

Mead & Chocolate
Experience
Excellence
Taste Perception &
Flavor Hooks

Berniece Van Der Berg
VP Sales & Marketing

Moonlight Meadery LLC
Londonderry NH





**EXCELLENCE Chili
 & Moonlight Meadery Sensual**

(Traditional Mead**)

Aromas of smooth, sweet, balanced honey notes work together with EXCELLENCE Dark Chili to pull out the light spicy red chili that presents itself in the finish. The dark dark brown color and subtle, spicy aroma from this chocolate begins with sweetness on the tongue and then slowly yields to the delightful spices of the red chili. The rich, complex notes of this traditional mead made from wildflower honey hold the sweetness of the chocolate close and then comes out the spice for a harmonious lingering.

**EXCELLENCE Black Currant
 & Moonlight Meadery Red Dress**

(Melamel Mead*)

Red Dress is a lightly sparkling mead with distinctive, bright coloring of red currants. Pair it with the EXCELLENCE Black Currant bar. The tangy, fragrant black currants and mellow roasted almond notes found in this chocolate add depth to this slightly sweet/tart wine. Instead of overwhelming each of the bright flavors, each add to a delightfully playful finish.



**EXCELLENCE Extra Creamy Milk
 & Moonlight Meadery Desire**

(Flagship Melamel Mead*)

The complex berry notes of this mead are the ideal partner for the smoothness of the EXCELLENCE Extra Creamy Milk bar. Additionally the blumbery, black currant and black cherry depths of flavors are a perfect match for the exceptional creaminess of this premium milk chocolate.

**EXCELLENCE A Touch of Sea Salt
 & Moonlight Meadery Fling**

(Melamel Mead*)

The cocoa and fleur-de-sal in the EXCELLENCE A Touch of Sea Salt bar create a perfect partnership with this playfully sweet but tart, luscious dessert wine. The salt tempers the sweetness of the wine to produce a bright lifting flavor experience.



**CHOCOLATE &
 WINE TASTING
 STEP BY STEP**

1. **EXAMINE THE WINE:**
color, shade, clarity
2. **EXAMINE THE CHOCOLATE:**
smooth, silky, matte shine
3. **SNAP THE CHOCOLATE
 EXAMINE THE BREAK:**
audible snap, clean break
4. **SMELL THE WINE:**
aromas i.e. fruity, flowery,
earthy, spicy, woody
5. **SMELL THE CHOCOLATE:**
aromas i.e. roasted cacao,
wood, earth, spice dried fruit,
floral notes
6. **SIP THE WINE:**
sweetness, acidity, tannins, finish
7. **TASTE THE CHOCOLATE:**
melt, smoothness, silky,
flavors, finish
8. **SIP MORE WINE:**
just as the chocolate is almost
finished melting

*Melamel: fruit added honey wine

**Traditional: single varietal honey wine

Mead & Chocolate – Imperfect Pair?

May not always be compatible

- Often chocolate – simultaneously sweet, bitter, acidic and fruity. The combo may bring out the worst in each other.
- Try keep mead sweeter than the chocolate or else they will clash instead of sweetly synergizing



Tasting Process

Follows same process as a wine or chocolate tasting

EXCEPT.....

