



THE SOMMELIER'S SECRET OFFICIAL RULEBOOK

A game of wine, wit, and deduction!

OVERVIEW

The Sommelier's Secret is a strategy and deduction game for wine lovers of all levels.

Each team begins the game with a secret varietal. Over the course of play, teams move through the Vineyard, into the Cellar, and finally into the Tasting Room while gathering information, revealing clues, and attempting to correctly guess the wines held by other teams.

To win the game, a team must achieve both of the following:

- Advance through the board and reach the Tasting Room
- Eliminate all other teams by correctly guessing their secret wines

Reaching the Tasting Room alone does not win the game.

Guessing wines alone does not win the game.

Victory requires movement, deduction, and timing.

The game is designed to unfold in three phases:

- Early game (Vineyard): learning and movement
- Midgame (Cellar): protection and deduction
- Endgame (Tasting Room): deduction and elimination

Understanding this arc will help players make stronger decisions throughout the game.

COMPONENTS

The game includes the following components:

- Game board
- Varietal cards (by difficulty level)
- Trivia cards
- Wine Wisdom cards
- Somm's Favor cards
- One die
- Game pieces

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SETUP

1. CHOOSE A WINE LEVEL

Before the game begins, choose the **Varietal Deck** that best matches your group's wine knowledge.

The rules remain exactly the same at every level. **Only the wines change.**

Sipper

Designed for casual wine drinkers and players who are newer to wine.

The Sipper Deck features more familiar varietals, but don't expect a giveaway. You'll still need to collect clues, spot the Bluff, and use deduction to uncover your opponents' Secret Varietals.

Taster

Designed for players who know their way around a wine list.

The Taster Deck features less familiar varietals and provides a tougher deduction challenge. Even if you don't immediately recognize a wine, the clues are designed to help you narrow the possibilities and maybe teach you a new varietal along the way

Playing with Mixed Experience Levels

Not everyone at the table needs to play at the same Wine Level.

When players have different levels of wine knowledge, choose the Varietal Deck that creates the fairest challenge based on the **wine knowledge of the players trying to identify the Secret Varietal.**

This allows experienced wine drinkers and casual players to compete in the same game without changing any other rules.

When using both Wine Levels, keep the **Sipper** and **Taster** decks separate and draw each team's Secret Varietal from the appropriate deck.

Full Cellar

Want the biggest challenge?

Shuffle the **Sipper and Taster Varietal Decks together** to create the Full Cellar. All **52 varietals** are now in play.

With twice as many possibilities to consider, deduction becomes even more important, and even experienced wine drinkers will have to work for the answer.

A Note for New Players

You don't need to know every varietal to play. That's part of the fun.

Gather clues, decide which one might be the **Bluff**, eliminate wines that don't fit, and use your guesses wisely. You might start the game having never heard of a varietal and finish knowing exactly what makes it unique.

2. DRAW VARIETAL CARDS

After every team has selected its preferred difficulty level, the opposing team secretly draws one Varietal Card from the corresponding deck.

Each team receives **one hidden Varietal Card** for the entire game.

This card represents your team's secret wine identity.

Important Rules

- Keep your Varietal Card hidden at all times.
- Never reveal the name of your varietal to another team.
- Only your own team may view every clue on your card.
- Teams may privately discuss their own Varietal Card with one another but may never show it to another team.

Protecting your secret varietal is one of the keys to victory.

3. PREPARE THE DECKS

Shuffle each of the following decks separately and place them face down within easy reach of all players:

- Trivia Cards
- Wine Wisdom Cards
- Somm's Favor Cards

If any draw deck is exhausted during play, simply shuffle its discard pile to create a new draw deck.

4. PLACE TEAM MARKERS

Each team selects one game piece and places it on the **START** space in the Vineyard.

Determine the starting team using any fair method.

Play proceeds clockwise for the remainder of the game.

The game is now ready to begin.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Before the first roll, confirm the following:

- ✓ Every team has selected a difficulty level.
- ✓ Every team has received one secret Varietal Card.
- ✓ The Trivia, Wine Wisdom, and Somm's Favor decks have been shuffled.
- ✓ All game pieces have been placed on the START space.
- ✓ A starting team has been chosen.

