

Shmanners 351: Whiskey and Wine Connoisseurs

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[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to Shmanners!

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions! Hello, my dear. Hello, my dove!

Teresa: [through laughter] Hello, dear.

Travis: Ahh. Too in my head about it now! That was like our third take, trying to get it. I'm in my head now. It's on the sticker. Come on, self! Hi, everybody.

Teresa: You're still so endearing, so it's fine.

Travis: Thank you. I love that. Thank you very much. Uh, we're back. I don't know. We didn't go anywhere.

Teresa: We never left.

Travis: It's just every week there's another one that comes out. And it is week 2 of the MaxFunDrive, so if you haven't yet, this is the last episode you'll hear us talk about it in 2023. Uh, so please consider going to Maximumfun.org/join, becoming a supporter, supporting Shmanners and all the other amazing shows there.

It allows us to make this show, to pay Alex, to pay Rachel, um, to do all the stuff we have to do for this, our job. So if you love Shmanners and you

would like to become a supporter, Maximumfun.org/join. This is also part three of our sommelier series.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: And if I remember correctly, it's beer and whiskey? Whiskey and...

Teresa: Whiskey and wine. We've come full circle.

Travis: We didn't do wine already? We did wine!

Teresa: No, we did. But that was kind of like the introduction, right? We're coming full circle is what we're doing.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So if you've been listening for a—

Travis: So now whiskey for my men, wine for my horses, which can't be good.

Teresa: [laughs] No. If you've been listening for a while, you probably heard that we already did a couple episodes on beer. But if you haven't, please go back and listen to those. You can search lagers or ales and find both of those. They are very extensive and very fun.

Travis: Yes. So now we're doing...

Teresa: Now we are doing wine and whiskey, so that you can look extra cool at your next sampling.

Travis: Or not. I mean, I don't know. Maybe it's cool to know nothing. I don't know where we're at these days. Sometimes it's cool to know about stuff. Sometimes it's not cool to know about stuff, and I never know where we're at.

Teresa: In general it's okay not to know about stuff, as long as your mind is open to new experiences. I think that's what it is.

Travis: That's beautiful, babe. Babe? That was beautiful.

Teresa: Hey, thanks. Thanks.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay. Um, so let's do whiskeys first.

Travis: Whiskey, then wine.

Teresa: Whiskey, then wine.

Travis: I don't think that's the right order...

Teresa: Never—whiskey then wine, always divine? No?

Travis: Always fine.

Teresa: Always fine.

Travis: No, I don't think that's actually true, no.

Teresa: That's not it. [laughs] It's always a little bit of whiskey and a lot of water.

Travis: Beer then whiskey, feelin' frisky.

Teresa: Oh yeah?

Travis: Is that it? No. No, no, no.

Teresa: Beer before liquor, never sicker.

Travis: Liquor before beer, never fear. Is that it?

Teresa: In the clear, I thought?

Travis: In the clear?

Teresa: I don't know.

Travis: Drink clear beer.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Like a Smirnoff Ice or a Zima.

Teresa: [laughs] Gross.

Travis: Do they still make Zima?

Teresa: I don't think that they do. I mean, everybody's into Mike's Hard now, right? They make a ton of stuff.

Travis: wait is everybody into Mike's Hard now?

Teresa: You know what I mean.

Travis: Oh, you mean like seltzers?

Teresa: Yeah, seltzers.

Travis: Yeah, everybody is into seltzers. Seltzers is—oh my god, babe, you're right!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Seltzer's clear beer! Oh boy. Okay. It all comes full circle.

Teresa: 'Cause it's a malt beverage.

Travis: But just like Zima was.

Teresa: Zima was a malt beverage?

Travis: It's gotta be.

Teresa: I thought it was like a wine cooler.

Travis: [sighs] I gotta look now.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: Okay, you start talking about whiskey.

Teresa: Alright. So, bourbon and whiskey tastings have been rising in popularity since 2010.

Travis: Not Zika, which is what I started to look up. That's a different thing.

