

Wine

A new Dutch play by Philip Walkate

An acerbic comedy, with a bittersweet finish

*Translated by Michele Hutchison,
International Booker Prize winning translator*

Reactions in the Dutch Press

Walkates comedy is staged fantastically

De Volkskrant **** (Dutch National Newspaper) by Annette Embrechts

A wine course is nothing compared to how host Charles encourages to waltz, smell, taste and swallow, when he appears from the wine cellar again with a bottle from his collection. Actor Porgy Franssen lets opulent French descriptions roll over his tongue, about smells, fermentation, grape sorts and wine regions. His royal summing up and elegant pronunciation lead to applause during opening night in Haarlem. Randy Fokke, as hurt daughter, provides some youthful nectar with a bitter aftertaste.

Wine is the name of the new play (...) and the glasses are refilled plentifully in a stylish interior. Walkate puts strong jokes in the mouths of the actors. The themes are exactly what you expect of an evening with friends on stage, doused in alcohol. It is about expectations, pain, disappointments in relations, work, friendship and family. And when Charles stresses that they are 'celebrating life' this evening, you are certain that he is talking about death. 'Drink in, emotion out.' Old wine in new bottles, is what you could call Walkates comedy, but it is staged and performed fabulously.



WINE – Dutch Production – Hummelinck Stuurman 2018

'Wine is the *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf* of our time.'

NRC Handelsblad *** (Dutch National newspaper)

Thomas Rosenboom (Writer, winner of the Dutch Libris Literature Award twice)

Wine is a witty and distressing play that shows how a marriage can be a prison. A wine hobby is supposed to function as tunnel to freedom, which finally ends up in the yard – so it is also an exciting escape story.

Philip Walkate – WINE The Play © 2026

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Beautifully constructed and strong performance

Scènes **** (Dutch Magazine for Theatre professionals) by Jos Schuring

Alcohol brings the truth to light in a poignant and comical way. Many plays have been written with this premise since Edward Albee's *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf* from 1962. We are still eager to see these plays because they are so pleasantly recognizable. Playwright Philip Walkate made a particularly strong constructed and meticulously crafted variation on this kind of drama with surprising plot turns that is very humoristic from the start.

(...) *Wine* is a drama packed with heavy topics that tumble over each other. It is about loss, workaholics, failed upbringing, friendship, but mostly about how people can not talk about things that they really think are important for years.

(...) *Wine* is typically a story that you should not describe, because it will tarnish the pleasure of watching the play. People who like well made, contemporary theatre should just buy a ticket and enjoy. I am certain you will have a fabulous evening.



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Old friendship does rust

Theaterkrant **** (Dutch website for theatre news and reviews by Mieke Zijlmans)

The better people know each other, the better they can hurt each other's feelings. And they think they have the right to do that. So called honesty masked as friendly commentary. This harsh honesty is the motor of *Wine*, a successfully crafted play by Philip Walkate, directed by Victor van Swaay. How the traditional wine tasting evening of a group of friends turns into the kind of sincerity that makes everyone uncomfortable.

(...) *Wine* is a comedy about which you can reveal too much, because of the many plot turns. It is the kind of comedy of manners about the way old friendships that are taken for granted can degenerate into acerbity, frustrated about each other's habits. Because the friends know each other so well, because the friends know too much about the others.

(...) Philip Walkate created an upbeat and dynamic play, that pays tribute to the Anglo Saxon tradition of Edward Albee because of the uneasy inter human relations...

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When drunk people speak the truth

De Telegraaf **** (Dutch national newspaper) By Esther Kleuver

The word hypocrisy is from the Greek and means: acting. And that is exactly what a couple of friends are doing in *Wine*: acting.

For 25 years the friends have come together for a stylish and fun wine evening. This might have been pleasant in the beginning, but over the years the relations have grown sour. (...)

Victor van Swaay smoothly directed this successful new play by Philip Walkate. (...) Like Edward Albee, Philip Walkate created sharp and villainous dialogues, that fuel the laughter and under which you can feel the pain.

Wine (...) is psychological comedy, accesible, with a full body, bitter sweet that rolls over the tongue deliciously.



WINE – Dutch Production – Hummelinck Stuurman 2018

Reactions from the audience

***** Captivating, comical, a great story with great actors, and a story that makes you think. A fantastic evening.

***** We enjoyed this show. Excellent actors, the story engaged us from the first to the last sentence.

**** Beautifully told story with laughter and tears. Fabulous.

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About *Wine*:

Charles, the CEO of a large bank, and his wife Charlotte, have invited their old friends Bob, a writer and Marja, a professor of social psychology, for the yearly wine tasting evening in their posh home in Amsterdam.

Ed, an artist and good friend of Charles and Bob has not been invited this year, eventhough he was the initiator of these evenings and has been present all those years. Last time he drank too much and confronted Charlotte with questions about family matters.

The atmosphere is icy. Charles and Charlotte have marriage problems, Marja and Charlotte don't get along very well and Charles has chosen a very special date this year for the wine tasting...

What should have been a fun and relaxing evening, turns into a totally different gathering when Ed appears and some time later Eveline, Charles' and Charlottes' daughter, who has psychological problems and has been living in a clinic for a while.

But the wine keeps flowing and the saying *In Vino Veritas* gets a whole different meaning because things that have not been spoken about for years, finally emerge. The time of keeping up appearances is over, not in the least thanks to a delicious Chateau Petrus 1988, that Charles has saved for this special occasion.

Crisis and catharsis follow, combined with the complex Bordeaux bouquet of cassis and raspberry, to finally end with a bittersweet aftertaste.

Productions of *WINE* 2018-2026



Wine was performed 65 times in the largest theaters in the Netherlands and a total of 120 times between 2019 and 2026 by more than 20 theater groups in Holland and Belgium.

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About Phillip Walkate

Philip Walkate (1974) is a Dutch playwright and performer. He grew up in the United States and The Netherlands, received his International Baccalaureate degree in Ottawa, Canada and studied in France and at Leiden University. After finishing his Masters degree (History and International Law) he started his career as comedian, musician and writer.

He wrote five cabaret shows, performed song programs, and presented his comedy routines to (international) audiences in Europe and the United States.

Since 2015 his plays have been staged in the Netherlands and Belgium, including *Wine*, *A Grey Comedy*, *Cocktails* and *Adieu Indië*.

Also visit: www.philipwalkate.com/wine



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