

WINE WISE

(SOME OF) THE STUFF
YOU ALWAYS WANTED
TO KNOW ABOUT WINE

From a South African Perspective



CAPE OF GOOD WINE and CASSIDY DART MW

TRANSLATED BY MLONDOLOZI PUTE

I have been lucky enough to work with wine my entire professional life.

It's greatest attribute and perhaps biggest challenge is its inherent complexity.

We need more people drinking wine and not being afraid of it.

South Africa is making the greatest wine in its almost 300 year history, and our aim of this guide was to attach contemporary South African wine alongside an international context and to encourage a new generation of wine drinkers.

Cassidy Dart MW

I've always enjoyed wine but it wasn't until I learned more about it that I found a true appreciation. When we're able to appreciate wine, there's less inclination to abuse it. There's respect for how it's made: the land, the raw ingredients and most importantly, the people. Wine represents people. Our endless combination of quirks, how our histories are woven together, our cultures and the way we celebrate. And yes, our different colours. Wine Wise is my attempt to encourage more people to appreciate wine...so that, ultimately, when I'm next at the wine store, wine farm, or tasting event, I'll see more people who look like me.

Cape of Good Wine



**KUNYE
THE WINE
WISE**

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01. A BRIEF HISTORY OF WINE

Wine has been made
for a very long time.
Far longer than most
of us would have ever
considered.

Wine has been made for a very long time. Far longer than most of us would have ever considered.

8000 BC

In 8000 BC, the ancient Egyptians and Chinese made fermented beverages from fruits (including grapes), honey, and rice. They'd store these in earthenware jars.

4100 BC

The oldest winery in the world was traced to Armenia circa 4100 BC. Winemaking earthenware vessels were submerged in the ground in Israel, Georgia, Armenia, and Iran.

1500 BC-1200 BC

From 1500 BC to 1200 BC, during the Iron Age in Northern Europe, barrels were the preferred container for storing and shipping wine.

1500 BC-300 BC

Phoenicians spread *Vitis vinifera* throughout the Mediterranean from 1500 BC to 300 BC.

900 BC-100 BC

During 900 BC to 100 BC, clay amphorae were used to store and transport wine in ancient Greece and Rome.

1500'S

But that's the Old World. How did we come to enjoy wine in the New World? In the 1500s, Portuguese explorers transported vines and introduced winemaking to Brazil. Yes, Brazil has a long history of grape growing and wine production. The Spanish brought *Vitis vinifera* to the Americas. The Dutch started the

South African wine industry. And finally, the British introduced winemaking to Australia and New Zealand.

1659

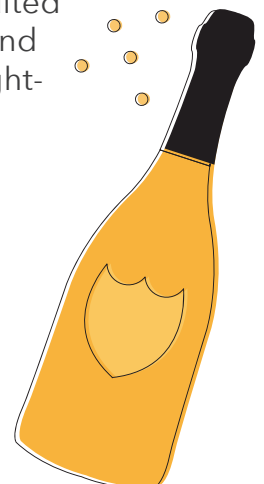
Here in South Africa, 02 February is a very special day. As it is on this day, in 1659, Jan van Riebeeck first pressed wine in the Cape.

1685

But it was Governor Simon van der Stel who truly furthered the South African wine industry, establishing Constantia Wine Estate. After his death, the estate would be split and sold into what are now Groot Constantia, Klein Constantia, and Buitenverwachting.

1693

In 1693, Dom Pérignon 'invents' champagne, exclaiming "Come quickly, I am drinking stars!". In actuality, there was less invention and far more surprise at exploding corks - a frightening side effect of the wine undergoing refermentation inside the bottles. Even though the poet Samuel Butler referred to 'brisk champagne' as early as 1663, there is a valid argument that Sir Christopher Merret discovered champagne when he added sugar to bottles of wine that resulted in the wine refermenting and creating bubbles. In an eight-page paper delivered to the Royal Society in 1662, Merret details the use of sugar or molasses to give wine or cider some fizz. This would predate the famous monk by three decades.



1740

Interestingly, wine bottles weren't always laid on their sides. In

1740, wine bottles were redesigned to enable them to lay on their sides. Having the bottles on their sides allowed the wine to stay in contact with the cork, ensuring that the cork stayed moist. Without moisture, the corks would dry out and crack, resulting in oxygen exposure that would spoil the wine. This bottle redesign would allow for long-term ageability.

MID 1800'S

Continuing with the bottle improvements, sparkling wines gained popularity in the mid-

1800s partially thanks to more consistent wine bottle production. Sparkling wines can exert an internal pressure of around five to six atmospheres. Developing a bottle that could withstand that pressure surely saved lives.

1900'S

In the 1900s, phylloxera destroyed roughly 70% of French vineyards.

This microscopic pest, native to America and accidentally introduced to Europe, attacks the roots of *Vitis vinifera* vines when in its louse form. *Vitis vinifera* is not able to protect itself from the pest, the vine is weakened and eventually dies. However, American vines are naturally immune to phylloxera. The solution to phylloxera was to graft the European *Vitis vinifera* cane onto the resistant American rootstock, producing the sought after European grape flavours with the safety and resistance of American vines but with none of its wild and foxy flavours.

1920 TO 1933

During the 1920-1933 prohibition, statewide

legislation banned almost all production, importation, transportation, and sales of alcohol in the United States of America. This undoubtedly delivered a massive blow to the burgeoning U.S. wine industry, setting it back by many decades. Alcohol consumption wasn't illegal - only the sale and distribution of alcohol were. There were a few exceptions to the ban - sacramental wines were permitted for religious purposes, and pharmacies could sell 'medicinal whisky'. Amazingly, 10 states still have counties where the sale of alcohol is still prohibited.

1925

A cross between Pinot Noir and Cinsaut (then known as

Hermitage in South Africa) was created in 1925 by Abraham Izak Perold, the first professor of viticulture at Stellenbosch University. Professor Perold was aiming to create a more robust Pinot Noir with the best characteristics of the more dependable Cinsaut.

1965

The first bag-in-box wines were invented in Australia in 1965.

1978

In 1978, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate established a

100-point wine rating system.

1994

1994 Apartheid is abolished in South Africa in 1994, opening up the overseas market and allowing South Africa to shed itself of the mass-produced co-op wines that it had built its wine industry upon.

2010

Cabernet Sauvignon became the most planted grape in the world in 2010. It holds this position to this day.

2018

2018 Kanonkop's Paul Sauer becomes the first South African wine to receive a 100-point score by a Master of Wine from the UK in 2018.





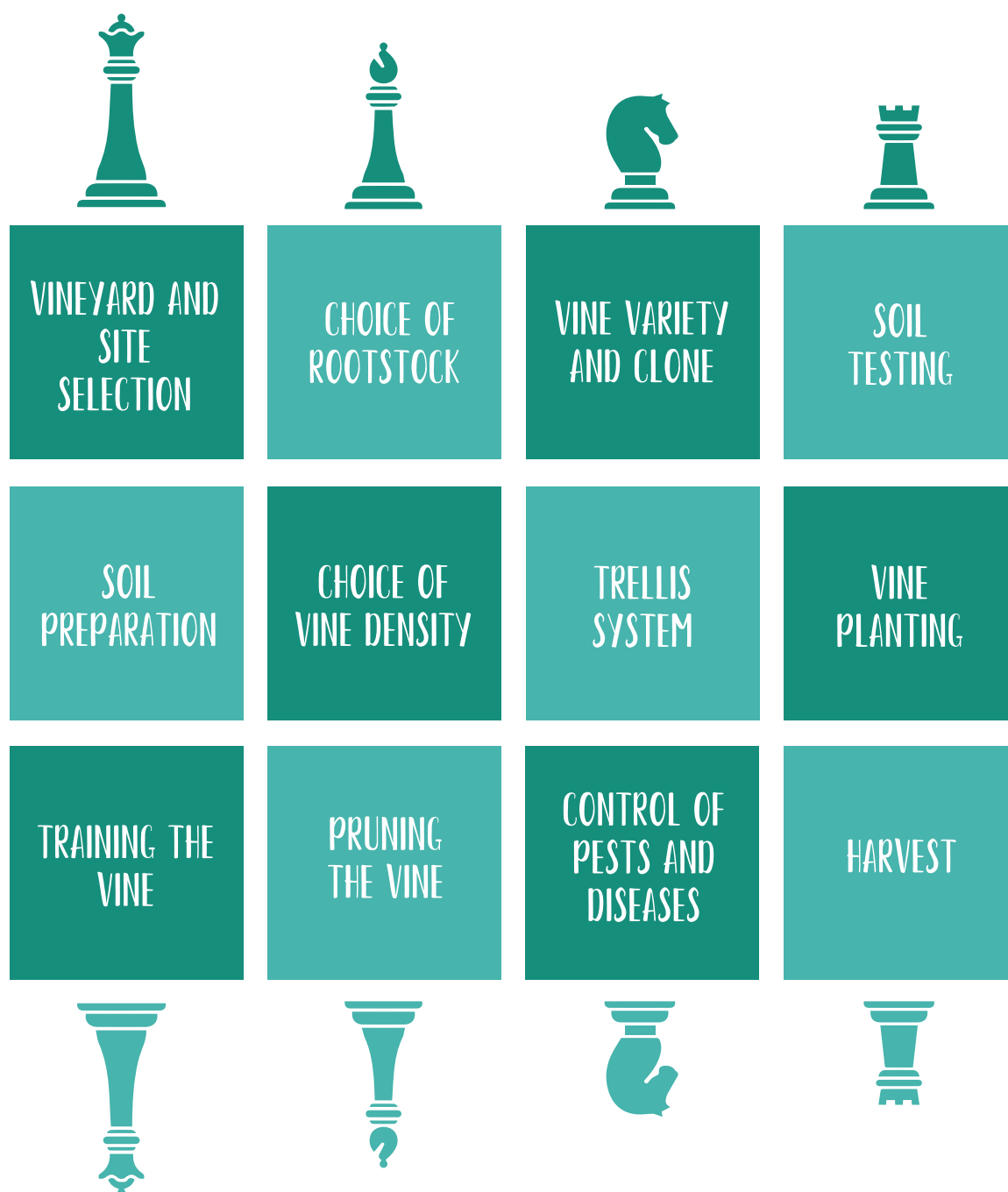
02. VITICULTURE

Growing grapes
is hard work.

Growing grapes is hard work.

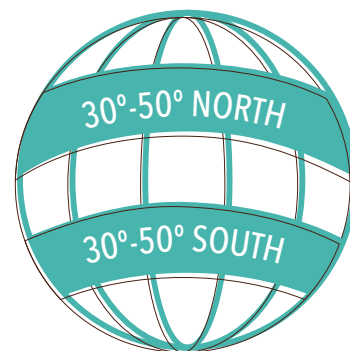
There are many factors to consider, some outside of the grower's control. It is a risky industry, but it can result in great reward.

The viticulturist (science and practice of grape culture) has as great an impact on wine quality as does the winemaker. Below are a few of the most important considerations for the viticulturist an



30° to 50°

Wine grapevines are grown between 30° to 50° south of the equator and 30° to 50° north of the equator. These are the areas where grapes can survive and thrive, receiving enough sunlight and warmth to produce a successful yearly crop. Anything further away from the equator would be too cold for the vines to survive. Anything too close to the equator becomes too tropical and hot to produce a viable harvest.



With global warming, we've seen and will continue to see these boundaries being expanded. e.g. England now has a growing wine industry.

The lifecycle of the grapevine

The lifecycle of the grapevine remains constant. Some vintages may be harvested earlier, and others later. But the pattern remains the same...

Budbreak - early spring when the vines start showing signs of life

Early Shoot & Leaf Growth - where the shoots start to unravel and produce their little leaves

Flowering & Fruitset - we start to see the clusters of flowers that will be pollinated and develop into clusters of berries

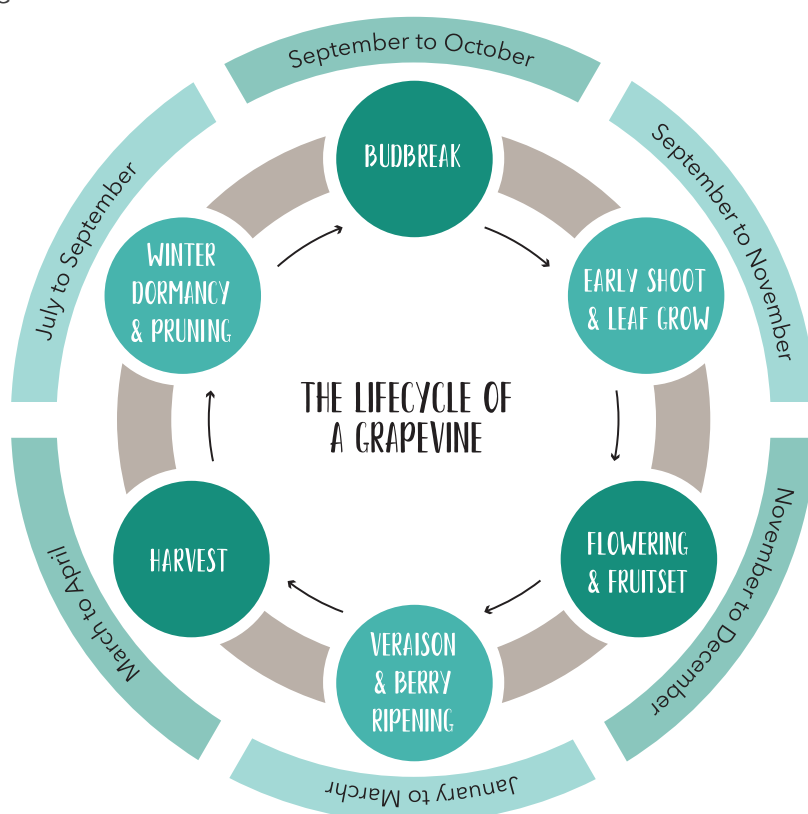
Veraison & Berry Ripening - a marvellous time in the vineyards with the berries starting to change colour (white grapes change from green to pale translucent yellow, black grapes change from green to purple)

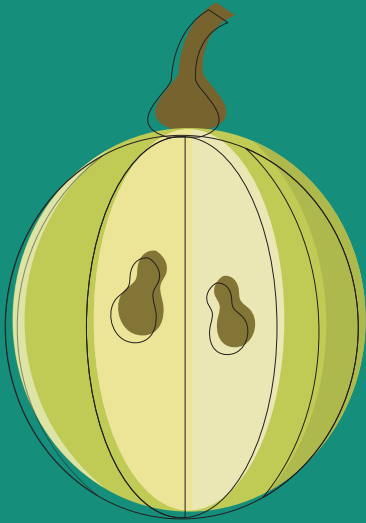
Harvest - mid-to-late summer, our favourite time of year when the vineyards and wineries come alive with frenetic activity as viticulturists and winemakers weigh up the best time to pick and process the grapes

Winter Dormancy & Pruning - at the end of autumn, the vines drop

their leaves and prepare for a hard-earned slumber, an opportune time to prune the vines and secure the structure for the next season.

...and then we do it all again next year.





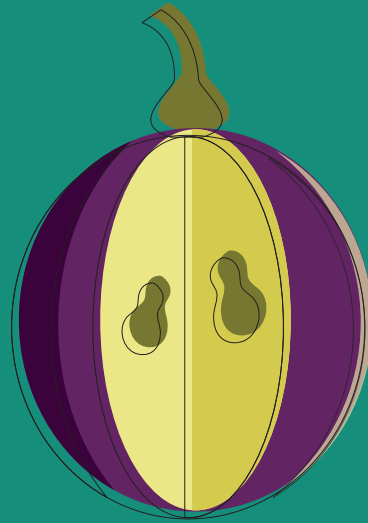
WHITE GRAPE



WHITE



ORANGE



BLACK GRAPE



RED



ROSÉ



WHITE

An important part to understanding how wine is made is to understand the various elements in a grape that contribute to the end product.

Starting at the top, the **stems** contain tannins, with their inclusion, or exclusion, having a marked impact on the wine.

The **skins** contain colour, tannins and flavour. The longer the grape juice remains in contact with the skins, the more flavour, tannins and colour can be extracted into the juice.

This also explains how it is possible to produce white wines from black-skinned grapes. e.g. Champagne and blanc de noirs.

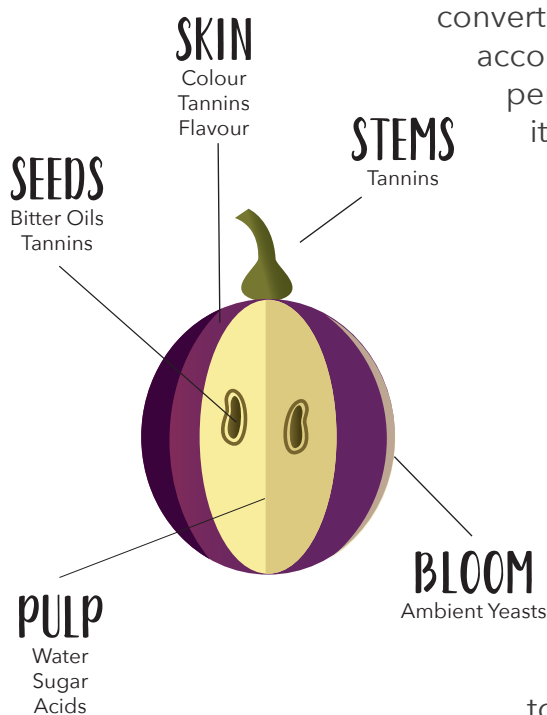
If a black grape is pressed immediately, little colour is extracted because the pulp of most grapes is clear. There are some grapes with tinted pulp. These grapes are known as *teinturier*, and their resultant wines have a richer colour. However, most grapes have clear pulp.

You may have noticed a waxy film coating the outside of unwashed grapes. This is usually most noticeable on black grapes. This film is called the **bloom**, and

it contains native yeasts that are able to ferment the grapes when they come into contact with the juice. Think back to 8000 BC, before cultured yeasts were harvested. It was these native, or ambient yeasts that fermented those first wines. Yeasts originated millions of years ago and can be found all around us, including in vineyards and inside wineries. We currently recognise at least 1,500 different species.

Inside the grape, you will find the pulp and seeds. **Pulp** consists of mainly water, with sugars and acids. Ergo, most of your bottle of wine is made up of water, acids, and the sugars that have been converted to alcohol. Flavour accounts for a minute percentage in wine. Yet, it's the flavour that is the most important to us.

The **seeds** contain bitter oils and tannins. Tannins help add structure to a wine. That structure makes it possible to age a wine. We certainly want the structure, but not too much of the bitter oils. When wines are pressed to release their juices



(the harder you press, the more juice you get) the winemaker needs to be incredibly mindful of pressing too hard and releasing too much of these bitter, unpleasant oils. In Champagne, there are strict rules that legally require producers to press the grapes only to a certain pressure.

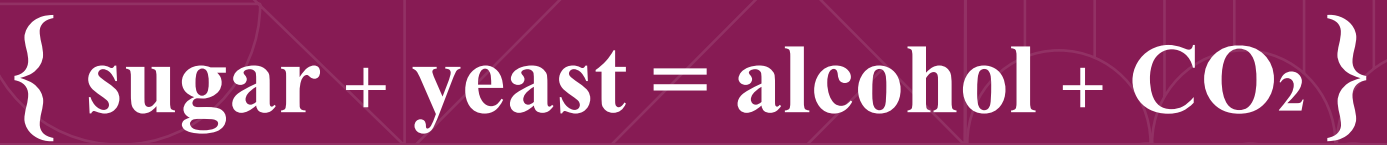
So with all that pressing I'm sure you're wondering just how many grapes it takes to make a bottle of wine? One grapevine yields approximately 10 bottles of wine. There are roughly 400 grapes in each bottle of wine. If a wine bottle pours four glasses, and my maths is to be relied upon, each delicious glass equates to 100 grapes.

1 GRAPEVINE
EQUALS
± 10 BOTTLES OF
WINE

± 400 GRAPES
EQUALS
1 BOTTLE OF
WINE



03. WINEMAKING



Sulfur dioxide

Sulfur dioxide kills bacteria and inhibits yeast. It's an essential tool for winemaking, whether to clean the barrels and equipment, or to neutralise any ambient yeasts present on the grapes before adding a cultured yeast. It can also be used as a final dose before bottling the wine to ensure its stability. Sulfur dioxide occurs naturally, and every wine contains a degree of SO_2 . Some winemakers opt to work without any addition of SO_2 . Next time you think of blaming your headache on sulfur, know that the dried fruit industry uses far higher levels in their production.