Teresa: Uh, not to say that they didn't exist before that, but it became a kind of, like, you know, a hash tag or whatever. [laughs]

Travis: M'kay. She did it with her fingers, everybody.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: No, it was malt beverage! Yeah, Zima was a malt beverage.

Teresa: All the cool people started doing it. So here are some tips if you find yourself at a distillery and want to feel extra fancy. Tips from the bourbon experts on the Whiskey Rebellion Trail.

As always, it is awesome if you know that you are going on one of these tastings to do a little bit of research. Watch a documentary, find out what you're in for. And, you know, that will be a really great way to have kind of some place for your instinct to lead you, right? Um, so here are a couple of facts.

Whiskey was originally a medicinal beverage.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: People used it as an internal anesthetic and antibiotic.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I mean, because you drink enough of it, it'll take you right out.

Travis: I mean, sure.

Teresa: That's it, right? You can't feel pain if you're passed out.

Travis: And, I mean, it would probably... it would probably kill some germs?

Teresa: Well—

Travis: I mean, it's not really that high in alcohol content.

Teresa: So, Sydnee has done a couple of episodes where this has come up. Uh, Sydnee, if you don't know, Justin, Travis's brother, and our sister-in-law Sydnee do a medical podcast called Sawbones, a medical history podcast.

And this came up, actually. The latest one that I recall was in a... medical questions show where if you got food poisoning, if you could potentially, like, kind of clear out the bug by drinking, right?

And the answer is no.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: Because of the way that digestion works, the way that food poisoning works, um, you would pretty much have to kill whatever bacteria was in the food first with some sort of spirit, um, and then eat it.

Travis: I see.

Teresa: So that doesn't work. You can't just eat the thing and once you feel bad start drinking whiskey. It doesn't work that way.

Travis: Yeah, no, no. Yeah. Usually start feeling bad, and then start drinking whiskey, is never a good combination.

Teresa: [laughs] Yeah. Then you just feel terrible and you're drunk.

Travis: Yeah. And then usually you feel terrible when you're hungover.

Teresa: Oh, yeah. Yeah, that's extra bad.

Travis: Are you going to go into the requirements for something to be called bourbon?

Teresa: I will, later.

Travis: Okay, great.

Teresa: Yes, definitely. The distilling methods we have today didn't really originate until the beginning of the 12th century where they were relegated mostly to, like, apothecaries and monasteries in Ireland and Scotland, so once they immigrants from those places come to the US, they brought their whiskey traditions along with them. And if you would like to learn a little bit more about this history, the Whiskey Rebellion Trail also recommends that you brush up on the impact of prohibition era, the industrial revolution, and also they have a great amount of information on women's impact on whiskey.

Travis: Indeed.

Teresa: Um, like wine—and we've talked about it's important to know your regions, right? So the primary places that whiskey come from is Ireland, Scotland, Canada, the United States, and Japan.

Travis: Hmm, yeah.

Teresa: Has a lively whiskey industry as well. Um, and so, you know, wherever you are, it's a great idea to kind of learn a little bit about the different qualities of those regions.

Travis: And even within that, I mean, there's different kinds of American whiskey, obviously.

Teresa: Of course there is.

Travis: But I would say if we're talking about scotch, the region that it comes from in Scotland has a huge impact.

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: Like, there's a huge difference between, like, Islay and Highlands and all that stuff, of is it going to be peaty? Is it—you know, all that stuff.

Teresa: And because, exactly like you said, whiskey—

Travis: I like a Speyside myself.

Teresa: [laughs] Whiskey has to have the grain mash, right? Which is usually composed of malted barley, rye, corn, or wheat. And then it also needs to have water, right? After distillation. Water is added to achieve the aspired alcohol percentage by volume. And then what you are talking about is the flavor additives, right? And peat—

Travis: Oh, sure. For sco—yeah, yeah.

Teresa: Peat is definitely one of the flavor additives for scotch.

Travis: Yeah, when you get that smoky? That's peat, baby.

Teresa: Yep. So botanicals, spices, flavorings, colors, all of this can be added to achieve a distinctive character or appearance in color.

