other winemakers in Colorado?

Ans:

Writers always ask this question. My approach is probably the same as many other winemakers in the world. I work with the grapes I'm given (blessed with) and guide them along the journey into the bottle. I want the wine to stay true to it's origin. I'm not making a "Napa Cab" or a white Burgundy. I'm making a Colorado Cab and Chardonnay. I want the wine to be an expression of the grapes origin.

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Question - 14:

Do you know what does Nomology mean?

Ans:

Nomological network is a representation of the concepts (constructs) of interest in a study, their observable manifestations, and the interrelationships among and between these. The term "nomology" has been derived from the Greek, meaning "lawful", or in philosophy of science terms, "lawlike".

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Question - 15:

Tell me why did you become a winemaker?

Ans:

I grew up in apple country and one day I took a trip with my wife to an apple farm. It was during harvest, which would be October, and the place was packed with



people like me, tourists, buying apples, apple cider and donuts. I saw that the whole family was involved - the kids were running around helping in the orchard and in the barn, along with their mom, dad and grandfather. I thought "This would be a great kind of atmosphere to raise a family." I was selling wine at the time as well as into drinking it and the ideas just came together.

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Question - 16:

Tell me what does an (o)enologist do?

Ans:

Being an enologist does not necessarily indicate that that individual is also the winemaker. In the book, "How to Launch Your Wine Career," the authors explain the two arms associated with wine production in California: the winemaker and the enologist. For a head winemaker position, one typically has to work up the ladder from assistant winemaker, and may find themselves in several assistant winemaker positions prior to holding a head winemaker position. The enologist position develops through a different ladder within the winery: from a crush (or harvest) intern to a cellar worker to a lab assistant and finally a cellar master before reaching the enologist position. Note that this development may not always be the case in smaller, commercial wineries.

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Question - 17:

Do you know how much does a viticulturist make a year?

Ans:

Depending on the size of the winery, vineyard managers reported average salaries of between \$81,000 and \$89,000 in 2011. The highest average salary, \$88,279 per year, was reported by vineyard managers working for very large wineries that produce 500,000 or more cases of wine per year.

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Question - 18:

Tell me do grapes grow in India?

Ans:

Total area under grapes in India is about 40,000 ha, distributed mainly in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Economic importance: At present, grape is the most important fruit crop grown commercially with the objectives.

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Question - 19:

Tell me how much do wine cellar workers make?

Ans:

Winemakers will earn average salary of \$95,263 this year, according to a salary survey of the wine industry conducted by Wine business. More senior winemakers (who supervised other winemakers) will earn an average of \$121,774.

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Question - 20:

Tell me how do you know when you've got a good vintage?

Ans:

It all has to do with weather. Once the grapes are planted in a vineyard and grow up on their trellises, if the same farmer grows them, really the only thing that changes from year to year is the weather. When I say the weather, it's from when the grapes start growing, which is usually around mid-March, to the time they're picked in September and October. If the weather throughout that period is ideal, if it's not too extreme during the growing process - too cold or hot, too rainy or dry, too windy - it's going to be a good vintage.

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Question - 21:

Tell me what are the steps from harvesting to bottling?

Ans:

After harvest, once the wines ferment, the whites are either in stainless steel tanks or in barrels. The wine that's made in tanks ages for three to five months and then it gets bottled. After fermentation, the white that is in barrels, which is mostly chardonnay, gets aged from about seven to ten months before it is bottled. The red wines, right after fermentation, go into barrels. If it is a light red, like a Pinot Noir, it might get bottled as soon as just before the next harvest. If it's a bigger, heavier wine like Cabernet it stays in the barrel for about two years.

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Question - 22:

Tell me do you think of wine as expressing something? If so, what?

Ans:

Well the obvious is that it expresses a place. But it also can express the artist's hand. I've always considered myself a fish out of water in the so called Metal Music scene. I've always been more into The Byrds, Pink Floyd, Joni Mitchell, Tom Waits. I think that shows in my wines. My wines are far more Pink Floyd than they are Metallica.

