THE VINTURI

SCOT MORRIS
Del Mar, California

Do you drink red wine?

A new wine-aerator has come along that is astounding in its effect. If I were still writing the Games column in OMNI I would do one about this. The inventor is one Rio Sabadicci who lives 20 miles away and I have interviewed him.

The old saw about "don't drink red wine just after opening it--the wine needs to breathe" turns out to be extremely true. What the Vinturi ($29 to $39 in stores) does is it is a funnel with a larger opening leading down to a smaller exit. By the Venturi Effect this means the velocity of the fluid increases. Just at this point two air holes enter the fast-moving stream of wine. The air is sucked into the wine--each droplet gets its own aeration, you can HEAR the air going in.

To add one more scientific level, it is the Bernoulli effect--the "suction" caused by low pressure which forces air to fill the void.

Here is how I demonstrate it. Pour a red wine into a nice glass. Newly opened is fine, but more impressive is a wine that has been opened for an hour or so. Then get a paper cup or cheap plastic glass and pour the wine through the Vinturi into the cup.

Have everyone taste the ordinary wine in the glass, smell it and be familiar with it. Then taste the wine in the paper cup. Almost everyone will agree that the stuff in the cheap cup is smoother, mellower, better-tasting than the stuff in the crystal glass.

I have seen this same reaction among rare wine drinkers and among bartenders and people who conduct wine-tasting classes.

I also like the slight wordplay that Sabaducci has done in changing one letter of "Venturi" and making it "Vinturi," using the prefix meaning wine.

Even if you don't drink, you probably have friends who do drink red wine and you owe it to your friendships to show them this product.

You can buy Venuris at good wine stores (though it is often sold out and "on order"), and at lower-than-retail prices from ebay.

Toast to science!