Travis: I mean, one of the number one things is when you finish distilling any kind of whiskey, it's clear. It is clear, and then it is aged in, um, charred barrels, and that—from soaking into the wood and the char, right? That's where it gets that really lovely brown amber color. But whiskey straight out the gate? Clear.

Teresa: And also you can add to the color and flavor, depending upon what the barrels have been used before.

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: To do.

Travis: Yeah, so there's an interesting thing, an interesting fact. Here in the US—so if you're talking about bourbon, right? The qualifications to be called bourbon. So, bourbon has to be at least 51% corn.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: It can be no more than 160 proof, which is 80% alcohol by volume. No more than that. That's still pretty high.

Teresa: That's a lot.

Travis: Like, 200 is the most you can go. Uh, I love, by the way, the proof is, like, it's just double the percentage wise, and it just seems arbitrary at this point to be like, we're calling it 160 proof. Well, and I why don't we just stick with 80%? I said what I said.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And then bourbon must not be introduced into the barrel at higher than 125%—er, 125 proof. So it's distilled to 160 proof, put in the barrel—so usually by adding water, bringing it down to 125, and then it has to be aged a minimum of two years. Then it can be called straight bourbon. And if it is aged for a period less than four years, it must be labeled with the duration of the aging. If an age is stated on the label, it must be the age of the youngest whiskey in the bottle. So if it's blended, right? You need the youngest—

Teresa: Right, that's true for scotch as well.

Travis: And only whiskey produced in the United States can be called bourbon.

So here's the thing about the barrels, though, that I feel really intere—first of all, also, anyone who tells you it has to be, like, from, like, Bourbon County or whatever, it's—no. That's not true.

Teresa: I mean... originally, yes.

Travis: Originally, but not now.

Teresa: Not now, technically, no. It does not have to be.

Travis: It's more about the process than the location. It's not like champagne. It's different from that.

Teresa: Some would argue with you. Alex would argue. But... [laughs]

Travis: What, that it's different from champagne or that it has to be from Bourbon?

Teresa: No, that it's the same as champagne, where it has to be from Kentucky.

Travis: It doesn't have to be from Kentucky, though.

Teresa: I know!

Travis: Because Tennessee, like—

Teresa: I know.

Travis: Okay. Anywho.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I'm saying that it is not an argument that you want to get into with the distiller.

Teresa: That's not the official reasoning.

Travis: Yes. But the charred barrel thing that I found very interesting is here in the US, there is a law on the books, I think to produce—to protect coopers, who are barrel makers. But the idea if you can only use the barrels, like, once.

Teresa: Yeah, because it changes the way that the whiskey tastes, obviously. And—

Travis: I mean, sure. But scotch distilleries use barrels until the alcohol has soaked all the way through the staves, right? And so what you get is you get a lot of whiskey barrels, bourbon barrels are then exported to, like, Italy, um, any winemakers or scotch makers to then continue to use the barrels there.

Teresa: Right, and the scotch makers go both ways, actually. You can get—you can put your scotch in, like, sherry barrels, for example, and that gives it a distinct flavor as well.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So one of the other things that you should do if you are going to embark on a whiskey connoisseur adventure is you need—

Travis: Is designated driver.

Teresa: —a designated driver. [laughs quietly] But also get a whiskey glass.

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: So, the best glass is a one that is small and kind of bulbous, right? With a stem. It has a rounded bottom with a slightly more narrow opening at the top, which—

Travis: Just like me. [laughs quietly]

Teresa: [laughs] Which creates the ideal condition for swirling the beverage, and then the stem allows you to hold the glass without your hand, your body temperature—

Travis: We have a couple of those from tastings we've done.

Teresa: —uh, impacting the temperature. Um, in Scotland they call 'em a wee dram.

Travis: Sure. Or maybe just dram.

Teresa: Dram.

Travis: I think a wee dram is, like, a fun way of saying like, "Uh, just a wee dram," but I think dram is just what they call it.

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, so, like wine, you are to smell the whiskey before you sip it. But after—so you pour the whiskey in the little whiskey glass, the dram. You swirl it, and then wait a second, because if you swirl it right on your nose, you'll just get alcohol, right? You have to wait for that to kind of dissipate before you can smell it.

