



MAKING A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION

Questions & Compliments

Acknowledge each individual as soon as you can, especially those who have been waiting, just as you would in your home. Simple friendliness, a smile and eye contact go a long, long way. Many of your guests are from out of state and/or from other countries, and they may feel intimidated by the elegant ambiance of your winery, or unsure of what to expect in a tasting room. It's your job to put their minds at ease and to prepare them for an exceptional experience. Here are a handful of questions (and compliments) to break the ice with guests. Add your own in the blanks below:

1. What brings you to the Napa/Sonoma/Temecula valley?
2. You look like pros on the winery circuit. How can I help you today?
3. What other wineries have you visited?
4. Where are you from?
5. Where are you staying?
6. You all seem to be having a good time. How long will you be here in Carmel Valley?
7. What have you been doing for fun? What's the weather like back home in Fargo?
8. That is a great hat. Did you get that here in the Willamette Valley?
9. I am admiring your earrings . . . your glasses . . . that lovely bracelet . . .
10. Is your dog (or your baby . . .) always so good?

[TIP] Shannon Muracchioli of Clos du Val said, "I have always encouraged the team to consider the efforts that each visitor may have taken to walk through our doors. Did they take their previous vacation time, save for months, arrange care for their children and their pets, all to get to this place? We can ensure that each welcome is what it should be."

Your Favorite Questions & Compliments



My sister-in-law and her daughter wandered into one of the longest established, most renowned wineries in Sonoma, wearing shorts and running shoes. The two women stood behind a group at the tasting bar. Staff members looked up, apparently assumed that the casually dressed women were unimportant, and looked away. Feeling unwelcome, the two walked downtown into another tasting room where they were warmly welcomed, and they hung out for an hour or so before choosing several wines to take home.

Delve Deeper on Specific Preferences

Once you've broken the ice and gotten a dialogue going, you can begin digging deeper to learn about their wine preferences. Here are a handful of questions to test the waters with. Add your own in the blanks below:

1. Of all the wineries in the valley, how did you choose ours?
2. What do you like to drink at home?
3. What do you look for on a wine list?
4. Red, white, sparkling?
5. How often do you serve wine?
6. Do you collect wine?
7. Tell me where you usually buy wine?
8. Did you happen to see the Wine Spectator review of this one?
9. Tell me what you are most interested in today?
10. Shall we start with the whites or go right into the reds?
11. Would you like to see the cellar? the vineyard? the bottling line?
12. Do you want to learn more about winemaking?
13. Would you like to hear about what makes our winery different from the others you've been to?
14. Are you planning to take some wine home to add to your wine collection?

Your Favorite Wine Questions

The most successful salespeople are avid listeners. The more closely they listen, the sooner they get to know their customers, and the better they can personalize an approach that results in sales, or at the very least, in a memorable experience for their guests.