Once these steps are complete, you're ready to begin your journey from the Vineyard to the Tasting Room.

THE VARIETAL CARD & CLUE SYSTEM

Every Varietal Card contains five clues about your secret varietal.

Each card contains:

- **Four Truths** displayed in **white text**.
- **One Bluff** displayed in **yellow text**.

Only the owning team knows which clue is the Bluff.

Throughout the game, various cards and board effects may instruct your team to reveal a clue.

Whenever instructed to reveal a clue:

- Choose **one unrevealed clue** from your Varietal Card.
- Read that clue aloud to every team.
- Leave the revealed clue visible for the remainder of the game.
- Each clue may only be revealed once.

Your team always chooses which clue to reveal.

Choosing whether to reveal a Truth or the Bluff is one of the game's most important strategic decisions.

Your varietal name always remains hidden until another team correctly identifies your wine.

HOW A TURN WORKS

Every turn follows the same simple sequence.

Unless a card specifically instructs otherwise, complete the following steps in order.

STEP 1: ROLL

Roll the custom die to determine how many spaces your team moves.

Note: If you roll an “SS” symbol, you’ve rolled a **Somm’s Choice!** Move **1–6 spaces** to land on any space of your choice within that range.

STEP 2: MOVE

Move your game piece forward the exact number of spaces rolled.

If your movement ends on a colored space or an icon space, immediately resolve that space before your turn ends.

STEP 3: RESOLVE THE SPACE

Resolve the effect of the space you landed on.

The color or icon of the space determines what happens next.

Follow the instructions for the space before continuing your turn.

Detailed explanations of every board space can be found in the following section.

STEP 4: END YOUR TURN

Your turn ends after resolving the space unless:

- You answered a Trivia question correctly and earned another roll.
- A card specifically instructs you to roll or move again.

Play then continues clockwise to the next team.

READING TRIVIA CARDS

Whenever a team lands on a Trivia Space, the team immediately to their left (the next team in clockwise order) draws the top Trivia Card and reads the question aloud.

Because both the question and answer appear on the same side of every Trivia Card, teams never read their own Trivia Cards.

After the answering team gives one final answer, the reading team confirms whether it is correct.

CORRECT ANSWERS

If your team answers correctly:

- If the Trivia Card displays a **Guess Token**, keep the card.
- If the Trivia Card does not display a **Guess Token**, discard it.
- Roll again immediately.
- Continue your turn unless the card instructs otherwise.

Only correctly answered Trivia Cards displaying a **Guess Token** are added to your team's collection for later use.

INCORRECT ANSWERS

If your team answers incorrectly:

- Discard the Trivia Card, regardless of whether it displays a Guess Token.
- Your turn immediately ends.

REMEMBER

Only correctly answered Trivia Cards displaying a **Guess Icon** are kept by your team. Correctly answered cards without a Guess Icon are discarded.

Once your team reaches the **Tasting Room**, you may discard a Trivia Card displaying a Guess Icon to make one guess against another team's Secret Varietal.

See **The Tasting Room** section for complete guessing rules.



Guess Token

Guess Icons may be used once your team reaches the **Tasting Room**. On your turn, discard the card to make one guess against an opposing team's Secret Varietal.

BOARD SPACES

As you journey through the Vineyard, every space you land on presents a new opportunity to learn, advance, or gain a strategic advantage.

The color of the space determines what happens next.

Resolve the effect of the space you land on before your turn ends unless instructed otherwise.

TRIVIA SPACES (*Burgundy*)

Trivia Spaces test your team's wine knowledge, with select Trivia Cards offering valuable **Guess Token** for correct answers.

When your team lands on a Trivia Space:

1. The team immediately to your left (the next team in clockwise order) draws the top Trivia Card.
2. They read the question aloud to your team.
3. Your team discusses the question and provides one final answer.
4. The reading team confirms whether the answer is correct.

