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A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z









Sorry, no terms exist for this letter.

A Really big bottle of Wine.


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Wine Videos

[Aging Wine in the Wine Making Process](#)

[Chardonnay, an Overview](#)

Wine Audio

[What is Wine "Body"](#)

[Breathing and Decanting Wine](#)

[Cabernet Sauvignon](#)

[Chenin Blanc](#)

[Chardonnay](#)

[Color and its Importance to Wine](#)

[Dessert Wines](#)

[Generic Wines](#)

[Gewurtztraminer](#)

[Reading a Wine Label](#)

[Robert Mondavi on Fum  Blanc](#)

[Johannisberg Reisling](#)

[Merlot](#)

[Pinot Noir](#)

[Ros  Wines](#)

[Sauvignon or Fum  Blanc](#)

[Smell, Your Best Guide](#)

[Sparkling Wines](#)

[What makes up a Wines "Taste"](#)



Sparkling Wines

Champagne

Description:



Champagne is a sparkling white wine made, for the most part, from the Pinot Noir and, to a lesser degree the Pinot Meunier grape. For the champagnes labeled *blanc de blanc*, the Chardonnay grape is used. The skin of the Pinot Noir or black grape, is actually not black, but blue on the outside and red on the inside. When first pressed, the juice is "white," that is, clear.

It has been argued that, technically, the word "Champagne" is not a generic term and that true champagnes are made only in certain carefully-defined districts of the province of Champagne which is located in Northeast France about 90 miles east of Paris. Nevertheless, other areas of the world, notably California and New York State, also produce high-quality sparkling white wines and often label them as "Champagne".

In contrast to non-vintage Champagnes which blend the vintages of two or more years, "Vintage champagnes" are produced from the harvest of a single year and this year is noted on the label. Vintage champagnes are produced only in the best years. In years when the harvest lacks great quality, vintage Champagnes are not created.

The three districts within the Champagne region of France that produce the finest wines are the *Montagne de Reims*, the *Vallée de la Marne*, and the *Côte des Blancs*. The soils from all three of these districts are unusually high in chalk content. The first two districts from which we get, respectively, the "wines of the Mountain" and the "wines of the River" employ mostly the Pinot grape in the champagne-making process. The *Côte des Blancs* district, however, relies almost exclusively on the Chardonnay grape and produces the lighter and drier Champagne called *Blanc de Blancs*. Some "*champagne nature*," that is "still" or "natural" non-sparkling wines are also made in the Champagne region, but these are rarely found in the United States as their export is discouraged by the French government.

Basically, Champagne is made by allowing wine to ferment a second time. This creates the carbonation or bubbles that distinguish it from still or natural wines. Unlike the modern "bulk process" where the wine is fermented in great sealed tanks and then transferred under pressure into bottles, the more traditional *methode champenoise* or champagne-making process requires that the second fermentation take place within each bottle. Naturally, the *methode champenoise* is a much more laborious and costly procedure than the bulk process. A bottle of fine champagnes may take seven years before reaching market during which time it may be handled as many as 200 times.

The origins of the *methode champenoise* process date back to the 17th century. A Benedictine monk named Dom Perignon, (who did not, as it is claimed, actually invent champagne,) was one of the first to experiment with and perfect champagne making. Another innovator named Frantoise invented the *densimètre*, a 19th-century instrument used at the time of bottling to measure the sugar content of the "must", that is the juice of the grapes. Prior to the invention of the *densimètre*, there was no scientific method of determining the sugar content. Estimates were made solely by tasting and precision was difficult to achieve. If too

much sugar were added, the bottles exploded. (In 1833, one out of three bottles in the M^{et} cellars exploded.) If too little sugar were added, the "champagne" came out flat. Today, thanks to numerous technical innovations, including the fabrication of stronger bottles, explosions that occur during processing and cellar storage average only one or two percent.

The *methode champenoise* is a rather elaborate process and only the highlights will be covered here. After the harvest which is usually in mid-October, each cluster or bunch of grapes is carefully examined. Grapes that lack the proper ripeness or are unsuitable because of mildew or for other reasons are removed. The remaining grapes are put in deep, wide baskets known as *caques* or *mannequins*, loaded into trucks, and hurried to the *vendangeoir* or press-house.

The grapes are pressed immediately in a *pressoir* that accommodates about four tons. The *Cuvée* (i.e., the grape juice or must) from this first pressing is then collected in 450-gallon vats and allowed to ferment for about 24 to 36 hours. This "shortvatting", as it is called, assures the proper amount of coloration and also allows time for the "head", that is the dust and other impurities that rise to the surface, to be drawn off. The *Cuvée* is then transferred to 44-gallon oak casks, treated with a small amount of sulfur to halt fermentation, and shipped to the cellars of various local wine-making firms.

Here the wine is tested. In order to assure that the alcohol content of the finished product reaches 10 to 12 percent, sugar is added in those years when the grapes do not have enough natural sweetness. This process is called *chaptalisation*. (Under exceptional circumstances, citric or tartaric acid might also be added. This practice, however, is not viewed as desirable.)

The addition of sugar causes a continuation of the fermentation that usually lasts anywhere from 18 to 30 days, after which the wine is allowed to settle and clarify for eight to ten weeks.

In December, the wine is racked. Racking entails the transfer of the wine into new casks in order to remove the sediments or dregs and also to expose the wine to fresh air. After four or five weeks, the *Chef de Caves* supervises the blending or *assemblage* of the wines from different vineyards and towns in order to create a quality champagne. The wines are blended in huge vats called *foudres*. Sometimes, wines from older vintages are added in. Although there are a few *vins de cru*, that is wines that come from one town only, most champagnes are a blend or *cuvée* of wines.

By spring and early summer, the wines are put in bottles. At this time, a liquid sugar mixed with wine called *liqueur de tirage* is added. The addition of the *liqueur de tirage*, which is at the heart of the *methode champenoise*, not only raises the alcohol content slightly but also, most importantly, causes the bottled wine to ferment a second time. This second fermentation creates the carbon dioxide that gives champagne its sparkle. When the amount of *liqueur de tirage* added is deliberately kept to a minimum, a champagne with less pressure and less sparkle termed "*crémant*" is produced. During the second fermentation, the extra-heavy cork in each bottle is held in place by a sturdy clamp.

The wine is then stacked horizontally in the cellars and allowed to "ripen" for several years. About twice a year, the bottles are moved. Bottles in the middle of the stack, where the heat of the fermentation is concentrated, are moved to the outside and vice-versa so that the output is consistent.

The bottles are also shaken to free up any sediment that may have formed. This shaking process is referred to as *rémuage* and the person who shakes and turns the bottle is called a

r mueur. Later, the stacked bottles are placed in special turning racks called *pupitres* where they are regularly turned. These racks hold the bottles by their necks and allow them to be gradually maneuvered by a *r mueur* from a horizontal to a completely upside-down position in order that all the sediment sink and rest close to the cork. It is said that it takes five years to fully train a *r mueur*. Estimates of the number of bottles that the best of them can turn range from 32,000 to 70,000 a day.

The next step is the *d gorgement* which entails the removal of the particles of the sediment. This process is performed by a specialist called a *d gorceur*. The trick is to remove the cork in such a way that the sediment is extracted with as little loss as possible of either the wine or carbonation. The modern method of accomplishing this involves freezing the necks of the bottles thus allowing for the easy removal of the sediment. The next process called the *dosage* involves replacing the small amount of wine that has been lost. A champagne that has been held in reserve (*vin de reserve*) is combined with sugar and a little brandy to create the sweetener called *liqueur d'exp dition*.

Different champagnes are sweetened to different degrees. Less than two percent of the sweet *liqueur d'exp dition* is added to *Brut*, the driest champagne. Two to three percent is added to the *Extra-Sec* or Extra Dry; three to six percent to the *Sec* or Dry; six to eight percent to the *Demi-Sec* or Semi-dry; and eight to ten percent to the *Doux* or Sweet.

After the "dose" of *liqueur d'exp dition* has been added, the final corking takes place. The wine is then stored for another year or two before being sold. During this time, the bottles are checked for the presence of a third and unwanted fermentation.

The person who drives the water-softened cork into the bottle is called the *boucheur*. The one who then secures the cork with wire to the ring of the bottle neck is called the *ficeleur*. While some champagnes are corked with plastic stoppers, the best champagnes use corks from Portugal and Spain. According to French law, the word "Champagne" must appear on all corks.

Although corks and stoppers may change, the bottles usually do not. Champagne is almost always sold in the same bottle in which it was processed. The only exception are champagnes that are transferred from their original bottles into different-sized ones.

The names and content in fluid ounces of champagne bottles are as follows: The standard bottle or *bouteille* (which in France is referred to as a "*Quart*") holds 25.4 ounces; the "Pint" holds half that amount or 12.7 ounces; the "Split" holds six ounces. The "Magnum" (50.7 oz.) is made up of two 25.2 ounce bottles; The "Jeroboam" (101.4 oz.) is a double magnum. The "Rehoboam" (152.1 oz.) contains six bottles; The "Methuselah" or "Methuselem" (202.8 oz.) contains eight bottles; The "Salmanasar" (304.2 oz.) contains 12 bottles; The "Balthazar" (405.6 oz.) contains 16 bottles; and the "Nebuchadnezzar" (507.1 oz.) contains 20 bottles.

Many experts believe that champagne should be uncorked very gently so as to preserve as much of the carbonation as possible. For the same reason, it is recommended that champagne be served in fluted or tulip-shaped glasses that are relatively tall rather than in the popular shallow and open-bowled ones.

Finally, certain purists propose that champagne is best served by itself or as an aperitif. Since this would preclude one from enjoying champagne with such complementary delicacies as caviar, oysters, and strawberries, for instance, such counsel should not be taken too seriously.

Type: **Regions:** **Temp:** **Optimal Age:**

Sparkling, France 43-46. 2-5
White
Regional

Characteristics:

Dry to slightly sweet. The driest, labeled Brut, is considered the best by some.

Appropriate Foods:

Oysters, smoked fish, caviar, light breakfast fare.

Blush or Rosé wines

Rosé

Description:



From the French word "*rosé*" meaning "pink" or "rose-colored". A true *vin rosé* is made from the fermentation of red or black grapes. After two or three days, the clear "must" (i.e., the grape juice) begins to redden as a result of the alcohol that has broken down and drawn out the pigmentation in the skins. This process gives the wine its characteristic pink hue. Once the proper color has been attained, the must is drawn off. Compounds created from white wine to which a measure of red wine has been added in order to provide color are not considered genuine *rosé* wines and this practice is outlawed in France and other countries.

Notable *rosé* wines from France are Tavel which is made principally from the Grenache grape and *Rosé de Marsannay* made from the Pinot Noir grape. In addition, many popular *rosé* wines are produced in California and Portugal. Best served well-chilled as aperitifs, *Rosé* wines, as a rule, should be drunk when young.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
<i>Rosé</i> or Blush	France, California and International	50.	2-10

Characteristics:

Dry to Sweet.

Appropriate Foods:

Salads, fruit, paella, Middle Eastern dishes.

Zinfandel, White

Description:

Zinfandel is an inexpensive (usually) red or blush wine (both made from the Zinfandel grape) that can range in taste from sharp and full-bodied to smooth with earthy qualities. It may have originated in North America. White Zinfandel, an inappropriate name for a *Rosé* or Blush wine, has become very popular.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red or Blush	California	60-63	3-10+

Varietal

Characteristics:

Fruity, adaptable grape, sometimes metallic in flavor.

Appropriate Foods:

Turkey, light game, ratatouille, stews, casseroles for red; picnics and other light food for white.



