

Tasting Alphabet

POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Bitter - Term indicating a taste sensation typical of extra virgin olive oil made from green or not fully ripe olives.

Fruity - Term indicating both the olfactory and the taste aromatic intensity of extra virgin olive oil: it can be light, medium or intense according to the degree to which sensations are perceived. The olive determines the fruity category, that is its variety (cultivar). Moreover other factors are important: the climate and the soil where the plant grows; harvesting and transportation times; extraction method and storage.

Pungent - Term indicating a pungent tactile sensation typical of extra virgin olive oil produced at the start of harvesting, mainly from green olives.

NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Vegetable water - Term describing an oil made from olives that has been in contact with vegetable waters for a long time.

Winey - Term describing an oil made from olives producing an olfactory-taste sensation reminding wine or vinegar. This defect is due to a fermentation process causing the formation of acetic acid, ethyl acetate and ethanol.

Cucumber - Sensation produced in olive oil by a too long watertight bottling, especially in cans.

Cooked - Term describing an oil from olives producing an olfactory sensation due to excessive and/or prolonged heating during processing, especially during the phase of malaxing, if it occurs in unsuitable thermal conditions (over 30 °C).

Hay - Term describing an oil from olives producing an olfactory-taste sensation reminding hay. This defect is due to dry or too ripe olives.

Mat - Term used for an olfactory sensation produced by oils from olives obtained by pressing with dirty filters because of the presence of fermented residues.

Coarse - Term describing the dense and pasty oral-tactile sensation produced by some oils from olives.

Metallic - Term used for an oil from olives producing an olfactory-taste sensation reminding metal. This defect is due to the prolonged contact with metallic surfaces during crushing, malaxing, extraction and storage.

Muddy - Term describing an olfactory-taste sensation typical of an oil from olives that has been in contact with decanting dregs in underground or overhead warehouses.

Musty - Term describing an olfactory-taste sensation typical of an oil from olives in which numerous fungi and yeasts have developed after a long storage in humid places.
Rancid - Term describing an olfactory-taste sensation typical of oils from olives subject to oxidative processes.
Fusty - Term describing an olfactory-taste sensation typical of oils from packed olives which have gone through a high degree of fermentation.
Pickle - Term describing an olfactory-taste sensation typical of an oil from olives which has been in prolonged contact with vegetable water.
Earthy - Term describing an olfactory-taste sensation typical of an oil obtained from olives picked with earth or mud and not washed.
Worm - Term describing an olfactory-taste sensation typical of an oil obtained from olives attacked by larvae of the olive fruit fly (<i>Bactrocera Oleae</i>).

DIRECT OR RETRO-NASAL OLFACTORY AROMATIC SENSATIONS

Unripe - Olfactory sensation reminding the typical smell of the fruits that have not reached physiological ripeness.
Citrus - Positive term indicating an olfactory sensation reminding citrus (lemon, orange, bergamot, mandarin, grapefruit).
Aromatic herbs - Positive term indicating an olfactory sensation reminding aromatic herbs (laurel, basil, marjoram, mint, field balm, myrtle, moss, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme, etc.).
Flowers - Positive term indicating an olfactory sensation reminding flowers (camomile, genista, wisteria, lavender, mimosa, rose, etc.) Also called flowery.
White fruit - Positive term indicating an olfactory sensation reminding white fruit of different ripeness (apricot, apple, pear, peach, etc.).
Exotic fruit - Positive term indicating an olfactory sensation reminding exotic fruit of different ripeness (pineapple, banana, passion fruit, mango, papaya, etc.).
Dried fruit - Positive term indicating an olfactory sensation reminding dried fruit of different ripeness (almond, walnut, hazelnut, pine nut, pistachio, etc.).
Ripe fruity - Term describing the olfactory sensation produced by extra virgin olive oil obtained from ripe olives.
Green fruity - Term describing the olfactory sensation typical of extra virgin olive oil obtained from unripe olives or olives at the start of the ripening process.
Red fruit - Positive term indicating an olfactory sensation reminding wild berries (strawberry, raspberry, blueberry, blackberry, currant, etc.).

Spices - Positive term indicating an olfactory sensation reminding spices (cinnamon, white pepper, black pepper, green pepper, vanilla, ginger, etc.).
Vegetal - Positive term indicating an olfactory sensation reminding the vegetal hint of fresh grass, hay, eucalyptus, fig leaf, olive leaf, tomato leaf, etc..
Vegetables - Positive term indicating an olfactory sensation reminding vegetables (asparagus, artichoke, thistle, chicory, broad beans, fennel, lettuce, pepper, unripe tomato, medium ripe tomato, ripe tomato, radicchio, radish, rocket, celery, etc.).

TASTE SENSATIONS

Bitter - Positive term indicating a taste sensation typical of extra virgin olive oil made from green or not fully ripe olives.
Sweet - Positive term indicating a taste sensation typical of extra virgin olive oil obtained from fully ripe olives.
Qualitative retro-olfactory sensation
Retro-olfactory persistency - Duration of residual retro-olfactory sensations, after expelling the olive oil sip from the oral cavity.
Tactile or kinaesthetic sensations
Fluidity - Kinaesthetic characteristics of the rheological state of oil, able to stimulate the mechanical receptors of the oral cavity during tasting.
Pungent - Positive term indicating a pungent tactile sensation typical of extra virgin olive oil produced at the start of harvesting, mainly from green olives.