Travis: Another thing you can do that we learned about when we were doing scotch tastings in Scotland is dip your pinky in—clean. A clean pinky. And then kind of rub it on the back of your hand, and that helps the alcohol evaporate and leave behind a lot of, like, the smells and notes, and you can smell it better that way.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Uh, then after that if you smell too much alcohol, if it gives you that kind of sting, right? You can add a couple drops of water to your own glass, and so that will open it up enough. It kind of moves the oils away, if you know what I mean. It breaks the surface tension in a way.

Travis: Yeah, you know, like those things where you got the, um... pepper on the water and you put a little soap and then it goes "Pew!"

Teresa: Yeah, kind of like that. And that should make it so that you can actually smell anything other than the alcohol. Which is fun. We like the smell.

Travis: Of alcohol?

Teresa: No, of whiskey.

Travis: Oh. I mean, I like both.

Teresa: Um, so then finding a good bottle of whiskey, like wine, is highly subjective, okay? It doesn't have to have been, it doesn't have to be hundreds of years old, because whiskey stops aging once it is put in the bottle, right?

Travis: Yes. Once it's out the barrel, it ain't gonna be more whiskey than it was.

Teresa: Right. It doesn't change after that. Because the glass that the bottle that it's in doesn't allow any of the water to evaporate, right? I suppose that if you kept an open bottle of whiskey it might change over time, but I also don't know how that would work with, like, sanitation. Would it? It's probably high enough alcohol that it wouldn't, like, mold, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But again, it doesn't—there's not enough evaporation from your bottle once it's out of the barrel. Um, and so, like, the time that it puts in to the bottle, the time that it stays in the barrel into the bottle isn't gonna change. So you can always find really great whiskeys that are pretty young, right? You've got, like, two year, three year, four year, and then—

Travis: 12, 15.

Teresa: 12, 15, and then the blends, right? Which a blend could have, you know, like a 24-year-old whiskey that goes into the whiskey that's only labeled for four, right? Because it has to be the youngest in the bottle. The youngest—what do they call that? Um...

Travis: The youngest...

Teresa: Pour? I don't know what they call it. There's a word for it.

Travis: Hind, heart?

Teresa: Oh no. That's from the distilling process.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So don't get too hung up on the age of the liquor and, you know, the only thing is when you're tasting multiple whiskeys, because they do get darker and heavier, right? You go from lightest to darkest, which is the youngest to oldest.

Travis: Yes. So, also if you are new to the whiskey world, know that there is a big flavor difference between rye and bourbon. Big difference.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Um, I don't mind rye. It's not my thing. It's like the difference between, like, white bread and wheat bread. You know what I mean? Like, it's—it's like, yeah, it's both bread. But it's different versions of it, you know what I mean?

Teresa: Maybe it's the difference between white bread and rye bread, which is another kind of bread. [laughs]

Travis: Sure, sure. Okay, let's say sourdough and rye bread.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay.

Travis: Let's class 'em both up if we're gonna do that.

Teresa: Yeah, let's class 'em up. So, here are some adjectives that you will find are often used to describe the tastes of whiskey. We've got creamy, oaky, herbal...

Travis: Smoky. I bet smoky is in there.

Teresa: Definitely smoky. Peaty, like we said. Floral, peppery, and, I mean, there's also vanilla is a very normal thing to taste in a whiskey.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, you might also hear someone describe a spirit as austere, which means straightforward flavor, right? Where it's kind of just like one or two notes. And then rich, where it has more of a—let's say a chord of notes, a highly stacked chord.

Travis: And then, like, middle class, where it's kind of in the middle.

Teresa: [laughs] Not really.

Travis: No? Okay.

Teresa: Not really. We've got just austere and rich.

Travis: Sure. You know... speaking of—no, I don't know.

Teresa: No, no, no. [laughs]

Travis: But, Maximumfun.org/join. Speaking of rich, if you're kind of an Uncle Pennybags type and you're wanting to support the arts... how about that?

Teresa: Insert segue here.

Travis: Yeah. Um, so we have been—Shmanners has been a part of Max Fun since its inception. And we joined—let's see. My Brother, My Brother, and Me joined Max Fun I want to say episode, like, 32? And we're now on, like, 650-something. So we've been a part of Max Fun for a long time now.

