

4th and 10 - It's time to "Punt"

The "punt" of a bottle is the indentation at the base of the bottle. In the old days, when wine bottles were each made by hand, it's very likely that the punt was a result of the glassmaking process. The punts could have been flattened during the glassmaking, but generally were left as is. The question is why.

For Champagne and sparkling wine, the punt increases the strength of the bottle to hold in the pressure of the bubbly wine. Also, it allows stacking of the bottles during the second fermentation stage.

For still wines, a large punt makes the bottle appear larger while containing the same amount of wine. A punt helps make the bottle easy to hold and some assert the punt stabilizes the bottle on an uneven table.

Bottles are no longer hand made, but cast in molds, so they could easily be made without punts. Modern white wine bottles are cast with flat bottoms or modest punts. However, most red wine bottles are made with relatively deep punts. One theory for this is that the punt collects sediment into a thicker ring, so it does not as easily pour from the bottle to the glass.

In general, punts are nothing more than bottling tradition, similar to sticking tree bark into a bottle to seal it. But more on that in a future issue of Trivia.