Corks vs screw caps

There are a variety of options for bottle closures - from corkscrews harvested from ***Quercus Suber L*** trees to the unpleasant plastic versions. Traditional natural corks have traditionally been the most popular, given their ability to allow the wine to breathe over time. But screw caps have gained in popularity. Not enough time has passed for us to conclusively measure the ageability of wines sealed by screw caps. For now, they're indicative of early drinking wines meant to be enjoyed whilst still fresh and fruity.

Sugar + Yeast = Alcohol + CO₂

That's all. We can all go home now.

Sugar + Yeast = Alcohol + CO₂ That's the most important part of winemaking. Without this recipe, we'd all be drinking grape juice. As lovely as grape juice tastes, I'm sure you'll agree that there's a certain delight in consuming an adult beverage.

The winemaking process for red, white, rosé, sparkling, and fortified wines, be they dry or sweet, starts off in the same way.

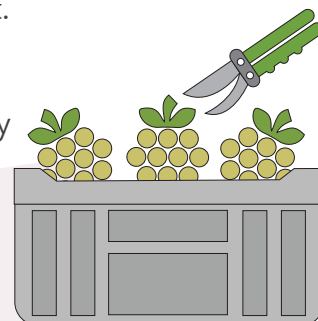
Harvesting

The producer will keep an eagle eye on the ripening grapes, picking them at the optimum balance of ripeness and acidity. In South Africa, we harvest our grapes by hand as labour is plentiful and, questionably, inexpensive. But in other parts of the world, grapes can be harvested with machinery that speeds up the picking process. There is technically no difference in the quality of the wines based on whether they are hand- or machine-harvested. Some winemaking styles use the entire grape bunch, including the stems, and this is much easier to do by hand. Some of the best sweet wines in the world are made from grapes affected by botrytis ("noble rot"), requiring individually selecting the best grapes from the bunch. This is a process that can only be done by hand. Sauternes, Tokaji, and our very own Noble Late Harvest are examples of these carefully harvested grapes.

Transporting

Whether they are producing sweet wines or dry wines, the best producers will take care not to damage the grapes in the picking process. Lug boxes are used to transport the grapes from the fields to either a larger container, or they are stacked in a vehicle destined for the winery. These lug boxes won't be filled to the top, as stacking could damage the grapes and expose them to unwanted oxygen and potential rot.

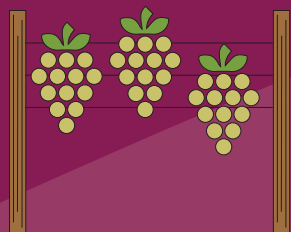
The grapes are transported to the winery as quickly as possible and are either kept in a cold container until processed or crushed immediately.



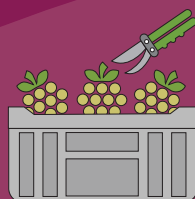
Crushing

Traditionally, crushing was done by foot. In some wineries, grapes are still crushed this way. But most wineries make use of modern machinery that can crush and destem the grapes quickly and efficiently.

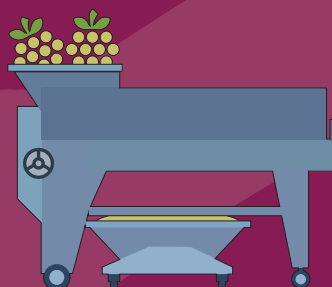
At this point, white winemaking and red winemaking proceed differently.



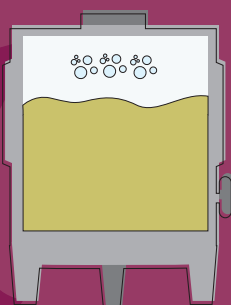
GROW GRAPES



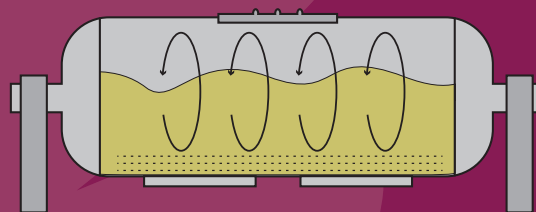
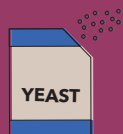
HARVEST GRAPES



CRUSH GRAPES



FERMENT GRAPES



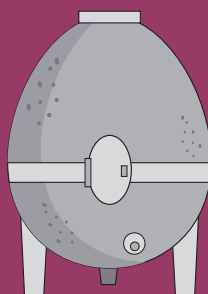
PRESS GRAPES



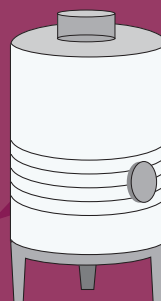
AMPHORA



OAK



CONCRETE EGG

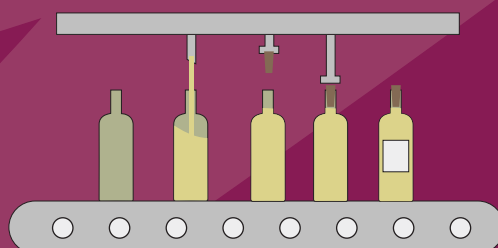


STAINLESS STEEL

MATURATION OPTIONS



MALIC ACID
CONVERTED TO
LACTIC ACID



BOTTLING (FILLING, CORKING) AND LABELLING

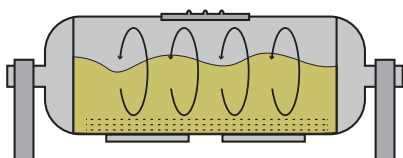
White winemaking

After the grapes are crushed, they are usually pressed immediately to avoid contact with unwanted oxygen and to retain the freshness of the grape juice.

There are variations to this, with some winemakers leaving the juice in contact with the skins. This extended skin contact will add depth of flavour, texture, and can also add tannin. Amber wines, or orange wines as they're also called, are wines made through extended skin contact.

Pressing

Pressing was traditionally done in a basket press



that requires manual labour and is time-consuming. Modern wineries opt to use a large pneumatic press as this saves time and avoids the ever-present risk of excessive oxygen exposure. The harder the must is pressed, the more flavour from the skins and bitter oils from the pips are extracted. There's a careful balance that needs to be found so as not to over-extract the juice.

We refer to the pressed juice as must. Remember that until yeast starts converting the juice into alcohol (and CO₂), we still have only grape juice.

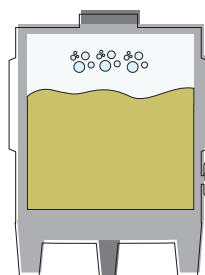


Yeast

The grapes are then pumped into a waiting stainless steel tank, where a cultured yeast is added to the juice. An extensive range of yeasts are created in laboratories, each with properties that best suit the style of winemaking, e.g. Champagne yeast for sparkling wines, yeasts that are best suited to Bordeaux-style wines, yeasts cultured for every style of beer making.

We know that grapes naturally have ambient or natural yeasts that live on their skins. There is a move towards

producing wines that use the minimum of intervention, and some winemakers choose not to add a cultured yeast, instead relying on the native yeasts in the bloom. However, one doesn't know what types of yeasts might be on the grape skins. In a risky and costly winemaking business, it could be safer to rely on a proven strain of yeast instead.



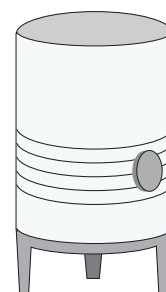
Fermentation

We now wait for fermentation, the process where the yeast converts the juice into wine. Most white wines are fermented at cooler temperatures and in inert, or non-

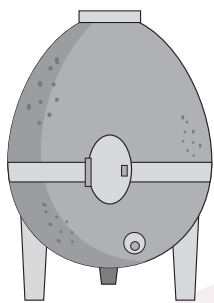
reactive, vessels to retain the freshness, purity of fruit and flavours, and to preserve the natural varietal character of the grape.

Stainless steel tanks

Stainless steel tanks are an excellent vessel to control temperatures as they conduct heat and cold efficiently. They are also easy to clean.



A producer could choose to leave the grapes to ferment in stainless steel or decide to place the juice (or wine, depending on the stage) in a number of different vessels.



Concrete - either tanks or eggs

Concrete is an inert vessel that minimises contact with air making. It is naturally cool, is less expensive, but it

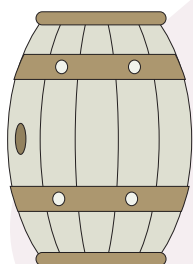
is also hard to clean. I've heard many winemakers state that winemaking is 50% cleaning. Unwanted bacteria can ruin your wine and result in very expensive vinegar.

Amphora

These beautiful clay vessels have been used since the beginning of winemaking. In Georgia, the vessels are called Qvevri and are sunk into the earth to further keep the wines cold.



Amphora vessels are gaining popularity around the world.



Oak

Oak barrels are made by a *tonnelier* or cooper, who heats and moulds staves of seasoned wood into barrels. They also toast the wood over a flame to add varying levels of

flavour ranging from light to heavy. The most popular oak is sourced from France, Hungary, and America. Each imparts a unique flavour to the wine. European oak from cooler climates grow more slowly and is denser, imparting less flavour than American oak.

French and Hungarian oak offer subtle and spicy notes of vanilla, toffee, butterscotch, chocolate, and coffee that have a silky texture. American oak is known for more intense flavours of vanilla and coconut with a creamier texture.

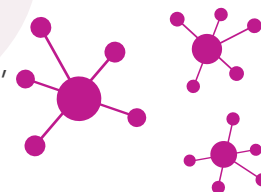
A brand new, and very expensive, oak barrel is usually reserved for red wines that benefit more from spending time in oak. However, some producers might want to impart some of the new oak flavours into their white wines. Chardonnay is synonymous with varying degrees of new oak that add vanilla and toasty flavours to the wine.

Older oak that has been used for winemaking in previous vintages loses its toasted flavours. Older barrels are often referred to as neutral barrels because they don't influence the flavour of the wine, whether it's white wine or red wine.

Oak also has tannins of its own, and you might find that you can pick up on some of these tannins in a glass of white wine.

MLF (optional)

Malolactic fermentation, or conversion since it's not technically a fermenting process, is the result of harsh malic acids (found in Granny Smith apples) being converted into softer lactic acids (found in milk and yoghurt). It softens the flavours and texture of the wine as well as adding complexity and stability to the finished wine.



How do you detect malolactic in a wine? Look for a creamy, buttery, oily texture as the giveaway. All red wines go through malolactic conversion, but not all white wines are made this way. Chardonnay and Viognier are two of the most common wines that go through the malolactic process.

Lees stirring

Once the yeasts have converted the grape juice to alcohol, they die. These dead yeast cells are known as lees and fall to the bottom of the fermentation vessel. Some producers choose to stir the lees into the wine, instead of immediately separating the clear wine from the lees. Lees stirring adds extra body and texture to a wine, as well as flavour. Still white wines will have more yeast-like flavours. Still wines that are lees aged in oak could amplify the wood aromas of caramel, smoke, spices, and umami.

Fining

At this stage, the wine is usually still hazy and cloudy with lees and bits of grapes floating in the liquid. Before a wine is bottled, it is usually fined and filtered to add clarity and stability to the wine.

Fining involves adding an agent that attaches to any sediment left behind. Fining agents include bentonite clay (vegan), egg whites, isinglass (dried fish bladders), and casein (milk protein).

Racking

Racking is the process of separating the wine from the lees. It can be done at various stages of the winemaking process. It removes the sediment and helps to produce a clearer and 'cleaner' wine. Racking after fining will remove the finer sediment that has attached to the chosen fining agent.

Filtering

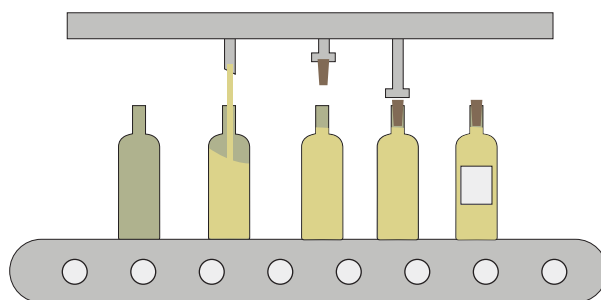
Filtering can also be done a few times in the winemaking process, but it is usually done one more time before bottling. Fining and filtering stabilise the wine by removing any microbial elements that could spoil the wine.

There are winemakers who choose not to

fine or filter their wines as this is thought to affect the texture and flavour in the wine.

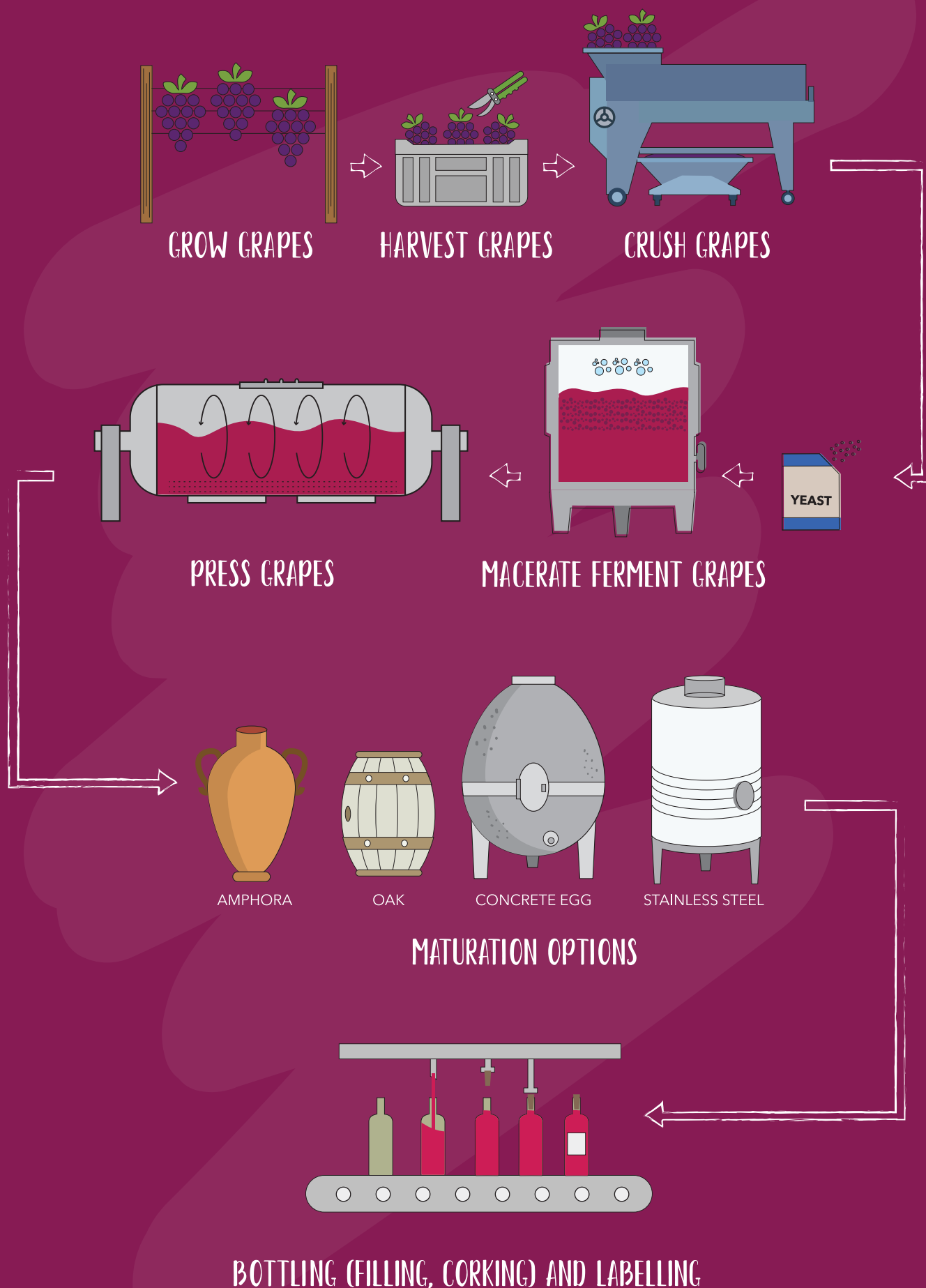
Bottling and Ageing

And finally, the wine is bottled. Producers will either have their own bottling line or will make use of a mobile bottling service.



The wines are pumped from their vessels into the bottle, and a cork or screw cap is added.

Not all white wines benefit from ageing. Some wines are meant to be drunk when they're young and fresh. Regardless of when the wine is meant to be consumed, a period of rest is beneficial for allowing the wine to settle in its bottle. Heavier white wines might require some ageing, especially if they've seen oak. Riesling is known for its ability to age for more than 50 years and retain its freshness. If you ever come across an old Chenin Blanc or Sauvignon Blanc that has been stored correctly, you might find that their naturally high acidity has helped to preserve the wines. Having said this, white wines are still usually released a few months after they've been bottled.



Red winemaking

The fundamentals of red winemaking are much the same as for white wines. The key difference is that the **grapes are macerated and fermented BEFORE they are pressed**. We need to impart their colour, flavours, and tannins into the juice.

After the grapes are crushed, yeast is added if necessary, and the wines are allowed to steep in their skins for varying periods of time (maceration). Stainless steel is most commonly used as it is easier to clean - the skins and pips don't cling to the smooth surface.

Cap management

During this time, the CO₂ that develops as a result of fermentation pushes the skins, otherwise known as the cap, to the top of the wine. The cap, which can be quite sturdy given claims that a grown man can stand on it, floats on top of the liquid and needs to be broken up, submerged, and reintegrated with the juice for the colour, flavour, and tannins to continue to be released. This can be done by a few methods:

Punch down (*pigeage*)

The cap is physically punched down and swirled into the wine. This is not often done mechanically and is physically demanding.

Pump over

A pump is placed into the tank and the liquid is drawn out and pumped back over the floating cap. Pump overs can be gentle or aggressive, frequent or less so, all depending on the style of wine being made.

Maturation

After fermentation has completed, the wine is pressed and racked into its maturation vessel. This could be another stainless steel, concrete or amphora vessel for freshness.

Barrel ageing

Red wine is synonymous with oak, and the wines can spend anywhere from a few months to a few years in new or old barrels

of different sizes. The larger the barrel, the less surface contact with the wine - meaning less influence from the oak. The older the barrel, the less toast and flavour in the oak - meaning less influence on the wine. The newer and smaller the barrel, the more flavour is imparted into the wine.

Oak is not an inert vessel. It allows for a degree of oxygen to reach the wine. This oxygen, together with the oak, can soften the tannins in wines, making them silkier and more pleasant to consume.

When the winemaker deems the wine ready, the wine is racked, fined and filtered before being bottled.

Another important difference between white winemaking and red winemaking is that red wines are more often than not stored in the cool cellars of the winery to age in their bottles. Again, this period of time can range from a few months to many years. The more time it spends in bottle, the more the flavour compounds merge.

Corks also allow a small and controlled amount of oxygen to reach the wine. In these measured amounts, the oxygen has positive effects. The tannins and acidity in red wines allow for reds to age for some time in bottle, and with time more complex tertiary aromas develop. There is nothing better than a red wine that's had time to develop complex notes - and this is the reason why wine collections exist!

SAIGNEE / BLEEDING

Saignée

Rosé wines begin as a byproduct of red winemaking. After several hours of maceration, 10% to 20% of the juice is drawn off to be fermented as rosé wine (the remaining juice, which is now more concentrated, continues to be fermented as red wine).

Although the saignée method can feel like the indecisive option, it is still used and can be a preferable technique for certain grapes. For example, the saignée technique does not include pressing, minimising the risk of bitterness in Syrah and Cinsault, and resulting in a smoother, more mellow wine. The wines are noticeably darker, fuller-bodied with more tannins.

LIMITED SKIN MACERATION

Limited Skin Maceration

The red grapes are crushed, and the juice is left in contact with the skins for a limited period of time. Limited skin maceration results in a range of colours and additional flavours imparted into the juice depending on the amount of time the winemaker chooses to leave the juice in contact with the skins. The longer the skin contact, the deeper the colour and more intense the flavours. Think of it like steeping a tea bag in hot water.

This method results in a wide range of styles of wine. Tavel, an appellation in Southern Rhône that is only allowed to produce rosé wines, is famed for its darker, watermelon colour wines. Three of the nine permitted grapes are white, but these must be fermented with the red grapes.