Teresa: It was 2016. We started when I was pregnant with—

Travis: Shmanners started, yes.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Shmanners did. We started My Brother, My Brother, and Me I think shortly before 2011, we joined Max Fun.

Teresa: I think so.

Travis: So we've been with Max Fun—I think this is our 12th MaxFunDrive. And I was talking about this the other day. You've probably—if you've listened to Shmanners before, you've noticed that we do, from time to time, have advertisers. So part of our finances do come from advertisers. But in the last three years, podcast advertising has, uh, for lack of a better term, dried up quite a bit.

Teresa: I think that they were really zealous at the beginning.

Travis: Well, there was a lot of money being thrown at podcasts, which was great.

Teresa: I loved it.

Travis: But now, as the—you know, there's a recession going on and things have tightened up, one of the first areas that advertisers have cut is podcast advertising. But I was thinking about it and I was talking about it the other day, and it occurred to me that, like, when an advertiser buys a spot on a podcast, they're looking for a return on investment that's like, I'm spending money in the hopes that I will make more money.

Uh, but I think the thing that really always makes you feel a lot of gratitude during MaxFunDrive is the return on investment that Max Fun supporters expect is they just like the joy that they get from supporting the things that they like, of knowing that, like, I don't expect to get money back from it. Like, they're not trying to make money from supporting Shmanners. They just like Shmanners, and they're choosing to support it. And I think that that's really, really wonderful.

It makes me feel really grateful that, you know—there's a lot of podcast networks out there, but I don't know another one that is so directly audience supported. And it just means so much to me that year after year, people decide, you know what? These things matter to me, and I like these shows,

and I like these creators, and I want to make sure that they can keep creating.

And, like, we wouldn't be here if it wasn't for, you know, Max Fun supporters. And now, not only are we able to make it our full time jobs, uh, but we've been able to bring in people like Alex as our researcher and Rachel as the editor and all the people that work with the McElroys to be able to make all the different things that we do, and that is directly because of the support you've shown us every year.

So when you go to Maximumfun.org/join, you will choose a support level that works for you, starting as low as just \$5 a month. You will then choose which shows you listen to, and a portion of your support goes to Max Fun, so that they can continue to support us, but the majority of it gets split between the shows that you listen to. So if you pick four shows, then the majority of your support is split four ways for those four shows.

Teresa: And we love Max Fun so much at this point that we are also supporters, and we spread that love around to the shows that we love to listen to as well.

Travis: Indeed. And so you are very, very directly supporting the shows you care about. So, um, if you enjoy listening to Shmanners, or any of the other McElroy shows, or any of the other Max Fun shows, consider going to Maximumfun.org/join. If you're already a supporter, maybe this is the year you consider upgrading your support level, or even just boosting. If you're not ready to move up to the next support level, just giving a couple dollars more a month, you can do that by boosting.

So, please consider it. Maximumfun.org/join.

Now let's talk about wine.

Teresa: Once again we come around to wine.

Travis: This—it feels like such a big topic, babe.

Teresa: It really is. The world of wine is ever-expanding, [through laughter] it seems.

Travis: You know, that's why I always love when you see a bottle of wine and it just says, like, "Red." I'm like, "Hey, thanks."

Teresa: "Hey, awesome."

Travis: "Hey, thanks for not making me confused."

Teresa: I love—

Travis: And then you see a bottle that says, like, "Gewürztraminer," and you're like, "Aww, man." [wheezes]

Teresa: Well, I really love the adage—

Travis: Gewürztraminer has too many letters in it. Can everybody agree?

Teresa: Tell me how you really feel about the German language.

Travis: I like Gewürztraminer as a wine. It's lightly carbonated, very sweet, I enjoy it. There's too many letters!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: There's the extra dots in there and everything! What are they doing?

Teresa: I told Bebe about gesundheit the other day and she said "That is a funny word." And I said "German is a great language. They have lots of great words."

