

Riesling Taste Profile

The International Riesling Foundation (IRF) has created a Riesling Taste Profile intended to help consumers know the relative dryness or sweetness of a particular bottle of Riesling.

The IRF invites all Riesling producers to use the taste profile according to the standards cited below; and requests that producers using the taste profile send an email to:

jimtrezise@nywgf.org

The IRF requires that the description of the wine on the label be consistent with the wording on the taste profile.

The IRF invites and encourages users of the taste profile to become a “Friend of the Foundation”, with more details available from jimtrezise@nywgf.org

To download high quality taste profile choices click here: [TASTE PROFILE SCALES](#)

Standards for using the International Riesling Foundation “Taste Profile”

1. The taste profile can print any color. All parts of taste profile must be the same color.

2. The taste profile can be positioned horizontally or vertically.

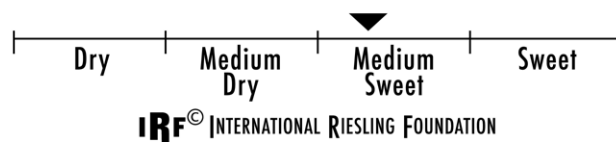
3. The taste profile can be reduced in length to a minimum of 45 mm (about 1.75 inches)

4. The label designer can choose from the four variations of the taste profile provided.

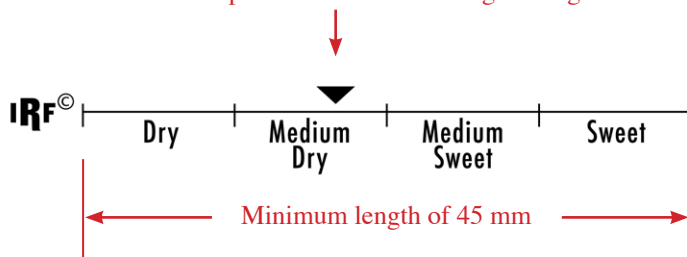
5. The taste profiles may not be altered graphically in any way except for size, color, and the position of the indicator arrow/triangle along the line to indicate dryness/sweetness.

The arrow/triangle must remain the same distance from the line and moved parallel to the line. The placement of arrow/triangle is a subjective decision made by the winemaker.

A technical guide for the placement of the arrow/triangle on the taste profile is in the following text. However, the ultimate decision is that of the winemaker.



Winemaker positions indicator triangle along the line



Final Proposal on Riesling Sugar Guidelines

The Scale

It is proposed that the International Riesling Foundation supports four sweetness categories for Riesling, as set forth below, using no numbers to designate the various categories. They will be referenced only by the terms we used for each of the four categories. Wineries are encouraged to use these categories on all their literature and labeling as well as verbally as a guide for wholesalers, retailers, restaurateurs and consumers.

In the following list, sugar and acid are listed in grams per liter.

The proposal is as follows:

Dry. All wines carrying this designation will have a sugar-to-acid ratio not exceeding 1.0. For example, a wine with 6.8 grams of sugar and 7.5 grams of acidity would be in the same category as a wine with 8.1 grams of sugar and 9.0 grams of acid. Similarly, a wine with 12 grams of sugar and 12 grams of acid would be classified as dry.

Notice also that wines that are totally or “near-totally” dry (such as 4 grams per liter) will have a much lower ratio. For instance, a wine with only 3 grams of sugar and a total acidity of 6 grams per liter will have a ratio of .5, and clearly the wine is dry.)

As to pH: we assume that the range of pHs for most Rieslings is between 2.9 and 3.4. So 3.1 is the “base” pH with which most wine makers will be working. So if the pH of wine is 3.1 or 3.2, it remains in this dry category. But if the pH is 3.3 or 3.4, it moves up to Medium Dry. (And if the pH is 3.5 or higher, the wine maker may wish to move the wine to Medium Sweet.)

Medium Dry. Here the ratio is 1.0 to 2.0 acid to sugar. Example: a wine with 7.5 grams of acid could have a maximum sugar level of 15.0 grams. And if the pH is above 3.3, it moves to Medium Sweet, and if the pH is as low as 2.9 or lower, the wine moves to Dry.

Medium Sweet. The ratio here is 2.1 to 4.0 acid to sugar. Example: a wine with 7.5 grams of acid could have a maximum sugar level of 30 grams. And again, the same pH factor applies as a level two wine: if the pH rises to 3.3, you move up to Dessert, and if the pH drops to 2.9 you move to Medium Dry. And if the pH is 2.8 or below (highly unlikely), the wine could be called Dry.

Sweet. Ratio above 4.1, but using the pH adjustment, a sweeter wine with a ratio of, say, 4.4 might actually be moved to Medium Sweet if the pH is significantly lower.

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It is vital that all IRF members adhere to the same terminology so when we speak to Riesling consumers about what is a dry wine and what is a medium dry wine, we are all speaking the same language.

This guideline should assist restaurants in that servers can verbally tell patrons what style of wine they will be getting. The more it is used, the more the terminology will be understood.

It is highly recommended that this guideline be used in conjunction with the IRF's approved graphic interpretation, called The Taste Profile, that could be used on back labels, case cards, shelf-talkers, and so forth. For this proposal to have the greatest impact, the terms we offer above for the four levels of sweetness remain unchanged.

This guideline is a technical discussion for use mainly by wine makers and winery owners, who now will understand that all IRF members agree on what constitutes the approximate perceived sweetness level of Rieslings with which we will be dealing. Some of this material may be more technical than would be appropriate to publicize to consumers, but this explanation will be posted on the IRF web site for those wine “geeks” who are interested in knowing what strategy was employed in determining our four sweetness levels.

The IRF understands and respects the fact that similar systems remain in place in Germany, Canada, and elsewhere, but believes firmly that this guide is ultimately simpler and benefits Riesling (and Riesling sales) in making it more understandable to newcomers.

Other proposals have been made to the IRF; although they may be valid, they detract from the uniformity of use of this proposal that will benefit all IRF members.

The categories proposed here is an amalgam of the thinking of all members of the IRF board, which believes this to be much better than the simple “dry” and “not dry” categories that anecdotally are in use today.

Two issues that have not been discussed here: alcohol level and how it relates to sweetness, and the form of sugar (glucose, fructose, etc.) in how we perceive the sweetness. IRF is aware of such issues and will continue to discuss whether they should be included in future discussions regarding this chart.

The above chart was conceived after suggestions from Derek Wilbur of White Springs Winery in New York and modified after discussions with other members of the IRF board. By modifying the ratio between acid and sugar (as measured in grams per liter) with pH as a factor, we now have guidelines that are not hard-and-fast rules, but give wine makers a justification for the use of appropriate terms to affix to their wines.

In deciding in which sweetness category a wine belonged, wine makers should use the ratios proposed unless extraneous situations arise.

The idea is to assign to each wine a ratio between the Titratable Acidity (TA) of the wine in grams per liter with the Residual Sugar (RS), also in grams per liter.

IRF members should remember that this guideline is completely voluntary and that no panel will monitor the use of the terms above. In unusual circumstances (for instance, where a wine is a bit aberrational), wine makers may wish to solicit the opinions of others to make an appropriate decision on which term to use on a particular wine.

This is highly recommended and ultimately will benefit the IRF, its members, and how The Scale is perceived.

~ Dan Berger