

# @ THE WINERY

## LOW CARB WINE

Is there such a thing as a low carb wine, and is it better for you?

As everyone knows, there are three main food groups - carbohydrates (that's starches and sugars), proteins and fat.

A few years back, there was a flurry of 'low carb' diets and these have promoted the supposed benefits of eating high-protein foods and avoiding 'carbs'.

Everyone has jumped on the low carb bandwagon and today there are a whole range of low-carb and zero-carb foods and drinks.

As far as alcoholic drinks, everyone believes that low carb means they aren't fattening, for example that a low-carb beer such as 'Pure Blonde' is much healthier than even a low strength beer. There is even a belief that spirits such as vodka are great if you are on a diet (as they don't contain any carbohydrates at all).

But is this actually correct?

Let's start with beer. It is made from barley (a starch), which is converted to sugars in the mashing, then to alcohol during fermentation. The carbs in beer come from residual starches and sugars remaining in the final product.

But focussing just on carbs overlooks one vital fact. Alcohol is much like a food

group itself and alcohol has many more kilojoules per gram than carbohydrates - it is actually nearly the same as fat!

So a stubby of light beer (2.7% alcohol) has around 197 kilojoules from its carbs, but also 249 kilojoules from the alcohol.

Even though a typical 'low carb' beer such as 'Pure Blonde' may have just 49 kilojoules from the carbs, it also has a massive 395 kJ from the 4.6% alcohol content. With a total of 444 kilojoules per stubby, it's as fattening as light beer!

And as for vodka, it may have zero carbs but a 30mL standard shot with no mixers still has 276 kilojoules. If you add lime and soda, you are up to 477 kilojoules.

So unfortunately low carb drinks are just a marketing hype.

Where does this leave wine though - is there such a thing as low carb wine?

Yes, carbs in wine are from the sweetness, so any dry wine has virtually zero carbs. There is still the alcohol of course, and a glass of dry white (120 mL) is around 485 kilojoules, slightly higher for red.

High carb wines are the sweet ones - sweeter whites, desert wines and fortifieds such as port.

*Warwick Adams*

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