Because both the question and answer appear on the same side of every Trivia Card, teams never read their own Trivia Cards.

Correct Answer

- If the Trivia Card displays a **Guess Token**, keep the card for later use.
- If the Trivia Card does **not** display a Guess Icon, discard it.
- Roll again immediately.
- Continue your turn unless instructed otherwise.

Incorrect Answer

- Discard the Trivia Card, regardless of whether it displays a Guess Token.
- Your turn immediately ends.

Correctly answered Trivia Cards displaying a **Guess Token** become valuable resources once your team reaches the Tasting Room, where each card may be used to make one guess against another team's Secret Varietal.

WINE WISDOM SPACES *(Beige)*

Wine Wisdom Spaces put your team's wine knowledge and instincts to the test with a game of Truth or Bluff.

When your team lands on a Wine Wisdom Space:

- The team immediately to your left (the next team in clockwise order) draws the top Wine Wisdom Card.
- They read the statement aloud **without revealing the answer**.
- Your team discusses the statement and gives one final answer: **TRUTH** or **BLUFF**.

Correct Answer

If your team calls the **TRUTH** or **BLUFF** correctly:

- Keep the Wine Wisdom Card for later use.
- Your turn ends unless instructed otherwise.

Incorrect Answer

If your team answers incorrectly:

- Discard the Wine Wisdom Card.
- Your turn ends.

Wine Wisdom Card Tokens

Every Wine Wisdom Card displays either a **Clue** or **Guess** token. Correctly answered cards may be used for the strategic ability shown on the card.

Clue

Clue Card may be used once your team reaches the **Tasting Room** or **instead of your turn at any point during the game**.

Discard the card to choose another team that is in your current **Zone** or **any Zone behind you**. That team must reveal one additional clue from their Secret Varietal Card.

You may **not** use a Clue Card against a team that is in a Zone ahead of you.

Remember, revealed clues can benefit every team, not just yours, so choose when and where to use your Clue Cards strategically.

Guess

A Guess Card may only be used **once your team reaches the Tasting Room**.

On your turn, discard one Guess Card to make one guess against another team's secret varietal.

See **The Tasting Room** section for complete rules on revealing clues and making varietal guesses.



Clue Token

Clue Icons may be used in place of your turn to reveal one clue from an opposing team's Secret Varietal Card. The opposing team must be in your **current Zone or a Zone behind you** and cannot be in a Zone ahead of you.



Guess Token

Guess Icons may be used once your team reaches the **Tasting Room**. On your turn, discard the card to make one guess against an opposing team's Secret Varietal.

SOMM'S FAVOR SPACES *(Blue)*

Somm's Favor Spaces reward your team with special abilities that can influence the game.

When your team lands on a Somm's Favor Space:

- Draw the top Somm's Favor Card.
- Read the card.
- Follow the instructions exactly as written.

Some Somm's Favor Cards take effect immediately.

Others may be saved and used later.

Always follow the instructions printed on the card.

If a card's instructions conflict with a general rule in this rulebook, the instructions printed on the card take precedence.

ICON SPACES *(Charcoal)*

Landing on a charcoal Icon Space activates the symbol shown on the board.

Each icon has its own unique effect.

Whenever your team lands on an Icon Space:

- Refer to the included **Icon Guide**.
- Locate the matching icon.
- Resolve its effect completely.

The Icon Guide is referenced below and is also included as a separate reference sheet with the game and explains every board icon in detail.

Once the icon's effect has been resolved, your turn ends unless instructed otherwise.



Grape Cluster - Choose a Card

Draw one card of your choice: Trivia, Wine Wisdom, or Somm's Favor.



Key - Reveal a Clue

Choose an eligible opposing team. That team reveals one unrevealed clue from its Varietal Card. They choose which clue to reveal, including their Bluff.



Question Mark - Make a Guess

Choose an eligible opposing team and guess their secret varietal. If correct, that team is eliminated. If incorrect, move back 6 spaces and your turn ends.



Candle - Reveal Your Clue

Your team reveals one unrevealed clue from its own Varietal Card. You choose which clue to reveal, including your Bluff.



