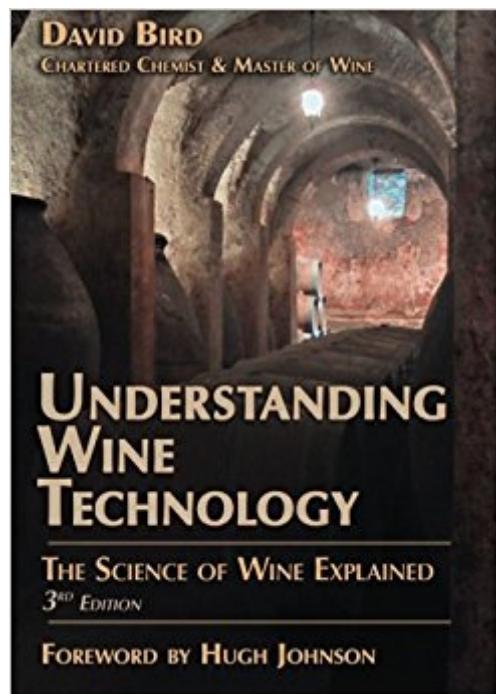


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# Understanding Wine Technology: The Science Of Wine Explained



## Synopsis

Any student who has ever logged credits in a viticulture and enology class knows Bird's book. It is the most widely assigned wine science primer in the English speaking world. This completely revised and updated edition to Bird's classic textbook deciphers all the new scientific advances that have cropped up in the last several years, and conveys them in his typically clear and plainspoken style that renders even the densest subject matter freshman-friendly. New material includes: expanded section on the production of red, rose, white, sweet, sparkling and fortified wines; information on histamine, flash detente, maceration, whole bunch and whole berry fermentation; expanded chapter on wine faults, including Brettanomyces; new section on HACCP analysis as applied to a winery; and much more.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is a reference book that I can be truly enthusiastic about. David Bird puts the science of wine into layman's language. It is comprehensive, interesting, well organised and the language is accessible. As the Wife, the Number Two at Eglantine Vineyard, I am often called upon to lead tour groups, write publicity leaflets, answer media and student enquiries and the like, but am not very heavily involved in the winemaking processes, some of which have remained a mystery to me for the thirty two years that we have been open to the Great British Public. The public can be quite intimidating to the tour guide with just a little knowledge and no easy access to the 'fount of all knowledge' - the winemaker. From now on I will have this book close at hand for every tour. It would

have been invaluable thirty odd years ago when we were planning to start our vineyard - we had so many questions to ask, so few places to turn to for support. It would have been invaluable again when I took the WSET course, because this book complements and extends the course work material. And why? The book is so easy to use and so clearly written. It moves at a cracking pace - no need to wade through pages of exemplification, because author David Bird sticks to the point. A brief glance at the Contents pages demonstrates this admirably: each chapter clearly headed and the sub-sections 'sign-posted' too. It takes only moments to find the answer to that question which has you stumped before the difficult customer loses interest and wanders off. Chemical formulae, mind-boggling for the non-specialist, are kept to the minimum, and labelled where they do occur. Diagrams, flow charts and photographs abound and are always timely and relevant. I have learned a lot. As for the Winemaker? I am currently battling with the all new and bewildering legislation coming at us. With a background in wine quality control, David Bird is undoubtedly a leading authority on the subject, able to guide us in setting the highest standards for our production processes. What a relief! In chapter 23 he has listed the up to date legislation relating to all that we need to be aware of and comply with, from the growing of the grapes to sending out the wine in bottle. He has even included the dreaded HACCP, for which he has provided a flow diagram and table. We have no hesitation in recommending this book (third edition) unreservedly: to the student of oenology, to the amateur and professional wine grower/maker, to the tour guide, to the wine enthusiast and to the correspondent." Veronica and Tony Skuriat, Eglantine Vineyard. "This is a book that is worth every penny and I cannot recommend it too highly." - E.R.Adlard, Chromatographia. "This book is ideally suited to those who require more detailed explanations than can be obtained from the vast array of coffee-table wine books." - Kym Milne MW. --Hugh Johnson

David Bird is trained as an analytical chemist and in 1981 became a Master of Wine and a Chartered Chemist. He specializes in quality assurance techniques, such as ISO 9000 and HACCP, and has been involved with wine activities and education in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, China, Algeria, Australia, Scotland, Ireland, and England.