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Question - 23:

Explain me about the harvest process?

**Ans:**

As a winemaker, the first thing I do during harvest is walk through vineyards where I know the grapes are starting to get close to ripeness. They are already delicious by that point but are not ready to be picked. I walk through a vineyard with a baggie and pick a random sample of the grapes, one berry at a time, until I have half a baggie full of grapes. In the meantime, as many grapes as I'm putting in the baggie, I'm eating to taste how ripe the grapes are. On any given day during harvest I eat hundreds of grapes.

At the winery, I squeeze the baggies of grapes and analyze the juice to see what the numbers say about the acidity and sweetness. I use those numbers as guidelines and when I'm in the range of the numbers I want, I spend the last few days in the vineyard just tasting grapes. When they taste right, it's time to pick them.

We pick the grapes on the day I feel they are ready. With white grapes, the first thing we do is get rid of the stems with a machine and then squeeze the grapes. We take just the white grape juice and it goes into either a tank or to a barrel. We then add yeast and start fermenting it.

With red grapes, again we take the stems away and this time we pump the grapes, skins and all into a tank. The juice of red grapes like Cabernet, Zinfandels and Pinot Noirs, is clear as water so we let the juice steep with the skins. With red grapes, it's the skins that have all the color and flavor. So the skins and juice steep together and then we add yeast to that and it ferments. When it's done fermenting, we drain the wine out of the tank and squeeze the grapes to get the last little bit of wine out. The harvest is pretty much over at that point. Of course there are a lot of little details in there but that's basically what we do.

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Question - 24:

Tell me at what point in the winemaking process do you decide on what you're aiming at regarding style?

Ans:

In the vineyard. Taking large leaps early on in the growing process has helped shape our direction in the cellar. Going all in with a particular goal. We've found that half-assing it only leads to half a result. It starts long before pruning, but we'll start there. Don't fear the late spring frost. We train cordons to where we want to be as far as shoot positions. We prune to where we want to be. We shoot thin to where we want to be. We green harvest to where we want to be. Leaving extra stuff as back up confuses your vine.

[View All Answers](#)

Question - 25:

Tell me how do you grow grapes for wine?

Ans:

Planting:

- * Plant dormant, bare-root grape vines in the early spring.
- * Construct a trellis or arbor before planting. ...
- * Most grape varieties are self-fertile. ...
- * Before planting grapevines, soak their roots in water for two or three hours.
- * Select a site with full sun. ...
- * Space vines 6 to 10 feet apart (16 feet for muscadines).

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Question - 26:

Tell me what is the difference between viniculture and viticulture?

Ans:

While "viticulture" refers to the science, study and production of grapes, "viniculture" refers to the same thing, but for grapes specifically for wine. I think that the terms are used somewhat interchangeably-many schools have degrees in viticulture that are specifically geared toward wine grape production.

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Question - 27:

Tell me at what point does imagination come into play?

Ans:

Effective imagination comes with experience in the cellar. With no experience you might get lucky trying to be clever, but the results will be inconsistent.

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Question - 28:

Tell me is an enologist the same thing as a sommelier?

Ans:

Enologists should not be confused with sommeliers, which the Oxford Companion to Wine defines as a "specialist wine waiter or wine steward." Sommeliers are typically employed by restaurants, distributors, or other retail entities to advise consumers on wine purchases at a specific establishment. It is not uncommon for sommeliers to determine a wine list for a restaurant or to advertise food and wine pairings based on the restaurant's menu and available wine selection.

Education in a sommelier certificate program focuses on introductory viticulture and winemaking knowledge; a broad overview of terms and basic production practices (i.e., how to make a white wine versus a red wine). Their focus will feature global wine producing regions (e.g., regions within France like Bordeaux, Burgundy, the Loire, etc.), wine styles and the characteristics associated within specific regionally (terroir-driven) produced wines. Written knowledge is supplemented with educational tastings, and most sommelier and sommelier-like programs have a unique tasting method that is taught and practiced by all pupils.