Broken Bottle - Move Back 12 Spaces

Move Back 12 Spaces and your turn ends.

BOARD PROGRESSION

Your journey through **The Sommelier's Secret** takes place across three distinct sections of the board.

Each section represents a new phase of the game, introducing additional opportunities for deduction while gradually bringing teams closer to the final showdown in the Tasting Room.

Vineyard Section: Learn, collect resources, and begin gathering information.

Cellar Section: Gain protection, receive the one-time Cellar Bonus, and focus your deductions.

Tasting Room Section: Put everything you've learned to the test and eliminate the remaining teams to become the winner of The Sommelier's Secret.

VINEYARD

The Vineyard is where every team begins their journey.

During this stage of the game, teams focus on learning, collecting resources, and protecting their hidden varietal.

As you move through the Vineyard, you'll answer Trivia questions, collect Wine Wisdom Cards, draw Somm's Favor Cards, and begin gathering clues about your opponents' wines.

Guessing in the Vineyard

Teams located in the Vineyard may only make guesses against teams that are also in the Vineyard.

Teams may never guess a team that has already advanced into the Cellar.

CELLAR

Safe Zone

The Cellar marks the transition from the early game into the game's deduction phase.

Once a team enters the Cellar, they are protected from teams that are still in the Vineyard.

Teams remaining in the Vineyard may not guess teams that have already reached the Cellar.

First Team Bonus

The first team to reach the Cellar immediately receives a one-time bonus.

That team chooses one opposing team to reveal one clue from their hidden Varietal Card.

The chosen team selects which unrevealed clue they wish to reveal.

This bonus may only be awarded once per game.

TASTING ROOM

The Tasting Room is the final destination on the board.

Once your team reaches the Tasting Room:

- Your game piece remains in the Tasting Room for the remainder of the game.
- You no longer roll the die.
- You no longer move around the board.

Instead, your turns become focused entirely on gathering information and correctly identifying your opponents' hidden varietals.

Trivia Cards with a **Guess Token** and Wine Wisdom Cards collected throughout the game now become valuable resources that allow your team to make guesses or reveal clues.

GUESSING WINES

Correctly identifying another team's hidden varietal is the ultimate objective of **The Sommelier's Secret**.

Throughout the game, your team will gather information by revealing clues, answering Trivia questions, collecting Wine Wisdom Cards, and carefully observing your opponents. The more information you collect, the stronger your deductions become.

WHEN CAN YOU MAKE A GUESS?

Your team may make a guess only when:

- You land on a Guess Icon.

OR

- Your team has reached the **Tasting Room** and discards a Trivia Card or Wine Wisdom Card displaying a **Guess Token**.

If neither of these conditions has been met, your team may not guess another team's hidden varietal.

MAKING A GUESS

When your team is given the opportunity to guess:

1. Choose one eligible opposing team.
2. Clearly state the name of the varietal you believe they are protecting.
3. The opposing team immediately confirms whether your guess is correct.

Only one varietal may be guessed at a time.

CORRECT GUESSES

If your guess is correct:

- The opposing team immediately reveals their Varietal Card.
- That team is eliminated from the game.
- Their game piece is removed from the board.
- Discard the Trivia Card or Wine Wisdom Card used to make the guess.

Although eliminated teams no longer take turns or make guesses, they continue to assist the game by reading Trivia Cards whenever it is their responsibility to do so.

INCORRECT GUESSES

If your team makes an incorrect guess **outside the Tasting Room**:

- Move your game piece back six spaces.
- Your turn immediately ends.

If your team makes an incorrect guess **from the Tasting Room**:

- Discard the Trivia Card or Wine Wisdom Card used to make the guess.
- Your turn immediately ends.

No additional penalty is applied.

GUESSING FROM THE TASTING ROOM

Once your team reaches the Tasting Room, movement around the board ends.

Instead, your collected cards become opportunities to make deductions.

On your turn, you may choose one of the following:

- Discard one Trivia Cards with a **Guess Token** to make one guess.

