



WINE MARKETER'S COMPANION

SAMPLE COPY

Second Edition

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PREFACE

This report has two main sections. Section one (part one) is an analysis of flavor/aroma attributes used in written wine reviews by three influential wine reviewers. The second section is a wine writer's companion and consists of four parts (parts two through five).

Section One – Wine Review Analysis

We analyzed over 30,000 wine reviews by *Wine Spectator* and *The Wine Advocate*. This section consists of an analysis of James Laube, Harvey Steiman and Robert Parker's reviews of seven main varietals. James Laube reviews California wines for *Wine Spectator*, Harvey Steiman focuses on Washington, Oregon, Australia and New Zealand for *Wine Spectator*. Robert Parker is with *The Wine Advocate* and we have chosen to analyze his reviews of wines from the United States, Australia and New Zealand. The purpose of the analysis is to identify individual flavor/aroma preferences and their associated average scores.

Section Two – Wine Writer's Companion

In parts 2 through 5 we have compiled a Wine Writer's Companion which looks at other components of the wine reviews or tasting notes. It is meant as a writing guide and a reference guide for anyone needing quick inspiration or help finding the right words.

Section One: Wine Review Analysis

Part One: Varietal specific flavor and aroma attributes by wine reviewer

The presence of certain attributes in both *Wine Spectator* and *The Wine Advocate* tasting notes correlate to one wine scoring higher than another. Knowing which attributes yield the most influence when making or marketing a wine could provide a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

In an attempt to determine which attributes the reviewers have chosen as the most frequent and influential, we decided to take a look at New World wine reviews from *Wine Spectator's* James Laube and Harvey Steiman and *The Wine Advocate's* Robert Parker.

For James Laube, we analyzed all of his reviews written between March 1986 and March 2003. Laube is the main reviewer of California wines for *Wine Spectator*. We analyzed Harvey Steiman's reviews written between July 1987 and March 2003. Steiman focuses on wines from Australia, New Zealand, Oregon and Washington for *Wine Spectator*. For Robert Parker, we analyzed reviews of wines from the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Our analysis covers all of Parker's reviews for these regions written from 1992 through 2002.

This report focuses on the following varietals: Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Syrah/Shiraz and Zinfandel. Using specialized software, we analyzed the sentence structure and words used in over 30,000 wine reviews. The following example of a Chardonnay review helps to explain how we conducted this analysis.

A rich and ripe fruit-bomb. Packed with pear, fig, melon, and mineral flavors. Long on the finish.

In the above review, the nouns "pear", "fig", "melon", and "mineral" all modify the word "flavor". These descriptor nouns provide a large part of the identity or character of the reviewed wine. And that's what we're interested in. The most commonly occurring descriptors have been identified by varietal and then listed by frequency in 90 to 100 point reviews and in all wine reviews. Average score for each descriptor is also listed by varietal and reviewer.

Descriptor nouns, such as "pear," usually refer to flavors, but in some cases they may refer to both flavors and aromas, or even just aromas. To avoid misidentifying descriptor nouns as flavors, when they might also be identified with aromas, or vice versa, we'll refer to them collectively as *attributes*. Since this analysis is limited to word and phrase occurrences, we have made no distinction as to whether the listed attributes modify either flavors or aromas.

It should be noted that both James Laube and Harvey Steiman put more emphasis on taste rather than smell in their reviews. Laube mentions variants of the word "flavor" in 66 percent of all reviews, but only mentions variants of the word "aroma" in 3 percent. Harvey Steiman mentions variants of the word "flavor" in 84 percent of his reviews and variants of "aroma" in 12 percent. However, in 79 percent of Steiman's usage of the word "aromas" it is part of the phrase "aromas and flavors"; outside of that phrase, variants of "aroma" occur in only 3 percent of Steiman's reviews. So clearly, while we will be referring to descriptor nouns as attributes, for Laube and Steiman, they mostly refer to flavors.

On the other hand, Robert Parker's reviews slightly favor the mention of smells over tastes. Fifty-four percent of his reviews contain variants of smell-related words like "aroma," "nose," "bouquet" and "scent." Thirty-eight percent of his reviews contain variants of the words "flavor" and "taste."

How we analyzed the flavors and aromas

The methodology described in this section was used to analyze all the varietals except for Sauvignon Blanc for which we had to make minor adjustments. Both Laube and Parker had a low incidence of Sauvignon Blanc reviews that scored between 90 and 100 points. For that reason, we expanded the analysis for the range of Sauvignon Blanc reviews from 87 to 100 points for Parker and 85 to 100 points for Laube.