Additionally, some sommelier programs feature education on the various types of spirits produced internationally and the sensory evaluation thereof. Sommeliers understand how to interpret wine regions and what to expect stylistically from a wine that is presented to them. Despite the depth of knowledge in these areas, sommelier training does not focus on actual production techniques. A sommelier is not trained in a wine processing facility, nor taught the scientific component to winemaking, and their approach to wine tasting often differs from those in production. I have often found that sommelier's evaluation of a wine can supplement that of the winemaker in a positive way, and emphasizes how varied sensory perceptions of wine truly are based on one's training and experience.

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Question - 29:

Tell me does one year or one vintage come to mind when you think about one of the best Pinot Noirs that you've made?

Ans:



Yes, my 2007. It's a beautiful Pinot Noir. It's what I call my 'go to' wine at the moment. If I'm running out to lunch or dinner with somebody, I often will bring a bottle. People seem to really enjoy it and, if I just like my wine that's good but, if I drink one of my wines with other people and they like it, it makes it even more enjoyable for me.

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Question - 30:

Do you know how much does a vineyard make per acre?

Ans:

So 1 ton of grapes yields about 60 cases or 720 bottles. If you put all that together, a very low-yielding vineyard that produces 2 tons per acre makes about 1,440 bottles, or 120 cases, while an acre that yields 10 tons produces about 7,200 bottles, or 600 cases.

[View All Answers](#)

Question - 31:

Tell me how much do winemakers make a year?

Ans:

Winemakers with less experience who were charged with tactical decision making, sometimes called a "winemaker 1" position, reported average earnings between \$93,000 and \$97,000 per year. Those acting as assistant winemakers earned considerably less, averaging \$64,000 to \$68,000 per year.

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Question - 32:

Tell me for people who want to know more about winemaking, what do you recommend?

Ans:

I would recommend taking a class - an appreciation for wine class is a good place to start. At first you'll learn about wine itself but in most of those classes there will be winemaking portions.

There are also tons of great books out there that you could read. I don't have any specific book recommendations, I would just find one that is interesting to you and start there.

Going on winery tours is a great way to learn about wine and wine making in an interactive atmosphere. You'll see and hear a lot of things that will give you a basic feel of how it's done, especially if you visit during harvest, which I recommend.

During harvest a lot of wineries are looking for help and you can get what's called a 'harvest job'. You'll get to do a lot during harvest with no experience. They'll throw you right into the middle of it. You might get laid off at the end of harvest but if you go back the second year they'll hire you back because they know you know what you're doing. If you do that a couple of times, they see you're interested and a lot of times you can parley the experience of a couple harvests into an actual winery job.

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Question - 33:

Tell me what is Enology?

Ans:

By definition, (o)enology is the study of wine and wine making (Robinson 2006). The field of enology differs from that of viticulture, the science of grape growing, although the two are often intertwined in academic departments across the United States.

An (o)enologist is one that practices the field of (o)enology, and often understands the scientific principles associated with winemaking, including desirable characteristics associated with the grape itself. Enologists tend to understand wine analysis and can make educated decisions during wine production based on the analytical description and, potentially, sensory description of a given wine. Many enologists do not actually have a degree in "enology" per se, although enology degree programs exist throughout the world. In fact, many industry enologists have a science degree in chemistry, microbiology, biology, food science or another related field.

[View All Answers](#)

Question - 34:

Tell me how important is tasting to the winemaking process?

Ans:

I taste but at the end of the day, what am I gonna do with that? Once the fruit is in it's a little late. Smelling the ferments helps me identify if there's anything going off the rails. But other than that, I love to strap in and wait. Ask me again in a few years. I'll probably change my mind on this.

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Question - 35:

Tell me what is oenology the study of?

Ans:

Oenology is the science and study of wine and winemaking; distinct from viticulture, the agricultural endeavours of vine-growing and of grape-harvesting.

[View All Answers](#)

Question - 36:

Explain me what is an enologist?

Ans:

An enologist is someone who is responsible for everything having to do with the science (chemistry and biology) of the wine. Their responsibilities vary a lot from winery to winery depending on the winery size, wines produced, and needs of the winery.