White Wines

Bordeaux White

Description:

White Bordeaux is not a single wine, but a class of wines ranging from dry to fruity to richly sweet. Practically all white Bordeaux wines are blends. They are derived mostly from the SØmillon and Sauvignon Blanc grape varieties grown in France's Bordeaux region. Muscadelle and Merlot Blanc grapes are sometimes also used.

Wines simply labeled "Bordeaux Blanc" are usually fairly ordinary. A fine white Bordeaux will list the name of the district, village and vineyard (or *Château*) where the wine was produced. In general, the more specific the information on the label, the better the wine. Thus, the best white Bordeaux will be labeled *mis en bouteilles au château* indicating that the wine has been bottled at the vineyard where the grapes were grown and the wine was made. Perhaps the best white Bordeaux is the extraordinary *Château d'Yquem, Premier Grand Cru*.

For more information about the wines of the Bordeaux region, refer to [Bordeaux, Red](#) in the Red Wine section.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Regional	France	48.	3-10+

Characteristics:

From light dry fine wines in Graves to the rich sweet dessert wines of Barsac and Sauternes.

Appropriate Foods:

Artichokes, light fish, oysters(Graves); rich desserts and blue cheese (Sauternes).

Burgundy, White

Description:

True Burgundy wines, whether white or red, are made in the Bourgogne or burgundy region of central, eastern France. Unfortunately, over the years, the name "burgundy" has been used so indiscriminately that the only thing most wines labeled "burgundy" have in common is the fact that they contain alcohol.

Chardonnay is the basic grape used to make white burgundy. For the better white burgundies, *Pinot Blanc* is added. *AligotØ*, *Sacy*, and *Melon de Bourgogne* are also sometimes used.

Two fine white burgundy wines are *Pouilly-FuissØ* and *Montrachet*. Another fine white Burgundy is *Chablis* which is discussed under its own heading. For more information about the wines of the Burgundy region, refer to [Burgundy, Red](#) in the Red Wine section.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
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White France 48-58. 4-10+
Regional

Characteristics:

Light to deeply perfumed in the tiny Grand Crus vineyards. The wines of the Chablis region may be described as more steely or flinty.

Appropriate Foods:

Veal in cream sauces, cream cheeses, chicken, full-flavored fish, ham, and cream or pesto pasta.

Chablis

Description:

Chablis is a white burgundy that takes its name after the French village of Chablis in the Bourgogne. A true *Chablis* must come from this district. Unfortunately, the name "*Chablis*" has been misappropriated and incorrectly used to label many dry, white wines from various parts of the world, especially California.

The finest *Chablis* wines have a clean, almost tart dryness about them. Their pale gold color is highlighted by a burnished gloss of green. The four categories (in descending order) of Chablis are: *Grand Cru*, *Premier Cru*, *Chablis*, and *Petit Chablis*. Of the seven *Grand Cru* or great growth vineyards, *Les Clos* and *Vaudesir* are most often acknowledged as the best.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Regional	France (though term used incorrectly elsewhere)	48-58.	4-10+

Characteristics:

Earthy dry whites from north Burgundy area.

Appropriate Foods:

Oysters, scampi.

Chardonnay

Description:



Chardonnay, along with Riesling, is one of world's great white wine grapes. In France where it originated, it is used in the making of Chablis, Le Montrachet, Pouilly-Fuiss[®], and Champagne. It has also been widely planted in California. When properly aged in oak, the

fragrant and flavorfully crisp wines derived from Chardonnay are rich and well-balanced with wonderful body and finesse and a lingering aftertaste. Although the grape is not a true Pinot, it is often referred to as Pinot Chardonnay.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Varietal	California, France, International	48-58.	4-10+

Characteristics:

Full-Bodied, Intense and Crisp. Many styles from fruity to oaky.

Appropriate Foods:

Full-flavored fish, chicken, ham, cream or pesto pasta and shellfish.

Chenin Blanc

Description:



An early-maturing, pale white wine made from the Chenin Blanc grape. The Chenin Blanc grape originated in France and, although it is not a Pinot, it is sometimes referred to as *Pineau de la Loire*. It is the most widely planted grape of the French provinces of Anjou and Touraine where it is used in the making of vouvray and other white wines. It has been also been successfully planted in California. Chenin Blanc is best when served young.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Varietal	California, France	45.	1-4

Characteristics:

Dry to slightly fruity or off-dry.

Appropriate Foods:

Light seafood, fruit, cream pasta dishes.

Columbard

Description:

Colombard or French Colombard is a dry white wine of moderate quality. The Colombard grape has a high acid content and is widely grown in the Dauphin region of France where it is also known as *Bon Blanc*, *Pied-Tendre*, and *Banquette*. It is also used in the blends that comprise certain California Chablis and Champagnes.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Varietal	California, France	48.	0-2

Characteristics:

Fruity and sharp

Appropriate Foods:

Light seafood, chicken salad, and light chicken dishes.

Frascati

Description:

A white wine that is made from the Malvasia, Greco, and Trebbiano grapes grown in the Latium or Lazio region near the town of Frascati in the hills southeast of Rome. There are three varieties of Frascati: dry, semi-sweet, and *canellino* which is very sweet. Frascati is one of a family of several, local Roman wines referred to by the name *Castelli Romani* (Castles of Rome), the most famous of which is probably *Est! Est! Est!!!* of Montefiascone.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Regional	Italy	45.	2-5+

Characteristics:

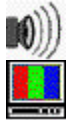
Dry to sweet, ordinary to a few fine wines tasting of whole grapes.

Appropriate Foods:

Cream shellfish or pasta, antipasto, and cold cuts.

FumØ Blanc (also Sauvignon Blanc)

Description:



A good basic dry white made from the grape of the same name. The Sauvignon Blanc grape may be used in combination with other grapes to make other wines such as the White Bordeaux wines of France.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Varietal	California, France	43-48.	2-10+

Characteristics:

Usually dry and smoky or grassy. Can be blended with the Semillion grape.

Appropriate Foods:

Salads and light seafood, shellfish, and piccata.

Gewurztraminer (see also Traminer)**Description:**

Since the *Gewurztraminer* and *Traminer* grape are identical, the names may be used interchangeably. This reddish, musky-flavored grape, widely-planted in Alsace and in Germany, produces a very spicy white wine with a pronounced and sometimes heavily-perfumed bouquet. *Gewurztraminer* is also produced in some of the coastal counties of California. The word "*Gewurztraminer*" means "spicy Traminer". The wine is generally dry, but sometimes slightly sweet. When *Gewurztraminer* grapes are affected by the "Noble Mold" *Botrytis cinerea*, however, the result is a richly-sweet dessert wine.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White	California,	45-48.	3-10+
Varietal	France, Germany		

Characteristics:

Spicy with ranges from dry to sweet

Appropriate Foods:

Spicy foods, Chinese and Korean, fruits.

Johannisburg Reisling (see also Reisling)**Description:**

Riesling (also Johannisberg Riesling or White Riesling) is an excellent white wine made from grapes originating in Germany's Rhine Valley and later widely transplanted. Known in California and New York State as Johannisberg Riesling or White Riesling, it is a full-bodied wine with a delicate fruitiness and flowery bouquet. Neither the "Grey" Riesling (*Chauchθ Gris*) nor the "Franken" Riesling (Sylvaner) are true Rieslings.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White	California,	43-48.	3-10+
Varietal	France,		

Germany,
International.

Characteristics:

Dry to sweet and sometimes flowery. Usually low alcohol content.

Appropriate Foods:

Crab and lobster if a dry Reisling; light desserts if sweet.

Mosel

Description:

Mosel is a delicate and fragrant white wine made from Riesling (and sometimes *Müller-Thurgau* and *Elbling*) grapes that are grown on the steep, heavily-slated slopes of the Mosel River Valley in Germany. Although these wines are also produced in the Saar and Ruwer Valleys, the best estate-bottled Mosels are grown in the *Mittel-Mosel* or central region of the Mosel Valley.

The most famous Mosels are from the *Bernkasteler Doktor*, *Wehlener Sonnenuhr*, and *Piesporter Goldtröpfchen* vineyards. The popular *Moselblümchen* or "Little Flower of the Mosel" is an overrated wine and is not recommended. *Auslese*, *Spätlese*, and *Trockenbeerenauslese* Mosels are made from late-harvested grapes of the finest quality. These elegant (and expensive) wines are noted for their rich sweetness and extraordinary finesse.

Finally, the term "*Moselle*" (accent on the second syllable) is a French corruption of the German "*Mosel*" (accent on the first syllable) most likely created by wine companies as a marketing strategy. Under German law, this French spelling is not recognized.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Regional	Germany	48.	3-5

Characteristics:

Thin in bad years to steely and elegant in good ones.

Appropriate Foods:

Simply prepared seafood and shellfish.

Orvieto

Description:

Orvieto is a delightful Italian white wine from the cathedral city of Orvieto located halfway between Rome and Florence in Umbria. Orvieto ranges from dry (*secco*) to slightly sweet (*abboccato*) to semisweet (*amabile*). Bottles are labeled accordingly.

Orvieto (whether dry or sweet) is made from a combination of the following grapes: *Trebbiano* (also called *Procanico*), 60%; *Verdello*, 20%; *Malvasia*, 15%; and *Grechetto*, 5%.

An especially sweet and rich Orvieto *Vino Santo* that is aged five years in wood is also produced as well as a red Orvieto made mostly from *Sangiovese* grapes.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Regional	Italy	43-48.	1-5

Characteristics:

Usually poor but some dry to sweet are interesting.

Appropriate Foods:

Dry with salads; sweet with fruits and light desserts.

Pinot Blanc

Description:

Pinot Blanc is a grape variety from the Alsace region of France. It is characteristically dry with a soft body.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Varietal	France, California	45.	2-5

Characteristics:

Dry and Soft, neutral.

Appropriate Foods:

Light soups and cold cuts.

Pinot Grigio

Description:

Italy's Pinot Grigio is a simple wine with a full-bodied flavor. It shares a similarity with Frascati in that it has a coppery or darker color.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Varietal	Italy	45.	2-5+

Characteristics:

Tasty with low acidity.

Appropriate Foods:

Chicken, fish, light pastas, and salads.

Pinot Gris

Description:

An ordinary but pleasant white wine grape.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Varietal	Italy and Alsace France, Germany	45.	2-5+

Characteristics:

Full-bodied with some spiciness

Appropriate Foods:

Chicken, fish and light foods.

Reisling (see also Johannisberg Reisling)

Description:



Reisling is the name of a grape originating in Germany (also considered to be Germany's greatest) but now used internationally to make wine. Wines made from the Riesling grape usually exhibit good acid balance and sweetness..

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Varietal	California, France, Germany, International.	43-48.	3-10+

Characteristics:

Dry to sweet and sometimes flowery. Usually low alcohol content.

Appropriate Foods:

Crab and lobster if a dry Reisling; light desserts if sweet.

Rhine or Rhein

Description:

Rhine wines are made in the Rhein region of Germany. The Rhein is one of the better

known German wine-growing regions.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Regional	Germany	43-48.	3-10+

Characteristics:

Flowery wines varying in flavor from dry to extremely sweet (Troockenbeereauslese).

Appropriate Foods:

Crab and lobster if a dry Rhine; light desserts if sweet.

Rioja

Description:

The Rioja Valley in Northern Spain produces both red and white wines, although, in general, the whites are not notable. About a dozen different varieties of grapes go into the making of Rioja wines.