DIRECT PRESSING

Direct Pressing

Direct pressing, where the grapes are pressed immediately without any skin contact, produces the palest colour wines that display more citrus, lemon, raspberry and strawberry notes. Whole bunch pressing is desirable as it is gentler, often compared to pressing by hand.

It is the most popular style with consumers and is the trademark of the Provence region in southern France.

BLENDING

Blending

The last method of producing rosé wine is by blending. A finished white wine is blended with a finished red wine.

This technique is used in only a few New World countries, and is banned in all Old World countries, except for the Champagne region.

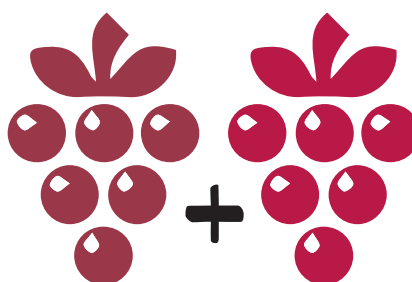
Rosé winemaking

We now know that the skins of grapes are responsible for the colour in wine. We also know that the longer we steep the juice in the skins, the deeper the extraction of colour, flavour, and tannins. This explains why rosé wines come in all shades of pink, ranging from light salmon all the way to deep rosy red.

Rosé winemaking is most similar to white winemaking. Instead of white grapes, red grapes are used for their pigment. There are four ways to make rosé - Saignée, Direct Pressing, Limited Skin Maceration and Blending (see previous page).

Over 50% of rosé wines are pale, but colour has more to do with marketing than it is an indication of quality. In some ways, the consumer dictates the colours as paler wines sell in far higher quantities than darker wines. One way of increasing the aromatics to create a fashionably pale wine without extracting more colour is by employing a technique called **stabulation**. This is where some of the juice is left on the lees for one or two weeks at very low temperatures. After stabulation, the juice is much more aromatic and has a richer texture. It can be used as a blending component.

Producers have long realised that rosé wines can be premium products. As such, the grapes are now grown specifically to make rosé wines. At the top end, these wines are able to express terroir and are capable of ageing for many years. The picking time of the grapes is incredibly important. They are often picked earlier than red wines to retain the freshness and acidity (in warmer regions, it is common to adjust the acidity in the winery.) For example, Grenache grapes destined for rosé can be picked 10 -12 days earlier than Grenache for red wines. The ripe tannins and extra colour aren't needed.

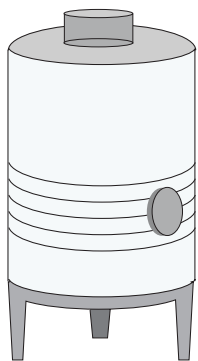


A blend of grapes is also common, as the combination of grapes can produce

a more complex wine. The grapes will be co-fermented rather than blending together the finished wines.

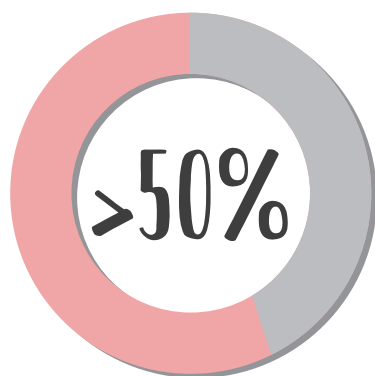
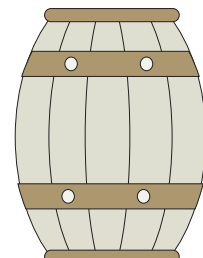
Producers can choose to work with **press fractions** (different parcels of juice separated after varying degrees of pressing). Free run juice is always the most prized. The first pressing is usually an acceptable colour. But the second pressing might get fined to remove excess colour. The last pressing will not be used for rosé as it will be too dark and tannic. Filtering (carbon) can be used to achieve the pale colour - but filtering also filters out the aromatics.

There was a time when all rosé wines were fermented at very low temperatures. But lower temperatures can result in simpler wines that don't extract enough flavour and aren't able to express terroir. Overly high temperatures destroy the aromatics and extract unwanted high levels of tannins.



Paler, more aromatic styles of rosé are almost always fermented in stainless steel. These styles rely on as little contact with oxygen as possible. They will make use of wine presses that pump nitrogen over the grapes and juice during pressing. They might even choose glass stoppers over corks to further prevent oxidation of the wine inside.

The use of old, bigger oak vessels can add structure and texture to more premium wine, without imparting any of the oak flavours. Some producers choose to use lighter doses of untoasted oak as, aside from structure, this can also add a little sugar.



With a 50% increase in growth in the United States during 2019, rosé is a serious category of wine. Perhaps it's the pretty, photogenic colours that make the paler colours more popular. The bottles are often clear to entice the consumer and these are often custom, designer bottles. One sometimes wonders how many of the premium wines are priced for the bottle or for the quality of the wine. Therefore it remains important to taste the wine before judging the quality.

Another possible reason for the increase in popularity could be the realisation that rosé works particularly well with lighter foods, and given our healthier lifestyles, it is feasible that we'd adjust our wines to suit our food choices.

Although many rosé wines are made to be enjoyed early, the more premium wines are capable of ageing.

*With a 50% increase in growth
in the United States during
2019, rosé is a serious category
of wine.*

Sweet winemaking

There are six ways of making sweet wines.

Halting Fermentation

You will recall that yeasts eat the sugar in the grapes to create alcohol. If we were to prevent the yeast from eating all of the sugars, we would be left with residual sugar (RS). How do we do that? Fermentation plods along merrily at 15° C for white wines. By dropping the temperature and chilling the wine, we can halt fermentation at the desired sugar level. The wine is then filtered to remove all the yeasts. This is how premium sweet wines are made.

Most yeasts are also killed by alcohol that exceeds 16% ABV. Adding a grape spirit at the desired sweetness level is another way of stopping fermentation. But this can drastically alter the way the wine tastes.

Sulfur Dioxide kills yeasts and inhibits bacteria, preventing further fermentation. However, SO₂ is toxic in large doses and some people are allergic to SO₂ even in smaller legal doses. Thus, this is not the best method of creating a sweet wine.

Noble Rot

Some botrytised (affected by noble rot) grapes are so sweet that fermentation naturally stops as the yeasts cannot convert all the sugars.

Botrytis cinerea is a naturally occurring fungus that pierces the skin of the grape allowing the water to evaporate and concentrate the sugars, flavours, and acids. Tokaji, Sauternes and some German Rieslings are examples of this premium style of sweet wine.

Drying Grapes on the Vine

Otherwise known as ***passerillage***, this happens naturally in dry and warm conditions in the late summer and early autumn. The grapes dry out and form raisins on the vines. The wines are also referred to as Late Harvest wines. These wines have a dried fruit and tropical fruit quality.

Drying Grapes after Picking

This process is called ***passito*** and is famous in Italy. The healthy grapes are picked and laid out to dry on straw mats. As the water evaporates, the flavours, sugars, and acids are concentrated. These wines also have a raisiny quality.

Freezing the Grapes

Healthy grapes are left on the vine during the winter months. The pulp turns to ice in the freezing temperatures. The frozen grapes are pressed leaving the ice behind in the press and resulting in intensely concentrated sugars and pure varietal flavours. Germany produces ***Eiswein***, and Canada produces **Ice wine**. This process can be mimicked with refrigeration, but the premium wines are those that are made naturally.

Adding Sweetener

Süssreserve, the German name for unfermented grape juice, can be added to sweeten a wine after fermentation is completed and just before bottling.

Rectified Concentrated Grape Must

(RCGM) can be added instead of *süssreserve*. RCGM is usually done in bulk wine production.

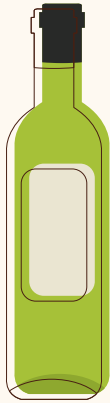


04. WINE STYLES

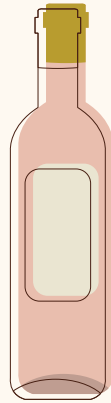
Part of the magic of wine is the array of different styles in which it is produced. There is a wine for every occasion. There is a style to suit every palate. There is a wine for everyone.



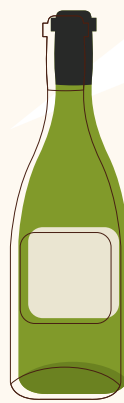
SPARKLING
WINE



LIGHT BODIED WHITE
WINE



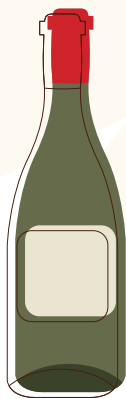
ROSÉ
WINE



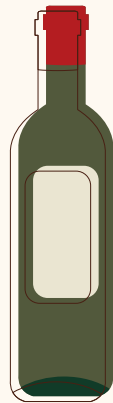
FULL BODIED WHITE
WINE



AROMATIC WHITE
WINE



LIGHT BODIED RED
WINE



MEDIUM BODIED RED
WINE



FULL BODIED RED
WINE



DESSERT
WINE

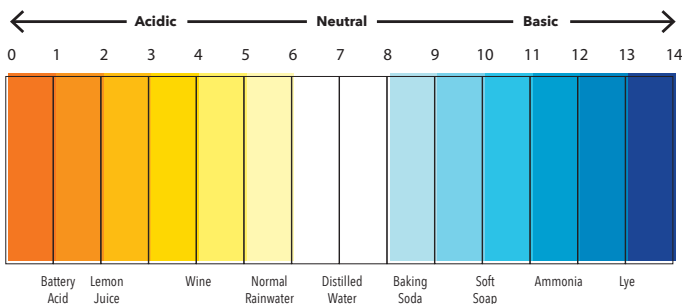
Part of the magic of wine is the array of different styles in which it is produced. There is a wine for every occasion. There is a style to suit every palate. There is a wine for everyone. Wines can be divided into nine styles. Each of these styles can be produced at different sweetness levels - from bone dry to off-dry, semi-sweet, all the way through to lusciously sweet. Let's start with the sweetness levels.

Dry	< 3g/litre
Off-dry	5 - 9 g/litre
Semi-sweet	10 - 45 g/litre
Sweet	> 45g/litre

Interestingly, dry wine always contains some sugar, usually 1 gram or more. Most people cannot detect sweetness below 4 to 5 g/litre. It is also important to note that sugar alone does not define sweetness. Sweetness is a function of how much acidity is in the wine. Take the example of Coca Cola with its 106 g/litre where the pH of 2.3 mitigates the sweetness. Lower acidity with more sugar will taste soft and soupy.

or not? Other than tasting the wine, you can't know for sure. But turning the bottle around and reading the back label could give you an indication of the sweetness levels. We now know that alcohol is a byproduct of yeast eating sugar. Less alcohol could be an indicator that the yeasts haven't consumed all the grape sugars i.e. residual sugar. High alcohol in non-fortified wines is a good clue that the wine is going to be dry, as the yeasts would have consumed all the sugars.

This is not a foolproof method, as winemakers are able to manipulate alcohol, sugar, and acidity levels in the winery. Tasting is still the best way to find out.



Wines like Riesling and Chenin Blanc, with their naturally high acidity, can take more sugar. Think of it as a balancing act between freshness, acidity, and sugar. There is nothing wrong with liking sweet styles of wine. Some of the greatest and most long-lived wines in the world are lusciously sweet. e.g. Sauternes, Vin de Constance, Tokaji.

So when you next walk into a wine store, how can you tell if a wine will be sweet

Sparkling wine

e.g. Methode Cap Classique, Prosecco, Charmat

Light-bodied white wine

e.g. Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris

Full-bodied white wine

e.g. Chardonnay, Viognier

Aromatic wine

e.g. Riesling, Gewürztraminer

Rosé wine

E.g. Provence

Light-bodied red wine

E.g. Pinot Noir, Gamay

Medium-bodied red wine

E.g. Merlot, Grenache,

Full-bodied red wine

e.g. Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Shiraz

Dessert wine

e.g. Tokaji, Vin de Constance, Port

05. SERVING TEMPERATURES

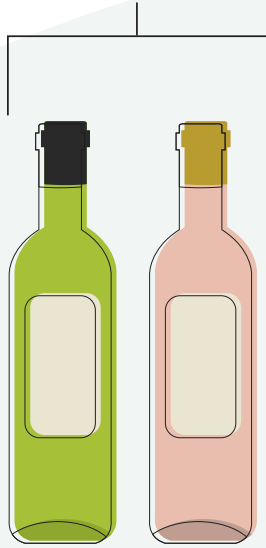
Serving temperatures are suggestions that winemakers and producers assign to their wines so that you are best able to appreciate the aromas and flavours that the wine has to offer.

6°C - 10°C



SPARKLING
WINE

7°C - 10°C



LIGHT
BODIED
WHITE
WINE

ROSÉ
WINE

10°C - 13°C



FULL
BODIED
WHITE
WINE

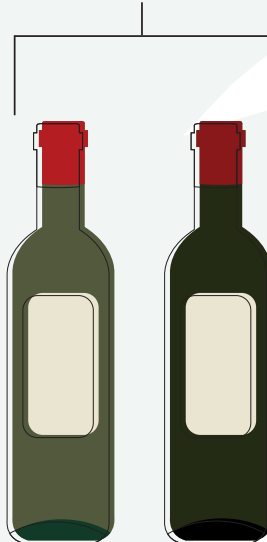
AROMATIC
WHITE
WINE

13°C



LIGHT
BODIED
RED
WINE

15°C-18°C



MEDIUM
BODIED
RED
WINE

FULL
BODIED
RED
WINE

6°C - 8°C



DESSERT
WINE

Serving temperatures are suggestions that winemakers and producers assign to their wines so that you are best able to appreciate the aromas and flavours that the wine has to offer.

Know that, in general, white wines are often served too cold and red wines are served too warm. If you think about the birthplace of wine, Europe, and its average temperatures, you realise that room temperature in the heart of a South African summer might not be the best way to enjoy red wine.

Without central heating, wines will be warmer in summer and colder in winter.

If a wine is too cold, the tannins become more apparent. This could be to the benefit of a lighter red wine like Pinot Noir but might not help an already tannic full-bodied wine such as Cabernet Sauvignon.

If a wine is too warm you will lose the aromatics.

Light, peppery Syrah, Pinot Noir and Cinsault are very pleasant when slightly chilled.

Grand, powerful white wines like oaked Chardonnay shouldn't be killed with too much cold.



Serve sub-par wine at 6° Celsius - no one will notice it's bad if you kill the wine with cold!

Adding ice to wine is your personal preference. It lowers the temperature but be mindful that it can also dilute the wine.

Sparkling wine

Sparkling wine is best served between 6° and 10° Celsius. If you've ever opened a warm bottle of bubbly, you'll remember the explosion of bubbles that ensued. Because of the low serving temperature, sweeter sparkling wines can be very palatable even if your preference is for dryer wines.

Light bodied white and rosé wines

These should be served at a refreshing 7° to 10° Celsius.

Full bodied and aromatic white wines

These wines that have more complex aromas and flavours are best served not too cold. 10° to 13° Celsius is recommended.

Light bodied red wine

Wines like Pinot Noir and Cinsault can be enjoyed at 13° Celsius - a perfect excuse to keep drinking reds throughout summer.

Medium to full bodied red wines

These are often served too warm and are best enjoyed at 15° to 18° Celsius.

Dessert wine

The temperature is dependent on the type of dessert wine you're enjoying. 6° to 8° Celsius suits sweet and semi-sweet wines. Port and some sherries are best served at full-bodied red wine temperatures.

06. LEARNING TO TASTE WINE

WINE TASTING IS
A JOURNEY...

YOU'RE NOT WRONG –
IT'S PERSONAL TO YOU

anosmia noun

an·os·mia | \ a-'näz-mē-ə

Definition of anosmia

:loss or impairment of the sense of smell

Everyone can taste unless you're anosmic.

So many people are put off the experience because they feel terrified of tasting - you don't need to be. We can all taste wine.

Wine is predicated on a coded lexicon that is no different to sports, physics, or finance. We've all been in a room where experts are talking about

things that they understand in words that they only understand.

Don't be put out by all the dialogue and narrative that's, frankly, sometimes not very welcoming. It's not meant to be elitist or leave people behind...it's that people who are into wine get so excited that they can't help themselves. Much like sitting around a table with PhD scientists or if you worked at NASA and you talk at a level that no one else understands.

You're not wrong - it's personal to you.

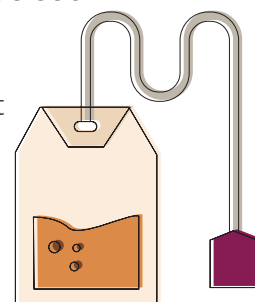
If you can learn to understand the building blocks in wine, you can learn to assess a wine.

TANNIN**ACIDITY****BODY****ALCOHOL**



ACIDITY is like a lemon - to some people, this can be sour.

TANNIN is best pictured as a teabag steeped in hot water. The longer you steep, the stronger the tannins that you feel on your teeth, tongue and sides of your mouth. Tannins are compounds that a red wine needs to age.



BODY is best thought of as evaluating the viscosity of skimmed milk versus full cream milk versus yoghurt.

ALCOHOL - if it's balanced you shouldn't notice it. But if it's unbalanced, you'll feel it burn.

ABV

Those are the building blocks of wine.

But what does it smell like?

Smell is linked to memory. Taste is what you smell (think of when you have a cold and can't taste anything when you don't have a sense of smell). Your mouth confirms what you smell.

e.g. If you smell perfume from someone that you liked a long time ago - when you smell it again years later, you'll immediately think back to that person.

Smell is one of our strongest senses. We hid away from dangerous animals because we could smell them before we could see them. Your sense of smell is more powerful than you think it is. The human has around 400 scent receptors. It was thought that we could smell 10,000 different aromas when, in fact, the human nose can detect at least one trillion different odours.

Because smell is so linked to memory, be mindful of this as you go about your day-

to-day life. The fruit and vegetable section in your local grocery store can offer an array of produce to purchase and ponder. Fruit markets are even better as the produce is stored at room temperatures, releasing the scents into the environment.

What does it taste like?

The human tongue can detect five unique flavours.

Umami = MSG and marmite.



- BITTER
- SOUR
- UMAMI
- SALTY
- SWEET

PRIMARY AROMAS: from grapes

FLORALS:
honeysuckle, rose, geranium

FRUITS:
Green (apple, pear, quince)
Citrus (lemon, orange)
Tropical (lychee, pineapple)
Red (cherry, strawberry,
plum)
Black (blackcurrant,
blackberry)

SECONDARY AROMAS: from winemaking

*easiest to spot in white
wines*

YEAST:
Bread, Toast, Cheese
MLF:
Butter, Cream
OAK:
Vanilla, Cloves, Coconut,
Smoke, Chocolate, Coffee

TERTIARY AROMAS: from ageing (bottle or oak)

mostly savoury

WHITE WINE:
Dried Apricot, Marmalade,
Petrol, Ginger, Nutty, Honey
RED WINE:
Fig, Prune, Leather, Earth,
Mushroom, Game, Tobacco,
Meaty, Farmyard

Primary aromas are mostly made up of fruits, e.g. citrus, apple, pear, pineapple, berries

Secondary aromas are derived from winemaking techniques like malolactic fermentation, lees stirring and oak, e.g. bread, butter, smoke, coffee, smoke

Tertiary aromas are found in wines that are older. In white wines, these might be dried fruits, nuts, or honey. In red wines, they could also include dried fruits, as well as leather, earth, mushrooms, game, or meat.

"Wine people get excited about old wines. There's no other beverage that you can buy and serve to your children and grandchildren on your wedding anniversary. You can drink it when it's young, and when it's old."

LOOK



SMELL



TASTE



THINK



The process

Start with a tapered glass that will contain the aromas. A thin glass is nicer. Stemmed glasses keep your fingerprints off the glass and will avoid warming the wine through body heat.



Swirl

Give your glass a swirl. It helps to rest the base of your glass on a solid surface (table or knee) to control the movement and avoid sloshing the precious nectar all over your white shirt. Swirling will release some of the aromas.



Observe

A light-filled room and white background are preferential when tasting wine for assessment.

Look at the wine to make sure there are no floating bits of cork, fruit flies, or unintentional sediment. If the wine is unfined and/or unfiltered, it may have some hazy sediment. If the wine is older, it could contain sediment. Both situations are fine. The unfined wine will have extra texture from the sediment. The aged wine can be decanted to remove any larger particles.



Does the wine have tears or legs? These are slightly more viscous, slow-moving drips that run down the glass after swirling. They could be an indication of higher sugar levels or higher alcohol.

