

Electronic tongue tastes wine variety, vintage

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You don't need a wine expert to identify a '74 Pinot Noir from Burgundy – a handheld "electronic tongue" devised by European scientists will tell you the grape variety and vintage at the press of a button.

Designed for quality control in the field, the device is made up of six sensors which detect substances characteristic of a certain wine variety. Components such as acid, sugar and alcohol can be measured by this detection, and from these parameters it can determine the age and variety of the wine.

The tongue was invented by Cecilia Jiménez-Jorquera and colleagues from the Barcelona Institute of Microelectronics, Spain, and is reported in the Royal Society of Chemistry journal *The Analyst*.

Wine industry specialists told the researchers they lacked a fast way to assess quality of wines – it takes a long time to send samples to a central laboratory for processing.

This new tongue is not only swift, but also portable, cheap to manufacture, and can be trained to "taste" new varieties as required.

Jiménez-Jorquera says "the device could be used to detect frauds committed regarding the vintage year of the wine, or the grape varieties used."

Source: Royal Society of Chemistry

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