The four categories of Rioja are *Rioja Sin Crianza* (that is, without breeding), *Rioja Crianza* (with breeding), *Rioja Reserva*, and *Rioja Gran Reserva*. All Riojas spend a year in fermenting tanks. The *Sin Crianzas*, however, are not further aged and are released almost immediately. The *Crianzas* and *Reservas* are further aged in barrels usually for one and three years respectively. The *Gran Reservas* are further aged for a combination of six and sometimes eight years in both barrels and bottles. Two Riojas of exceptional quality are the *Marqu@s de Riscal* and the *Marqu@s de Murieta*.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red and White Regionals	Spain	48-63.	3-20+

Characteristics:

Ordinary to the rare, old, excellent reservas (reserves or vintages).

Appropriate Foods:

Paella, red meat, bean dishes for the Red Rioja; Shellfish and seafood for the White.

Sauternes

Description:

True Sauternes (the final "s" is used for both singular and plural) come from the area in and around the towns of Sauternes and Barsac about 30 miles south of Bordeaux. It is made from the shrivelled and overripe SØmillon, Sauvignon, and Muscadelle grapes that have been most affected by *Botrytis cinerea*. This beneficial mold, commonly called "Noble Rot,"

creates wines that possess a special taste, a rich sweetness, and a high alcohol content.

One of the few white wines that improves with aging in the bottle, Sauternes is a smooth, golden and very sweet wine with an alcohol content that ranges from 14 to 17 percent. If one swirls the wine, one will notice its "legs," that is, the streams or rivulets that adhere to and then flow down the inside of the glass.

In general, the Sauternes from Barsac are somewhat less sweet. On the other hand, perhaps the sweetest (and certainly most elegant) Sauternes is *Chateau d'Yquem*.

Sauternes are best served cold. Some debate as to when Sauternes should be served exists. Some advise at the *end* of the meal with dessert, fruit, or sharp cheese. Other contend that it can be taken *with* meals and that it goes well with fresh *foie gras* or fish. Still others suggest that rather than serve it *with* dessert, it should be served *instead* of dessert. The reader is left to make his or her own decision on this matter.

Finally, wines from California labeled "Sauterne" (note the lack of the final "s") are made from a variety of different grapes and range from dry to sweet. Most bear little, if any, resemblance to true Sauternes.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Regional	France	42.	3-20+

Characteristics:

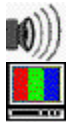
Sweet, rich and golden; best when aged.

Appropriate Foods:

Roquefort and Blue cheese, flans and custards.

Sauvignon Blanc (also FumΘ Blanc)

Description:



A good basic dry white made from the grape of the same name. The Sauvignon Blanc grape may be used in combination with other grapes to make wines such as the White Bordeaux wines of France. Also called FumΘ Blanc.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Varietal	California, France	43-48.	2-10+

Characteristics:

Usually dry and smoky or grassy.

Appropriate Foods:

Salads and light seafood, shellfish and piccata.

Semillon

Description:

Semillon is a French grape used to make dry white wines in California. It is fruity and rich in taste with a slightly aromatic bouquet. It is best when served young.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White	California,	43-48.	1-4
Varietal	France		

Characteristics:

Sweet and fruity soft. Sometimes blended with Sauvignon Blanc grape of the Bordeaux region for smoothness.

Appropriate Foods:

Pat@, cream cheeses.

Sherry

Description:



As there exists a wide and often bewildering variety of Sherries, both dry and sweet, the following is meant to serve only as a brief introductory overview to the subject. Moreover, although many nations, including the United States, create Sherry-like wines, this summary is limited to the topic of the authentic Sherries of Spain.

True Sherry is a fortified wine, usually golden or amber in color, produced in Southern Spain near the prosperous city of *Jerez de la Frontera*. Grapes have been cultivated here for over three thousand years -- first by the Phoenicians and later by the Romans and Vandals. ("Vandal" is the root of the word "Andalusia", the name of the province.)

The word "Sherry" is the anglicized corruption of the word "Jerez" which the Spanish pronounce (approximately) as *hair-eth*. The "*Frontera*" or "Frontier" contained in the name of the city refers to the fact that, from the year 711 A.D. until late into the thirteenth century, the city of *Jerez de la Frontera* lay on the border that divided the opposing Christian and Moslem factions.

The best Sherries, like the best Champagnes, are almost always blends that are derived from grapes grown in chalky soil. The *albariza*, as the Spanish call this type of chalky earth, forms a white, mirror-like crust upon the vineyard grounds that reflects the intense Andalusian sun back up from the earth to the vines. Naturally, this extra sunlight enhances the growth and sugar content of the grapes.

It is notable that just before the grapes are pressed, they are deliberately and generously dusted with this chalky soil. The calcium sulfate contained therein helps to enhance both the Sherry's acid balance and lucidity.

Palomino (also known as *Listan* or *Tempranillo*) and *Pedro XimØnes* are the principle grapes used to make Sherry. Curiously, the Palomino is one of the rare varieties used in wine making that also happens to be a scrumptious eating grape. Consequently, the vineyards that cultivate the eminently-stealable Palomino grapes are, understandably, very closely watched.

To prolong their lives, Palomino vines are pruned down to a single branch. To support the weight of the grapes, each branch is braced by a forked stake.

After the grapes are pressed, the juice (*mosto* in Spanish) is fermented in 158-gallon oak casks or "butts" filled only to the three-quarter level. In the *bodegas* or storehouses, the new wines are classified and graded for alcohol content and quality. Those lacking in strength are fortified with high-proof grape brandy. Those wines that are not of high quality are distilled into brandy.

The wine is then deliberately left exposed for about a year or two to encourage the formation of a certain bacterium and yeast called *flor*. The *flor* (Spanish for "flower") forms in some, but not all, of the casks. It starts as a microscopic white film on the surface of wine and then expands, sometimes reaching a depth of a half-inch. Similar in appearance to cottage cheese, this rather peculiar growth is nevertheless very desirable in that it imparts a distinctive flavor and bouquet to the Sherry.

Next, the wines are again graded and sent to the *criadera* or nursery for their suitable *solera*. Simply stated, a *solera* is a group of barrels in which wines of different ages are blended and reblended over the course of several years.

During this period, sweetening (*vino dulce*) and coloring (*vino de color*) agents are added to the various blends. The best *vino dulce* or sweet wine used as a coloring agent is called "P.X." as it is derived from *Pedro XimØnes* grapes that have been dried, fermented, fortified, and then aged in oak. A fortifier of lesser quality called *mosto apagado* is also sometimes used.

The two types of *vino de color* are *sancocho* and the even sweeter *arrope*. Both coloring agents are mahogany-colored and are derived from non-fermented grape juice concentrates. The color range of Sherries go from very pale (*muy palido*), to pale (*palido*) to amber (*ambar*) to gold (*oro*) to dark (*oscuro*) and finally to very dark or "Brown Sherry" (*muy oscuro*).

A brief summary of the different classifications of Sherries follows. Keep in mind that the gradations of Sherries often tend to overlap and the distinctions among them are not always exact. The only valid way to truly understand the differences between the various types of Sherries is, of course, to taste each of them.

Fino and Oloroso

All Sherries start out as either Finos or Olorosos. A Sherry classified as a Fino is created from wine made exclusively from Palomino grapes that have been affected by the *flor*. A Sherry classified as an Oloroso is made from a combination of Palomino and Pedro XimØnes grapes and has either no *flor* or very little.

Typically, the highly-prized Finos are drier and pale gold in color. In general, the alcohol content of 15 or 16 percent is relatively low. Finos have a lovely bouquet of apples and almonds. Like many other Sherries, once bottled, they only last about two years before losing their freshness.

The Olorosos are darker with more richness and body. A word frequently used to describe them is *gordura*, that is "fatness". Olorosos are more fortified than finos and, on average, have an alcohol content of 18 to 20 percent.

Amontillado

Amontillado is a more complex and nutty Sherry derived from the Fino. They are usually sweet and dark in color and seem to be able to age indefinitely. On average, Amontillados contain about 18 percent alcohol.

Manzanilla

The palest and lightest of the Finos, Manzanilla is made from grapes grown about 14 miles from Jerez de la Frontera near the town of *Sal-car de Barrameda* on the Atlantic. The ocean breezes gives this Sherry a distinct tart tang in its aftertaste. The three classifications of Manzanilla are *Manzanilla Fino*, *Manzanilla Pasada*, and *Manzanilla Olorosa*.

Palma

Palma is both a type and a brand name of Fino. Palma is celebrated for its delicacy. Palmas are sometimes ranked by age using the numbers one through four, with four being the oldest.

Amaroso and Brown Sherry

These are dark sweetened Sherries derived from Oloroso rather than Fino blends. Brown Sherry, which is also sometimes called East India Sherry, is the darker and sweeter of the two. The Spanish taste runs toward dry sherries and both the Amaroso and Brown Sherries are produced for export, mostly to England.

Cream Sherry

Like Amaroso and Brown Sherry, this is another heavily-sweetened Aloroso. It was developed in Bristol, England. The most famous Sherry of this type is Harvey's Bristol Cream which is made in Spain and then shipped to England for bottling. In England, such Sherries are sometimes served at the end of a meal rather than as an aperitif. As with Port and the other well-known fortified sweet wines such as Madeira and Marsala, there is a prominent British influence in the Sherry trade.

Raya

Raya is a somewhat harsh Oloroso Sherry that is not exported.

Palo Cortado

Palo Cortado is unusual in that it is an Oloroso that shares some qualities of the Finos. It may have, for instance, a bouquet similar to that of the Amontillados. Unlike other Sherries which are blends from different years, Palo Cortado Sherry is made from the harvest of a given year and thus is a true vintage wine. A genuine Palo Cortado requires about 20 years of maturation and, consequently, is very rarely seen commercially.

Pedro XimOnes

Pedro XimOnes or P.X. Sherry is made exclusively from the grapes of the same name. It's alcohol content is the highest of all Sherries, usually ranging from 20 to 24 percent although sometimes it is even higher.

Tio Pepe, La Ina, Double Century, and Dry Sack

All of the above are popular brand names and are not to be confused with types of Sherries.

Finally, a few words should be said about the proper serving temperatures of the various Sherries. In general, Finos and Manzanillas are best served chilled. Dry Amontillados benefit from some cooling, whereas most other Sherries can be served at room temperature.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Regional	Spain	See Above	5-50+

Characteristics:

From light, dry Finos to richer Amontillados to the nut flavored Olorosos and Cream Sherries.

Appropriate Foods:

Nuts and aged cheeses

Soave

Description:

One of Italy's finest wines, the Soave is a crisp, white wine with a dry taste. And good acid balance.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Regional	Italy	45.	2-5+

Characteristics:

Crisp and dry. Well balanced.

Appropriate Foods:

Salads and seafood.

Traminer (see also Gewurztraminer)

Description:



Since the *Gewurztraminer* and *Traminer* grape are identical, the names may be used interchangeably. This reddish, musky-flavored grape, widely-planted in Alsace and in Germany, produces a very spicy white wine with a pronounced and sometimes heavily-perfumed bouquet. *Gewurztraminer* is also produced in some of the coastal counties of California. The word "*Gewurztraminer*" means "spicy Traminer". The wine is generally dry, but sometimes slightly sweet. When *Gewurztraminer* grapes are affected by the "Noble Mold"

Botrytis cinerea, however, the result is a richly-sweet desert wine.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Varietal	California, France, Germany	45-48.	3-10+

Characteristics:

Spicy, ranges from dry to sweet.

Appropriate Foods:

Spicy foods, chinese, fruits.

Vouvray

Description:

Vouvray is a French wine made in the Loire Valley. It is a long-lasting white wine that may be semi-sweet to sweet.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
White Regional	France's Loire Valley	41-43.	3-10+

Characteristics:

Varying degrees of quality and sweetness. May be sparkling.

Appropriate Foods:

Some fruit, shellfish.