But it could also be indicative of a dirty glass or residual dishwashing liquid. Tears/legs are just glycerol and are not an indication of quality.

WHITE WINE



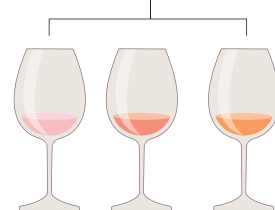
LEMON

GOLD

AMBER

BROWN

ROSÉ WINE



PINK

SALMON

ORANGE

RED WINE



PURPLE

RUBY

GARNET

TAWNY

What colour is the wine?

Note that white wines get darker with age. Red wines become lighter with age.

These colours provide further clues as to the type of wine. Lemon-coloured wines are often indicative of younger wines. Gold could mean the wine has seen skin contact or oak. Amber is usually an excellent giveaway to extended skin contact in white wines.

Purple and ruby often mean a younger red wine with higher levels of tannin. Garnet could indicate age or lighter-bodied wine. Tawny is a sure sign of an aged red wine.

Now think about the intensity of the colour. Is it pale, medium or deeply coloured? A pale red wine could be a lighter-bodied wine like Pinot Noir.



Cassidy recommends taking one sniff. He feels that if you keep smelling, you won't smell anything more. I disagree and rely on many quick sniffs throughout the tasting to latch onto the fleeting aromas.

Think about what the aromas remind you of. This is part process and part time. Try to connect the vocabulary with what you know. e.g. fynbos in South Africa.

Regardless of wine lexicons, linking what you smell to cultural norms and things that surround us cements a longer-lasting image and memory of the wine.

It helps to divide what you smell into the primary, secondary, and tertiary categories. List the fruits or vegetables that you smell. Lemon, grass, green peppers, and pineapple will lead you to determining that the wine is a Sauvignon Blanc.

Do you smell vanilla, butter, cheese, biscuits and toast? You'd be right in assuming that the wine has seen time in oak. The stronger the scent, the higher the chance that this oak was partially or completely new oak.

Are you smelling dried apricots, marmalade, and honey? This could mean you have an older wine, or it could also mean you're indulging in a sweet or dry wine made from botrytised grapes.

You don't have to swallow to know what's there. Breathing the air allows the back part of your retronasal passage to also be affected.

A good way to gauge the intensity of a wine is to measure how far away from your nose the glass needs to be held before you're able to smell the wine. Chest level would be a wine that has a pronounced and intense nose.

Needing to raise the glass to your chin would mean a medium intensity. Having to hold the glass right under your nostrils is a sign of a shy or light nose.

Taste

Now go ahead and take a sip. Take a substantial sip that you can swish around in your mouth and coat all the areas of your mouth.

Is the taste powerful and intense, or is subtle? Or is it medium? Do you find the flavour boring or interesting?

Sometimes a floral or very fruity wine can deceive us into thinking it is sweet. Gewürztraminer and Albariño are two examples that often confuse me. A good tip is to take a sip and hold your nose closed. Without the pretty aromas, your tongue will tell you the truth.

Another great trick for measuring how acidic a wine is is to take a little sip and then count how long it takes for you to start salivating. If need be, turn your head upside down and hold your mouth open. If you start to salivate immediately, it means the wine is high in acidity. If it takes forever, and there's no need to close your mouth, it's a low acid wine. Somewhere in the middle - medium acidity.

If it is red wine, or a wine that has skin contact or extended barrel maturation, you'll want to assess the tannins. Tannins can be felt in different areas of the mouth. You can usually sense tannins on the front of your teeth (run your tongue over your front teeth...does it feel furry?) as well as on your tongue. The best description is still to compare it to a strong cup of black tea. Does it dry out your mouth instantly, or not so much?



High tannins usually mean a grape with thick skins like Cabernet Sauvignon. Lower tannins could indicate a Shiraz that hasn't been matured in new oak. Very low tannins could be a Pinot Noir, or a fruity, easy-drinking Grenache.

Think about the weight of the wine to assess its body. Does it compare to skimmed milk or yoghurt? Is it a wine that you'd drink at the pool (light-bodied), a wine you'd have at lunchtime (medium-bodied) or a wine that requires a big heavy steak dinner (full-bodied)?

Does the flavour line up with what you were smelling? If you picked up on lemon and yellow apples on the nose, is it repeated on the palate?

And lastly, think about the finish. How long does the flavour last? Does it change? Is it simple or is it straightforward?

There's one more question to ask yourself. It is, undoubtedly, the most important question - do you like the wine? Would you buy it again? This really is all that matters. But by assessing the wine - the structure, the range of aromas, flavours, and the finish - we can upgrade our tasting abilities and better understand value for money.

Evaluating quality - R200 versus R40

Up to a certain point, you can taste a difference. It's also about scarcity and brand value. Is a Rolls Royce so much nicer than a BMW 7 series? If you had the money, you'd buy the Rolls Royce, but it's probably not R5 mil nicer.

The more you taste and learn about wine, the more you'll learn about quality levels. If you want to drink the most expensive wines in the world, it WILL be expensive because there are people who want to drink those wines. Supply and demand.

The more you taste, the more you try, the more you can assess wines and calibrate your palate.

The **B.L.I.C.** system is a quick and easy way to measure the quality of a wine. Irrespective of whether it's a wine that's suited to your tastes and preferences, or not. And irrespective of price. More expensive does not necessarily mean higher quality.

Balance is the most important factor to Cassidy. A wine should not be too acidic or too alcoholic. The best wines are those that you don't even think about because everything is perfect. Visualise a sphere, where everything is smooth, and nothing juts out.

Length of the finish is important. There's nothing wrong with a wine with a short finish that has you going back for another sip immediately after swallowing. These wines can be refreshing and fruity. They're often designed to be drunk early. But then there are the wines where each sip lasts for ages - each sip lasting long enough to slow the pace of the evening.

Intensity - if a car is fast it mustn't be fast in just a straight line...it needs to be able to be fast around corners. Lots of oak, alcohol and extraction can be boring...you can't have more than one sip. Intensity can have flavour but it can also be light on its feet. Think about Sauvignon Blanc - it's not often a complex wine, but it has intensity.

Complexity - do you keep going back to the wine? Do you pick up a range of aromas and flavours that tick boxes from the primary, secondary, and tertiary categories? Complex wines can evolve and change over time. The most profound wines are the wines you can spend the evening with and that will change over time.

Taste with friends and people you like spending time with. Don't be embarrassed about your own preferences. We all have different palates and preferences. The key is to have your own calibration.



What does best mean?

Why are we fixated with it? Think back to a beach day with a loved one - sharing an average wine in a plastic cup. This memory can be better than sharing an amazing wine in an incredible restaurant with someone you dislike. Context is important.

Know the golden standard

Once you've tasted classic grape varieties, then you'll know what the wine is trying to be. It will be the baseline by which you judge the next wines by.

Practice, practice, practice

Wine practice is fun. Put in your 10,000 hours. Put in the graft. If you enjoy it, you'll have a pretty good idea of what you like.

Smell everything.

Build your own scent library and keep adding to it. Next time you know a dish contains saffron, think about what that smells like to you and store the information in your head. Can't remember what nutmeg smells like? Go to your spice rack and reacquaint yourself with the smell. And when it next rains, breathe deep, and absorb the smell of petrichor (the earthy scent caused by rain falling on dry ground). The more you add to your memory bank, the more vivid and fascinating wine will become to you.

Think about what you don't like.

Try and think about why you don't like a wine - it'll be easier to know what you don't like when you next purchase a bottle.

Your palate will evolve over time.

You might like big powerful wines in the beginning and then move onto more elegant wines, or vice versa.

04. FOOD AND WINE PAIRING

As we're learning, wine very much revolves around personal preferences. There are general rules, plenty of strict regulations, but also a fair amount of trial and error based on your own tastes. Food and wine pairings are no different.

01.

Pair great wines with great food - pair humbler wines with more humble food.

02.

Wine should be more acidic than the food.

03.

Wine should be sweeter than your dessert.

04.

Match the intensity of the wine with the intensity of the food - bold with bold, delicate with delicate. Light to medium-bodied white wines pair best with lighter meats. Bold, full bodied wines pair best with red meat.

05.

Match your wine to the sauce, not the meat.

06.

Complementary versus contrasting - do you want to highlight the contrasts or match the flavours? Red wines make good complementary pairings. White, rosé & sparkling make good contrasting pairings.

07.

Try fruitier wines with fruity foods e.g. pork belly and apple sauce with Gewürztraminer or Muscat.

08.

Sweet and salty are always a great combination, so try Port with blue cheese.

09.

Bold, tannic, and high acidity wines can cut through fatty foods. e.g. Cabernet Sauvignon with ribeye steak. It's not tannic, but Sauvignon Blanc is a good way to freshen your palate when eating smoked salmon or Chow Mein.

10.

Sparkling and rosé wines are the most flexible and are able to pair with a range of meals.





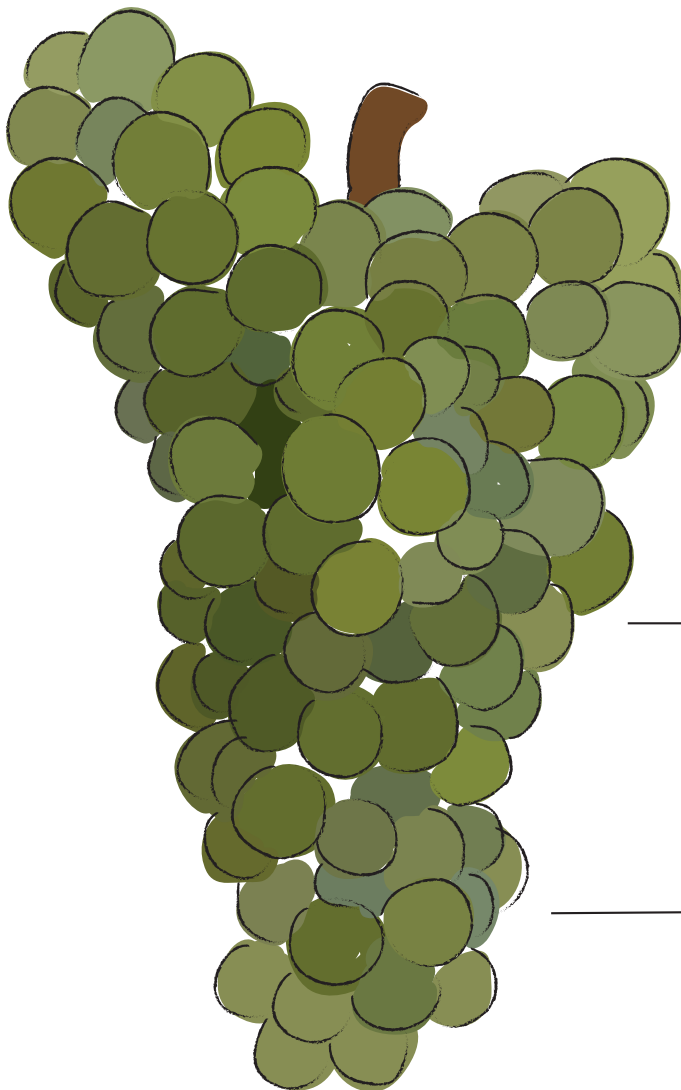
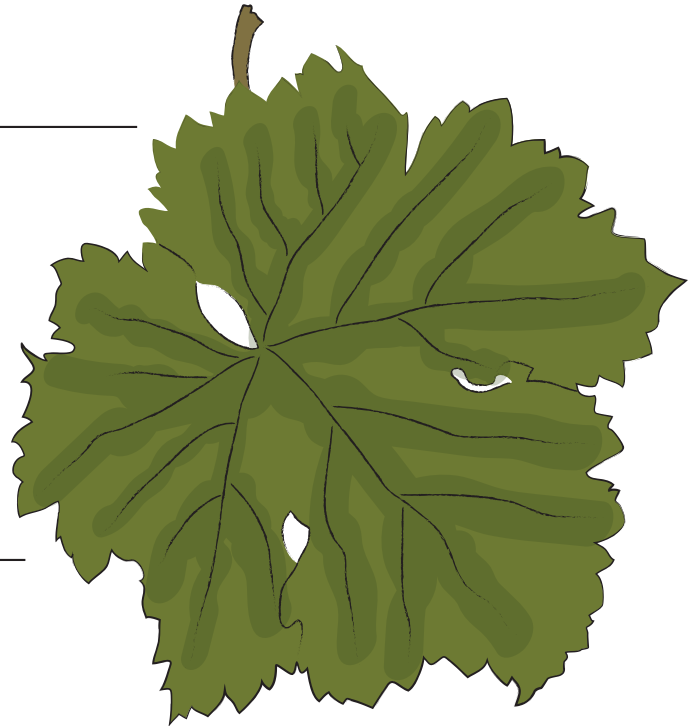
THE WINES

08. SAUVIGNON BLANC

Sauvignon Blanc means
'wild white' in French.

The vines thrive in cooler
regions and are
moderate to vigorous
growers.

Doesn't need a low yield.



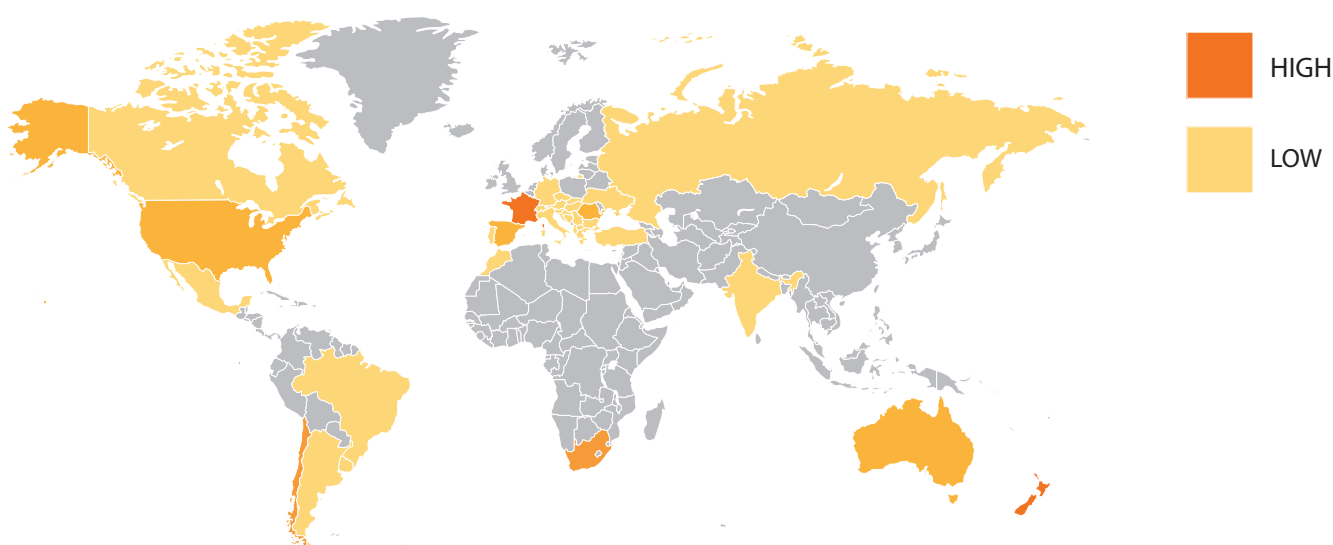
Loses flavour if it overcrops,
but is okay to use machine
harvesting.

Medium to small sized berries
that are yellowish green in
colour with soft, thin skins.
The flesh is distinctively
grassy in flavour.

Prone to downy & powdery
mildew, botrytis, and frost
damage.

Sauvignon Blanc

Grown in most of the world, Sauvignon Blanc performs well at low yields. If the growth is too vigorous, it loses its aromatics which is a key part of its style. It can be machine or hand-harvested which is an important factor if you consider New Zealand doesn't have enough affordable manual labour, with the majority of their grapes being machine harvested. Whilst South Africa, in contrast, makes use of mainly hand harvesting as labour is, regrettably, affordable and plentiful.



Together with the variety being prone to mildew, Sauvignon Blanc requires some attention in the vineyards.

There is something whistle-clean about this grape - the clarity of style, and obvious characteristics make these wines very easily distinguishable.

MOST PLANTED GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon - 340,000 hectares

Merlot - 266,000 hectares

Tempranillo - 231,000 hectares

Airén - 218 000 hectares

Chardonnay - 211,000 hectares

Syrah - 190,000 hectares

Grenache Noir - 163,000 hectares

Sauvignon Blanc - 121,000 hectares

Pinot Noir - 115,000 hectares

Trebbiano / Ugni Blanc - 111,005 hectares

New Zealand

NZ a good case study having started fairly late. Their first bottling of Sauvignon Blanc was produced in 1979. It accounts for nearly 90% of New Zealand's exports.

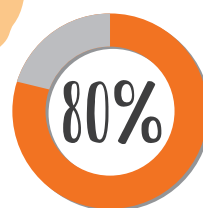
It is produced in a style that hadn't been seen before - fresh, zesty, with in-your-face pungent and tropical aromas. New Zealand came out swinging with a great white wine in a sea of crisp, dry, neutral wines around the world without any redeeming characteristics.

Cloudy Bay is arguably the most well-known brand that set the standard. It was a commercial wine that stole the market from beer drinkers, whisky drinkers and other categories. It was started in 1984 and has since been bought by the LVMH group.

Marlborough, on the South Island, produces 80% of New Zealand's Sauvignon Blanc and has set the benchmark with its pungently aromatic wines with their distinctive gooseberry aromas and flavours.

NORTH ISLAND

SOUTH ISLAND



MARLBOROUGH



New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc wines tend to be unoaked, combining delicious, tropical fruit flavours with lively, fresh tasting acidity and a directness that makes them especially satisfying.

The Loire Valley

Like most wines, Sauvignon Blanc's home is in France with a long history that can be traced to the 18th century. Evidence suggests that the grape originated along the Loire River in northwest France.

In France, wines are best known by the place where they are grown rather than the grape varietal.

Pouilly Fumé and **Sancerre** are the two regions that excel at Sauvignon Blanc, making discreet, aristocratic, non-showy styles of wine. The wines are not bright or zesty, nor are they loud. Instead, they are much more elegant and understated, with a 'come hither' approach rather than shouting from the rooftops.

CENTRE LOIRE

POUILLY-FUME

SANCERRE

The cool climate in the Loire can prevent the grapes from fully ripening and developing the sugars necessary to balance the natural acidity. During cooler vintages, the wines can be lighter in colour, less fruity, and with more pronounced mineral (like sucking on a river pebble or stone) notes.



'Fumé' comes from the silex flint interspersed with the limestone in the area (can give a smoky gunflint note) OR from the early morning fog created by the Loire river.



Loire Valley styles are generally drier, slower maturing, more restrained and austere, with a mineral note. They can also be oaked. You might find that you have to think about it them as they don't jump out of the glass.

Bordeaux

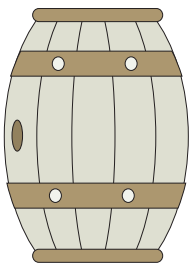


Bordeaux Sauvignon Blanc works on its own, but it can also be an incredible team player.

Some of the most famous dessert wines in the world come from **Sauternes** and **Barsac**, where the grape is blended with Semillon to make lusciously sweet, complex wines. These sweet wines are made from botrytised grapes and are aged in oak. They are capable of ageing for hundreds of years.

The addition of Sauvignon Blanc provides freshness and acidity to the blend.