Travis: If you are a writer who's getting paid by the letter, you should go work in German. That's all I'm saying.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. Um, so I was gonna say that I really love the adage that if you like the label of wine, you should try it, because you might like the wine that's inside.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Yeah, I like that.

Travis: Judge a book by its cover. Great, babe. Great advice, babe.

Teresa: Do it. This is a great quote from Carol Meredith, who is a grape geneticist.

Travis: Whoa!

Teresa: And a professor emeritus at UC Davis. She told the documentary crew of SOMM: Into the Bottle.

"I think people who are new to wine feel somehow that they should know all the stuff about wine before they can enjoy wine, before they can talk about wine, and that is really a shame."

Travis: Yeah, no. Man, just started talking about it.

Teresa: It's supposed to be great, right? And if you don't like it, you don't have to finish it. That's what I say.

So here are a couple of tips for you to get the most—

Travis: For me?

Teresa: For everyone.

Travis: Oh!

Teresa: To get the most enjoyment out of the wine tasting process.

Travis: Chug it!

Teresa: And I really wish that I had read this before we did our [laughs] our blind—

Travis: Our live stream? We didn't do a good job?

Teresa: We did an okay job. We did an alright job.

Travis: I think we nailed it.

Teresa: But one tip in particular has to do with temperature.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: And I was very excited to learn this, because we do try to keep our whites chilled and our reds at room temperature, except red wines need to be in the 60's. If it's sitting on your counter and your house is at 72 degrees, put it in the fridge for 15 minutes before you drink it so it will taste better. Flip side for whites. If they're sitting in your fridge at 38 degrees, take 'em out 15 minutes before you serve them, because the 50s is where they will show their full flavor.

Travis: Or, better yet, keep your house at 50 degrees.

Teresa: What about for red wines?

Travis: All. The. Time.

Teresa: I mean—

Travis: And you wrap those in little blankets.

Teresa: [laughs] I tend to run warm, so we... I... like to keep the temperature between, like, 67 and 68.

Travis: Meanwhile, me and the children, like little matchstick waifs, "[exaggerated British accent] Please, mother!"

Teresa: You can always—

Travis: "Mother, turn it up to 71, please!"

Teresa: You can always put more clothes on. That's why they make housecoats.

Travis: Uh, up to a point. Up to a point. 'Cause after a while, you start to look like Violet Beauregard from Willy Wonka and you're just, like, rollin' around like a big blueberry.

Teresa: [laughs] I would love to see one of our children roll around like a big blueberry.

Travis: I know! I bet they would love that too, frankly.

Teresa: [laughs] Alright. So maybe invest in a small wine fridge, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: I know people who have wine fridges.

Travis: Here's what I'll say. I think as we have already touched on, if you—this is from somebody who when I get into a hobby or something, right? I want every accessory that's there, right? Long before I've learned all the stuff, right? I'm like, "Oh, there's... accessories, you say? Bring them on in."

I would say I am 39 years old. I have drank a lot of wine in my life. I don't own a wine fridge. So I think if you're saying—hey, if you want to take it to next level...

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Wine fridge away. You want to get started? You don't need a wine fridge.

Teresa: Maybe you don't need a wine fridge, but you do need some glassware.

Travis: That is true. Don't just drink it out of, like, old jelly jars.

Teresa: [through laughter] Old Jelly jars.

Travis: I mean, then again, I say that. That's very West Virginian of me. I love that.

Teresa: Or coffee mugs, as the college kids are wont to do.

Travis: Okay. I'm just saying, listen, mason jars are really good for a lot of things. You can seal it up, take the wine with you.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's one of my biggest problems with wine glasses: portability.

Teresa: [laughs] For example, champagne flutes are designed especially to preserve the sparkling quality of the wine, as well as guide aromas and flavors evenly distributing throughout the glass.

Travis: Do you like the flutes better than the cups, the bowls?

Teresa: Absolutely I do. The bowls are beautiful.

Travis: So beautiful. Very Gatsby, the bowls.

Teresa: Exactly, and I love to see, like, a garnish on those bowls, like a great big, like, dried orange slice or something. I love that. Or like a sprig of... I don't know, rosemary or thyme or whatever, right? It looks lovely.