Red Wines

Barbaresco

Description:

Barbaresco is an Italian Red Wine from a region near Barolo, but it tends to be lighter and age more quickly than Barolo Red Wine.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Regional	Italy	60-65.	15

Characteristics:

Subtle, fine, and clean tasting.

Appropriate Foods:

Red meats, stews, roasts, and roast chicken. Also good with heavy pasta dishes such as Lasagna.

Barbera

Description:

Barbera is the varietal name of grapes used to make a clark, Italian red wine with a slightly acidic, robust flavor and an earthy bouquet.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Varietal	Italy, California	60-63.	3-10

Characteristics:

Slightly robust, acidic.

Appropriate Foods:

Barbecued meats, tomato sauce pastas, pizza.

Barolo

Description:

Barolo, an enormously robust wine that is deep red to almost black in color, is made from the Nebbiolo grape in the hilly district in and around the city of Barolo in Piedmont in northwestern Italy. It is, along with Brunello di Montalcino, one of Italy's most majestic wines.

To be classified as a Barolo, the wine must be at least 13 percent alcohol. In years when the vintage is not up to standard, a lesser Barolo called *Nebbiolo delle Lange* is produced.

The best Barolos, labeled *Reserva* and *Reserva Speciale*, are aged in oak for four and five years respectively. Being a very slow-maturing, long-lived wine, a Barolo may then require as much as 20 years of bottle aging to mature and soften. The result, however, is well worth the wait and expense. The finest vintage Barolos are powerful, velvety wines of extraordinary elegance with a fragrance that hints of violets and a pungent aftertaste. Three excellent Barolos are Mascarello Bartolo, Giacosa Bruno, and Elvio Cogno.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Regional	Italy	60-63.	3-15

Characteristics:

Rich, dark and deep; high alcohol, ages well.

Appropriate Foods:

Beef roasts, game, Italian sausage.

Beaujolais

Description:

A simple, lesser red wine from the south of Burgundy, France. It is made from the gamay grape. An even simpler variety, Beaujolais Nouveau is sold each year when the wine is only weeks old.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Regional	France (though term used incorrectly elsewhere)	54-58.	0-2

Characteristics:

Light and fruity.

Appropriate Foods:

Ham, turkey and chicken; Mild cheese, light pastas, pizza, and strong fish.

Blush (see Ros )

Bordeaux, Red

Description:

The world's most sought-after red wines are produced in Southwestern France in and around the city of Bordeaux, especially in certain villages or *appellations* adjacent to the Gironde River and its two smaller estuaries, the Garonne and the Dordogne. In all, some 20,000 growers in the Bordeaux region produce roughly 650 million bottles of wine.

While notable white wines such as the famous Chateau d'Yquem Sauternes originate here, it is the outstanding red Bordeaux wines (or "Clarets" as they are sometimes called) from locations such as *Saint-Julien*, *Saint-Est phe*, *Pauillac*, and *Margaux* in the M doc, *Pessac* in Graves, and *Saint-Emilion* and *Pomerol* that, over the centuries, have inspired an interest and excitement that often borders on obsession.

Much of the uniqueness of the wines of Bordeaux can be attributed to the climate of the region which is influenced by the warm Atlantic Gulf Stream and also by the vast Gironde River tidal estuary. (Indeed, many of the more majestic Bordeaux could rightly be called "river wines" as their vineyards are usually within sight of water.) As a result of this maritime influence, the summers here are warm and humid, while the winters are generally short and gentle. Critical dangers to the vines do exist, however, especially from random winter hail storms and frosts.

The soils of Bordeaux, deposited there ages ago by the rivers, are composed of sand, clay, limestone, gravel, and combinations thereof. In some areas, the soil has an exceptionally high gravel content. Among other beneficial effects, gravel provides good drainage. (The Graves region takes its name from the French word for gravel.) Heftier stones the size of eggs and larger called *cailloux* are also common in some of the finer vineyards in the M doc region such as Chateau Margaux, Chateau Latour, and Chateau Ducru-Beaucaillou.

The character of Bordeaux wines is influenced not only by the types of soil present, but also by the age and care of the vines as well as the ripeness and overall quality of the grapes when harvested.

Another major factor that determines the quality and distinctiveness of the various red wines of Bordeaux is the choice of grape varieties that are blended together to make them. In the M doc region, (also called the "West Bank" because it is situated on the west bank of the Gironde River), the dominant grapes used are the Cabernets -- Cabernet Sauvignon and, to a lesser degree, Cabernet Franc. Cabernet Sauvignon creates a highly-flavored, tannic wine that requires long bottle ageing.

Wines made from Merlot grapes have a slightly higher alcohol content and are less tannic. Merlot is often blended in with Cabernet Sauvignon to provide softness. Also, the low acidity of Merlot, unlike Cabernet Sauvignon, produces wines that, in general, require less bottle aging.

Petit Verdot and Malbec are two other grape varieties that are also used, although not as often and usually in very small amounts. Chateau Lafite-Rothschild, for instance, is a blend of 70% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, and 5% Petit Verdot.

On the "East Bank" (that is, across the Garonne River in the hills above the Dordogne River) where *Saint-Emilion* and *Pomerol* are located, the land has a higher clay content. The Merlot grape grows here best and is the dominant one used. It is usually blended with Cabernet Franc or, as it is referred to locally, Bouchet. Chateau Petrus of *Pomerol*, for instance, is a blend of 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc.

As mentioned previously, many Bordeaux, especially those from M doc, require lengthy bottle aging before the wines are smooth enough to drink. This is due to the presence of the astringent tannins found in the skins and pips of Cabernet Sauvignon grapes. To accelerate the

maturation, a procedure sometimes referred to as the "new vintification" is used. This entails the removal of the grape skins and pips from the "must" or fermenting grape juice after only about three weeks instead of the customary six. Despite concern and criticism, this practice has become fairly commonplace. Some producers, however, including the renowned Chateau Petrus, still insist upon using the traditional method.

A perennial question concerns which wine one should choose. Of all the red Bordeaux, eight vineyards or *Chateaux* seem to stand out above the others. The "Big Eight," as they are sometimes called, are Chateau Lafite-Rothschild, Chateau Mouton-Rothschild, and Chateau Latour from *Pauillac* in *Médoc* and Chateau Margaux from *Margaux* (also in *Médoc*), Chateau Haut-Brion from *Pessac* in Graves, Chateau Cheval-Blanc and Chateau Ausone from *Saint-Emilion*, and Chateau Petrus from *Pomerol*.

When mature, these distinctive, beautifully-textured, delicate, yet firm and complex wines are believed by many to be the finest in the world. This holds especially true for Bordeaux produced in certain highly-rated years or vintages. Indeed, if price is any indication of quality, the "Big Eight" are certainly among the world's most expensive wines.

In 1985, for instance, a single bottle of Chateau Lafite Rothschild bearing the initials "Th.J" (presumably Thomas Jefferson) was sold at Christie's in London for \$105,000 or the equivalent in 1995 American dollars of approximately \$200,000. (Incidentally, assuming "Th.J" was, in fact, Thomas Jefferson, the wine would date back to the 18th century and would therefore be altogether undrinkable.)

While this example is, admittedly, an extreme one, it is not at all uncommon for bottles of vintage Bordeaux to be sold at auction for thousands of dollars. A wine, for example, that fetches very lofty prices when it appears (and it does not appear too often) is the 1870 Chateau Mouton-Rothschild.

Naturally, numerous other fine red Bordeaux are produced in addition to the eight mentioned above. It is difficult to rate them, however, because any system of assessment is, by its very nature, bound to be subjective. In 1855, an "official" classification system was established wherein the "best" wines were classed as "First Growths" (*Premier Crus*), the next best as "Second Growths", and so on down to "Fifth Growths". The current relevance of the 1855 classifications is, in the opinion of many, questionable.

Wine specialist, Alex Lichine, has proposed an alternate system of classification that also has five subdivisions: *Crus Hors Classe* or Outstanding Growths is first, followed in descending order of excellence by *Crus Exceptionnels* (Exceptional Growths), *Grands Crus* (Great Growths), *Crus Supérieurs* (Superior Growths) and, finally, *Bon Crus* (Good Growths).

To further complicate matters, *Saint-Emilion* and *Pomerol*, which were excluded from the 1855 classification, each have their own system of classification. The wines of *Saint-Emilion* are rated as *Premiers Grands Crus Classés*, *Grand Crus Classés*, and *Grands Crus* while those of *Pomerol* are classified *Premiers Grands Crus*, *Premiers Crus*, *Deuxièmes Premiers Crus*, and *Deuxièmes Crus*.

Another major consideration regarding the quality of any given Bordeaux is the year or vintage. It is generally agreed that the "great" vintages of this century for red Bordeaux were 1900, 1921, 1929, 1945, 1947, 1952, 1961, 1970, 1975, 1976, 1978, 1979, 1982, 1989, and 1990. A "great" or "big" vintage year (versus "smaller" or "poor" ones) is determined to a large degree by the amount of sunshine during the growing season.

As a rule, wines that receive more sunshine take longer to mature. Thus, the costly Bordeaux from the "great" vintages usually take quite a while to age properly and, for whatever

reasons, are all too often drunk well before they have reached their optimal maturity.

Accordingly, the careful selection of a mature "Big Eight" wine from one of the "smaller" years often allows one to enjoy a Bordeaux of considerable quality and, most importantly, to enjoy it at a time when it is at its peak. Moreover, such wines can usually be secured at a considerable savings. Also, just as many of the "smaller" vintages of the "Big Eight" are undervalued, so too are scores of wines (from vintages "great" and "small") that are available from less-celebrated, but nevertheless excellent, Bordeaux vineyards.

For those who might appreciate some assistance with Bordeaux selection, what follows is a short (and, of course, subjective) list of recommendations of wines other than the "Big Eight". They are chosen from what are considered to be the better red wines produced in M \odot doc, Graves, *Saint-Emilion*, and *Pomerol* during the 1980's. They are:

From *Saint-Est Φ phe*: Ch Γ teau Cos d'Estorunel, Ch Γ teau Montrose, and Ch Γ teau Meyney. (The latter is a high-quality wine that, as a rule, is priced very reasonably.)

From *Saint-Julien*: Ch Γ teau Ducru-Beaucaillou, Ch Γ teau L \odot oville-Las Cases, Ch Γ teau Gruaud-Larose, and Ch Γ teau L \odot oville-Barton.

From *Margaux*: Ch Γ teau Palmer and Ch Γ teau La Lagune.

From *Pauillac*: Ch Γ teau Pichon-Longueville-Lalande, Ch Γ teau Pichon-Longueville-Baron, and Ch Γ teau Lynch-Bages. (The latter is a wonderful wine, often affectionately referred to as Ch Γ teau "Lunch Bags".)

From *Graves*: Ch Γ teau La Mission Haut-Brion, and Ch Γ teau Pape-Cl \odot ment.

From *Saint-Emilion*: Ch Γ teau L'Ang \odot lus (especially the 1989 and 1990), Ch Γ teau Canon, Ch Γ teau Figeac, and Ch Γ teau L'Arros \odot e.

From *Pomerol*: Ch Γ teau La Fleur, Ch Γ teau Certan de May, Ch Γ teau La Conseillante and, starting in 1989, Ch Γ teau Clinet.

For those who wish to delve deeper into the subject, numerous books have been written about the red wines of Bordeaux. Two authors in particular who are well worth reading are Hugh Johnson and Alexis Lichine.

Lastly, the editors wish to express their appreciation to wine journalist, Dennis Lowden, for his patient and erudite counsel and for providing the list of recommended Bordeaux.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Regional	France	60-63.	5-20+

Characteristics:

The great Chateaux are rich, subtle and smooth when aged. Lesser wines of this large region can be very pleasant.

