**WineWords**English for wine professionals and wine lovers  
Mike Mazey et al  
MKM Language School  
€55, $60, £40



When Mike Mazey, Adelaide oenology graduate and Australian winemaker, headed out to the Czech Republic in 2004 to do a stint in Moravia, no one spoke English. His crucial and constant companion was therefore interpreter Petr Očenášek. On the back of that trip, Mazey made the somewhat startling decision to pack up his winemaking life in Australia and move to the Czech Republic to start teaching English. Which he has done for the last 10 years. But he missed the wine industry...

Pavlína Megová owns a prestigious language school (MKM) in the Czech Republic. She's mad about food and wine. She and Mazey started a language course on 'Wine English'. The WineWords project was her idea.

Vladimír Moškvan was headmaster of 'one of the most innovative primary schools in the Czech Republic'. His current job is tourism director for a high-profile winery, part of which includes training staff on international exposure. Petr Očenášek moved on from interpreting to become a very successful wine broker of local and international wines.

This eclectic team, together with eight MWs and 10 producers, has produced an extraordinary book. When the title WineWordsfirst appeared in the list of books I was to review, I narrowly assumed that it was to do with the language of wine as used by wine writers or critics. The book arrived, large and heavy, and I was a bit bewildered when I started to page through it. 'Mouth Puckering Pronunciation' was the first subtitle that caught my eye, followed by 'Vocabulary Vats', and then, 'A Hint of Grammar'. Huh?

Then, as I should have done from the start, I read the introduction. This is a book, written entirely in English, aimed at people for whom English is not a first language. It's for oenologists, viticulturists, vintners, importers, brokers, sommeliers, those in wine marketing, those in enotourism, restaurateurs, wine students and wine enthusiasts. It's for anyone who may need to speak or write in English as a part of their job, be it selling wine to international importers, or showing visitors round a vineyard. And it's for anyone who simply loves wine and would like to travel in different wine regions or make the most of the vast amount of wine information available in English. It doesn't teach about the wine industry. It doesn't teach 'wine'. It teaches you the vocabulary of wine and how to use it.

It's a clever concept. Each section focuses on a different segment of the wine industry. Chapter 1, for example, tackles the language of the vineyard; chapter 2, the language of the winery; chapter 6 looks at wine competitions and judging; 4 is marketing; 8 is 'Healthy, Wealthy & Wise' - health, collecting/storing, and qualifications. Nothing is left out.

The sections are divided into units, each one taking a different aspect of the main topic and examining it in more detail, breaking the knowledge down into bite-sized chunks. A 'Learn' flag indicates a particularly fundamental bit of information, often presented in the style of questions, to challenge the student to think further. A 'Read' flag indicates written text with key wine words in bold blue italic font. These key words are all found in the glossary with their explanations, but the meaning can also be gleaned from the context of the text within which they appear. For example, chapter 1 (viticulture), unit 2 is the growth stages of the vine. The text describes the vine from dormancy to flowering, veraison to leaf fall, with beautifully sketched illustrations, and words such as budbreak, fruit set, ripening, crop and viticulturalist have been highlighted.

The third flag that the student encounters within each unit is 'Watch'. This is a rich collection of over 120 videos, free to watch on YouTube, covering every possible subject from wine competitions to tight vs loose grain of oak (see [this fascinating interview](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXnGKLPC3P4) with François Frères). Fascinating in themselves simply for the subject matter and interview content, the authors have interviewed first- and second-language English speakers from 16 different countries in order to expose students to different accents. It's details like this that underline the pedigree of this book as a language tool.

Another thoughtful inclusion is a clear visual explanation of differences between British and American English (eg bunch v cluster). The only thing that worried me was where one particular example examined the words variety and varietal, and stated that varietal was the word used by Americans to mean variety. The book does go on to explain the actual difference between the two words, but the American v British usage implies that it's ok to use varietal when you mean variety. I'm afraid it isn't.

Other focal points within each section include: the 'hint of grammar' lesson, designed to deliver a bit of grammar lite that relates to the main topic, and also addresses common mistakes; the 'mouth puckering pronunciation' guide, which deals with accent issues that commonly crop up (eg the German W v the English V, and where wine, winery, one, and terroir are all pronounced with a double-U); 'vocabulary vats', which tackle specific but often confusing words; and the reviews, which set questions and tasks for the learner (answers at the back).

Different aspects are championed (and I assume sponsored) by producers and other wine-related companies, which brings a 'case study' relevance to the text book, but at the same time I feel that the authors have maintained laudable independence.

The book ends with the glossary as well as some very useful tools, such as the explanation of common phrasal verbs ('to round up', 'to drive home', 'to pair with'), spelling out words over the telephone ('A as in apple'), verbs for telephone conversations ('I'm trying to get in touch with Mr Smith'), the correct phraseology for email communication (at this point I'm tempted to pause and ask whether Mr Mazey would consider taking up a job in any one of or all British universities?), and etiquette for making/keeping appointments, tweeting and using other social media.

As I said from the start, it's a unique book occupying a unique sector of the wine-book market. But the potential, if this were to reach a widespread audience, is hugely exciting and could open doors for many. Now the only thing left for Mazey et al to do is write a WineWords book for English speakers to communicate with others in their own languages. I'd buy it.