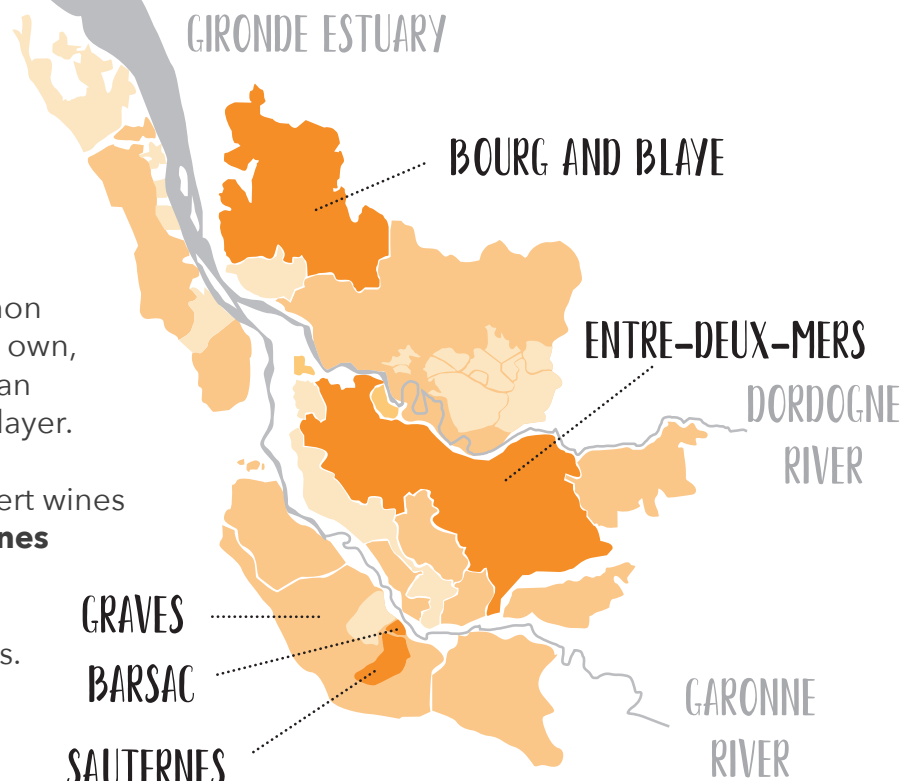
The great thing about wine is that the rules always have counterexamples. Sauvignon Blanc generally works best when it's tank fermented and bottled early to provide the zesty, limey, bright fruit character. But at the very top end it can also work well with oak.



The famous **Graves** and **Pessac-Léognan** regions on the left bank of the Gironde Estuary are known for employing lees stirring, malolactic fermentation, with some of the greatest wines being matured in oak. These are some of the most exciting Sauvignon Blanc based wines that are blended with Semillon to create powerful, full-bodied styles.

Barsac & Sauternes produce luscious wines with the perfect balance of sweetness and acidity. They are often characterised by apricots, peaches, honey, as well as nutty notes from the oak.

Graves and Pessac-Léognan produce dry wines with rich and varied notes that include blossoms, peaches, citrus, acacia and hazelnut from frequent use of oak.



Chile

With the Atacama Desert in the north and Antarctica to the south, Chile encompasses every climate type on earth.



The Humboldt current of the Pacific Ocean brings sea fogs and breezes that, where the mountains are low enough, move inland, bringing welcome relief for the ripening grapes.

The coolest regions are found in the north, where this oceanic influence is at its greatest.

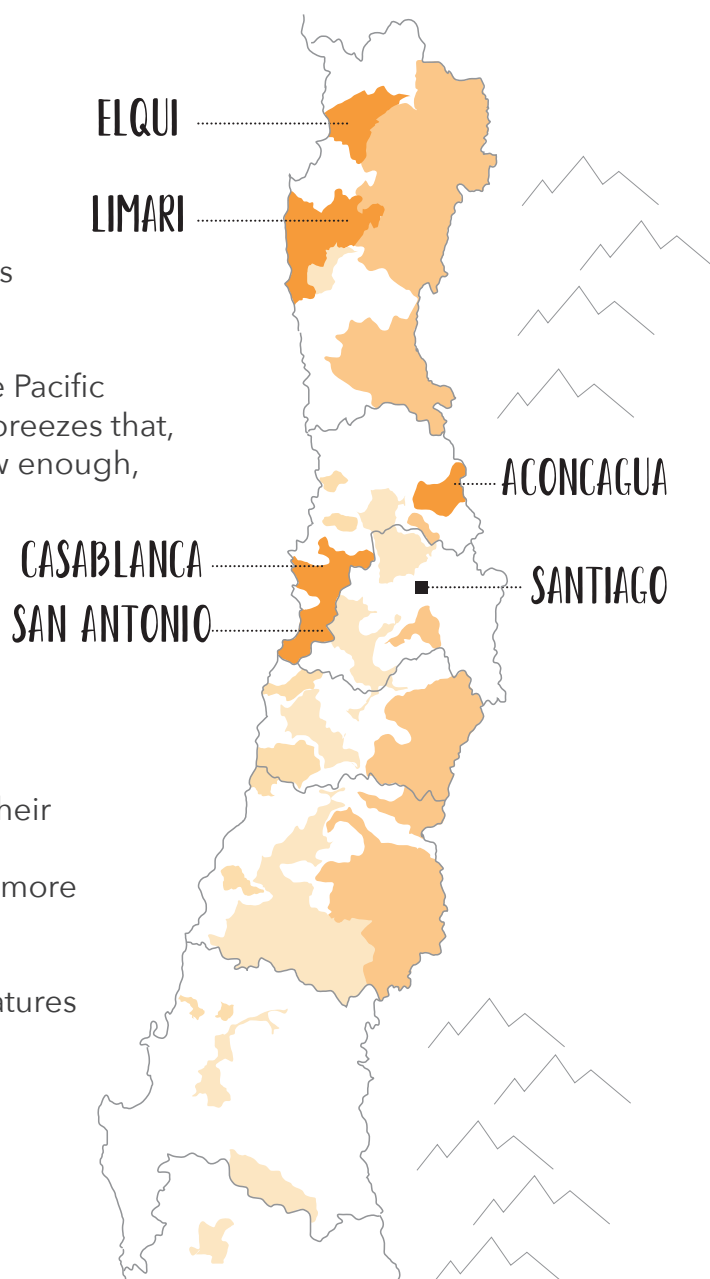
The two valleys of **Elqui** and **Limarí**, with their limestone soils, produce a Sauvignon Blanc that is more akin to the Loire Valley.

Cool nighttime temperatures help retain the marked acidity in the wines.



Chile is the only major wine producing country in the world unaffected by phylloxera

Chilean Sauvignon Blancs are refreshing & crisp with intense aromas of gooseberry & elderflower. They have a style that is similar to South Africa - somewhere between France and New Zealand, but with less intensity and passion fruit than NZ.



South Africa

The best regions in South Africa are those cooled by the oceans. For that reason, **Durbanville** and **Constantia**, with their proximity to the breezes, make some of the most exciting Sauvignon Blanc in the country.

Elgin is also known for quality Sauvignon Blanc. Here, the vines are cooled by the altitude.

Both the ocean breezes and altitude give the variety freshness and aroma. There is often too much heat in areas like Stellenbosch and the Swartland to retain those qualities, along with the grape's signature high acidity.

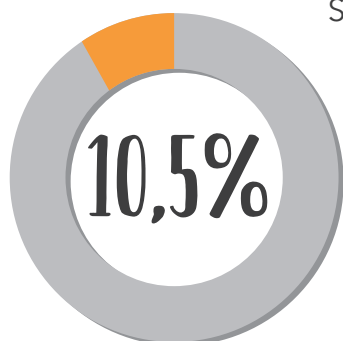
DURBANVILLE

CONSTANTIA

STELLENBOSCH

ELGIN

50% of white wine that is varietally labelled in South Africa is Sauvignon Blanc - an undoubtedly popular choice.



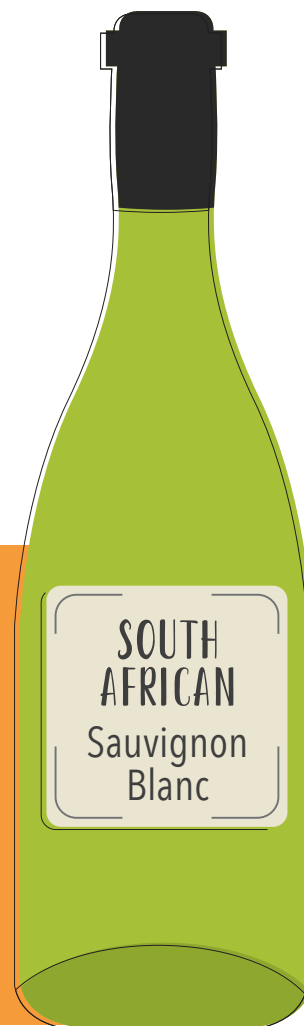
Sauvignon Blanc is the 3rd most planted white grape, after Chenin Blanc, at 10,5% of the total vineyard plantings

It is unknown when the grape first arrived in South Africa, but records show that it was planted at Groot Constantia by the late 1880's

1880's

South Africa's Sauvignon Blancs are some of the ripest, in terms of fruit flavour, with vibrancy and acidity to match. They have a more green and herbal quality.

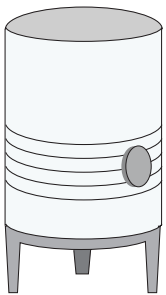
The tropical fruit flavours, although not as tropical or zesty as New Zealand, are matched with pungent, elderflower aromas along with the grape's distinctive herbaceous quality.



Winemaking

Sauvignon Blanc is not overly complex, hence it being loved by wine brands. You grow the grapes, you pick the grapes. You don't have to concentrate vineyard efforts to get a low yield, and the grapes can be picked by machine.

The grapes are placed in stainless steel. They can be fermented in oak, but it is difficult to get it to work well with oak.



Most commercial styles are picked early and fermented in stainless steel. You press, add yeast, ferment, and you have wine. Then you rack and fine, and finally bottle. Most Sauvignon Blanc is best drunk as young as possible.

Only the very best examples can age over time. Aged Sauvignon Blanc gets more of the green, asparagus, herbal, tinned pea characteristics that accentuate over time. In SA, probably less than 5% is suitable for ageing.

Don't be afraid of screw caps - most Sauvignon Blanc is better under screwcap than under cork.

Tasting Profile

The key to Sauvignon Blanc is that it has high acidity. We talk about balance all the time. Remember, it's all about your perception of acidity. If you aren't used to acidity in the foods that you eat, you might find it sour. But there's a brightness, freshness, and a piercing character that runs through a wine. It is pungently aromatic and zesty in character.

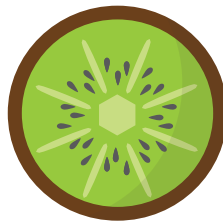
Typical aromas are **asparagus, kiwi, lemon, lime, peas, passion fruit, gooseberry, nettle, and freshly mown lawn.**

The alcohol doesn't tend to be north of 14%.

The methoxypyrazines chemicals give you the green, herbaceous, capsicum and blackcurrant leaf character. Some people love it, some find it too grassy and herbal.



ASPARAGUS



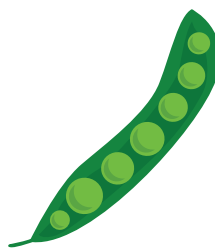
KIWI



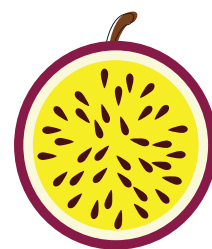
LEMON



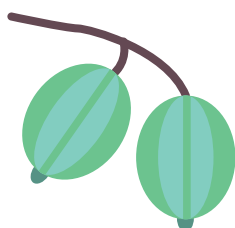
LIME



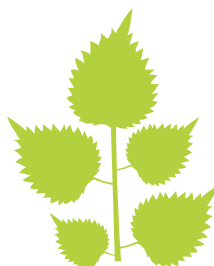
PEAS



PASSION FRUIT



GOOSEBERRY



NETTLE



FRESHLY CUT GRASS

Food pairings

Sauvignon Blanc is par excellence the wine that is synonymous with alfresco dining... with ice cubes! You can drink it quickly. It's the acidity that makes you want to have another refreshing glass at the bar. It's crispy. It's clean. It's unadulterated. It's bright and fun without being complicated. And that's what makes you want to have another glass.

Sauvignon Blanc works well with green salad dressed in vinaigrette. Asparagus drizzled in olive oil and a squeeze of lemon juice is also delicious. Goat cheese is the classic pairing. That's because the acidity in the wine is able to stand up to the acidity in all these dishes. It can also counterbalance the richness of smoked fish.

If you're not spreading your goat cheese on a cracker, then try baking a few goat cheese tartlets with caramelised onions. While we've got the oven on, whip up a quick bacon and leek quiche. If you have the skills, a cheese soufflé would be perfect.

Repeat after me: Sauvignon Blanc is made for seafood. Shellfish, grilled fish, smoked salmon, yellowtail, goujons, hake and chips and calamari. No, I haven't forgotten about oysters. Those creamy, minerally pops of goodness love being paired with the brightness of Sauvignon Blanc. Think of the wine as the drizzle of lemon that you'd normally squirt over your oyster.

So you prefer your food to be cooked? No problem. Sauvignon Blanc is good with white meats like pork and chicken. Also think about warm Mediterranean countries with their tapas-styled meals, countries like Greece and Mexico. Remember how you add balsamic vinegar to your feta salad? What's the best way to finish off your tacos and guacamole? A squeeze of lime. Making those connections between the high acids that you dress your food in, and the similarity in acid levels of Sauvignon Blanc, will open up a world of food pairings.

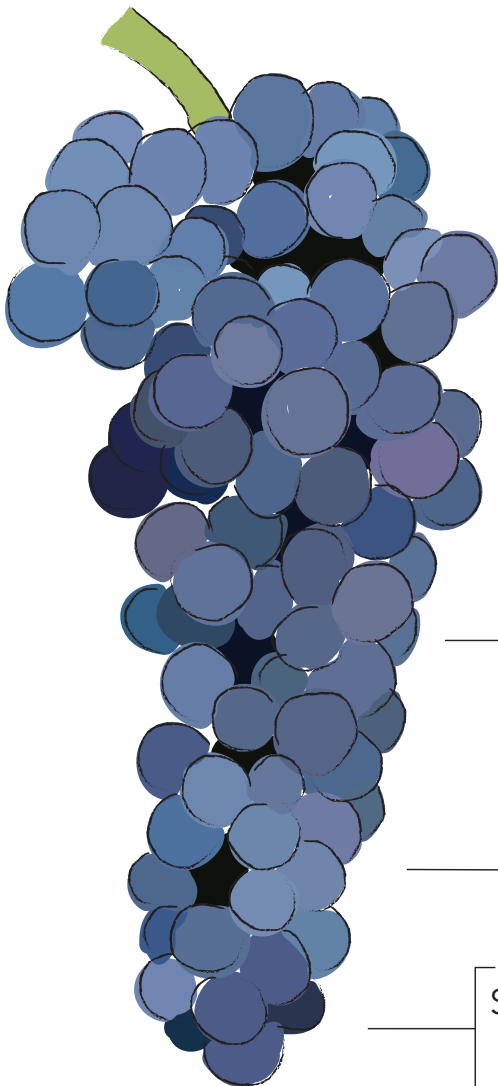
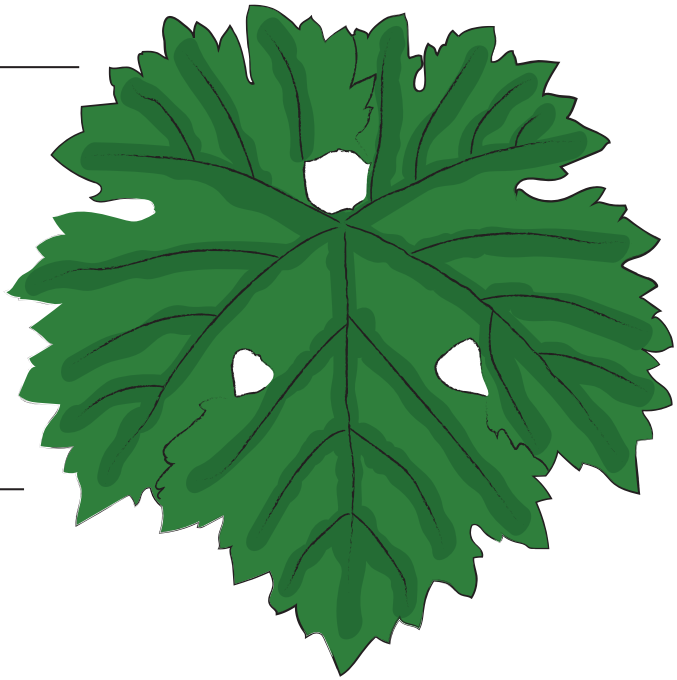
Or you could just drink it on its own...with a block of ice!

09. CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Sauvignon Blanc X Cabernet Franc = Cabernet Sauvignon, an accidental crossing that happened in the 17th century

Very vigorous grower producing hard wood, but ripens slowly.

Dark green, medium sized, 5 lobed overlapping leaves



Late ripening grapes so it needs a warm climate.

Small, round black berries with tough thick skins (colour + tannins). Large number of seeds (high in phenols). Firm flesh that tastes grassy.

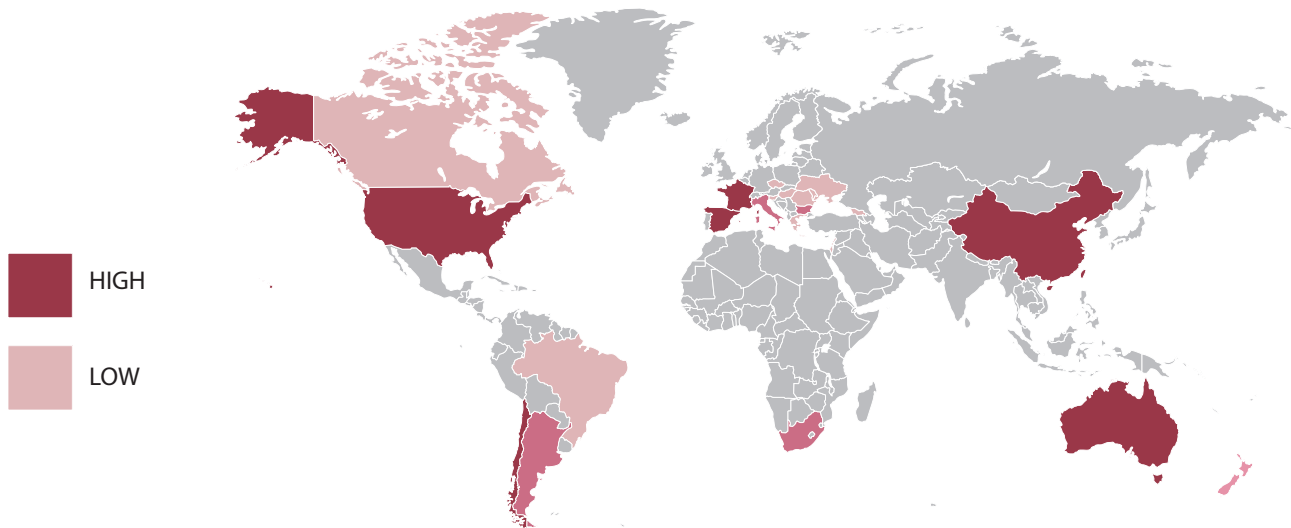
Works well with a variety of soils (prefers gravel, but does well on volcanic, loam, sandy, clay, granite). Ideally well drained & low-fertile soils.

Popular crossbreeding partner - with around 80 kids.

Sensitive to oidium & downy mildew.

Cabernet Sauvignon

It's hard to over-emphasise the important influence that Cabernet Sauvignon has in the wine industry. From both a business-to-business and business-to-consumer perspective, Cabernet really is an incredibly important grape variety.



It's the most planted grape in the world because it's the easiest to sell, the most accepted, and it's the gold standard for wine.

Cabernet Sauvignon is a cross between Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc. It is a late-ripening cultivar that needs a warm climate to fully ripen. Cabernet Sauvignon works well on a variety of soils, but it does best in gravel (arguably the absolute best) as well as volcanic, loam, sandy, and clay soils.

The key things to remember about Cabernet Sauvignon is that it's always dark in colour - thanks to its high levels of anthocyanins and high polyphenols in the thick skins and numerous seeds. The wine is always tannic, always high acidity and always full-bodied.

It is not an elegant ballerina. It is a powerful, muscular, superhero type of wine.

When working with Cabernet (other than a rosé), it's difficult to make something that isn't dry, tannic, powerful, and assertive. But these properties give it a great ability to age and express where it's made. It can tell you exactly where it comes from. And it works just as well on its own as it does in a blend.

MOST PLANTED GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon - 340,000 hectares

Merlot - 266,000 hectares

Tempranillo - 231,000 hectares

Airén - 218 000 hectares

Chardonnay - 211,000 hectares

Syrah - 190,000 hectares

Grenache Noir - 163,000 hectares

Sauvignon Blanc - 121,000 hectares

Pinot Noir - 115,000 hectares

Trebbiano / Ugni Blanc - 111,005 hectares

Bordeaux

It all starts in the town of **Bordeaux** where the **Dordogne River** and **Garonne River** join to form the **Gironde Estuary** that flows into the Atlantic Ocean. This estuary and the large area of Entre-Deux-Mers divide Bordeaux into the **Left Bank** and **Right Bank**.