Appropriate Foods:

Beef, lamb, turkey, and aged cheese.

Brunello di Montalcino

Description:

Another of Italy's great wines, Brunello di Montalcino is made entirely from a variety of Sangiovese grape called Brunello. The Brunello grape is grown in and around Montalcino,

south of Siena. Brunellos are always aged at least three years in wood. Those designated as *reserva* are aged five years or longer. Like Barolo, it is a deep-red velvety wine that takes many years to mature. Its fragrance hints of cherries, flowers, spices, and chestnut. Two excellent vintage Brunellos are Biondi-Santi and Il Colle al Matricinese. A younger, less-expensive second wine derived from the Brunello grape called *Rosso de Montalcino* is also produced.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Regional	Italy	60-63.	3-15+

Characteristics:

Strong and Full-bodied when aged

Appropriate Foods:

Beef roasts, game, Italian sausage.

Burgundy Red

Description:

The Burgundy or Bourgogne Region of France is divided into five districts: Chablis, Beaujolais, Chalonais, M^lconnais, and the celebrated *C^lte d'Or* or "Golden Slope" where the most magnificent Burgundies are produced. The *C^lte d'Or* which is further divided into the *C^lte de Beaune* and the *C^lte de Nuit*. The former is the source of Le Montrachet, the world's best white Burgundy, while the latter is the source of La Roman^e Conti, the world's best red Burgundy. The reds from the *C^lte de Beaune* such as Pommard, Beaune, and Volnay tend to be more delicate than the fuller, more regal *C^lte de Nuit* Burgundies such as Chambertin, Roman^e, and Musigny.

Numerous wines from all over the world are inaccurately and indiscriminately labeled as "Burgundy". Authentic Burgundies, however, originate in the Bourgogne Region and are made from delicate Pinot Noir grapes (Pinot Liebault and Pinot Beurot are also allowed) that are aged in barrels anywhere from 18 to 24 months. Unlike the more tannic Bordeaux, Burgundy generally require considerably less bottle aging. When ready to drink, the best Burgundies, especially the great red *Grand Crus*, are superbly well-balanced, full-bodied wines of great depth and character.

Unfortunately, the demand for the relatively small supply of the best Burgundies (the total annual production of La Roman^e Conti, for instance, is only 7,000 bottles) is so very high that the cost of the great *Grand Cru* Burgundies, assuming their availability in the first place, borders on the absurd. Numerous lesser Burgundies are also available, however, and when properly selected can prove most are very worthwhile.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Regional	France (though term used incorrectly elsewhere)	63.	5-20+

Characteristics:

Light but good flavor from lesser growers to the incredible complexity from the extremely expensive Grand Crus.

Appropriate Foods:

Beef, lamb, and veal.

Cabernet Sauvignon**Description:**

Cabernet Sauvignon is splendid grape variety used in the creation of some of the world's finest red wines. It is the predominant grape used in the outstanding red Bordeaux of the Mœdoc such as Château Latour (see *Bordeaux, Red*) as well as the highest quality reds produced in California and elsewhere.

The full-bodied, complex wines made properly from Cabernet Sauvignon grapes are well-balanced and intense with splendid fragrances. These long-lived wines start off high in tannins, but smooth out to a velvety finish with aging. Cabernet Sauvignon is frequently blended with Merlot and Cabernet Franc to soften it somewhat.

California Cabernet Sauvignons, when well made, are undoubtedly the finest red wines produced in the United States and are capable of competing admirably against similar wines of French origin. Particularly recommended are the 1984 through 1987 vintages as well as 1990 and 1991. Three Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignons that one might be wise to stockpile are Caymus 1990 Special Selection, Flora Springs 1991 Reserve, and St. Clement Oropas Napa Valley 1992.

The Cabernet Sauvignon recommendations as well as those for Merlot have been taken from the *Wine Spectator*, a most useful as well as handsomely-produced publication that should appeal to anyone interested in increasing his or her knowledge of wines.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Varietal	France, California, International	60-63.	4-20+

Characteristics:

Fine rich tannic reds.

Appropriate Foods:

Beef, lamb, turkey, and aged cheeses.

Chianti

Description:

Chianti is Italy's best-known red wine. It comes in two very different styles. The first is a light, refreshing, everyday wine made to be drunk young. It is often packaged in a straw-covered bottle called a *fiasco* and can be found on pizza parlor menus throughout America. The other, labeled *Chianti Classico* or Classic Chianti, is an elegant, well-balanced, medium-bodied vintage wine comparable in many ways to Bordeaux. It requires bottle aging and can be found on the wine lists of the world's finest restaurants.

Chianti is mainly produced in the Tuscan provinces of Northern Italy. It is made from a blend of Sangiovese, Canaiolo, Trebbiano, Toscano and Malvasia del Chianti grapes, with Sangiovese being the most dominant.

Here are a few items that should facilitate your selection of a fine Classic Chianti: On most, but not all, Classic Chiantis, the image of a rooster appears on the neck of the bottle. In general, 1985, 1988, and 1990 were admirable vintages.

While many of the best Classic Chianti are labeled "*Riserva*", it is the name of a reputable producer (*fattoria*) on the label that is the most reliable guarantee of quality.

Highly recommended Classic Chiantis include *Fattoria Monsanto*, *Riserva il Poggio*; *Ruffino*, *Riserva Ducale* gold label; *Fattoria di Montagliari*, *Riserva Vigna Casaloste*; and *Badia a Coltibuono*, *Riserva*.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Regional	Italy	60.	3-10+

Characteristics:

From light and fruity to the more interesting "classicos"

Appropriate Foods:

Tomato-sauce-based pastas, prosciutto, and carpaccio.

Gamay

Description:

The Gamay grape is used to make several different wines including Beaujolais which is sometimes called Gamay Beaujolais.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Varietal	California, France and Italy	54-58.	0-2

Characteristics:

Light, simple.

Appropriate Foods:

Chicken, ham, mild cheese, light pasta, and pizza

Merlot

Description:



An early-ripening and productive grape that originated in France and which is now grown widely in California, Northern Italy, and elsewhere. The grape produces a rich, fruity, non-astringent wine that, because of its softness, is often blended with many of the world's finest Bordeaux and Cabernet Sauvignons. It also stands on its own as a premium varietal. It is, for instance, the principle wine used in Chateau Petrus, the blend of which is 95% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc.

Three recommended 1991 Merlots are Arrowood, Beringer Bancroft Ranch, and Clos du Val Stags Leap. Sterling and Clos du Bois are also very well made.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Varietal	California, France, Chile, Italy and Australia	63.	3-10+

Characteristics:

Firm to soft and slightly fruity

Appropriate Foods:

Light red meats and game such as duck.

Pinot Noir

Description:



This grape, used in the great Burgundies and Champagne, makes reds that vary greatly in quality.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Varietal	California, Oregon, France, Australia	60-63.	2-5

Characteristics:

Soft, fruity and smooth in the best of the Cote d'Or wines of France; less reliable elsewhere.

Appropriate Foods:

Veal, pork, roasts, salmon, duck, young cheeses, and game birds.

Pitite Sirah

Description:

Dark, full-bodied red wines are made from this grape of the Rhone Valley in France.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Varietal	California, Rhone region of France and Australia.	60-63.	3-20+

Characteristics:

Tannic

Appropriate Foods:

Lamb, Middle Eastern dishes, hearty soups.

Port

Description:

Of all the wines fortified with Brandy, (i.e., Sherry, Madiera, and Marsala), Port is perhaps the most famous. True Ports are rich, heavily-fortified, red and white dessert wines produced in the rocky schist-laden terraces of the upper Duoro Valley of Northern Portugal. The history of wine making in the Cima Corgo and Baixo Corgo regions of the Duoro River Valley dates back to the pre-Christian Roman Era.

The city of Oporto, where the Duoro River flows into the Atlantic, is the site of the famous "Factory House" built in 1790 and the center of the British and Portuguese-managed Port trade. Indeed, England's long involvement in the industry is evidenced by the fact that the two earliest British Port producers, Warre and Co. Lda., and Phayre and Bradley, (now known as Croft and Ca Lda.) were founded in 1670 and 1678 respectively.

There are several types or styles of Port and, in all, about a dozen different grape varieties are blended to create them. Some of the more important grapes used in the making of red Ports are Touriga, Bastardo, Mourisco, and Tinta Francisca. White ports are made with Verdelho, Malvasia, and Rabigato grapes, among others.

The vintage or annual harvest in the Duoro Valley takes place in mid-September. Two to four days after the grapes are crushed and fermentation has begun, potent grape brandy is added to the fermenting "must". In fact, about 20 percent of any given bottle of Port is brandy. As a result, the fermentation is halted and the sugar in the must, which ordinarily would have been converted into alcohol, remains. This accounts to a great extent for Port's sweetness.

For wines destined to become red Ports, brandy is added and fermentation stopped when the must still contains about 50 percent sugar. White Ports, however, are fermented longer before being fortified and, in general, tend to be drier.

In the spring following the harvest, the raw ports are drawn off into 159-gallon casks or

pipes and then shipped by truck to the Oporto suburb of Vila Nova de Gaia for processing. Here the raw Ports are classified by taste, and later blended and aged. A brief review of the various Port varieties that are created follows:

Ruby Port -- Made for lightest and most simple wines, Ruby Port is the least mature, least complex, and the least expensive of all Ports. Generally aged in oak for less than two years, this sweet, fruity, bright-red port is sometimes drunk as an *ap@ritif*.

Tawny Port -- A wide range of quality exists among Tawny Ports. The inexpensive wood-aged Tawny ports that are made by blending together rather ordinary red and white wines should generally be avoided. On the other hand, certain Tawny Ports such as the costly *Taylor's Finest Old Tawny*, for instance, are created from blends of outstanding wines that are aged in wood anywhere from 10 to 40 years. As Port ages in wood, its purple color turns into the dull yellowish brown that gives the wine its name. Varying in sweetness depending upon the producer, the best Tawny Ports represent, along with Vintage Ports, two of the finest types of Ports available.

Vintage Port -- The majority of Ports are made using blends from different vintages, that is, from different harvest years. About three or four times each decade, however, the finest wines of a particularly excellent *single* vintage are considered exceptional enough to stand on their own, and it is from these wines that the great Vintage Ports are derived.

Because they are aged or matured in wooden casks, the Ruby and Tawny varieties are referred to as "Wooded" Ports. Vintage Ports, however, although initially aged in wood for 22 to 31 months, are then left to mature in black glass bottles stopped with extra long corks for about ten to twenty years or more. During this long period of maturation, chemical reactions occur involving the trapped tannins and pigments. One result is the formation of a highly-desirable, heavy sediment referred to as "crust" that clings to the inside of the bottles and, of course, necessitates decanting. (Interestingly, the insides of bottles were sometimes roughened so as to make the crust adhere better.)

Most importantly, during the lengthy bottle aging, the highly-tannic, excessively-sweet, and almost undrinkable young wine undergoes a gradual and wonderful transformation -- ultimately emerging twenty or so years later as a mellow, delicately-sweet, and eminently drinkable wine that nevertheless retains a trace of the engaging final bite or "grip" characteristic of fine Vintage Ports.

Perhaps the two greatest Port vintages of the century were 1927 and 1945. The 1963, 1970, and 1977 vintages were also exceptional and are recommended. The 1970 Vintage Ports should reach their peak of readiness in 1995. Dow, Taylor, Warre, and Graham are four highly-respected producers.

Port "of the Vintage" -- This misleading name should not be confused with true Vintage Port. While Vintage Port spends about two years in wood, Port of the Vintage is usually kept in wood 15 to 20 years. Furthermore, it usually does not come from a true Vintage Year, but from a lesser vintage. Such wines, while smooth, lack both the fruit and character of the Vintage Ports.

