

LifeStyle

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南腔北调

选对航班品美酒 *Airline Wine Service* Secrets of the Seasoned Traveler

经常乘坐国内、国际航班的乘客们，一定会对飞机上的酒水服务印象深刻，在你尽情享受喜爱的葡萄酒的同时，还可以从空姐的介绍中了解到更多的葡萄酒小知识。本期，我就和大家分享我在这方面的一些经验。

选择航空公司

基本上，你的付出和所得是成正比的，如果你购买的是打折机票，那么就不要再奢望能喝到真正顶级的葡萄酒。如果你认为酒水对你来说至关重要，那你最好选择一些知名的大航空公司，例如美国联合航空公司、美国航空公司、国泰航空公司、新加坡航空公司等等。

关注服务等级

通常意义上，机票越贵，所能享用的葡萄酒档次就越高，所以我的建议是，如果你是个比较喜欢饮酒且注重品质的人，那么在同等距离的前提下，尽量选择稍贵一些的机票。但需要注意的是，国内或是短途航班往往不会提供较高品质的葡萄酒，因此，我的原则就是：如果我的旅程是两个小时或以下，那么我不会支付更多的钱去坐

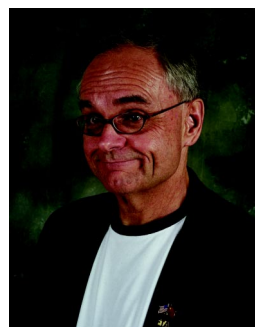
商务舱或头等舱；如果超过两个小时，我将会尽力去购买更贵的机票。

举例来说，如果你乘坐的是新加坡航空公司的航班，将有48位侍酒师为你服务，其中三位世界级的葡萄酒鉴赏大师尤为珍贵，领头的是Steven Spurrier，他们以超强的专业知识为你搭配最适合的葡萄酒，让你享受到最尊贵的服务。同样的，如果你搭乘的是联合航空公司的飞机，这里有着另一位葡萄酒专家Doug Frost带领专业团队，确保让你满意；如果你乘坐的是美国航空公司的航班，Ken Chase将会竭诚为您提供最好的酒水服务。

空姐的服务品质

事实上，无论航空公司的后勤工作做得多么出色，真正让你直接感受到服务品质的，只能是那些空中服务员。她们始终如一的微笑服务，确保你在饮酒时有一份绝佳的好心情，如果她还能有一定的葡萄酒知识，那当然就更好了。

伴随着越来越多的人开始喜欢葡萄酒，航班上的酒水服务也变得日趋重要，各大航空公司都在大力提高自己的葡萄酒服务水准，以保持行业竞争力。这意味着所有的乘务员都要接受更多更好的葡萄酒知识培训，也意味着无论是在经济舱还是头等舱，乘客们都会享受到更好的葡萄酒服务。



Fred Tibbitts Jr. is a global wine consultant based in New York and Bangkok. He assists some of the top hotel and restaurant chains in the U.S. and Asia Pacific developing their wine-by-the-glass programs, leading educational trips to wine producing countries and hosting VIP industry dinners at New York and across Asia.



Anyone who has traveled aboard domestic and international carriers knows that wine service varies by airline, class of service and in particular wine knowledge (or lack thereof) of flight attendants. Generalizations simply do not apply with respect to wine service on any given flight. Let me explain.

The Carriers

Essentially, as with all things mortal, you get what you pay for with respect to your choice of airlines; so if you fly a discount carrier, don't expect the world's foremost selection of wines. If drinking better is a priority for you, stick with a primary brand name carrier such as United Airlines, American Airlines, Cathay Pacific or Singapore Airlines, to name but a few.

Class of Service

Common sense dictates the better the class of service, the better the quality and selection of wine; so, once again, if the quality of your in-flight wine experience is worth a premium to you, upgrade with points, miles, coupons or simply buy a more expensive ticket. Domestic and short haul flights rarely have the quality and selection of the longer distance international flights, so my rule of thumb is if my flight is two hours or less flight, I may not want to pay the extra to go business or first; but over two hours, I'll do my very best to be upgraded or buy a more expensive ticket.

If you are flying Singapore Airlines, for example, which boasts 48 wine sommeliers in the air and three of the world's most accomplished wine authorities, headed by Steven Spurrier, to select the wines and with a very healthy budget to source very good quality, you know you're in good hands. Likewise, if you are on

United Airlines, Doug Frost, another industry wine star and his panel of experts ensure you will be pleased (See their August Featured Wine Menus). If you're flying American Airlines, Ken Chase (a.k.a. Delta, Canadian Airlines and Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines) is now selecting their wines and making arrangements to upgrade their premium service with larger, stemmed tulip-shaped globes in domestic first class and both business and first class international.

The Flight Attendants

The truth is that no matter how premium the airline or class of service, the quality of your wine experience has more to do with those who serve you. Even in economy, a highly motivated flight attendant with a cheerful personality can guarantee a very good wine experience, especially if she or he also has sufficient wine knowledge. Your choice in economy may only be the "Redwood Creek" Cabernet Sauvignon or Chardonnay; but if the attendant presents the small bottles (187ml each) as one would a full-size bottle for your dutiful inspection and comments very positively, for example, that the wines go well with the meals being served that day and they are very satisfying for most of the passengers who try them, you are having a fine wine experience.

As more frequent fliers are enjoying wine with their evening meals at home and entertaining clients and customers at restaurants with wines that meet or exceed the quality of the food served, in-flight wine service will increasingly be an important point of differentiation every airline will have to constantly improve to stay competitive. This means better and more frequent wine training for all flight attendants as well as investing additional resources in more sophisticated glassware and better quality wines from economy class to first class.

For years those of us responsible for training servers in restaurants and hotels have repeatedly emphasized to the servers that they are equally responsible for knowing the beverages as the foods on the menus, yet some servers still believe they only need understand the food, as anyone who flies regularly can all too easily attest. Over time all flight attendants will be expected to exceed new standards for basic wine knowledge and to learn the specifics of all wines on the new menus before leaving ground. And one more thing...soon even economy passengers will be able to enjoy first-class dining in the back of the plane with new software systems, such as "AM-1", which permit customers to select premium meals, beverages and services at a price online at the same time they are purchasing their airline tickets. Now that's the best of both worlds: Economy ticketing and First Class wine service. What could be better?

Red Fred, Over & Out.