Left Bank wines are dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon as these vineyards are mostly gravel. Whilst the Right Bank has Merlot that is able to ripen in the predominantly clay soils.

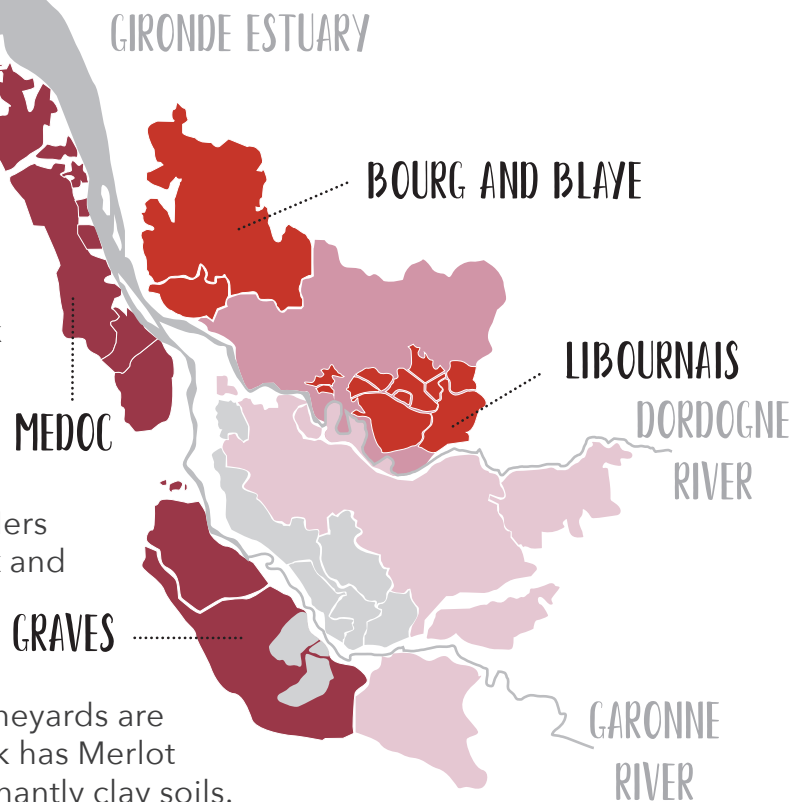
Bordeaux has a history of blending their wines. This began as insurance against their tricky maritime climate. To prevent an entire crop being ruined by the rain, they also planted Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Malbec, and Carménère alongside Cabernet Sauvignon. Cabernet Sauvignon ripens later, so grapes like Merlot, which ripen earlier, became an insurance policy against a difficult year. (Climate change means that this has evolved.)

It has now also become a stylistic choice. Adding Merlot to the blend softens the tannic, high acidity of Cabernet while lending a plush and velvety feel.

Note that you won't find any mention of grape varieties on the labels. This is an easy distinction between Old World and New World labelling. The only way to know what to expect is to learn the appellations, otherwise known as AOC's (*appellation d'origine contrôlée*).

Bordeaux Cabernet Sauvignon can range from iron filings to majestic cedar, pencil shavings complexity.

In a tough, difficult harvest year it's like rusty nails and iron filings. But the greatest examples of Bordeaux just smell expensive - like walking into a beautiful dining room with really fancy leather sofas, cigar box, finely woven suits. It smells expensive and it doesn't smell like grapes.



Napa Valley

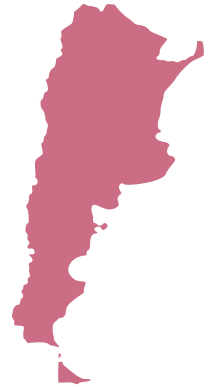
Cabernet Sauvignon accounts for 4% of the total production of Californian wines. It is 1/6 of the size of Bordeaux. **Napa Valley** has a strong domestic brand with plenty of Direct to Consumer (DTC) business with wealthy Californians who want to drink premium domestic U.S. wines. The price of grapes in Napa currently ranges from \$7,800 up to \$50,000 per ton [2020], making these some of the most expensive grapes in the world.



Canadian Cabernet is usually sold under its varietal name and is often blended with Merlot or Cabernet Franc. In Canada, Cabernet Franc, the parent grape, is more successful.

Argentina

Despite Malbec still being the most grown grape in Argentina, Cabernet Sauvignon accounts for 7.2% of total vine plantings. Argentinian Cabernet offers great value for money. The vines are often grown at high altitudes with 77% of Cabernet being found in **Mendoza**, at between 700m and 950m above sea level. The **Uco Valley** vineyards are planted between 1000m to 1500m asl. And **Cafayate** in **Salta** is planted at an astonishing 1750m above sea level! The grape is successful as either a single varietal or in blends.



Washington



Cabernet Sauvignon thrives in **Washington** and, in fact, could possibly be called Washington's signature grape. First

planted in the 1940s, Washington crushed more than 64,000 tons in 2018. The oldest working vines at Otis Vineyard in the Yakima Valley date to 1956.

Australia



Cabernet Sauvignon dates to the mid 1800's in Australia. Famed for some of the world's oldest vines, including those of Penfolds'

Block 42 in **Barossa**, planted in 1885. The grape is successful as either a single varietal or the dominant grape in blends such as Cab Shiraz. **Coonawarra** and **Margaret River** are the most successful regions for Cabernet.

Canada

The large lakes in Canada help moderate the temperatures, allowing Cabernet Sauvignon to ripen in **British Columbia**.



Cabernet Sauvignon does particularly well in the **Okanagan Valley** in British Columbia but is also grown in **Ontario**.

South Africa

Cabernet Sauvignon is South Africa's most planted red grape variety. It is now used in single varietal wines, as well as in blends. But the famous SA blends of the past were traditionally often blended with Cinsault or Shiraz (and who knows what other grapes) to soften the tannins.

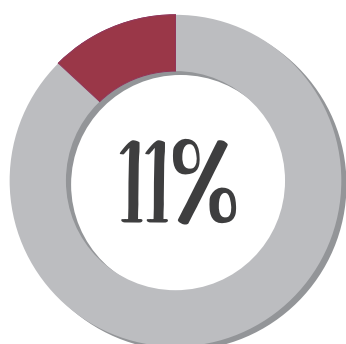
SWARTLAND

PAARL

STELLENBOSCH

ROBERTSON

The addition of a minimum of 30% and maximum of 70% Pinotage makes it a Cape Blend (dictated by competition rules, but not a legislated, or registered style of winemaking according to SAWIS). When blended with Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, or Malbec it is called a Bordeaux-style blend.



Stellenbosch, Paarl and **Robertson** are where it does extremely well in SA. The **Swartland**, to a lesser extent, although there are significant plantings.

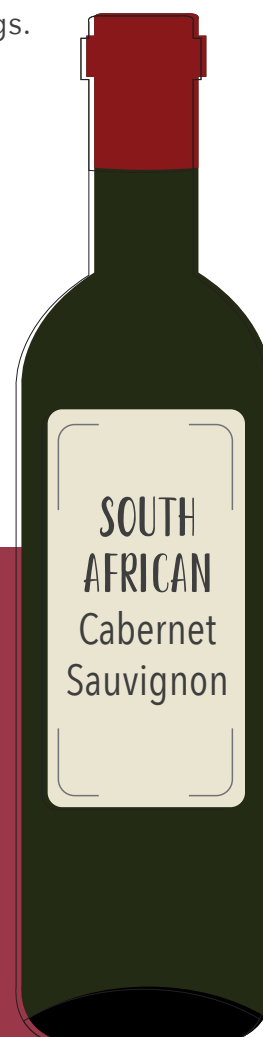
Cabernet is the most planted red grape in SA with 11% of the total vine plantings in South Africa.

The exact date is unsure, but Cabernet probably arrived in SA two centuries ago. It has been associated with premium single variety wines since the 1920's.

1920's

South African Cabernet Sauvignon straddles the border between Old World and New World. The fruit is ripe and fruity, without being jammy.

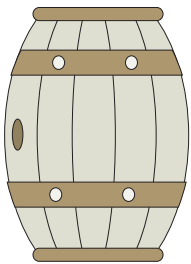
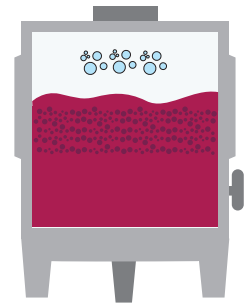
Each region offers their own variation based on soils and climate. A typical Stellenbosch Cabernet shows plum, mulberry, blackberry, cassis, chocolate and cigar box from the inevitable new oak.



Winemaking

Cabernet Sauvignon is a super vigorous growing vine, so you have to cut it down because it does better at lower yields. By forcing the vineyard to produce fewer grapes, you are able to harvest a higher quality grape.

Maceration is important as the grape's natural thick skins, high acid, and high tannins need to be extracted. Determining how long you allow the grapes to macerate and at what temperature are key factors to the style of wine you will produce. You will naturally get a deep and dark wine, but the longer you leave the grapes on their skins, and the higher the temperature you ferment at, and whether you choose to do punch-downs or pump-overs, all these factors will determine the colour and flavour.



It is possible to ferment in stainless steel or concrete for a fresher and more fruit-forward style. But, ultimately, new oak is synonymous with Cabernet Sauvignon. The grape loves new French or American Oak. Like Chardonnay, the oak and the grape have an incredible marriage. Cabernet is one of the few grapes that can handle a large amount of oak for a long period of time. The oak melds with the grape and smooths out the harsh tannins.

After 10, 20 or 30 years in bottle, the oak and wine are so seamless that they become part of each other.

Because of the natural polyphenols, anthocyanins, tannins, and acidity, it's best to leave Cabernet wines to sit for a longer period of time as they generally need time to come around in the bottle. Great Cabs need at least five years in bottle to really start strutting their stuff.



Tasting profile

Cabernet Sauvignon will always be high in tannins. They are necessary to provide enough backbone, structure, and harmony to the wine. Tannins also help the wine age for decades.

You'll notice the tannins as a dryness and mouth-puckering quality that is felt on your gums. Watch out for green, austere, astringent, or bitter tannins - none of these are a good thing. Rather look for tannins that are ripe. When you eat meat, mushrooms, or heavy food dishes, the tannins will dissolve in your mouth, and you won't even know that they're there. Don't be afraid of the tannins, focus instead on how balanced they are.

Cabernet Sauvignon will always have high tannins, high acidity, and it will always be full-bodied and will almost always be dry. The alcohol will usually be 13,5% or higher. Look for aromas and flavours of **blackcurrant, cassis, plums, and black cherries**. They'll also often show herbaceous notes (**green pepper**) from the high levels of methoxypyrazines. With the oak coming through as **vanilla, spices, mocha, cigar box, and smoke**.



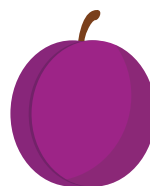
HIGH TANNIN



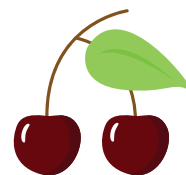
BLACKCURRANT



CASSIS



PLUM



BLACK CHERRY



MINT



GREEN PEPPER



EARTH



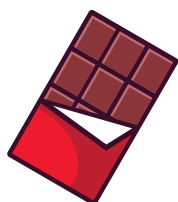
VANILLA



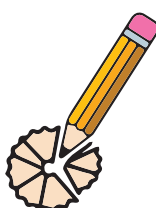
CLOVES



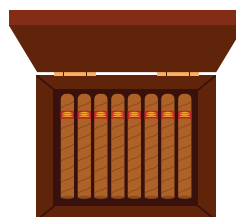
BAKING SPICES



MOCHA



PENCIL SHAVINGS



CIGAR BOX



SMOKE

Food and wine pairings

The food world is your oyster when drinking Cabernet. Though, if we're being honest, oysters wouldn't make a great pairing!

Cabernet Sauvignon and red meat are made for each other. The high tannins and high acidity in Cabernet help break down the proteins in the red meat. And the red meat seems to tame the tannins in the wine.

Try your Cab with a steak served with a peppercorn sauce. The peppercorn will marry well with the cloves and smoke of the wine. As does chargrilled meat like braaivleis. Sometimes you just want a good juicy burger - that doesn't mean you can't have one alongside your fancy bottle of Cab that costs triple the price.

Braised beef dishes like short ribs, lamb chops, or a lamb roast are classic family meals that work well with the wine. And when you're relaxing on the couch in front of the tv, could anything be more lekker than a bowl of salty biltong? I quite like kudu biltong because the gamey flavours add more complexity.

Whilst we're speaking of game - you have to try venison, especially when it's cooked in red wine. Ostrich drizzled in a red wine reduction on a bed of herbed mash. Rich, dark sauces like red wine reductions or peppercorn sauce will always do well with a Cabernet Sauvignon.

Other than red meat, consider these food options:

Roasted mushrooms and vegetables, veggie Lasagna or moussaka are all able to hold their own against the power of a big Cabernet.

As far as the cheese course goes, harder cheeses like cheddar are wonderful.

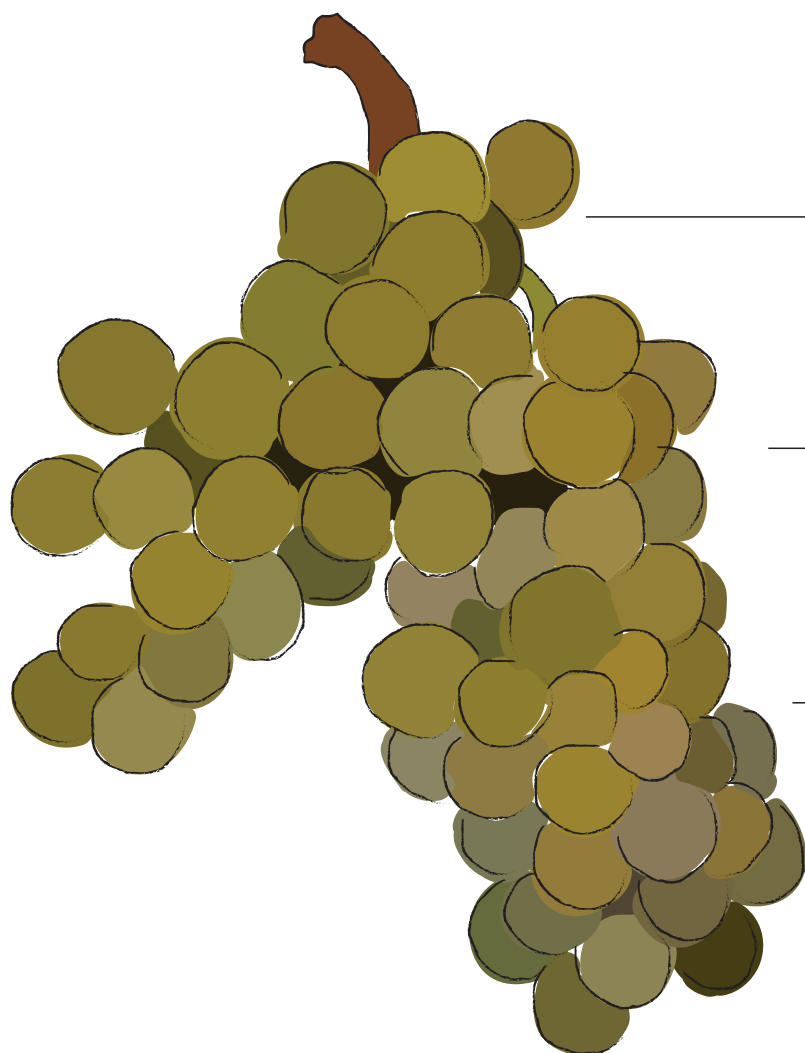
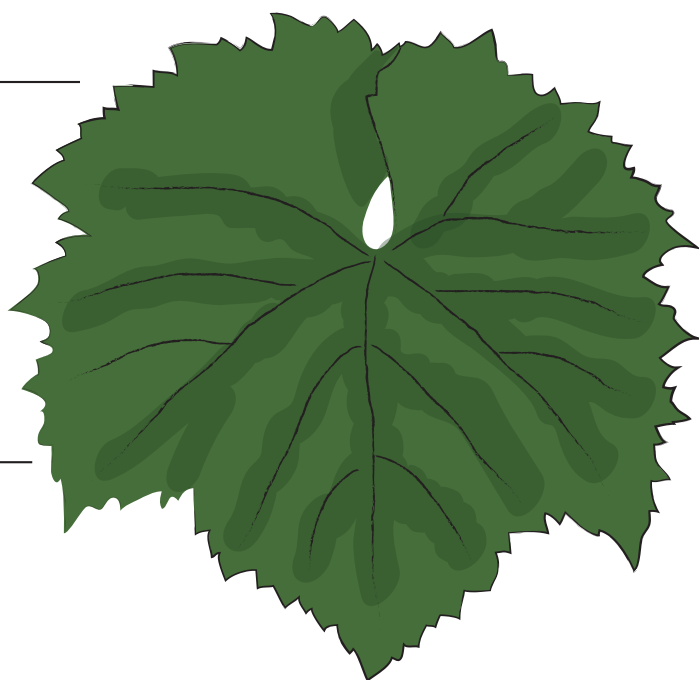
Dessert anyone? Chocolate! But with the caveat that it's proper dark chocolate that's made with bitter cacao. Dark chocolate ganache, a chocolate torte, or just a slab of high-quality dark chocolate will do just fine. If it's commercial sweet, milk chocolate... you're better off having a fortified wine.

10. CHARDONNAY

Relatively easy, and hardy to grow. Has a longer ripening season.

Forgiving in both vineyard (and winery) but tough to get really great.

Grows in a broad variety of climates, but tends to lose acidity quickly if the site is too warm.



Gouais Blanc x Pinot
= Chardonnay

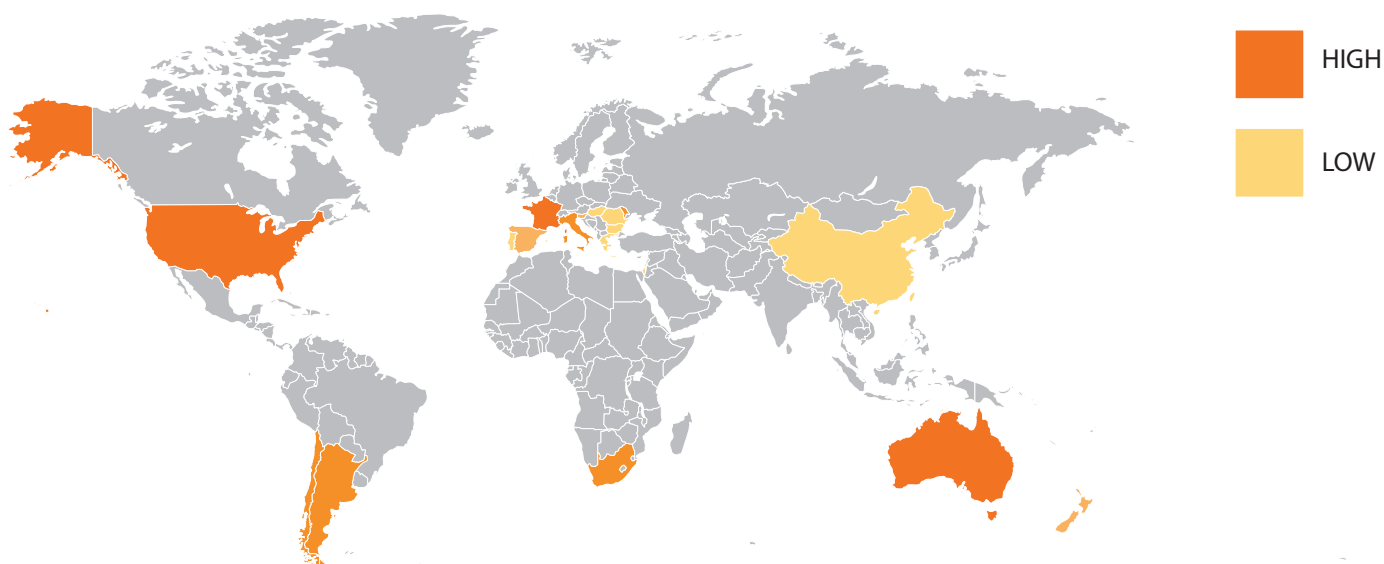
Hardy & relatively disease resistant, but is prone to spring frost as it buds early.