You taste both together

1. Sip of Mead
2. Taste of Chocolate
3. Another Sip of Mead

Flavors are released in stages

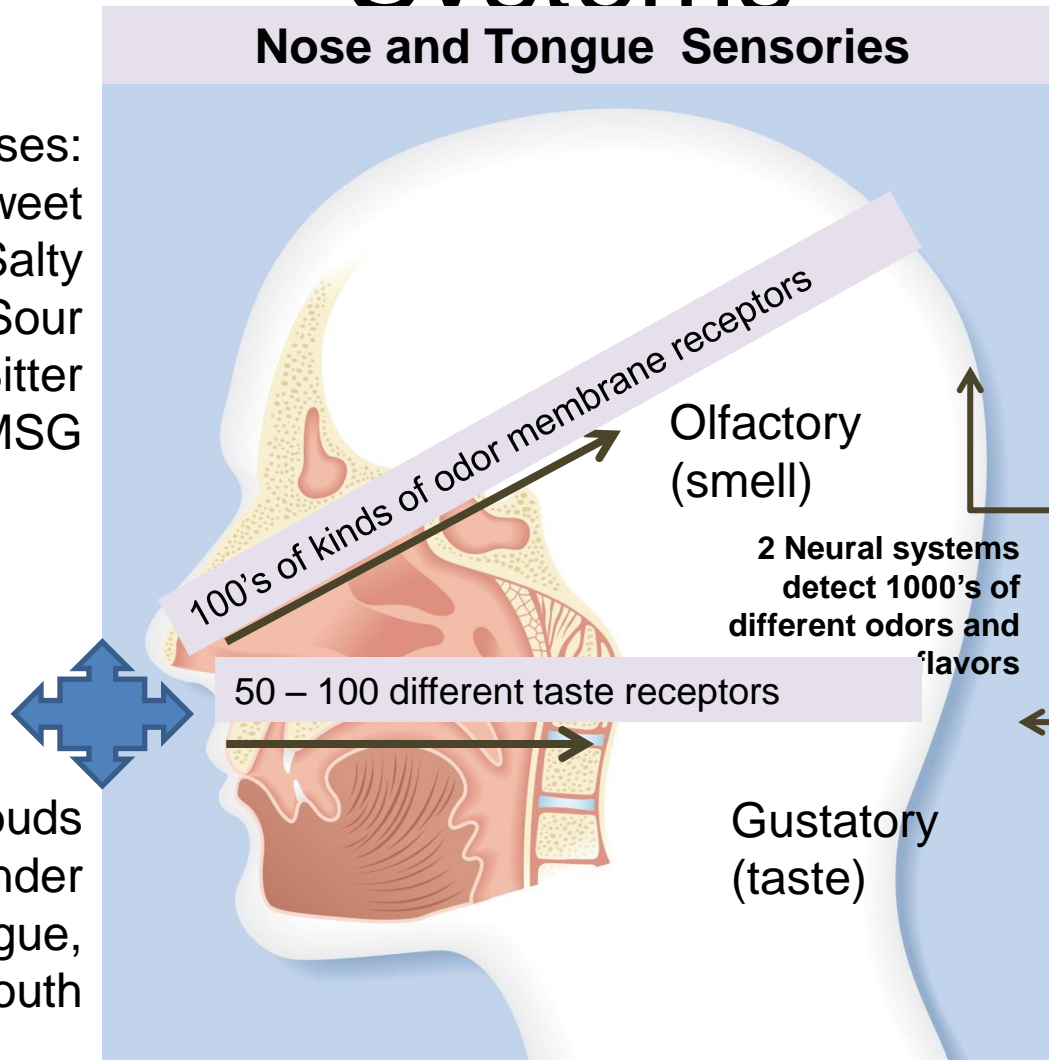


Overview of Smell & Taste Systems

Nose and Tongue Sensories

5 basic senses:

- Sweet
- Salty
- Sour
- Bitter
- MSG



10,000 Taste buds on or under tongue, roof of mouth



Taste sensory cells are found in taste buds

Our ability results from the fact that most substances we encounter are complex mixtures

Some chemicals stimulate the same receptors yet we can discriminate between 1000's of different tastes and smells



Image courtesy of Biodidac

A given membrane receptor will accept a number of structurally similar ligands

Each substance we smell or taste has a unique chemical signature

The neural systems for taste and smell share several characteristics. Same +/-10 day constant turnover of receptor cells