OR

- Discard one Wine Wisdom Card with a **Guess Token** to make one guess.

Each exchange allows your team to make **one** guess against an eligible opposing team.

Complete Tasting Room turn structure and guessing restrictions are explained in the next section.

DEDUCTION WINS GAMES

The strongest teams rarely guess based on a single clue.

Successful deductions come from carefully combining revealed clues, information learned through Trivia and Wine Wisdom Cards, and observations made throughout the game.

The more information you gather before making your guess, the greater your chances of eliminating an opponent and protecting your own secret varietal.

THE TASTING ROOM

Reaching the Tasting Room marks the beginning of the final phase of **The Sommelier's Secret**.

Once your team arrives, movement around the board ends and the game shifts entirely to deduction and elimination.

The resources you've collected throughout the game now become your opportunities to uncover your opponents' hidden varietals.

ENTERING THE TASTING ROOM

Once your team reaches the Tasting Room:

- Your game piece remains in the Tasting Room for the rest of the game.
- You no longer roll the die.
- You no longer move around the board.

Your turns now focus entirely on gathering information and making deductions.

ON YOUR TURN

While your team is in the Tasting Room, choose one of the following actions:

Option 1: Make a Guess

Discard either:

- **One Trivia Card with a Guess Token.**

OR

- **One Wine Wisdom Card with a Guess Token.**

to make **one guess** against an eligible opposing team.

If your guess is correct, that team is immediately eliminated.

If your guess is incorrect, the exchanged card is discarded and your turn ends.

Option 2: Answer a Wine Wisdom Card

If you do not wish to spend one of your cards, or have no remaining cards to use, you may attempt to earn a new **Wine Wisdom** card.

The team immediately to your left draws the top Wine Wisdom Card and reads the statement aloud without revealing the answer.

Your team must decide whether the statement is **TRUTH** or **BLUFF**.

- **If your team answers correctly, keep the Wine Wisdom Card for later use.**
- **If your team answers incorrectly, discard the Wine Wisdom Card.**

Your turn then ends.

Each Wine Wisdom Card displays either a Clue Token or Guess Token, giving your team additional strategic options on future turns.

WHO CAN YOU GUESS?

While **any team remains outside the Tasting Room**, teams already in the Tasting Room may **only guess teams that are still outside the Tasting Room**.

Teams already inside the Tasting Room may **not** guess one another until every remaining team has reached the Tasting Room or has been eliminated.

This allows every team the opportunity to complete the journey before the final showdown begins.

THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

Once every remaining team has reached the Tasting Room, the Final Showdown begins.

From this point forward, all remaining teams become eligible to guess one another.

Play continues clockwise.

On each turn, teams may continue exchanging:

- **One Trivia Card with a Guess Token**, or
- **One Wine Wisdom Card with a Guess Token**

to make one guess or reveal any unrevealed clues from a chosen team.

The game continues until only one team remains unguessed.

That team is declared the winner of **The Sommelier's Secret**.

WINNING THE GAME

To win, your team must:

- Reach the Tasting Room.
- Correctly eliminate every opposing team.

Knowledge alone is not enough.

Speed alone is not enough.

The winning team is the one that best balances wine knowledge, deduction, timing, and strategy.

Raise a glass, trust your instincts, and remember...not every clue can be believed.

Cheers, and welcome to **The Sommelier's Secret**.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following rules clarify some of the most common gameplay questions and special situations.

Can multiple clues be revealed at the same time?

No.

Unless a card specifically states otherwise, only one clue may be revealed at a time.

Once a clue has been revealed, can it be hidden again?

No.

Once revealed, a clue remains public information for the remainder of the game.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can a team choose to reveal the Bluff?

Yes.

Whenever instructed to reveal a clue, the owning team chooses any **unrevealed** clue from their Varietal Card.

That clue may be either a Truth or the Bluff.

Does revealing a clue reveal the wine?

No.

Only the selected clue is revealed.

The Varietal Card itself is never shown, and the wine name always remains hidden until a team correctly identifies it.

What happens if a card deck runs out?