In his 1999 book, *Wine Spectator's California Wine*, James Laube states, "When well made, Chardonnay offers bold, ripe, rich and intense fruit flavors of apple, fig, melon, pear, peach, pineapple, lemon and grapefruit, along with spice, honey, butter, butterscotch and hazelnut flavors." This is evidenced in an analysis of his Chardonnay reviews in the *Wine Spectator*. But just how are these attributes weighted in their contribution to a wine's score? And are there other Chardonnay attributes that are just as or more important to a wine's score?

First, we need to establish, based on word occurrences in Laube's reviews, what the most common Chardonnay attributes are. Table 1 lists the most frequent attributes in Laube's Chardonnay reviews, with Laube's "well made Chardonnay" attributes in bold.

Table 1. Laube's most common Chardonnay flavors and aromas

LAUBE'S MOST COMMON CHARDONNAY ATTRIBUTES	
ATTRIBUTE	FREQUENCY
PEAR	73%
SPICE, SPICY	40%
FIG, FIGGY	32%
CITRUS, CITRUSY	29%
APPLE, APPLEY	25%
OAK	21%
MELON	17%
CREAM, CREAMY	12%
TOASTY/TOASTED OAK	12%
HAZELNUT	11%
APRICOT	10%
SMOKE, SMOKEY	8%
ANISE	7%

Pear is the most dominant attribute listed with a 73 percent frequency. *Spice*, the second most frequent attribute occurs in 40 percent of the reviews. And *fig*, which rounds out the top three, occurs in 32 percent of Laube's Chardonnay reviews. Several attributes not listed in Laube's "well-made Chardonnay" definition, like *citrus*, *apricot* and *nectarine*, also make the list.

Based on Laube's reviews, you're more likely to get a Chardonnay with *pear* attributes than one with *fig* attributes. Or, in other words, *pear* is a more common attribute of Chardonnay than *fig* is.

However, the frequency of the individual attributes either grows or diminishes when we break down the reviews into the smaller, but more desirable category of 90-100 point reviews. For example, *pear* increases from 73 percent in all reviews to 86 percent in the 90-100 point reviews. A much larger distinction is in the attribute *fig*, which nearly doubles from 32 percent to 60 percent. *Melon*, which is ranked seventh in all reviews with a 17 percent frequency, ranks fourth in the 90-100 point category at 30 percent. While most of the occurrences of attributes increase in the 90-100 point category, *apple* actually lost ground.

Table 2. Laube's most common Chardonnay flavors and aromas in 90-100 point reviews

LAUBE'S MOST COMMON CHARDONNAY ATTRIBUTES IN 90 TO 100 POINT REVIEWS		
ATTRIBUTE	FREQUENCY IN	
	90-100 POINT REVIEWS	ALL REVIEWS
<i>PEAR</i>	86%	73%
<i>FIG, FIGGY</i>	60%	32%
<i>SPICE, SPICY</i>	46%	40%
<i>MELON</i>	30%	17%
<i>CITRUS, CITRUSY</i>	30%	29%
<i>CREAM, CREAMY</i>	22%	12%
<i>OAK</i>	22%	21%
<i>APPLE, APPLEY</i>	21%	25%
<i>HAZELNUT</i>	20%	11%
<i>APRICOT</i>	19%	10%
<i>TOASTY/TOASTED OAK</i>	18%	12%
<i>SMOKE, SMOKEY</i>	16%	8%
<i>ANISE</i>	15%	7%

From table 2, we know that 86 percent of Laube's Chardonnay reviews in the 90-100 point category have a *pear* attribute and that 30 percent have a *melon* attribute. Obviously this must mean *pear* is almost three times more important than *melon*, right? Not exactly.

One way to ascertain the relative importance of an attribute is to determine the average score of the reviews containing that attribute. Having determined the average score we can then view it in relation to the attribute's 90-100 point frequency. As you can see from table 3, the attribute *pear* has an 86 percent frequency and its average score is 87.9 points. The average score for all of Laube's Chardonnay reviews is 87.1 points.

