

THE MEN DON'T GET IT

TOP WINES, RUN BY A MOSTLY FEMALE TEAM OF 12, OPENED SIX YEARS AGO AND SUPPLIES TO THE AMERICAN CLUB AND WORLD GOURMET SUMMIT. ITS FOUNDING MANAGING DIRECTOR **FLORA LOH**, 46, BELIEVES THAT WOMEN-ONLY EVENTS HELP TO POPULARISE THE DRINK.

In the late 1980s, when she first started working as an executive at an American food and wine company, the wine industry was very conservative. "It was a man's world," Flora says. "People at wine tastings were overwhelmingly men. It was tough for a woman to penetrate this world. They belittled you."

All that has changed. "At least 40 per cent who attend wine tastings now are women. They're also making the decisions, and many men buy based on their wife's preferences," she says.

"Women speak a common lingo – manicure, pedicure, jewellery and wines – and connect from there. Plus, we can talk to men on most of their topics too, so we can switch between groups easily. Men would find it difficult to do that."

This gave her the idea to organise more women-only wine events. She was right to do so. Such events became popular, including her long-running "Champagne Girls" series that involves women professionals in the F&B trade.

"Women get turned off by technical jargon which men seem to relish. They close up when that happens," she explains.

"They're more willing to voice their opinions in women-only groups. No one really needs to be so technical about wines. After all, it's meant to be enjoyed."



SIX WORDS TO DESCRIBE WINES WITH APLOMB BY FLORA LOH

FLORAL: For those flower-like aromas or flavours in fragrant wines.

TANNIC: For that slightly harsh, dry and puckering taste of reds, similar to that of strong black tea. This comes from the skin, pips and stalks of grapes.

ACIDIC: For the sharp, crisp flavour particularly felt around the front of the tongue. While it makes whites refreshing, it becomes too harsh if it gets overpowering.

FRUITY: For that ripe hint of plums, apples, peaches, berries, lychees and so on, in the flavours and aromas.

FINISH: For the lingering tastes and sensations in the mouth just after swallowing. A good wine will exhibit a long finish.

BALANCED: For that equilibrium achieved with acidity, texture and flavour, meaning nothing sticks out or overshadows another, making it elegant. A good wine is balanced.