Travis: But way easier to spill.

Teresa: So easy to spill. And the bubbles go away really fast.

Travis: But if you're gonna stack it up into a pyramid and pull from the top? You gotta do the bowls.

Teresa: Gotta do the bowls. On the other side of the spectrum, dessert wine glasses typically have a larger bowl to better augment the complex aromas and the higher alcohol content, right? We've talked about that before.

Travis: Can you tell me the difference between a stemmed glass and a— just like a one you hold in your hands? Like, the difference between how you hold white wine and red wine, basically.

Teresa: Well, so if you are relying on your body temperature to augment your wine, one of those just bowl glasses without the stem is what you want to use, right? Because that is gonna take a lot of your body temperature into the glass. Whereas if you want to keep whatever you're drinking very chilled—

Travis: Put some ice cubes in it.

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, c—you—I don't—

Travis: If you want to. Listen.

Teresa: If you want to. Um, then you want to hold down to the bottom of the stem, really as far as you're comfortable. I've even seen people who kind of, like, set the bottom of the glass in their flat palm, right? And then you kind of curl your fingers up around the foot of the glass. I wouldn't recommend that. That seems like a recipe for disaster. But really as far down as you're comfortable, to keep your body temperature away from the wine, right? So if you're ordering wine in a restaurant...

Travis: Get the second cheapest. Not the cheapest cheapest. The second cheapest.

Teresa: That is your little life hack, isn't it?

Travis: Listen, if it was up to me—listen, if it's the big fancy night out, that's not a rule that applies. But I—there are certain restrictions I have to put in place for myself, because I have very little what I believe most grown-ups call impulse control.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: So instead of going like, "Look at this fancy name. Ooh, and it's expensive! It must be good."

The thing that I have to put on myself is like, "Okay. [wheezes] You are allowed to get... the second cheapest. You don't have to get the cheapest. You can get the second cheapest."

And that's how I avoid spending more money than I have and going into debtors' prison.

Teresa: [laughs] So your server, or if your restaurant has a sommelier, they might say things like soft versus heavy, light versus full bodied, delicate versus rich, or sweet versus earthy. But if you tell someone who knows about wine, "I had this one wine that I really enjoyed that tastes like butter and green apples," they should be able to find something for you that you like. And, you know, if they can't, maybe they'll find something similar enough that you'll enjoy as well.

Travis: I would also say, when you are doing—it's a little bit of, like, a read the situation kind of thing, right? Where if you're looking and the wine list is, like, three pages, long, right? Then yeah. If you go somewhere where they have, like, six wines listed and there's, like, maybe one red wine, white one, spark—kind of deal? Don't—they may not be as well versed in the thing, right? It's like, I don't know, man. But we have a huge beer list. Like, our on-tap list is gigantic. It's like, okay, that's probably where they're specialized. You know what I mean?

Teresa: Exactly. Um, so again, it doesn't hurt to know the difference between, like, old world and new world wines, right? So an example of old world would be, like, you know, France, Spain, and Italy, right? Those are some big ones. And then New World would be California, Washington, New Zealand, places like that, right?

And here's the thing, right? Again, wine doesn't have to be super old or super expensive to be enjoyable. So don't let that hold you back in trying to find something that you enjoy. There's wines at every level that people like. Um, on that note... a couple of years ago—not a couple. More than a couple. Several, several years, maybe a decade or so ago, a wine publication called

Wine Spectator created a 100 point scale to rate wines. And it is confusing, because 95-100 is called a great wine. 90-94 is outstanding. 85-89 is very good. 80-84 is good. 75-79 is mediocre. Like, it—it—[sighs]

Travis: I have also, 'cause we—Justin and Griffin and I have talked about celebrity wines. I've never seen a wine since I've become aware of that out of 100—I don't think I've ever seen anything below 85.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And frankly, guys, outstanding is above great. Like, let—outstanding is above—should be above great!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Right?

Teresa: Where do you think "classic" should fall in there?

Travis: Classic shouldn't be—classic is not a statement of quality—

Teresa: [simultaneously] I know, right?

Travis: —it's a statement of age.