Table 3. Average score of Laube's most common flavors and aromas in 90-100 point reviews

LAUBE'S MOST COMMON CHARDONNAY ATTRIBUTES IN 90 TO 100 POINT REVIEWS		
ATTRIBUTE	AVG. SCORE	FREQUENCY IN 90-100 POINT REVIEWS
<i>PEAR</i>	87.9	86%
<i>FIG, FIGGY</i>	89.9	60%
<i>SPICE, SPICY</i>	87.9	46%
<i>MELON</i>	89.2	30%
<i>CITRUS, CITRUSY</i>	87.7	30%
<i>CREAM, CREAMY</i>	89.2	22%
<i>OAK</i>	87.5	22%
<i>APPLE, APPLEY</i>	87.0	21%
<i>HAZELNUT</i>	89.9	20%
<i>APRICOT</i>	89.9	19%
<i>TOASTY/TOASTED OAK</i>	88.6	18%
<i>SMOKE, SMOKEY</i>	89.7	16%
<i>ANISE</i>	90.4	15%

In contrast, the attribute anise has only a 15 percent frequency in the 90-100 point range, but its average score is 90.4 points. Thus, based on its average score, we can assume that if a wine contains (or is perceived as having) the attribute anise, it has a better chance of receiving a higher than average Chardonnay score by Laube.

The attributes with the highest average scores are *anise*, 90.4 points; *hazelnut*, 89.9 points; *fig* and *apricot*, both 89.9 points; and *melon*, 89.2 points. Of the highest scoring attributes, *fig* seems to be the most influential; it is in more than half of the all of the 90-100 point Chardonnay reviews.

