

What's For English?
Wine in Easy English
Gerald Wright

#2: Have You Caught the Wine Bug?

Hello and welcome back to Wine in Easy English. I'm Gerald Wright. Today I'm going to talk about the Wine Bug.

Have you been bitten by the wine bug?

What do I mean by the wine bug – and how can you get bitten by it?

So you probably know that a bug is an insect. We can use the word bug to talk about almost any kind of insect – ants, beetles, flies or mosquitoes. And bugs bite.

Illnesses are also called bugs. Have you come down with a stomach problem? Food poisoning? I guess you have a stomach bug. Are you sick with the flu? Well, you've caught a flu bug.

Another way we use "bug" is to talk about having a serious interest in something. So, say you are crazy about photography – you have the photography bug. Some people might even call that a shutterbug. A shutterbug is a person with a great interest in photography. Now, since your interest in wine has been growing, well, maybe you have been bitten by the wine bug.

So, what's the wine bug? The wine bug is what happens when you learn there really is something special about this beverage. You used to think that wine was just a choice when you didn't want beer or whiskey. Your only decision was: "do you want Red or White?" But now you've learned that there really is something special in the taste, smell, and color of the wine. Those odors – what are they? Fruit? Strawberries or blueberries? Spices – maybe cloves. I know! I smell tobacco – no no no no no.. It's cedar. And maybe you're also beginning to notice the way that wine feels in your mouth: The taste of sweetness, saltiness and bitterness on your tongue. Have you noticed the way you can keep tasting the flavors of wine even after you've swallowed the liquid? Or how about the way the wine changes in the hours after you've opened the bottle? If you are noticing, it sounds like you've got the wine bug!

Have you started reading more books about wine? If so, now you're learning that the grapes and the wines are quite different if they come from France, Italy, Germany or Spain. You learn that each region of France has makes its own, unique wine. And those wines are unique and special because of the soil and climate in that area, they grapes they grow, the methods they use. And now that you've learned that, do you want to taste the wines of those regions and find out for yourself if you like them or not? Sounds like you've caught the wine bug!

Have you been reading wine blogs on the internet or magazines? Obviously there are hundreds or even thousands of wines that you can buy. And you've learned that the magazines and wine writers can help you with your choices. There are reviews and ratings and scores and points. So you read in a magazine that some Napa Valley Cabernet has scored a 92 from Robert Parker. And then you find it on a restaurant

wine list. And it only costs 4,000 yen (around 40 dollars)? Do you feel that you must order it and find out for yourself if Parker was right? Sounds like you have the wine bug!

And when you go to a supermarket or department store, do you head straight for the wine section? You can browse through the wines as if you were in a bookstore. Hmm... quite a few wines from California. Russian River... I wonder where that is... Wow – they've got a great selection of Bordeaux here – St. Emillion, Pauillac, Margaux and St. Estephe. Expensive – but interesting. And look at all these wines from Southern France – Languedoc, Minervois, Provence. Some great values here!

Does that sound like you when you're in a wine shop? I think you've got the wine bug!

Now that you have the wine bug, wine is no longer just wine. It's Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Riesling and Syrah; it's Burgundy, the Rhone Valley or Chianti Classico. You have the wine bug when you know there is something special – even unique – about wines from Napa Valley or Sonoma, Santa Barbara or Mendocino.

Now that you have the wine bug, what do you say when people ask: do you prefer white or red? Obviously it depends. It depends on the time of day. It depends on whether you are eating food or not. It depends on whether you are having fish or steak, Japanese sushi or Italian lasagna. And obviously it depends on which white or which red. If the white is Mondavi Woodbridge California Chardonnay (which costs around 1,000 yen) but the red is Mondavi Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (I guess it could be around 12,000 yen) I guess you would choose the Mondavi Reserve Cab, right? Or, maybe not.

Are you buying more and more wine? Are you buying some wine for every day drinking and other wines for special occasions? Have you bought wine online? Have you visited wineries and bought from the cellar door? Are you running out of space for your wine at home?

You definitely have caught the wine bug!

Well, now that we've found out that you, like me, have the wine bug, let me tell you more about this podcast.

This is a podcast for wine lovers. But not necessarily all wine lovers. This will be for wine lovers who are also learning English. Here you can let your interest in wine guide your way to better English.

So I'm going to try to keep it simple. I will keep the English fairly simple. And I'll try to keep the information simple, too. This podcast is really for people who are just starting to get enthusiastic about wine. I'll talk about grapes, about wine making, the history and traditions in different countries and regions. I will assume that you have been learning about wine in your own language, that you have some knowledge already, but that you feel you still have a lot to learn.

On the other hand, you may already have a lot of knowledge about wine – maybe even a lot more knowledge than I have – but you're struggling with your English. In that case, the knowledge you have will help you to understand what I'm saying, and your English skills and confidence might grow.

Maybe you work in a restaurant or wine shop and you've got to recommend wine to your guests and customers. Or maybe you want to read more English wine magazines and blogs and listen to more English podcasts about wine. But right now, the language is confusing or maybe they speak too fast. I think if you join in here, you will get the confidence to seek out more information anywhere on the web.

And that is what I'd like to do for you: to help you gain more confidence in your English.

So... I've got the wine bug, I suppose you've got the wine bug, too. Let's explore more of these topics together.

Once again, leave me a message.