Teresa: Most sommeliers do not like this system.

Travis: It should go "Awesome, totally tubular, radical... "

Teresa: [laughs] But it's just another tool if you find something, you know, that's graded less than 75, I guess... if you only paid \$5 for it... I don't know! Um, and here's another thing. You can play with your pairings, right? Okay, we've all heard that darker meats like red meats should go with a red wine, while lighter meats go with a white wine. But do you remember the master sommelier that we heard from two episodes ago?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: He says that he loves pairing a red wine with a McDonald's cheeseburger.

Travis: Well, there you go! That's red meat!

Teresa: I know, but, like, it's not like a steak. It's not filet mignon. You don't need, like—

Travis: What pairs with chicken nuggets? Probably a white.

Teresa: Maybe?

Travis: Right?

Teresa: Or maybe a very fruity red.

Travis: Oh, see, I would think a really, like, crisp green apple white would go great with chicken nuggets, because I'm imagining eating green apple slices with chicken nuggets and I'm like, I know that that rules.

Teresa: One common saying is "What grows together goes together." So if you are eating French food, drink French wine. Right?

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: But with all of it, don't take any of it too seriously. So whether it's whiskey, or tea, or coffee, or beer, or wine, or sake, or even marijuana, right? Those things are made to bring us joy, and there's a lot of people who are interested in being connoisseurs, a lot of resources that you can go and look up and figure out what to pair it with, what it goes best with, all that kind of stuff. So I hope that you are, you know, dedicated to a delightful experience.

Travis: And, you know, I think that it—I was about to say "Goes without saying," but the opposite of that. It does not go without saying. It is important to state that when we talk about any of this stuff, what we are talking about is you figuring out what you like. These are not tools to judge what other people like.

Teresa: That's not how we do here.

Travis: No. And I think that that is a thing that often gives people who, say, like wine or like beer or like—things like the term snob, right? Where it's just like, man, I love knowing the kind of wines I like. I love knowing what kind of whiskey I like. Someone, like, saying that they—"Well, I just am kind of a Jack Daniels guy." I'm not gonna be like "Oh, gross. Get out." "Cool, man! Great!" Clink! "Cheers." Right?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Like, so that idea of—

Teresa: Yes, cheers, my love.

Travis: When we talk about these things, this is ways for you to be comfortable figuring out what kind of these things you enjoy, and not so you can say "It's gross that you like that."

That's not okay. That is not an okay way to go.

Speaking of knowing the things you like, and gross, I'm gonna ask you for money.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, please consider.

Teresa: Now that's a segue.

Travis: Yeah, thank you.

Teresa: That was great.

Travis: One last time, this MaxFunDrive, want to ask you to consider going to Maximumfun.org/join. Uh, see if there is a support level that works for you. Support the shows that you love. This isn't, like, a, you know, "Ohh, I'd hate to have to stop doing the show!" It's not that. Right? That's not what

we're doing. It's more saying we want to be able to grow this show, continue making it a priority, continue to do, like, cost-of-living increases for Alex and Rachel and everybody who works with us, and that is a priority for us, right? Because they work hard and they're worth it.

Teresa: And continue to compensate people for their time if we have guests or other things.

Travis: All that stuff. And that is made possible through the support that you guys give us each year in the MaxFunDrive. So please consider going to Maximumfun.org/join and either becoming a member, upgrading your membership, or just boosting it a couple bucks a month if that is what you're feeling. We appreciate it no matter what. And we also just appreciate you listening.

Thank you for being here. Thank you for sharing our 40 minutes with us. We really appreciate it. Thank you to Alex, our researcher, without whom we would not be able to make this show. Thank you to Rachel, our editor, without whom we would not be able to make this show, and thank you to you for listening. Without your support, we wouldn't be here.

Um, what else, Teresa?

Teresa: Thank you to Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today. And again, thank you to you for all of your topic submissions and your idioms and your ideas. Please continue to send those to shmannerscast@gmail.com, and say hi to Alex, 'cause she reads every one.

Travis: That's gonna do it for us, so thank you, and, uh, join us again next week!

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: You've been listening to Shmanners...

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners! Get it!

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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