Crusted Port, Vintage Character Port, Vintage Reserve Port -- Crusted Port, which is also referred to as Vintage Character Port or Vintage Reserve Port, is not a true Vintage Port in that the wines used are not as fine, nor are they required to be from a single vintage. Crusted or Vintage Character Ports are usually a blend of several vintages. They are handled in a manner similar to Vintage Port so as to create a small amount of crust or sediment. Blended from better quality Ruby Ports, Crusted or Vintage Character Ports are aged in wood for about five

years, a period of time longer than that which Ruby Port is aged, but not as long as Port of the Vintage. They are then usually held for about seven years more in bottles. Crusted Ports impart something of the character of Vintage Ports at a much more reasonable price.

"Late Bottled" Vintage Port -- Somewhat similar to Crusted or Vintage Character Ports, "Late Bottled" Vintage Ports are pleasant, lighter wines that can be drunk relatively young. They are made from good, but not necessarily great single vintages and are usually kept in wood anywhere from three and one half to six years. "Late Bottled" Vintage Ports fall somewhere between a faded ruby and tawny color. Crust may or may not be present.

Single Quinta Port -- *Quinta* (pronounced "keen-ta") is Portuguese for a parcel of land or, more specifically, a vineyard. In off-Vintage years, wines of exceptional quality from a single site are often made into unblended Ports called Single *Quinta* Ports. Like classic, blended Vintage Ports, these unblended Single *Quinta* Ports are bottle-aged and also form a crust. They mature earlier than the Vintage Ports and have a pleasing character. Of all the Single *Quinta* Ports, Quinta do Noval is the most renowned.

White Port -- Rarely available in America, White Port is made from white grapes and is produced in both dry and sweet styles. The dry variety is created by allowing all of the sugar to be fermented out. It is somewhat similar but not as fine as Sherry and is usually drunk as an *ap@ritif*.

California Port-Style Wines -- Although ordinary port-style wines have a long history in California, for about the past twenty years, a number of vintners in the state have been seriously aspiring to create wines similar in character and quality to the exceptional Vintage Ports of Portugal. Ficklin, Woodbury, Prager, and J. W. Morris wineries are among the leaders in this effort.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Regional	Portugal, California	57.	3-30+

Characteristics:

See Above

Appropriate Foods:

Heavy desserts and pudding, nuts, aged sharp cheeses.

Rhone

Description:

Rhone red wines are generally dark and long-lived. They are produced in the Rhone River region of France.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red (some White) Regional	France	57-63.	3-15+

Characteristics:

Ordinary to strong.

Appropriate Foods:

Roasts, stews and other strong meat dishes, aged cheeses.

Rioja**Description:**

The Rioja Valley in Northern Spain produces both red and white wines, although, in general, the whites are not notable. About a dozen different varieties of grapes go into the making of Rioja wines.

The four categories of Rioja are *Rioja Sin Crianza* (that is, without breeding), *Rioja Crianza* (with breeding), *Rioja Reserva*, and *Rioja Gran Reserva*. All Riojas spend a year in fermenting tanks. The *Sin Crianzas*, however, are not further aged and are released almost immediately. The *Crianzas* and *Reservas* are further aged in barrels usually for one and three years respectively. The *Gran Reservas* are further aged for a combination of six and sometimes eight years in both barrels and bottles. Two Riojas of exceptional quality are the *Marqu@s de Riscal* and the *Marqu@s de Murieta*.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red and White Regionals	Spain (its most famous region)	48-63.	3-20+

Characteristics:

Ordinary to the few rare, old, excellent reservas (reserves or vintages).

Appropriate Foods:

Paella, red meat, bean dishes for the Red Rioja; Shellfish and seafood for the White.

Zinfandel**Description:**

Zinfandel is an inexpensive (usually) red or blush wine (both made from the Zinfandel grape) that can range in taste from sharp and full-bodied to smooth with earthy qualities. It may have originated in North America. White Zinfandel, an inappropriate name for a Rose or Blush wine, has become very popular.

Type:	Regions:	Temp:	Optimal Age:
Red Varietal (or blush)	California	60-63 deg.	3-10+

Characteristics:

Fruity, adaptable grape, sometimes metallic in flavor.

Appropriate Foods:

Turkey, light game, ratatouille, stews, casseroles for red; picnics and other light food for white.

Acidity

Refers to the level of acid found in wine, usually whites are more acidic than reds. Proper acid balance is important and can be described as fresh, lively, tangy and zesty. Too little acid tends to make a wine bland while too much can make it vinegary. Acidity is not to be confused with sourness.

Aftertaste

The taste left on the tongue after drinking wine. Some wines tend to have more aftertaste than others, some have hardly any.

Age



The period of time that a wine spends maturing to achieve its best flavor and aroma. Wines are aged in a variety of ways from large casks (such as oak or stainless steel) to bottles. Complex wines tend to benefit from aging whereas simple wines should be drunk when they are young.

Alcohol

A product of the fermentation of grapes that contributes to the taste of wine and acts as a preservative.

Appellation Controlee (AC)

Appellation Controlee is a guarantee that a wine was produced in a specific location by a particular method with approved grape varieties and in controlled quantities. Quality is not guaranteed but wines designated with the AC are usually of higher quality than those that are not.

Aroma

The smell of a young wine which may later develop into a mature bouquet in fine wines.

Auslese

German term referring to a wine with high natural sugar content.

Balance

The relationship among alcohol, sweetness, fruitiness, acidity and tannin found in a wine. Well balanced wines have a pleasant proportion of all these elements.

Beerenauslese

Sweet German white wine made from late harvested grapes. These wines are usually expensive and hard to find.

Big

Describes a wine with powerful flavor.

Blanc de Blancs

A white wine made from white grapes.

Blanc de Noirs

A white wine produced from red grapes.

Blush Wine

A pink wine that is produced from red grapes that have the skins removed before fermentation is complete. Same as a pale rosé.

Bodega

(1) Spanish for a winemaking establishment. (2) A wine store (3) A wine cellar.

Body

The weight and texture of a wine in the mouth, from light to robust.

Botrytis cinerea (Noble rot)

A mold used to concentrate the sugar and flavor of grapes.

Bouquet

The complex aroma of a matured wine. Not to be confused with the aroma of a young wine.

Breathing

Exposing a wine to the air by uncorking the bottle, for approximately 15 minutes before serving. Generally red wines require more breathing time than whites, which sometimes require none or sparkling wines which should not breath at all.

Brut

This refers to the driest type of champagne or other sparkling wines.

Buttery

A term used frequently to describe some Chardonnays and White Burgundies referring to the smooth texture and rich butter like flavor.

Carafe

A glass container frequently used to serve house wine in restaurants.

Cave

Some French wines are labeled 'Mis en bouteilles dans nos caves'. This means 'bottled in our cellars', but is no guarantee of quality.

Character

The distinctive attributes which give a wine its individuality.

Chateau

Quality French Bordeaux wines are labeled 'Mis en bouteille au chateau'. This means that the wines were estate bottled by the proprietor and is considered to be of high quality.

Claret

The British term for red Bordeaux wines.

Clean

A wine with no offensive odors or tastes.

Cloudy

A dull, hazy color in a wine.

Coarse

Rough, inelegant texture.

Complex

A word used to describe the rich variety of bouquet and flavors in a fine wine.

Corky

The odor and taste of cork that indicates deterioration of the wine.

Crisp

A wine with a good acid balance and is fresh and lively.

Cru

French for `growth' or vineyard.

Cuvée

French for a lot of a wine or a blend.

Decant

To gently pour a wine from one bottle to another so as not to disturb the sediment remaining in the bottom of the original bottle.

Delicate

A wine that is light of flavor, fragrance and body.

Demi-Sec

Champagne or other sparkling wines in their semi-sweet form.

Depth

The characteristic of a fine wine with several layers of flavor.

Dry

Wines that have had most or all of their sugar fermented into alcohol and as a result have little or no sweetness about them.

Earthy

The taste that soil imparts to wine grapes and consequently to the wine.

Edelföule

German term for the 'noble rot' mold which attacks the skins of some grapes thereby withering them and removing some of the juice. This results in a higher concentration of sugar so that the grapes produce rich, sweet wines.

Eiswein

A sweet, German wine made from grapes harvested and crushed after they have frozen on the vine.

Fermentation

The process that occurs when yeast changes the sugar in grapes (or some other organic materials) into alcohol and carbon dioxide.

Finesse

A French term used to refer to the 'finesness' of exceptionally elegant wines.

Firm

A well-balanced, tight combination of the different ingredients of a wine.

Flinty

A hard, stony taste in wine.

Flowery

The subtle taste and aroma of blossoms found in a wine. Not to be confused with sweetness.

Fortified

Wines that are made stronger by adding brandy.

Foxy

The wild taste found in some North American grape varieties.

Frizzante

An Italian word meaning semi-sparkling wines.

Fruity

The fresh taste and aroma found in some younger wines. Not to be confused with sweetness.

Full-bodied

Wines that are high in alcohol and soluble solids from the grape, that have a weighty and substantial taste.

Hard

A wine that has not aged enough to achieve a proper balance.

Herbaceous

Wine that has the flavor and aroma of herbs.

House

A term used for producers of Champagne.

Hybrid

Grapes that are bred from more than one grape variety. This breeding may improve the flavor or hardiness of the vine.

Jug Wines

Simple, casual, easily made wines that were originally bottled in jugs. In America jug wines are usually inexpensive and come in large bottle sizes.

Kabinett

Light German white wines made without additional sugar; low in alcohol content.

Kellerabfüllung

German term for 'estate bottled'. Also known as Original-Abfüllung.

Kosher Wine

A wine traditionally made from Concord grape and by Jewish law, under the supervision of a rabbi.

Labrusca

A species of grape found growing naturally in the United States.

Legs

Streams that run down the sides of a glass indicating a rich, full-bodied wine.

Light-bodied

A wine that is low in alcohol, texture and body.

Lively

A wine with high acidity and a crisp, fresh flavor.

Maderization

A process in which white wines become flat and dark due to excessive aging or poor storage. The term is derived from Madeira wine, which is dark.

Marrying

The blending of two or more wines in a cask in order to yield a wine with the desired characteristics.

Mature

A wine that has aged sufficiently and is ready to be drunk.

Medium-Bodied

A wine whose weight and texture on the tongue fall between light and full bodied.

Mousseux

French for sparkling.

Muscadines

A species of grape that is grown in South America.

Naturwein

German term for wines made without the addition of sugar.

Negociant

A shipper or dealer.

Noble Rot (Botrytis cinerea)

The standard name given to the mold which attacks the skins of some grapes thereby withering them and removing some of the juice. This results in a higher concentration of sugar so that the grapes produce rich, sweet wines

Non-Vintage Champagne

A Champagne containing the juice from grapes of different years.

Nose

A term used to describe the smell of a wine.

Oak

The taste of oak that is given to wine by the oak casks in which it is aged.

Oenology

The science or study of wine.

Oenophile

A connoisseur of wine.

Organic Wine

Wine processed from grapes grown free of chemical pesticides or fertilizers.

Oxidation

The process of young and fruity white wine turning stale, flat and brownish in color. Sometimes referred to as maderization.

Petillant

French term for a very lightly sparkling wine.

Piquant

The agreeably sharp taste found in a light wine.

Proprietaire

The owner of an estate, chateau or vineyard.

Rich

A full bodied wine with good flavor and bouquet.

Robust

Refers to a strong and powerful wine, usually red.

Rosé

A light pink wine made from red grapes that have had their skins removed before fermentation is complete.

Rough

Not smooth. Immature.

Round

A mature, full-bodied wine that is smooth and graceful.