James Laube

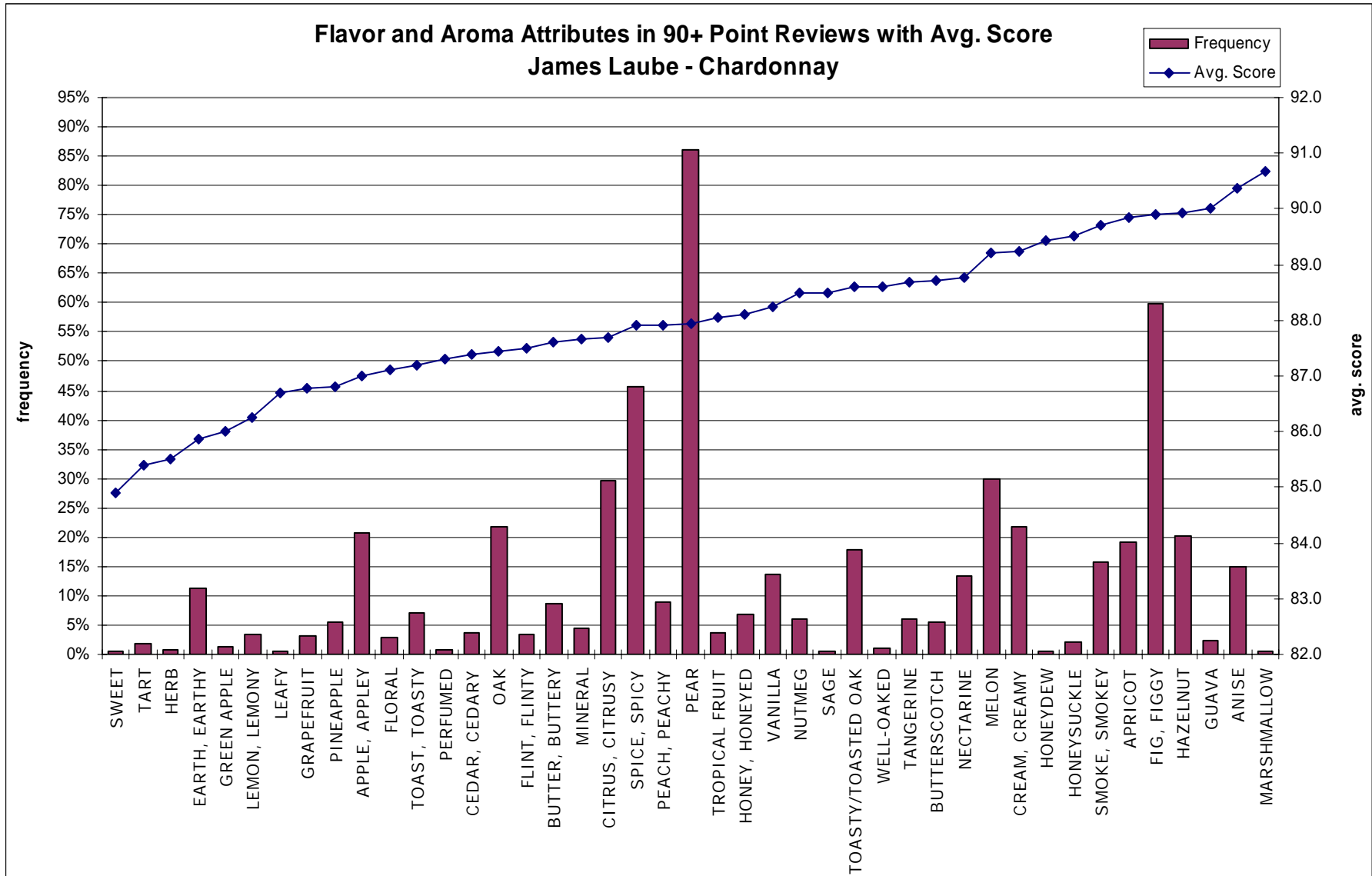
James Laube – Chardonnay

Table 4. James Laube Chardonnay Flavor/Aroma Attributes

Flavor and Aroma Attributes - Highest Number in 90+ Point Reviews - James Laube - Chardonnay					
WORD	Score			Frequency	
	Average	Min.	Max.	90-100 PNT Reviews	All Reviews
PEAR	87.9	70	98	86%	73%
FIG, FIGGY	89.9	78	98	60%	32%
SPICE, SPICY	87.9	70	97	46%	40%
MELON	89.2	73	98	30%	17%
CITRUS, CITRUSY	87.7	70	97	30%	29%
CREAM, CREAMY	89.2	80	96	22%	12%
OAK	87.5	71	97	22%	21%
APPLE, APPLEY	87.0	72	95	21%	25%
HAZELNUT	89.9	82	97	20%	11%
APRICOT	89.9	75	98	19%	10%
TOASTY/TOASTED OAK	88.6	71	97	18%	12%
SMOKE, SMOKEY	89.7	74	97	16%	8%
ANISE	90.4	83	96	15%	7%
VANILLA	88.3	80	97	14%	11%
NECTARINE	88.8	80	96	13%	9%
EARTH, EARTHY	85.9	60	97	11%	14%
PEACH, PEACHY	87.9	77	96	9%	8%
BUTTER, BUTTERY	87.6	65	97	9%	7%
TOAST, TOASTY	87.2	65	97	7%	7%
HONEY, HONEYED	88.1	74	96	7%	5%
NUTMEG	88.5	76	96	6%	5%
TANGERINE	88.7	83	97	6%	5%
PINEAPPLE	86.8	70	96	6%	6%
BUTTERSCOTCH	88.7	75	97	6%	4%
MINERAL	87.7	75	97	5%	5%
CEDAR, CEDARY	87.4	79	94	4%	6%
TROPICAL FRUIT	88.1	70	95	4%	2%
LEMON, LEMONY	86.3	70	94	3%	7%
FLINT, FLINTY	87.5	75	94	3%	5%
GRAPEFRUIT	86.8	74	93	3%	4%
FLORAL	87.1	78	93	3%	4%
GUAVA	90.0	82	96	2%	1%
HONEYSUCKLE	89.5	85	95	2%	1%
TART	85.4	70	95	2%	4%
GREEN APPLE	86.0	79	93	1%	2%
WELL-OAKED	88.6	70	94	1%	1%
HERB	85.5	72	93	1%	3%
PERFUMED	87.3	70	97	1%	1%
LEAFY	86.7	80	92	1%	1%
SWEET	84.9	75	93	1%	2%
SAGE	88.5	82	92	1%	1%
MARSHMALLOW	90.7	88	94	1%	0%
HONEYDEW	89.4	86	94	1%	0%

Average Score - James Laube - Chardonnay: 87.1 Points

Figure 1. Most frequently occurring flavor and aroma attributes – James Laube – Chardonnay



CITRUS

Almond-scented	Fragrant	Mouthwatering
Apricot-scented	Fresh	Palate-cleansing
Bitter	Grassy	Peppery
Bright	Green	Resiny
Buttered	Herbaceous	Silky
Buttery	Honey-dusted	Snappy
Candied	Honeyed	Spicy
Caramelized	Honey-scented	Steely
Caramel-tinged	Juicy	Stony
Creamy	Lavishly-oaked	Succulent
Crisp	Leaf-scented	Sweet
Crisp-tasting	Leafy	Tangy
Dried	Lemongrass	Tart
Earthy	Lemony	Tropical
Exotic	Limelike	Unctuously-textured
Firm	Low-key	Vanilla
Flavorful	Melony	Velvety-textured
Flinty	Mineral-scented	Zesty
Floral	Mouthpuckering	