To determine whether Bird's "Understanding Wine Technology" is for you, it is necessary to decipher its positioning. It is an overview of all areas of commercial wine production from a less-technical basis (meaning something like "few chemical formulas, with all jargon explained very clearly). In the introduction, Bird says, "The book is aimed at the person with no formal scientific

training, yet who is interested in the science behind wine and wants to know the mechanism behind the complex transformations that take place."The book delivers perfectly on that promise: it is amazingly readable and covers nearly every conceivable (general) topic regarding production. What it does \*not\* do is to provide detailed depth in any area (see below), cover non-production aspects such as details of individual varietals or wines, nor present a winemaking manual. It covers commercial rather than home production, although of course there is some overlap.If you want one of the following, then the book is for you: an substantial breadth view of topics; an overview of the science; an overview of commercial wine production. On the other hand, if you want something else, it is \*not\* for you: detailed technical depth on chemistry (try Margalit instead); a guide to wines, regions, or wineries; a guide to wine making. For my part, I am an aficionado and home winemaker, and it has added breadth to my knowledge. It's a good "first source" to look up something before delving into more depth.Preview pages ("see inside") are not yet posted for this volume, so I will clarify what it includes. There are 23 chapters that take up 290 pages of primary text. These include virtually every topic from vineyard to bottling. In addition to the usual topics ("in the vineyard", "producing the must", "fermentations", "clarification and fining", etc.) there are interesting and more industry-focused chapters, including a chapter on "quality control and [hazard] analysis". In other words, the topics are comprehensive, but at an average of 10 pages per topic, each topic provides only an overview of its area.The print quality is good, heavy weight, glossy paper. A pleasant surprise was the number of interesting color photographs, taken in vineyards and wineries around the world. These help immensely to illustrate the concepts.Finally, to clarify just how much depth there is, here is a paragraph describing cold soak processes:"Pre-ferment maceration, otherwise known as a 'cold soak', can be used to extract more aromas from the skins, This is identical to the so-called 'skin-contact' process as used in the production of aromatic white wine (sse p. 104). During this period the must has to be cooled to somewhere between 15 and 4 degrees C in order to prevent the fermentation starting, so that the cells containing the flavour and aroma compounds can be broken. This is particularly effective with Pinot Noir, where the aromas are very valuable, but the danger of the extraction of polyphenols is minimal because of the nature of the thin skins." [p. 90]That description took about 1/3 of a page. If you imagine that level of description multiplied across hundreds of carefully arranged and progressive topics, ending up with almost 300 pages total, you can imagine this book. I find it tremendously interesting and helpful, but again, it is an overview not a technical guide. Cheers!

I bought this book on the basis of the previous reviews and I agree with the praise in large part. Let

me start by saying I read Yair Margalit's comprehensive volume on wine chemistry shortly after the first edition was published simply because I couldn't find "Wine Chemistry for Dummies." It required the constant help of my friends Morrison, Boyd, and Lehninger. Having a modest collegiate background in chemistry helped but the whole experience was one of concept overload. Bird does an outstanding job of taking the major chemical concepts in winemaking and making them eminently understandable by parsing them out in digestible nuggets. I read this book primarily for the chemistry but was drawn into his discussions of wood and storage. The chapters on fining and filtration seemed to hold particular interest for the author, but I found them overlong. When he publishes his Fourth Edition there are a few things I'd like to see. First, the color pictures are nice but they don't provide the information that a well drawn diagram could provide. Although his narrative about the different types of crushers, destemmers, and presses his good, a diagram of each type would have been more helpful than a picture, especially to those of us that are not generally familiar with mechanical devices. Chapter 10 is entitled, "Sparkling and Fortified Processes," is a scant eleven pages. The chapter title alone, by including both, gives the reader a warning that these subjects will be given short shrift. Yes, there are other resources for this information, like Julian Jeff's \$700 book on Sherry. But Bird writes so well that it seems a shame that he devotes more time to filtration than he does to these complex processes. This volume fills in many gaps in the winemaking process that are present the standard wine references. It also made me recognize the gaps I still have in the production of Champaign, Port, and Sherry.

I believe this book really dissects many things about wine technology and presents the information in a very succinct manner. I learn something new from each chapter. As a trained winemaker, I appreciate those nuggets of information that David presents.

Simple, succinct & direct. No repetition of contents. It explains scientific principles but only requires very elementary science background such as understanding simple chemical formulae & equations; concepts of family, genus & species in the classification of living organisms; etc

too compressed. too narrow for the subject, like you could only make wine the way he says.

Just getting started with this and love David's writing. Great info and written more for people with a wine background than with a chemistry background.

Great reference to the science of wine, explained in plain English. Loaded with practical advice and insight that even a non-chemist can comprehend. The 300+ page book explores the many options and techniques available to the winemaker, along with challenges and standards which are all accompanied by explanations and examples, defined by a highly qualified and insightful author.

Winemaking is a science as well as an art, and this book is essential for anyone interested in making their own wine. It deals with the process (as well as other processes around the world) and faults to avoid, and ways to correct problems that might arise in the process. Well worth the cost because so much information is crammed into this volume!

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