[View All Answers](#)

**Question - 37:**

Tell me what is the name of a winemaker?

Ans:

A winemaker or vintner is a person engaged in wine making. They are generally employed by wineries or wine companies, where their work includes: Cooperating with viticulturists. Monitoring the maturity of grapes to ensure their quality and to determine the correct time for harvest.

[View All Answers](#)

Question - 38:

Do you know which vitamin found in grapes?

Ans:

In addition to providing us with conventional antioxidant nutrient like vitamin C and manganese, grapes are filled with antioxidant phytonutrients that range from common carotenoids like beta-carotene to unusual stilbenes like resveratrol, and the total number of different antioxidant nutrients in grapes runs well into ...

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Question - 39:

Explain me what is the most difficult aspect of making wine?

Ans:

The most difficult aspect of making wine is the capriciousness of it and those times when you don't have control over the process. The weather is the one thing we don't have any control over and when making the wine problems can arise for seemingly no reason. Wine is a living entity and it can sometimes veer off into unplanned directions for inexplicable reasons. They don't always behave the same throughout the process, including growing the grapes.

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Question - 40:

Tell me what do you think are the strengths and downfalls for Colorado wine?

Ans:

I view the expansion of the industry as a strength. More wineries equates to more exposure. The lack of acreage to grow grapes and cold weather can hinder the industry.

[View All Answers](#)

Question - 41:

Tell me what must a wine be like to be beautiful?

Ans:

That's very subjective. Most score driven wines require them to punch you right out of the bottle. Some might consider this beautiful. I don't. Beauty comes from sustainability. From age-ability. In my opinion.

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Question - 42:

Tell me how is making music similar to winemaking?

Ans:

The process of general to specific applies. And of course the more experience and success you have, the more you trust this process. Things can always seem in rough shape early on. A line without a surrounding story, a beat without a melody, etc.

[View All Answers](#)

Question - 43:

Tell me what would you hope people say about your wine?

Ans:

I just returned from a business trip on the east coast and I met a gentleman who told me that our 2012 Russian River Selection Chardonnay reminded him of Puligny Montrachet, but with a suntan. That is a great compliment and right on par with what I hope people will say about our wines. I like to hear people say that our wines are balanced, have just a kiss of oak and have lots of texture, spice and abundant aromatics.

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Question - 44:

Tell me what is one aspect of your job that might surprise people?

Ans:

People often think because I make wine I have a better palate than most. I think what surprises people is that I don't believe that to be true. The difference in our palates is what I call 'palate memory'. Meaning, I don't think I can taste any better than anyone else but because I've been making wine for so many years and tasting it at all stages my palate remembers what a wine will taste like in a month, two years or eight years if it tastes like this now. I've got this file cabinet in my brain so that when I taste something, I can know what's going to happen with this range of flavors, aromas and everything else. My actual tasting ability is no better than anyone else's. I just have a lot of information that's attached to my palate compared to an average wine drinker.

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Question - 45:

Do you know where is the origin of grapes?



Ans:

There are grapes native to Europe, Asia, and North America. Most Wine grapes would come from European/ Middle Eastern species. Others are for eating or juicing.

[View All Answers](#)

Question - 46:

Tell me what climate do you need to grow grapes?

Ans:

Grapes are the largest fruit crop on earth. The grapevine prefers the temperate climate in which it evolved, with warm, dry summers and mild winters. Winters of sustained cold kill grapevines. High humidity promotes vine disease.

[View All Answers](#)

Question - 47:

Do you know what is the study of pomology?

Ans:

Pomology is a branch of botany that studies and cultivates fruit. The denomination fruit culture introduced from Romance languages is also used.

[View All Answers](#)

Question - 48:

Explain me what is viticulture and enology?

Ans:

Wine grapes. Vineyard in Brhlovce, Slovakia. Viticulture is the science, production, and study of grapes. It deals with the series of events that occur in the vineyard. It is a branch of the science of horticulture.

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