COFFEE

Bitter	Exotic	Pruny
Black	Filtered	Raisiny
Brewed	Fresh	Roast
Burnt	Full-bodied	Roasted
Cedary	Ground	Smoky
Chewy	Leathery	Smooth
Chocolate	Meaty	Spicy
Chocolaty	Milled	Strong-brewed
Creamed	Mocha	Sweet
Creamy	Mocha-scented	Toasted
Crisp	Mocha-tinged	Vanilla
Dark	Nutmeg-scented	
Earthy	Oaky	
Espresso	Plush	

Specific types of coffee beans, roasts and drinks

Arabica	coffee beans grown at higher altitudes, elegant and complex flavors
Robusta	more single dimensional flavors
American roast	regular roast, medium-roasted beans
French roast	heavy roast
Italian roast	heavy roast
European roast	2/3 heavy roast, 1/3 regular roast
Viennese roast	1/3 heavy roast, 2/3 regular roast
Turkish coffee	very strong coffee sometimes flavored with cardamom, cinnamon or nutmeg

ACIDITY

Accentuated	High-wire	Rigid
Adequate	Integrating	Scintillating
Almost-searing	Jaw-stunning	Scorching
Beautifully-integrated	Lively	Screaming
Bracing	Live-wire	Screeching
Bright	Low	Smacking
Bristling	Medium	Sneaky
Bursting	Medium-firm	Spiky
Buttressing	Minimal	Spine-tingling
Citrus-spiked	Minimum	Still-vibrant
Cleansing	Moderate	Stirring
Concealed	Mouth-cleaning	Strident
Crackling	Mouth-cleansing	Structure-giving
Crisp	Mouth-searing	Submerged
Cutting	Mouth-tingling	Supercrisp
Decent	Natural-tasting	Superlively
Delineating	Nicely-integrated	Super-refreshing
Discreet	Non-abrasive	Tame
Dosed	Non-intrusive	Teeth-rattling
Driving	Normal	Tingling
Enamel-dissolving	Not-too-crisp	Tingly
Enlivening	Palate-cleansing	Tongue-tingling
Eye-opening	Perky	Tuned
Firm	Proper	Underlying
Flavor-enhancing	Racy	Vibrant
Focus-providing	Raised	Well-dosed
Fresh	Rapierlike	Well-integrated
Hidden	Razor-edged	Whopping
High	Refreshing	Zinging
High-tension	Relaxed	
High-voltage	Reverberating	

HARMONIOUS/BALANCED

Accordant	Equalized	Peaceful
Adapted	Even	Proper
Agreeable	Harmonic	Proportional
Agreeing	Harmonizing	Proportionate
Allied	In Concert	Quiescent
Amicable	In Harmony	Serene
At Peace	In Order	Simpatico
Calm	In Step	Smooth
Centrolineal	In Tune	Sonorous
Consistent	Level	Soothing
Cooperative	Mellow	Symmetrical
Coordinated	Neutral	Tranquil

LUXURIOUS

Affluent	Impressive	Spiffy
Ambrosial	Indulgent	Splashy
Aristocratic	Lavish	Splendid
August	Like Silk	Splendiferous
Chichi	Luscious	Stately
Classic	Lush	Suave
Classy	Lushly-Styled	Sumptuous
Dazzling	Lush-Tasting	Superb
Deluxe	Luxuriant	Superlative
Detailed	Luxury	Superopulent
Dignified	Luxury-Priced	Super-refined
Distinctive	Made Well	Swank
Divine	Magnificent	Swanky
Dressy	Majestic	Sybaritic
Elaborate	Nervy	Upholstered
Elegant	Opulent	Valuable
Expensive	Ornamental	Velvet
Exquisite	Ornamented	Velvety
Extravagant	Ornate	Verdant
Exuberant	Ostentatious	Voluptuous
Fancy	Ostentatiously-Styled	Wealthy
Festooned	Palatial	Well-Appointed
Flamboyant	Plush	Well-Bred
Frou-Frou	Plushy	Well-Endowed
Garnished	Polished	Well-Healed
Glamorous	Posh	Well-Off
Grandiose	Priceless	Well-To-Do
Grand	Princely	
Grandiose	Prosperous	
Hedonistic	Regal	
Highly-Wrought	Replete	
High-Priced	Resplendent	
Illustrious	Rich	
Imperial	Ritzy	
Imposing	Sophisticated	