

Wine

The By-the-Glass Standard

Five steps that keep the last glass from a bottle as fresh as the first.
A guest tastes yesterday's bottle in one sip, and usually says nothing.

Who
Sommeliers, bartenders and
servers who pour by the glass

When
Every open bottle, from the first
pour of the shift to closing

You need
Date labels, a marker, stoppers or
inert gas, a tasting glass, the log

Measured by Every open bottle labelled with day and time · First pour of each shift tasted · No bottle kept past its limit on the card

1 Label it

The moment a bottle is opened for glass pours, write the day, the time and your initials on a label on its shoulder. A bottle without a label is treated as old and poured away at closing.

"Opened Tue 18:40, MR"

Common mistake Keeping the date in your head because you opened it yourself. The next shift sees a full bottle and assumes it is fresh.

2 Taste first

Before the first glass of every shift, pour 10 ml from each open bottle into a tasting glass, away from guests. Smell it, taste it, decide. Anything in doubt goes down the sink and into the log.

"Wed 12:00: Chablis fine. Rosé flat, poured away, 0.4 l logged as waste."

Common mistake Smelling the neck of the bottle instead of the wine. The neck smells of the stopper; the guest drinks the wine.

3 Close it

Close every bottle within a minute of pouring: stopper in, inert gas if you have it, whites and sparkling back in the fridge, reds in a cool cupboard. No open bottle stays on the bar top.

"Open bottles: stopper, gas, date. Whites and sparkling go in here."

Common mistake Leaving the red on the back bar under the lights all evening. By ten it is warm, and by the morning it is tired.

4 Pour in view

Bring the bottle to the table and pour in front of the guest. Name the wine and vintage as you pour, and pour the same measure every time: 125 ml or 150 ml, as your list states.

"Here is the Sancerre, 2023, Ms Rossi."

Common mistake Pouring at the bar and carrying the glass over. The guest has to take on trust what is in it, and which vintage.

5 Close the shift

At closing, check every open bottle against the limits on the card. Pour away anything past its limit, log the volume, and leave a count for the morning: wine, day opened, level left.

"Close 23:30: 6 open, 1 poured away (Prosecco, day 2). Levels on the log."

Common mistake Topping up one open bottle with another of the same wine. The date means nothing now, and the old wine is still in it.

How Long an Open Bottle Keeps

Our house limits for wine by the glass, stoppered and kept cold where it should be. Taste decides first; these limits decide when taste is in doubt.

Style	Our limit once open	Pour it away if
Sparkling, hinged stopper	24 hours	Bubbles flat or coarse
Light, unoaked white or rosé	48 hours	Fruit faded, smell of bruised apple
Fuller or oaked white	3 days	Colour darker at the rim
Light and medium red	3 days	Smell of vinegar or stewed fruit
Full-bodied red	4 days	Flat, dull, brown at the edge
Sweet and fortified	3 weeks	Nutty or sharp where it was fresh
Poured through a needle system	As the head sommelier sets	Any change from the first pour

How to use this with your team

Brief one row a day at the pre-service meeting, and taste a wine at its limit with the team so everyone knows the smell. The closing supervisor checks the open-bottle log against this card every night.

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