



What are "breathable wine glasses?"

I had heard about them for a few months already. There is a new variety of wine glasses made out of "breathable glass" produced by the German company "Eisch Glasskultur". According to the advertising a wine poured in one of these glasses will, in the space of 2 to 4 minutes, exhibit a degree of aeration similar to that observed for the same wine in a traditional decanter after 1 to 2 hours. Sceptical, I communicated with the importer who was kind enough to send me a "breathable glass" accompanied, for control purposes, with a regular "non-breathable" glass but otherwise in all points identical. I then set up the experiments according to the well established "double blind" scientific standard. I asked my wife to mark anonymously without my knowledge the two glasses. Then I chose a full-bodied red wine which I poured in equivalent amounts in both glasses. After 4 minutes I tasted the wine in both glasses. The results were unequivocal. In the glass marked "A", the "breathable glass", the nose was more developed and more complex. In terms of taste it was softer and rounder. Having convinced myself I repeated the blind experiment with four of my colleagues. It was unanimous; it does seem to make a difference. I would very much like to discover the technique used to produce these glasses. It is of course a secret but the company mentions ..."a proprietary oxygenation treatment". It is possibly the same type of phenomenon found in sport clothes made out of "Gor-Tex" which also "breathe". The textile contains micro-pores that are small enough to allow gases to escape but blocks the larger water drops. Whatever it is I raise my glass to the "breathable" wine glass as another giant step in scientific discovery!

by Ariel Fenster

Department of Chemistry, McGill University
801 Sherbrooke West
Montreal, Quebec, H3A 2K6