Shuffle that deck's discard pile to form a new draw deck.

Can eliminated teams continue participating?

Eliminated teams no longer take turns or make guesses.

However, they continue assisting the game by reading Trivia Cards whenever it is their responsibility to do so.

What happens if a card conflicts with the rulebook?

The text printed on the card always takes precedence.

What happens if an icon conflicts with the rulebook?

The instructions for that specific icon take precedence over the general rules.

GOLDEN RULES

Keep these principles in mind throughout every game of The Sommelier's Secret.

- Your Secret Varietal must remain hidden until correctly identified.
- Only one clue may be revealed at a time.
- Once revealed, a clue remains public for the rest of the game.
- The Bluff may be revealed at any time if your team chooses.
- Correctly answered Trivia Cards displaying a Guess Token are kept until used. Trivia Cards without a Guess Token are discarded.
- Correctly answered Wine Wisdom Cards are kept until used. Incorrectly answered Wine Wisdom Cards are discarded.
- Wine Wisdom Cards displaying a Clue Token or Guess Token may only be used according to the rules for that icon.
- Once a Trivia or Wine Wisdom Card is used, discard it.
- If a card's instructions conflict with the rulebook, the card takes precedence.
- If a deck runs out, shuffle its discard pile to create a new draw deck.
- Most importantly, pay attention. Every revealed clue, Trivia question, and Wine Wisdom statement may provide valuable information that helps you identify another team's Secret Varietal.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

The following example illustrates how a typical game unfolds.

Team A's Turn

Team A begins their turn by rolling a 4.

They move four spaces and land on a **Trivia Space**.

Team B, seated immediately to their left, draws the top Trivia Card and reads the question aloud.

After discussing the question, Team A answers correctly.

The Trivia Card displays a **Guess Token**, so:

Because the answer is correct:

- Team A keeps the Trivia Card.
- Team A immediately rolls again.

Rolling Again

Team A rolls a 3.

This time, they land on a **Wine Wisdom Space**.

Team B draws the top Wine Wisdom Card and reads the statement aloud without revealing the answer.

After discussing the statement, Team A decides it is **TRUTH**.

Team B reveals the answer. Team A is correct.

The Wine Wisdom Card displays a **Clue Token**, so Team A keeps the card for later use.

Team A's turn ends.

Later in the Game

Several rounds later, Team A decides to use its Wine Wisdom Card with the **Clue Token** in place of its turn.

Team A chooses Team B, which is currently in the same Zone. Team B must reveal one additional clue from its Secret Varietal Card.

Team B reveals:

“Pairs well with shellfish.”

The clue remains public, giving every team another piece of information to consider as they try to identify Team B's Secret Varietal.

The Wine Wisdom Card is discarded after use.

Later, Team A becomes the first team to reach the **Cellar**.

As the first team to enter the Cellar, they receive the one-time **Cellar Bonus** and gain another opportunity to reveal a clue from an opposing team.

The Final Phase

Eventually, Team A reaches the **Tasting Room**, meaning they no longer roll or move around the board.

On a future turn, Team A decides to use the Trivia Card with the **Guess Token** that they earned earlier in the game.

Team A discards the card and chooses Team B as its target.

After reviewing the clues revealed throughout the game, Team A announces:

“We believe Team B's Secret Varietal is Albariño.”

Team B reveals their Secret Varietal and the guess is correct.

Team B is eliminated from the game, and their game piece is removed from the board.

Play continues until only one team remains after all other Secret Varietals have been revealed.

What This Example Demonstrates

This example highlights the natural progression of the game:

- Answer Trivia questions correctly to earn cards displaying Guess Icons.
- Decide whether Wine Wisdom statements are Truth or Bluff to earn valuable Clue or Guess Cards.
- Use Clue Cards strategically to reveal additional information about your opponents.
- Pay attention to every clue revealed, even those gained by other teams.
- Use logic, deduction, and strategy to identify your opponents' Secret Varietals.
- Reach the Tasting Room and use your earned Guess Cards to eliminate the remaining teams and win the game.