Taste Receptors

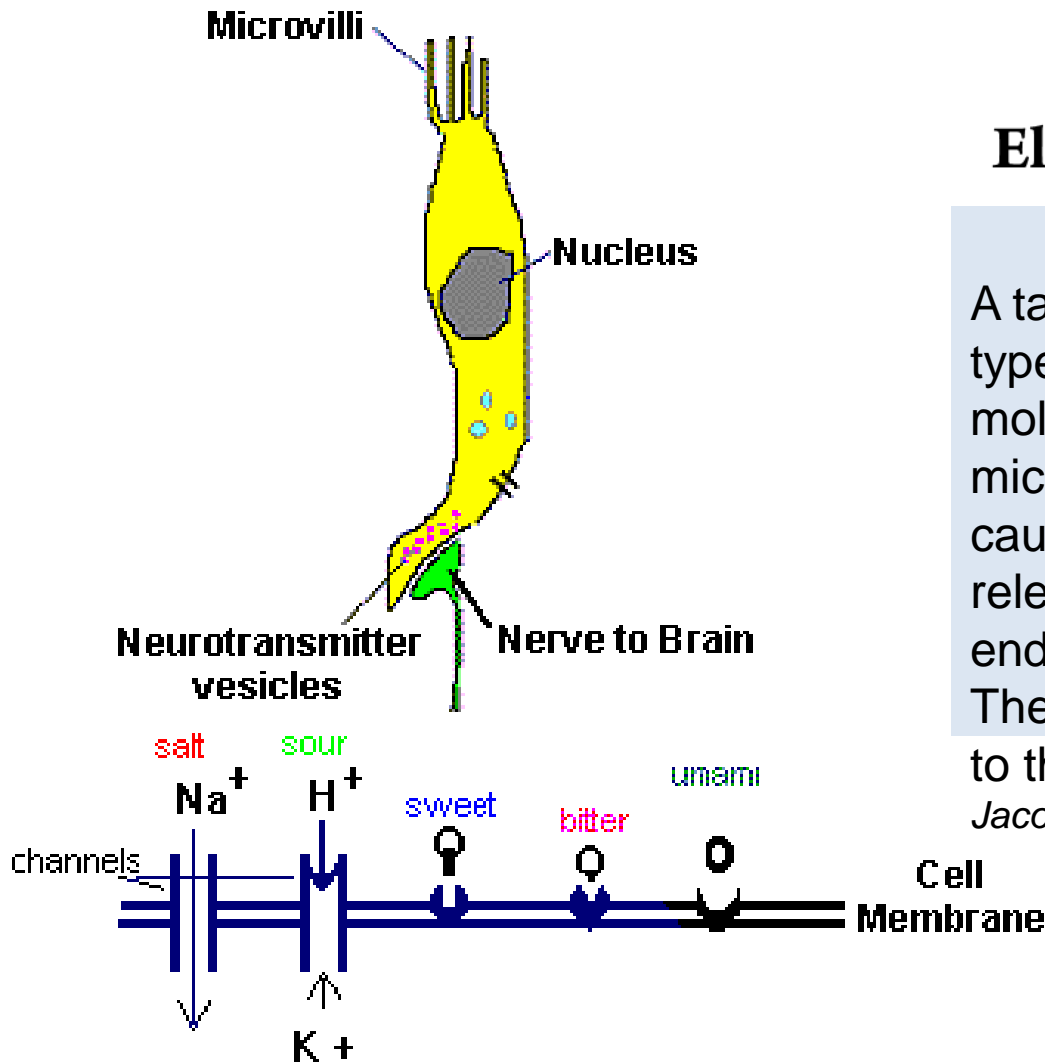
Lock & Key Fit Receptors

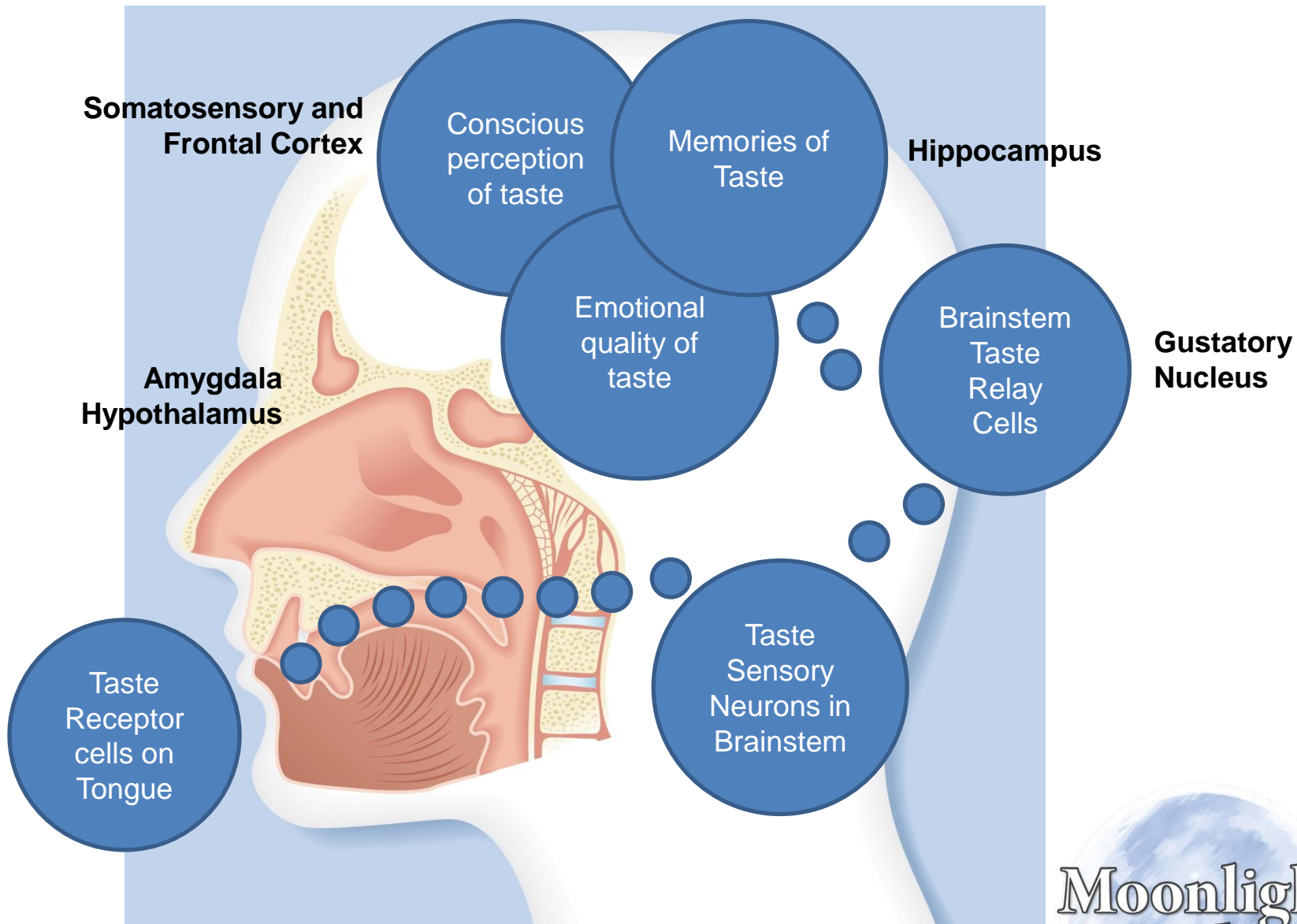


Electrical Signal to Brain

A taste sensory cell and the five types of taste receptors. Flavor molecules fit into receptors on the microvilli at the top of the cell, causing electrical changes that release transmitter onto the nerve ending at the bottom of the cell. The nerve carries taste messages

to the brain. *Figure courtesy of Dr. Tim Jacob, Cardiff University, Wales*





A Little Help From My Friends

- White to dark
- Lighter chocolates with lighter meads
- Darker with full-bodied meads
- Light to dark just like dry to sweet is recommended
- Start with milk chocolate or lower % cacao and work your way up



The Dark Side of the Moon

- Dark, Bitter, Bittersweet or Semisweet chocolates = Cysers, lighter, fruity melomels, sweeter, viscous melomels, intense methyglins or certain barrel aged meads. Try match stronger chocolates with more full bodied meads. Darker chocolate will display more tannins. The stronger the pairing the more the chocolate will balance the mead and allow the fruity notes to shine.



The Bright Side of The Moon

- Hint of chocolate flavor = Faint touch of sweetness. Lean toward a dryer melomel or very light methyglin with elegant finishes.



Super Moon

- Totally unexpected chocolate fillings:
Unusual ingredient fillings like passion fruit, guava, prickly pear etc.....
- Pairing Magic Potion = Aged, robust, intensely fruity and viscose meads that are complex and intriguing on the palette or barrel aged meads with surprisingly smooth caramel notes