Does particularly well on limestone soil. Also on kimmeridgian clay eg. Chablis.

Small, round yellow to amber (when ripe) berries.

Chardonnay

Chardonnay is the world's most popular white grape, beaten only in number by Airén, a bulk variety grown in Spain. It is a chameleon of a grape in the vineyard and is easily grown anywhere and everywhere, though it prefers limestone more than anything else.



For a young viticulturist or winemaker just coming out of school, this relatively disease-resistant grape that doesn't need much attention in the vines, will get them an acceptable crop that will make reasonably good wine.

It makes a broad variety of wine styles, in a manner best described as chameleon.

Two interesting things:

1. It is the grape variety that took the white wine world away from knowing wines by the name of the place that they came from e.g. Chablis or Corton Charlemagne or Meursault in Burgundy, to recognising the wines by the grape.
2. It was the grape variety that introduced the globe to the New World in the late 1970's.

At the same time, there was also an outcry out against Chardonnay with the acronym

'ABC' (anything but Chardonnay) often used by those with negative reactions to Chardonnays that were very oaky, very obvious, very sweet, and rich wines that were mega-successful commercially.

MOST PLANTED GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon - 340,000 hectares

Merlot - 266,000 hectares

Tempranillo - 231,000 hectares

Airén - 218 000 hectares

Chardonnay - 211,000 hectares

Syrah - 190,000 hectares

Grenache Noir - 163,000 hectares

Sauvignon Blanc - 121,000 hectares

Pinot Noir - 115,000 hectares

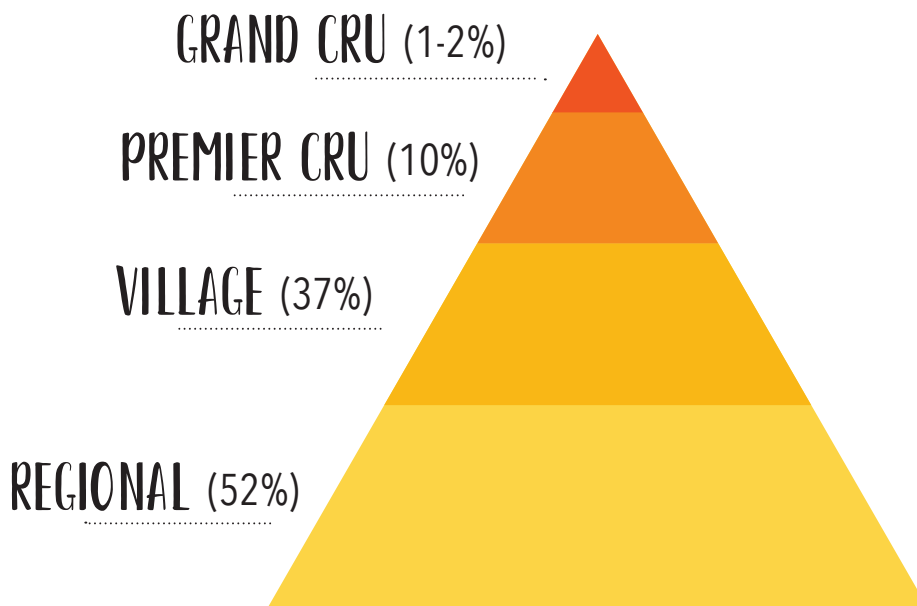
Trebbiano / Ugni Blanc - 111,005 hectares

Burgundy

Chardonnay's home is **Burgundy** in central eastern France.

Burgundy is complicated, consisting of tiny villages where 150-hectare plots of land are subdivided into Grand Cru (1 - 2 % of production), Premier Cru (10%), and Commune or Village (37%) wines. The rest fall under a regional classification of Bourgogne AC.

Essentially, when you win the lottery or have an IPO, you spend your money on Grand Cru Chardonnay.



Chablis, at the top of Burgundy, makes the most austere type of Chardonnay that has steely, briny, saline, and oyster shell characteristics that cannot be replicated anywhere else in the world. It's the northernmost region of

Burgundy, pretty close to **Champagne**, where Chardonnay is also grown for sparkling wines. They suffer from spring frosts, and harvests can vary.

Chablis has Grand Cru, Premier Cru, and Village level wines.

The magic of Chablis lies in the Kimmeridgian clay made of fossilised oyster shells that are in the soils. The classic style of Chablis, when done very well, is best imagined as going to a mountain stream, picking up a river pebble and putting it in your mouth. Pebbly, stony, dry and austere make for real refreshment value that makes you want to drink another glass. It is the closest thing to water, in the very best sense, but with flavour!

The most famous, powerful, seductive, lose-your-mind-as-well-as-your-bank-account wines comes from the three famous villages in the **Côte de Beaune: Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet** and **Chassagne-Montrachet**, and their seven Grand Crus.

These great oaked Grand Cru wines have an ability to wear oak in a way that gives the wines richness. But the oak doesn't sit on top of the wine. Instead, there is an amazing sandwich character in which the wine and the oak go together.

At their best, these oaked wines are good for 10 to 20 years. Cassidy describes them as imagining the most exquisite bit of praline or burnt butter that has richness and weight without being heavy or ponderous. They are magical wines, but they are crazily expensive wines.

Further down south you have the **Mâconnais** and **Côte Chalonnaise**. These are commercial examples of Chardonnays that are good without being overblown or tropical. They're also much less expensive.

Côte Chalonnaise plant their vineyards at a higher elevation, which results in a later and less reliable harvest. There are no Grand Crus in Côte Chalonnaise.

The most important appellations in the Mâconnais are **Pouilly-Fuissé** and **Macon**. Mâconnais is the furthest south which means warmer weather with riper fruits. Pouilly-Fuissé can produce full-bodied wines with tropical fruits. Macon is known for large volume, unoaked wines at good prices.



Chablis make the most austere types of Chardonnay that are steely, briny and saline. Look for lime and oyster shell in these unoaked wines.

Côte de Beaune is the crème de la crème of Burgundy. Think about the most exquisite bit of praline, truffles, vanilla, ripe yellow apples and tropical fruits...it has richness and weight without being heavy or ponderous.

Mâconnais wines are simpler, usually unoaked with notes of riper fruits, florals and sometimes nuts when oaked.

USA



California makes use of all the winemaking techniques (lees, MLF, oak) and are typically riper, heavier oaked style. Historically, the most powerful, richest, full-bodied Chardonnays from the New World typically came from California. Though, this is changing as there is a global shift from 'butter bombs' to wines made with little to no oak. **Oregon** has a climate similar to Burgundy's, with cooler temperatures that equal less ripe fruits. They make exciting New World style Chardonnay that is similar to those found in South Africa. **Washington** makes Chardonnay wines in a style somewhere between California and Oregon.

Argentina



Chardonnay arrived in the Americas in the 17th century. In Argentina, it is the second most planted white grape after Torrontés. The high-altitude vineyards of **Uco Valley** make Chardonnay wines that are a unique blend of Old and New World.

Chile



Chardonnay is well-adapted to the cool climate regions of Chile such as **Casablanca**, **San Antonio**, and **Aconcagua**. Chilean Chardonnays have an obvious pear and melon character. **Limarí** Chardonnay has a distinct minerality due to the calcareous soils of the region as well as ocean breezes.

Australia



Chardonnay first came to Australia in the 1920's. **Margaret River** with its warm, maritime climate makes a distinctive style that shows dusty, lemon sherbet, cut pear, dried pear, and fig flavours. **Adelaide Hills** has a cool climate that makes more elegant, refined, mineral, and crisp wines with good acidity. Good quality wines are also found in **Yarra Valley** and **Mornington Peninsula**. **Tasmania** has a maritime climate and, as one of the coolest regions in Australia, features wines high in acidity.

Italy



For a long time, Chardonnay was confused for Pinot Blanc in Italy. The two grapes are often interplanted and blended in wines. Chardonnay is Italy's fourth most planted white grape (2015). Most Chardonnay plantings are found in the northern regions of Italy. **Friuli** in northeastern Italy makes great Chardonnay that is often blended with Pinot Blanc. The grape was granted its own DOC (*Denominazione di origine controllata*) classification in **Alto Adige**, in northern Italy, in 1984.

New Zealand

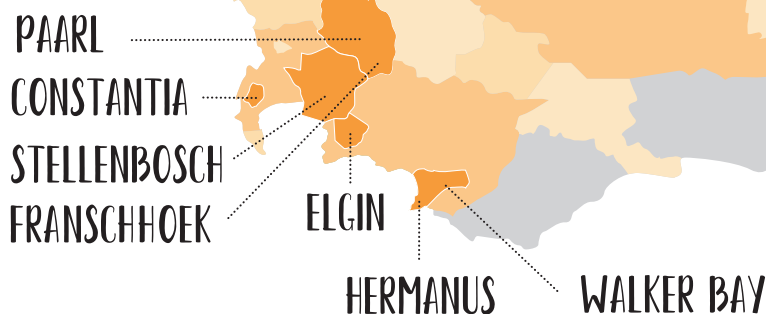


Interestingly, Chardonnay was the most planted grape in New Zealand from 1990 until 2002, when Sauvignon Blanc took over. It is grown in **Gisborne** and **Marlborough**.

South Africa

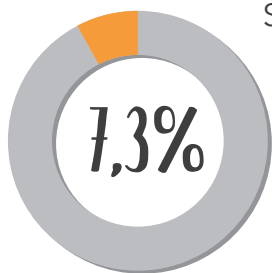
Chardonnay is a more recent newcomer compared to Chenin, Colombard and Semillon.

Over 1,000 hectares are planted in Robertson, Paarl, and Stellenbosch each. Plenty of this goes into commercial white wines as well as the distillation market.



In terms of quality, cool regions like **Walker Bay**, **Hemel-en-Aarde Valley**, **Elgin**, and **Constantia** produce world-class wines. Foothills and higher-lying ground cooled by altitude and sea breezes allow areas like **Stellenbosch**, **Paarl**, and **Franschhoek** to also produce quality wines.

If you were blindfolded and asked to compare South African oaked Chardonnays, they compare very well to some of the world's finest but at a lower price. South Africa is making great oaked Chardonnay!



At 7,3% of total grape plantings, Chardonnay is the 4th most planted white grape after Chenin Blanc, Colombard and Sauvignon Blanc

Frustrated by the red tape in the 70's & 80's, the first vines were 'smuggled in suitcases' but it turned out to be Auxerrois Blanc. Danie de Wet of De Wetshof Estate was one of the pioneers of the grape.



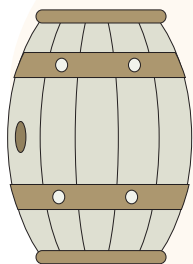
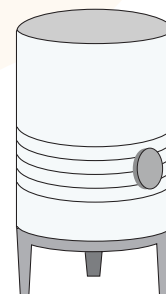
South African Chardonnays range in styles based on the winemaking techniques employed. From leaner, fruit forward unoaked styles that show florals, green apple, citrus and pear, to riper fruits like yellow apples, pineapple and mango.

Creamy, rich, oaked examples offer tropical fruits, butterscotch, vanilla, lemon curd, baked apple cloves and coconut.



Winemaking

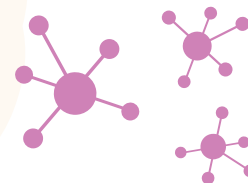
In terms of the winemaking, you can make it like a stainless steel Sauvignon Blanc - pick the grapes when you decide it's the right time, chuck it into a steel tank, and you'll get a relatively neutral, unoaked, simple commercial wine.



Where it gets interesting, and where decision making in terms of winemaking comes into play, is where it's fermented - barrel vs steel vs. old oak, ageing in oak, what type of oak. Really good Chardonnay can take 30-50%, sometimes even 100% new oak.

It works really well with French oak (not so much American). The key is to get it to work at the highest level - where the oak and the wine meld into each other and you don't know where the wine ends and the oak starts. That's tough to get right.

Malolactic fermentation/conversion - the softening of malic acid that you get from high acid grape varieties into lactic acid - can happen naturally or aided by the winemaker. If done naturally, it brings a character called diacetyl which means the wine smells of yoghurt.



Let's not forget lees (dead yeast cells that both protect and nourish the wine giving it a great mid-palate feel).

It is indicative of its terroir - it's a grape that wears makeup really well. Oak is a 'makeup' in wine. Like makeup on a person, oak can be done badly or it can be done well. Chardonnay does makeup better than any other variety. Chardonnay is a workhorse in the vineyard - it doesn't need a low yield to be able to grow well.

If all of this is done badly, you get vanilla, soft, soupy, desiccated coconut, obvious wines. If it's done well, the seasoning is like a great steak that gives it an extra lift without being obviously oaky. The key thing with making Chardonnay is the relationship with oak and lees. The raw materials will always be important, but the hand of the Chardonnay winemaker is more important than in any other grape variety.

Tasting Profile

Chardonnay can make classic, mineral blanc de blanc (white from white), assertive, high acid, classic aperitif, high-quality champagne. It can also make a very briny, oyster shell austere Chablis, which is the northernmost region where a Chardonnay can grow. It can range from a very steely mineral style to a full-bodied, rich, tropical, hedonistic, deep, powerful, compelling and flavourful wine from a top Burgundian, Australian or South African producer. It can be a wine where oak is very much part of its DNA. It can also work in a late-harvest, botrytis-affected wine. It's a chameleon that can do plenty.

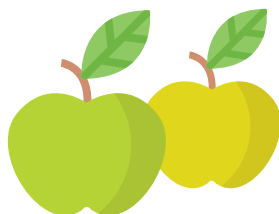
In terms of taste, it has a broad palate feel - if you think of Sauvignon Blanc being quite linear and direct, Chardonnay is more of a textured wine. It has more richness. It usually has high alcohol, though you can have it at 12.5%. But it generally tends to work better at 13 - 13.5%.

It is not especially aromatic on its own - nowhere as aromatic as Sauvignon Blanc or Viognier that both jump out of the glass at you. Chardonnay is usually medium to full-bodied and available in a wide variety of styles. From Chablis wines that are **chalky, lean, mineral, saline**, almost salty notes on the **apple** and **pear** spectrum. All the way to **tropical, tinned pineapple, piña colada, peach, melon**, coconut and toffee characters that are pungent, broad textured and make big-shouldered wines.

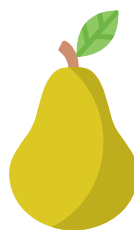
It can also be fairly anonymous and bland at a commercial level. Top-end chardonnay should last 10 - 20 years.



CHALK



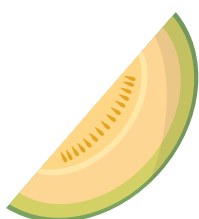
APPLES



PEAR



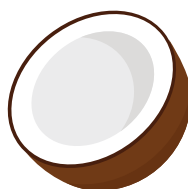
LIME



MELON



PINEAPPLE



COCONUT



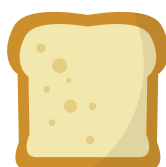
TOFFEE



ALMONDS
HAZELNUTS



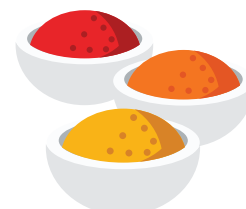
BUTTER



TOAST



VANILLA



BAKING SPICES

Food Pairings

Young, unoaked wines from cooler climates go exceptionally well with fish. Chablis pairs well with oysters. Intense wines can pair with raw fish like sushi or ceviche. Prawns, steamed or grilled fish, chicken, pasta, spring vegetables and creamy vegetable soups are all fantastic with a lighter wine.

Fruity, unoaked or lightly oaked wines are better suited to cooked meals that are slightly richer. Dishes like fish pie, fish cakes, grilled salmon, chicken or pork. Pasta in a creamy sauce or mild curries are lovely pairings. Salads with peach, mango and macadamia nuts makes for a fresh, vegan option.

Full bodied wines that have been aged in oak are able to stand up to even richer dishes like eggs Benedict or steak béarnaise. Red peppers, corn, butternut and pumpkin are fantastic with a fuller bodied Chardonnay.

Mature, barrel fermented Chardonnay wines pair best with foods like grilled, seared or roasted shellfish. Roast chicken, wild mushrooms and truffles (or a combination of all three) will also go well with a bigger wine. Dishes with hazelnut could align with similar oaked notes in the wine.

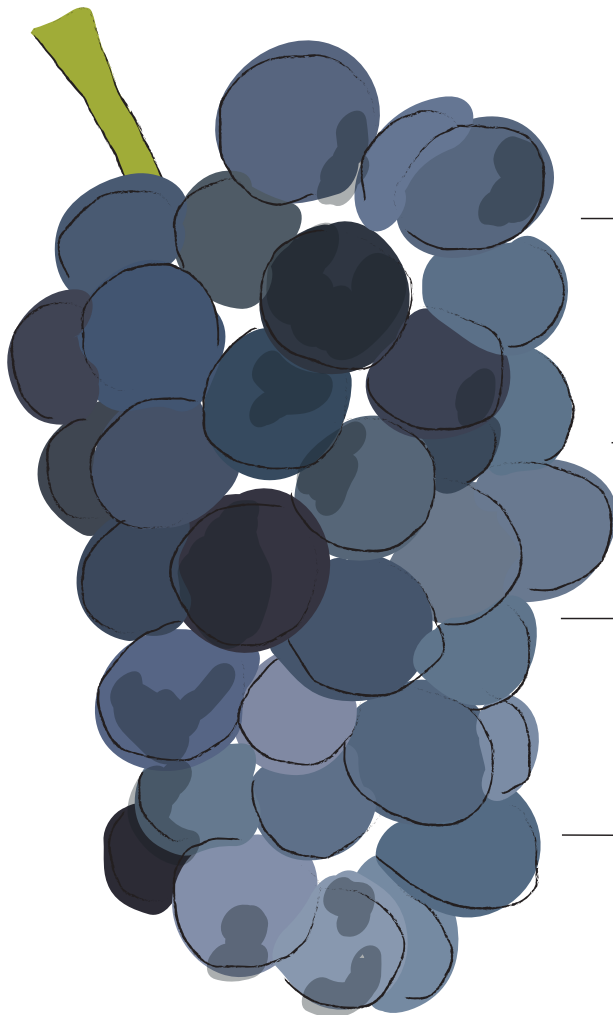
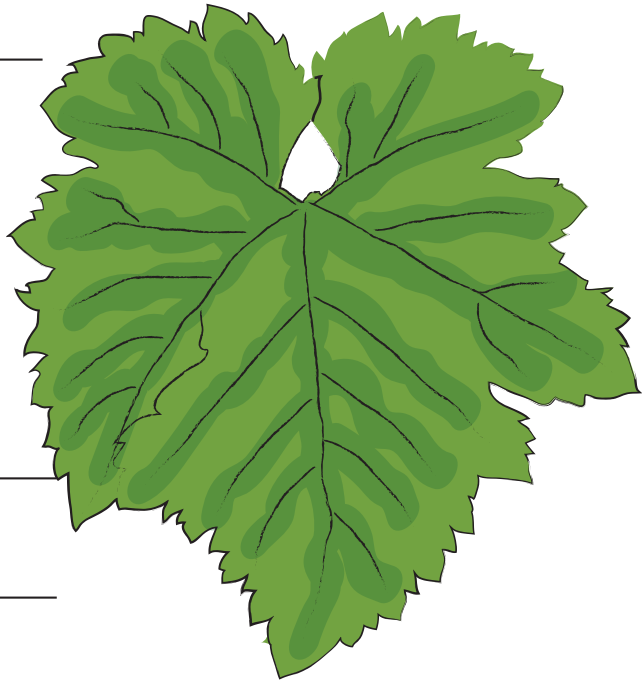
11. SYRAH / SHIRAZ

Origin myths include:
the Middle East (Shiraz &
Persia), Roman importation
into Gaul, Syracuse (Sicily),
and Syrah Island, Greece.

Good growing vigour,
moderate production, late
budding and mid-season
ripening.

Loses aroma and acidity
when yields increase.

Dull green, large leaves
that are 3 to 5-lobed.



Medium small, oval,
blue black (high levels
of anthocyanins)
berries that tend to
shriveled when ripe.