Sec

French for dry. In Champagne, sweeter than Brut.

Sediment

The fine deposits which may develop in some aged wines. May require that the wine be decanted before drinking.

Simple

An uncomplicated, ordinary wine.

Soft

A desirable characteristic in a delicate wine denoting a slight fruitiness. Also refers to a deficiency or lack of balance in more robust wines.

Sour

A spoiled wine with a vinegary taste.

Sparkling Wines

Wines containing bubbles of carbon dioxide gas (a byproduct of fermentation), which are retained in the wine.

Spicy

The aroma and taste of spice such as, cinnamon, clove or pepper, which comes from certain grape varieties such as gewⁿrtztraminer (literally spicy traminer).

Spumante

Italian term for sparkling wines.

Still Wine

Wines without carbon dioxide bubbles.

Sweet

Wines with a high sugar content and a sugary taste.

Table Wine

A still wine that has not been 'fortified' with brandy.

Tannins

Substances naturally found in the skins, stalks and pips of grapes, and in wood casks, that impart dryness and act as a preservative to wine. Can make young inferior wines taste harsh, but it adds to the balance of fine wines when aged.

Tart

An overly acidic wine.

Trockenbeerenauslese

The sweetest German white wines made from late harvested grapes which have shriveled into raisin-like berries.

Vanilla

An aroma and flavor of vanilla that is a characteristic of wines that are aged in oak casks.

Varietal Wines

Wines that are named after the grape from which they are made. In California the varietal grape must comprise 75% of the wine.

VDQS

French term 'Vin Delimite de Qualite Superieure', or Quality Wines from Delimited Areas. These wines are below the category Appellation Controllee in quality, but above vin de table.

Vin du Pap

French term for locally made and consumed wines from lesser-known areas.

Vin Gris

A dry pale blush win produced from red grapes.

Vinifera

The family of European wine grapes from which the world's finest wines are made.

Vin Ordinaire

French term for common table wine.

Vinous

Having a characteristic similar to wine.

Vintage

The annual harvest and wine produced from it.

Vintage Champagne

A champagne good enough to have the year it was made on its label.

Vintner

A person who makes wine.

Weighty

A rich, full-bodied wine that is heavy on the tongue.

Weingut

1. German term for estate or vineyard. 2. German term for the physical defect in truck drivers who consume too much wine during their driving careers.

Woody

1. Smell of a wine aged too long in a cask or aged in a cask made with faulty wood.

Yeast

A fungi found on the skins of grapes that causes fermentation. Some wine makers add their own yeast to aid fermentation.

Young

A desirable characteristic in simple wines that refers to its freshness and vitality. In complex wines, young refers to a wine that is not sufficiently aged.





Australia



Australia is rapidly becoming a country recognized for the production of quality wines. Recently introduced technologies have enabled Australia to produce finer wines in greater varieties than ever before.

Regions of Australia have climatic conditions similar to California. Australian wines are not known to carry labels designating the wine region, although some regions are gaining enough prominence to warrant such labeling. These include the Clare/Watervale, Murray Valley, Hunter Valley and the Coonawarra regions.



The most popular wines of Australia are the Shiraz, Cabernet Semillion, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay.



Australia



Argentina



Argentina is one of the largest wine producers in the world and the largest in South America. These wines, once consumed only locally, are now beginning to be exported. They are usually inexpensive and represent a good value.

Mendoza province is the location of most of the country's quality vineyards. San Rafael, Salta and Rio Negro also produce good wines. While a wide variety of other wines are produced, Argentina's best wines are the Cabernet Sauvignons and Chardonnays. Argentina's wines have recently received acclaim and awards in wine shows and hold great promise for the future.



Argentina



Chile



While not a particularly large producer of wine, Chile creates its share of good wines. Like other South American countries, Chile's Chardonnays, Sauvignon Blancs and distinctive Cabernets are good wines at reasonable prices.

The climate in Chile's central region is ideal for the production of wine. The Maipo Valley is the primary region with some southern regions also gaining in popularity. Modern equipment and processes have contributed to Chile's wine-making growth.



Chile

MAIN SEARCH INDEX BACK PRINT PREV NEXT HELP EXIT

The Interactive Wine Cellar



England



Although nearly a million bottles of wine are consumed annually in England, the country has not been a large player in the international wine community .

England's wine regions are fairly small, approximately 2,500 acres. The climate is generally moist and cool and consequently more ideal for white-grape varieties than red. English wines have strong German influences and use primarily French and German grapes in their production.

The majority of wines produced and consumed in England are the white varieties, Chardonnay and Chablis, and also the blush wines.



RETURN TO WORLD MAP

England Europe



France



Climate variations throughout France make for a wide assortment of wine styles. France produces many of the world's fine wines, notably those of the great Bordeaux and Burgundy regions. Other wine regions include Alsace, Champagne, and the Rhone Valley.

French wines are divided into two general categories: Vin Ordinaire and Appellation Controlee. Vin Ordinaire refers to modest, everyday wines produced for general consumption. For higher quality wines, however, strict guidelines have been imposed on both the wine-making process and on accurate labeling. The Appellation Controlee designation indicates that the guidelines have been followed and that the label specifies precise information regarding the wine and its origin.



Finally, French champagne is esteemed worldwide, as are the brandies made from the fine champagnes of the Cognac region.



[MAIN](#)[SEARCH](#)[INDEX](#)[BACK](#)[PRINT](#)[PREV](#)[NEXT](#)[HELP](#)[EXIT](#)

The
Interactive
Wine Cellar



Germany



Germany, long known for its fine beers, is also a large producer of wine. Some would say that, based on wine production prior to 1988, they should stick to beer. Germany has had somewhat confusing laws regarding quality standards that seriously affected the wine produced by that country. Fortunately, since 1988, changes have been taking place that point to renewed pride in wine production by the wine makers of Germany. They are disregarding the poor wine-making laws in favor of producing higher quality wines.

Due to lower amounts of sunshine during the growing seasons, Germany's wine regions do not enjoy the same beneficial climate found in the great wine regions of the world. Despite this, German wine makers have been able to produce some fine wines in smaller yields. These are made primarily from the Johannisberg Riesling grape. This grape's high resistance to cold makes it ideal for wine production in Germany's cooler climate.

Gewurztraminer, which is gaining popularity worldwide, is used for much of the rest of Germany's wines. Its spicy flavors make it a unique and popular wine.



[RETURN TO
WORLD MAP](#)

Germany Europe

MAIN

SEARCH

INDEX

BACK

PRINT

PREV

NEXT

HELP

EXIT

The
Interactive
Wine Cellar

Hungary



Hungary is best known for Tokay, an amber-colored desert wine. By not harvesting until late in the season, the overripe grapes shrivel up and become affected by "noble rot" (*Botrytis cinerea*) which generates the characteristic high sugar content common to sweet wines such as Tokay, French Sauterne, and German Trockenbeerenauslese.

The best Tokay grapes are grown in the northeast corner of Hungary near the city of Tokaj by the river Bodrog. For the sweetest and highest grade of Tokay, look for bottles with the word "Essencia" on the label. Bottles thus marked are expensive and in high demand because they are made from grapes with sugar contents as high as 60 percent and also because they are usually cellared for six or seven years before being released. The more reasonably-priced "Aszu" Tokays use the "puttonyo" as a sweetness scale — with five puttonyo being the highest and three the lowest.



The best-known Hungarian red wine is Eger Bikavér or "Bull's Blood." Hearty and full-bodied, it is an inexpensive and acceptable everyday wine. Reliable Hungarian whites include Debreceni, Badacsony Szarkebart, and Letnyka. Whenever possible, avoid the Hungarian wine called Duna.



Hungary



Italy



Italy is both the largest producer and the largest consumer of wines in the world. Due to legislation controlling production and labeling, the purchase of Italian wines was often somewhat perplexing. Recent legislative changes in this area, however, have reestablished Italy's reputation as one of the world's great wine-making countries.

Piedmont, Tuscany, and Veneto are the largest wine-growing regions in Italy, and the country produces a broad spectrum of fine wines. Among the highly-favored red wines, Chianti, Barolo and Barbera are the most popular; among white wines, Soave, Pinot Grigio and Frascati are preferred. Italy produces some of the world's best wines, and the quality of many of them rivals the wines of France.



MAIN SEARCH INDEX BACK PRINT PREV NEXT HELP EXIT

The Interactive Wine Cellar

New Zealand



New Zealand's cool climate lends itself to the growth of white grape varieties and, as a result, the country produces white table wines of high quality. Wine production in New Zealand has virtually exploded over the last decade and continues to grow. It's major producing regions are in Martinborough, Canterbury and Central Otago.

Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay are the most popular, although Riesling is also beginning to enjoy favor. Traditionally, red wines have not fared all that well, although some respectable vintages have reportedly been produced.



RETURN TO WORLD MAP

New Zealand



Portugal



Portugal is known mainly for Port, but the country also makes wines similar to those of neighboring Spain. Except for its famous Ports, however, the majority of Portugal's wines seldom find their way into the United States.

Portugal has four main wine regions, Bairrada, Douro, Alentejo and Minho. These regions are relatively small compared to other wine-producing countries.

The wines of Portugal include, Ports, Branco (white), Clarete, Doce Rosando (blush) and DAO wines.



Portugal



Spain



Spain follows Italy and France in wine production, but has more wine acreage than any other European wine country. Spain produces fine wines as well as wine derivatives such as Sherry. The main growing regions are Catalonia, Rioja, Navarra, and Rueda. Wines from Spain include Rioja (including Reserva and Gran Reserva designations), Sherry, Crianza, Penedes, Bodega, and Navarra.



Spain



United States



The United States is one of the greatest wine-producing nations of the world. While wine making is nearly ubiquitous throughout America, the climate and soil of much of California makes it an ideal location for the cultivation of the fine European grape

varieties used in the creation of red and white wines of superior quality. California boasts over 600 vineyards. In general, the best wines come from Napa, Sonoma, and Mendocino counties.

Other wine regions of America include certain areas on Long Island and the Hudson Valley in New York State and the Yakima Valley in Washington State. The United States produces a broad spectrum of outstanding wines including such notable types as Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc among the white wines and Cabernet, Merlot, and Zinfandel among the reds. Quality champagnes and other sparkling wines are also produced.



USA United States U.S.A.

Acidity

Refers to the level of acid found in wine. Too little acid tends to make a wine bland, while too much can make it vinegary. Acidity is not to be confused with sourness.

Aftertaste

The taste left on the tongue after drinking wine. It is also referred to as the finish. Some wines tend to have more aftertaste than others. Some have hardly any.

Age



The period of time that a wine spends maturing to achieve its best flavor and aroma. Wines are aged in a variety of ways from large casks (such as oak or stainless steel) to bottles. Complex wines tend to benefit from aging, whereas simple wines should be drunk when they are young.

Alcohol

A product of the fermentation of grapes that contributes to the taste of wine and acts as a preservative.

Apéritif

Any alcoholic beverage such as Champagne, Vermouth, or white wine that is taken before a meal as an "appetizer".

Appellation Controlée (AC)

Appellation Controlée is a guarantee that a wine was produced in a specific location by a particular method with approved grape varieties and in controlled quantities. Quality is not guaranteed, but wines designated with the AC are usually of higher quality than those that are not.

Aroma

The smell of a young wine which may later develop into a mature bouquet in fine wines.

Asti Spumante

A sparkling white wine made from the Moscato grape produced in and around Asti in the Piedmont region of northern Italy. It is sometimes referred to as the "Champagne of Italy".

Auslese

German term referring to a wine with high natural sugar content.

Balance

The relationship among alcohol, sweetness, fruitiness, acidity and tannin found in a wine. Well-balanced wines have a pleasant proportion of all these elements.

Bardolino

A light, red, slightly-sweet wine produced in the Veneto region of Northern Italy. Bardolino is best drunk when young.

Beerenauslese

Sweet German white wine made from late harvested grapes. These wines are usually expensive and hard to find.

Big

Describes a wine with powerful flavor.

Blanc de Blancs

A white wine made from white grapes.

Blanc de Noirs

A white wine produced from red grapes.

Blush Wine

A pink wine produced from grape juice or must from which the grape skins have been removed before fermentation is complete. Same as a pale rosé.

Bodega

(1) Spanish for a winemaking establishment. (2) A wine store (3) A wine cellar.

Body

The weight and texture of a wine in the mouth, from light to robust.

Botrytis cinerea (Noble rot)

A mold that concentrates the sugar and flavor of grapes.

Bouquet

The complex aroma of a matured wine. Not to be confused with the aroma of a young wine.

Breathing

Exposing a wine to the air by uncorking the bottle before serving. Generally, red wines require more breathing time than whites, which sometimes require none. Sparkling wines, for instance, do not need to breathe.

Brut

This refers to the driest type of champagne or other sparkling wines.

Buttery

A term used frequently to describe some Chardonnays and White Burgundies referring to the smooth texture and rich, butter-like flavor.

Carafe

A glass container frequently used to serve house wine in restaurants.

Cave

Some French wines are labeled "*Mis en bouteilles dans nos caves*". This means 'bottled in our cellars', but is no guarantee of quality.

Character

The distinctive attributes which give a wine its individuality.

Chateau

Quality French Bordeaux wines are labeled "*Mis en bouteille au chateau*". This means that the wines were estate bottled by the proprietor and are considered to be of high quality.

Claret

The British term for red Bordeaux wines.

Clean

A wine with no offensive odors or tastes.

Cloudy

A dull, hazy color in a wine.

Coarse

Rough, inelegant texture.

Complex

A word used to describe the rich variety of bouquet and flavors in a fine wine.

Color

Color refers to the "look" of a wine. That is, the actual color (red, yellow, brown etc.), its opacity (clear, cloudy), and other characteristics. If the color of a wine is wrong for that wine, it may be bad or not yet aged enough.

Concord

A native American blue-black grape used to make jelly, grape juice and Kosher wines.

Corky

The odor and taste of cork that indicates deterioration of the wine.

Crackling

Used to indicate a wine that is mildly sparkling.

Crisp

A wine with a good acid balance that is fresh and lively.

Cru

French word for "growth". Superior growths are classified by several names including *Grand Cru* and *Premier Cru*.

Cuvée

French for a lot of a wine or a blend.

Decant



To gently pour a wine from one bottle to another so as not to disturb the sediment remaining in the bottom of the original bottle.

Delicate

A wine that is light of flavor, fragrance and body.

Demi-Sec

Champagne or other sparkling wines in their semi-sweet form.

Depth

The characteristic of a fine wine with several layers of flavor.

Dessert Wines



Sweet wines such as Sauternes and fortified wines such as Port are generally served after meals or with desserts.

Dry

Wines that have had most or all of their sugar fermented into alcohol and as a result have little or no sweetness about them.

Earthy

The taste that soil imparts to wine grapes and consequently to the wine.

Edelfäule

German term for the 'Noble rot' mold which attacks the skins of some grapes thereby withering them and removing some of the juice. This results in a higher concentration of sugar so that the grapes produce rich, sweet wines.

Eiswein

A sweet, German wine made from grapes harvested and crushed after they have frozen on the vine.

Fermentation

The process that occurs when yeast changes the sugar in grapes into alcohol and carbon dioxide.

Finesse

A French term used to refer to the 'finesness' of exceptionally elegant wines.

Firm

A well-balanced, tight combination of the different ingredients of a wine.

Flinty

A hard, stony taste in wine.

Flowery

The subtle taste and aroma of blossoms found in a wine. Not to be confused with sweetness.

Fortified

Wines that are made stronger by adding brandy.

Foxy

The wild taste found in some North American grape varieties.

Frizzante

An Italian word meaning semi-sparkling wines.

Fruity

The fresh taste and aroma found in some younger wines. Not to be confused with sweetness.

Full-bodied

Wines, high in alcohol and soluble solids from the grape, that have a weighty and substantial taste.

Generic Wines



Wines made from a variety of grapes and that do not use the varietal grape names. The most common generic wines are the red and white "jug" wines.

Hard

A wine that has not aged enough to achieve a proper balance.

Herbaceous

Wine that has the flavor and aroma of herbs.

House

A term used for producers of Champagne.

Hybrid

Grapes that are bred from more than one grape variety. This breeding may improve the flavor or hardiness of the vine.

Jug Wines

Simple, everyday wines that were originally bottled in jugs. In America, jug wines are usually inexpensive and come in larger sized bottles.

Kabinett

Light, German white wines made without additional sugar that are relatively low in alcohol content.

Kellerabfullung

German term for "estate bottled". Also known as *Original-Abfullung*.

Kosher Wine

A wine traditionally made from Concord grapes and, by Jewish law, under the supervision of a rabbi.

Labrusca

A species of grape found growing naturally in the United States.

Lacrima Christi

A lovely white wine (although some red is also produced) derived from grapes grown on the volcanic slopes of Mount Vesuvius, an active volcano in Southwest Italy near Naples. The name means "Tears of Christ".

Legs

Streams that run down the sides of a glass indicating a rich, full-bodied wine.

Light-bodied

A wine that is low in alcohol, texture, and body.

Lively

A wine with high acidity and a crisp, fresh flavor.

Madeira

A process in which white wines become flat and dark due to excessive aging or poor storage. The term is derived from Madeira wine which is dark.

Maderization

A rich, white fortified wine resembling Sherry originally produced on the Portuguese island off the coast of west Africa of the same name. The more important varieties of Madeira are Sercial, Rainwater, Boal (or Bual), and Malmsey. The latter is often touted as an aphrodisiac.

Marrying

The blending of two or more wines in a cask in order to yield a wine with more desirable characteristics.

Marsala

Italy's most famous fortified wine is produced on the Island of Sicily and usually contains about 17% to 20% alcohol. The better Marsalas such as *Marsala Superiore* and *Marsala Vergini* (or *Solera*) are comparable to Sherry.

Mature

A wine that has aged sufficiently and is ready to be drunk.

Medium-Bodied

A wine whose weight and texture on the tongue fall between light and full bodied.

Mousseux

French for sparkling.

Muscadines

Species of vines that produce the Scuppernon, Mish, and James grapes that are grown in Southern parts of North America. Low sugar contents and high acidity are characteristic of the Muscadines.

Naturwein

German term for wines made without the addition of sugar.

Negociant

A shipper or dealer.

Noble Rot (Botrytis cinerea)

The standard name given to the mold which attacks the skins of some grapes thereby withering them and removing some of the juice. This results in a higher concentration of sugar so that the grapes produce rich, sweet wines

Non-Vintage Champagne

A Champagne containing the juice from grapes of different years.

Nose

A term used to describe the smell of a wine.

Oak

The taste of oak that is given to wine by the oak casks in which it is aged.

Oenology (Also Enology)

The science or study of wine.

Oenophile (Also Enophile)

A wine lover or connoisseur of wine.

Organic Wine

Wine processed from grapes grown free of chemical pesticides or fertilizers.

Oxidation

A flaw that occurs in young and fruity white wine turning them flat and brownish in color. Sometimes referred to as maderization.

Petillant

French term for a very lightly sparkling wine.

Phylloxera (phylloxera vastatrix)

A insect (specifically a plant louse) that attacks the roots of vines. Phylloxera caused widespread damage in the wine producing countries of Europe and also in California during the latter half of the 19th century.

Piquant

The agreeably sharp taste found in a light wine.

Proprietaire

The owner of an estate, chateau or vineyard.

Racking

The process of drawing off the clear wine from the sediment by transferring it from one barrel or vat to another. Better wines are racked two, three, and sometimes more times before bottling.

Rich

A full-bodied wine with good flavor and bouquet.

Robust

Refers to a strong and powerful wine, usually red.

Rosé

A pink wine produced from grape juice or must from which the grape skins have been removed before fermentation is complete.

Rough

Not smooth. Immature.

Round

A mature, full-bodied wine that is smooth and graceful.

SakΘ

A colorless Japanese wine made from fermented rice. It is usually served warm in very small cups. Alcohol content ranges from 12% to 16%. The most familiar type of SakΘ is called *seishu*. There is also the sweet and spicy SakΘ called *tosō* and another called *mirin* that is used in cooking.

Sec

French for dry. Among Champagnes, sweeter than Brut.

Sediment

The fine deposits which may develop in some aged wines. May require that the wine be decanted before drinking.

Simple

An uncomplicated, ordinary wine.

Smell

Smell is one of the best indicators of a wine's quality. It is comprised of varying factors: the aroma, the bouquet and the nose of the wine. If off it could indicate a bad or underaged wine. Experiment to train your nose to appreciate the "smell" of a wine.

Soft

A desirable characteristic in a delicate wine denoting a slight fruitiness. Also refers to a deficiency or lack of balance in more robust wines.

Sour

A spoiled wine with a vinegary taste.

Sparkling Wines

Wines containing bubbles of carbon dioxide gas (a byproduct of fermentation).

Spicy

The aroma and taste of spice such as, cinnamon, clove or pepper which comes from certain grape varieties such as gewürztraminer (literally spicy traminer).

Spumante

Italian term for sparkling wine.

Still Wine

Wines without carbon dioxide bubbles.

Sweet

Wines with a high sugar content and a sugary taste.

Table Wine

- 1) Simple, everyday wines (*Vin de Table*).
- 2) A still wine that has not been 'fortified' with brandy.

Tannins

Substances naturally found in the skins, stalks, and pips of grapes and in wood casks that impart dryness and act as a preservative to wine. Can make young inferior wines taste harsh, but adds to the balance of aged fine wines.

Tart

An overly acidic wine.

Taste

The taste of a wine is created by the combination of a variety of elements. The acidity of the wine, the alcohol content, the sugar content, tannins and other elements unique to each particular wine. Each combination of these elements yields a taste that is distinct for each wine.

Trockenbeerenauslese

The sweetest German white wines made from late-harvested grapes that have shriveled into raisin-like berries.

Vanilla

An aroma and flavor of vanilla that is a characteristic of wines that are aged in oak casks.

Varietal Wines

Wines that are named after the grape from which they are made (e.g. Zinfandel). In California, the varietal grape must comprise 75% of the wine.

VDQS

French term "*Vins D'limités de Qualité Supérieure*" or Quality Wines from Delimited Areas. These wines are below the category *Appellation Contrôlée* in quality, but above *vin de table*.

Vin Gris

A dry, pale blush wine produced from red grapes.

Vinifera

The family of European wine grapes from which the world's finest wines are made.

Vin Ordinaire

French term for common table wine.

Vinous

Having a characteristic similar to wine.

Vintage

The annual harvest and the wine produced from it.

Vintage Champagne

A champagne made from grapes from a single harvest versus a blend (*Cuvée*) from several harvest years. The year of the vintage can be found on the label.

Vintner

A person who makes wine.

Weighty

A rich, full-bodied wine that is heavy on the tongue.

Weingut

1. German term for estate or vineyard.

Woody

1. Smell of a wine aged too long in a cask or aged in a cask made with faulty wood.

Yeast

A single-celled microorganism found on the skins of grapes that causes fermentation. Some wine makers add their own yeast to aid fermentation.

Young

A desirable characteristic in simple wines that refers to its freshness and vitality. In complex wines, young refers to a wine that is not sufficiently aged.