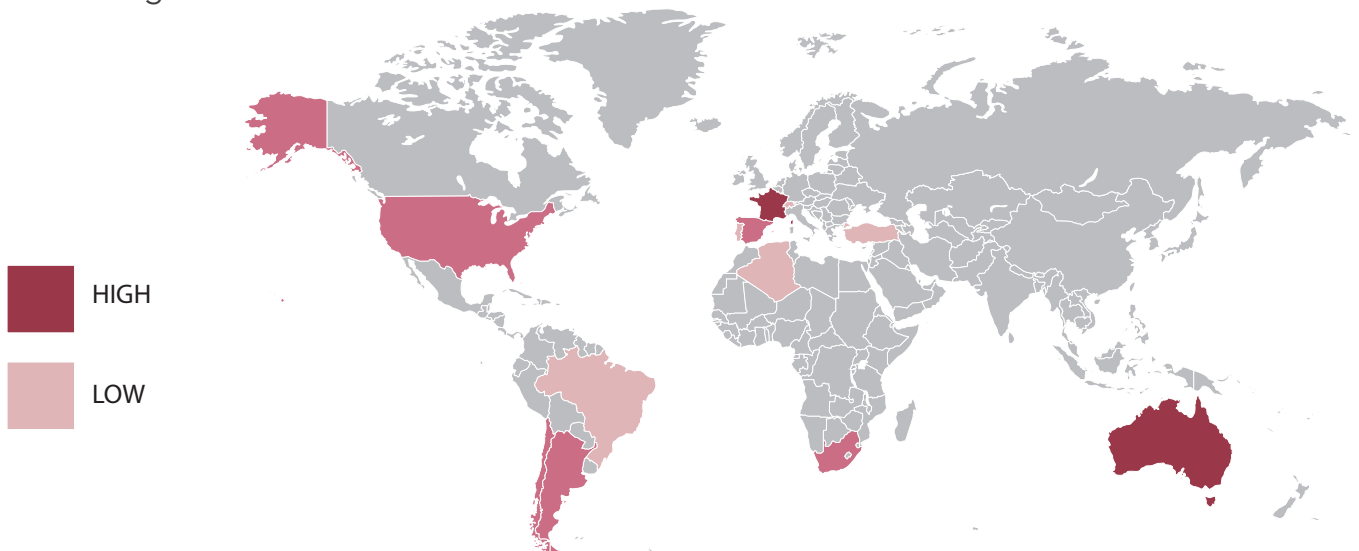
Fairly resistant to disease.

Responds well to oak
maturation when the
grapes are very ripe.

Thin skins, but
tough with juicy
flesh.

Syrah / Shiraz

The name Syrah refers to the traditional Rhône style wines with their more restrained fruit. The wine is referred to as Shiraz for the more modern New World. The name Shiraz is thought to originate from Persia, where there is a village called Shiraz, making this the older name even though it's associated with the New World. Shiraz usually implies a more powerful, richer, plusher style with riper berries, higher alcohol, and more upfront fruit. The dichotomy isn't necessarily useful anymore. There was a time when Shiraz was always big and bold. But there are plenty of Shirazes now that are much lighter.



Shiraz is the fourth most planted red grape in the world. The grape can adapt to a range of climates and can thrive in the hot Barossa Valley in Australia (ripe, full flavoured wines), as well as in the cooler Northern Rhône (leaner, floral, more elegant). It's made in a range of styles, from medium to full-bodied.

Compared to Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah doesn't have the same tannin or acidity as Cabernet. It is not as full bodied or as dense. Rotundone is a chemical that smells like pepper - it's found in the oils of black pepper, rosemary, basil, and is synonymous with Syrah / Shiraz.

The key notes to Syrah / Shiraz are pepper, black fruits, savoury (meaty, bacon fat) and dark chocolate (in Barossa styles).

MOST PLANTED GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon - 340,000 hectares

Merlot - 266,000 hectares

Tempranillo - 231,000 hectares

Airén - 218 000 hectares

Chardonnay - 211,000 hectares

Syrah - 190,000 hectares

Grenache Noir - 163,000 hectares

Sauvignon Blanc - 121,000 hectares

Pinot Noir - 115,000 hectares

Trebbiano / Ugni Blanc - 111,005 hectares

Rhône

The home of Syrah is the **Northern Rhône**, about a three-hour drive from Burgundy. Northern Rhône is not as warm as the south of France.

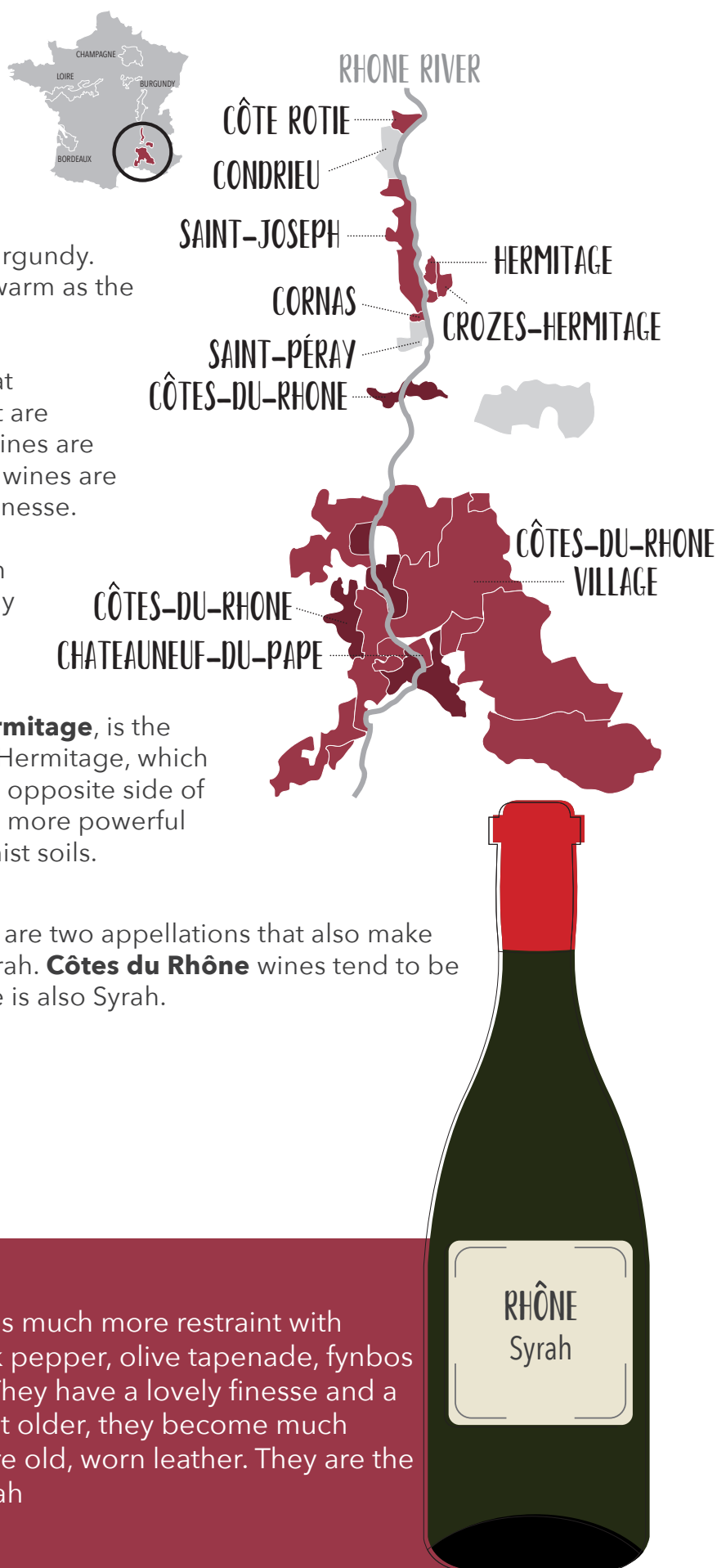
Côte Rotie can be found at the very top, with soils that are mostly granite. Only red wines are produced here, and these wines are perfumed and filled with finesse.

Just below is **Condrieu**, an appellation that makes only white wines from the Viognier grape

Côte Rotie, along with **Hermitage**, is the home of Syrah. The hill of Hermitage, which is further south and on the opposite side of the Rhône River, has much more powerful wines as a result of the schist soils.

Cornas and **Saint-Joseph** are two appellations that also make very good examples of Syrah. **Côtes du Rhône** wines tend to be mostly Grenache but there is also Syrah.

Northern Rhône Syrah has much more restraint with black fruits, violets, black pepper, olive tapenade, fynbos (a wild herb character). They have a lovely finesse and a real elegance. As they get older, they become much more perfumed with more old, worn leather. They are the most elegant style of Syrah



The Northern Rhône vineyards are planted along the steep and narrow slopes of the Rhône River, with the best vineyards facing south for the best exposure to sunlight.



Planting the vines in the lateral valleys shields them from the Mistral, a fierce and cold wind that can damage the vines. The vines are planted on individual stakes, sometimes in teepee structures, to protect them from this wind.

Northern Rhône Syrah is reasonably deep in colour with medium tannins. The wines offer notes of black fruits, olive tapenade, and spices like black pepper. Fynbos (or Mediterranean herbs in France) give the wines a wild herbal character. There is a lovely finesse to these wines, along with a real elegance. As they get older, they become much more perfumed and you get much more of the worn leather notes. These are the most elegant styles of Syrah.

Chateauneuf-du-Pape in the **Southern Rhône** famously allows up to thirteen grapes to be blended into their wines. Some of the grapes have mutations that are also allowed but not counted in our list of thirteen. These grapes are:

GRENACHE + MUTATIONS	SYRAH	MOURVEDRE	CINSAULT
VACCARESE	COUNOISE	MUSCARDIN	TERRET + MUTATIONS
PICPOUL + MUTATIONS	CLAIRETTE + MUTATIONS		
ROUSSANNE	BOURBOULENC	PICARDAN	

Syrah adds colour and tannins to these blends.

In the Southern Rhône, the landscape is much flatter and wider. The weather is also much warmer. However, with no valleys to break the flow of the wind, the Mistral can reach incredible speeds that have been known to blow a grown man off his feet. A unique feature of this region are large round rocks called *galets*.

Australia

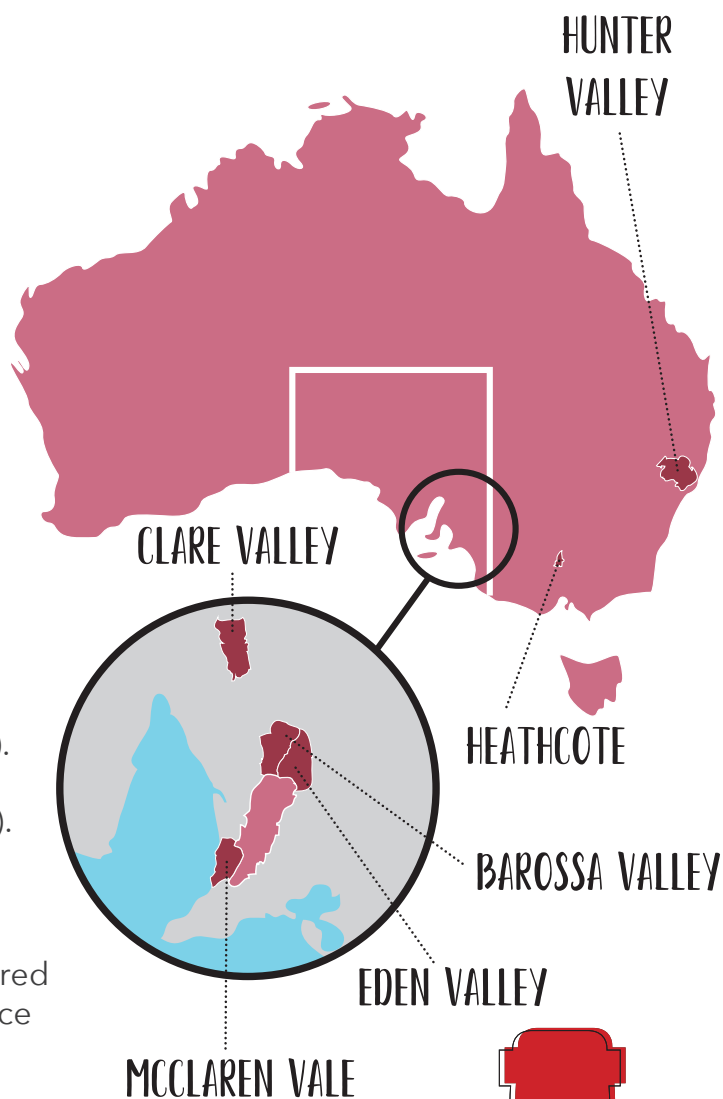
Shiraz is Australia's best known and most widely planted variety. It was first planted in the late 1700s. It is grown virtually all over Australia but thrives in moderate to warm climate areas. It is also made in various styles depending on the producer.

The grape is often blended with Grenache or Cabernet Sauvignon, e.g. Grenache + Mourvèdre + Shiraz (GSM). It's also trendy to co-ferment with Viognier (as it is in the northern Rhône).

Barossa Valley has some of the oldest and best-known vineyards that are famed for their full-bodied, richly textured wines with blackberry, pepper, and spice characters

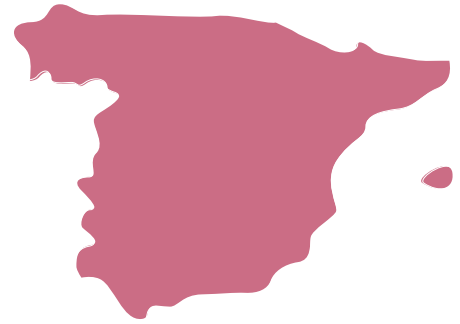
Barossa and **McClaren Vale** make high octane, chocolatey, high alcohol, bold wines that are often matured in American or French Oak. These are great wines that will age for a long period of time. But winemaking has evolved, and the caricature style of a big Barossa Shiraz at 16% ABV isn't always the case anymore.

Winemaking has evolved, and not all Australian wines are made in the same bold, high octane, chocolatey, high alcohol style anymore. But they are still synonymous with far more meaty, chocolatey, leathery wines that are powerful and full bodied.



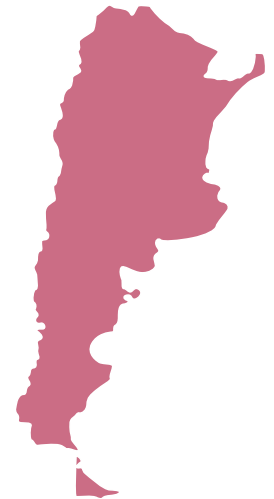
Spain

Spain has increased their plantings from 4,000 hectares in 1990 to more than 20,000 ha. It is now their seventh most planted red grape. It is mainly planted inland in **La Mancha** and **Toro**, as well as in the Mediterranean regions of **Priorat** and **Montsant** in **Catalunya** on the east coast, and **Yecla** further south. Spain makes a very different style of Syrah, compared to Rhône or Australian Shiraz. Spanish Syrah is normally full-bodied and high in alcohol. It is also often used as a blending grape with Garnacha (Spanish for Grenache) for commercial wines.



Argentina

When you think of Argentina, you probably only think of Malbec and Torrontés (their aromatic white grape). But with 12,000 hectares, the Shiraz grape makes up 10.3% of the country's red grape plantings. It was historically used in blends but has been made as a single varietal wine for the last decade. Syrah is well-adapted to the insulated regions, with the most plantings in **Mendoza** and **San Juan**. Colder regions, like the **Uco Valley** in **Mendoza**, produce well-structured wines suitable for ageing. The warmer regions are more fruit forward with textures and aromas that range from floral when young, to spicy after oak and bottle ageing.



South Africa

South Africa has the fourth biggest plantings of Syrah in the world, making up 10% of total vine plantings in South Africa.

The first bottling of Shiraz was a single varietal for Bellingham in 1957.

Between 1992 and 2016, plantings increased from 900 hectares to 10,000 hectares, making it the second most planted red variety in our country. It does particularly well in **Stellenbosch** and the **Swartland**.

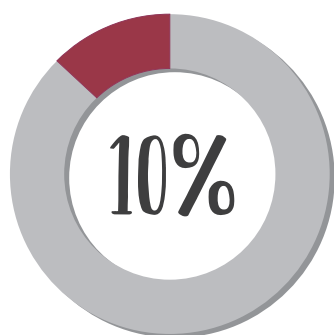
The best South African Shirazes stand toe to toe with any wines in the world, including those in Côte Rotie, along with Hermitage. There are more single varietal bottles of Shiraz than any other varietal wine in South Africa, but is also blended with other Rhône and Southern French varieties like Grenache and Mourvèdre.

SWARTLAND

PAARL

STELLENBOSCH

ELGIN



Syrah is the second most planted red grape at 10% of the total vine plantings in South Africa

The first confirmed Shiraz vineyards were planted in Groot Constantia towards the end of the 1890s

1890's

The cooler and higher altitude regions produce leaner wines that are more elegant and peppery.

Warmer areas make full-bodied, richer and riper wines with blackberry notes.



Winemaking

Syrah tends to do better in older vineyards. It grows well on a variety of soils, but schist and granite are best. You can use the stems or just the berries when making the wines, and it's becoming more popular to use the stems for added complexity.

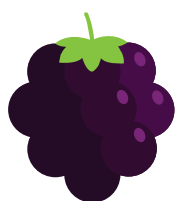
Traditionally, a long maceration is performed, with up to three years of barrel ageing. Longer oak ageing suits riper grapes. **Carbonic maceration** can be used for less expensive wines, resulting in fruity, light and fresh wines. However, there is a risk of bubblegum flavours and aromas.

Tannin management is important, i.e. picking at the right time to ensure optimal levels of acidity and ripeness. Cold soaking before maceration aids in extracting colour but not tannins, along with fermenting at lower temperatures and careful pump-overs.

Syrah also benefits from a little time in the bottle before being released.

Tasting Profile

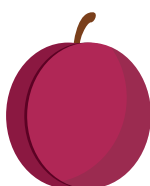
The key notes to Syrah / Shiraz are **black pepper** and black fruits like **blackberries**, **blackcurrants**, **black cherries**, and **plums**. Look for floral notes, like **violets** or **lilies**, as well as savoury notes, such as **black olive tapenade** or **bacon fat**. Bigger, riper styles could show **dark chocolate**. When oaked, you may pick up additional notes of **vanilla**, **cloves**, **tobacco** and **liquorice**.



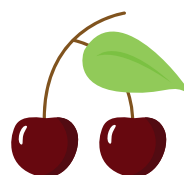
BLACKBERRY



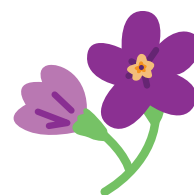
BLACKCURRANT



PLUM



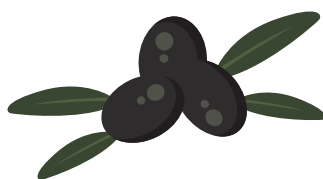
BLACK CHERRY



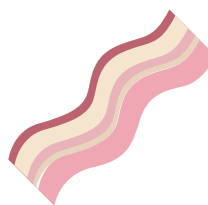
VIOLETS



PEPPER



BLACK OLIVES



BACON



VANILLA



CLOVES



COCOA



TOBACCO



LIQUORICE

Food Pairings

The thing about Syrah, for me, is the savoury, meaty characteristics along with the black pepper and olives. Once you throw in the potential bacon fat, it almost feels like a meal in a glass. Use those savoury elements to your advantage, and pair it with smoky, richer, more intense foods.

Grilled aubergine drizzled with a balsamic vinegar reduction, crumbled blue cheese or feta, and solid cracking of black pepper

Ratatouille with its layers of flavourful nightshades laid out in the prettiest pattern (or not, no pressure)

Grilled winter veggies that are the most comforting meal in the colder months

Vegetable pastas in a rich and creamy sauce (don't forget that hit of black pepper)

Aged gouda, cheddar, or an intense blue cheese. Why not throw all three on a cheese platter along with a deck of crackers, a bowl of olives, and a few slices of charcuterie if you're feeling fancy?

Of course, all the savoury meatiness in Shiraz will go well with braaivleis that's been soaking up a smoky marinade. The acidity of the wine will cut through fatty grilled meats, such as pork ribs and sausages, as well as complement their spices.

Classic Sunday roast beef with a pepper sauce is begging to be washed down with Shiraz.

Don't forget to add a glass of the wine to a beef or oxtail stew with smoky spice & chili.

I most enjoy Shiraz with seared kudu or venison rolled in a black pepper coating. One of my go-to's is an ostrich burger topped with a slab of melting brie and restrained dollop of raspberry jam. The wine echoes the gaminess in the ostrich, cuts through the richness of the brie, and marries with the fruitiness of the jam.

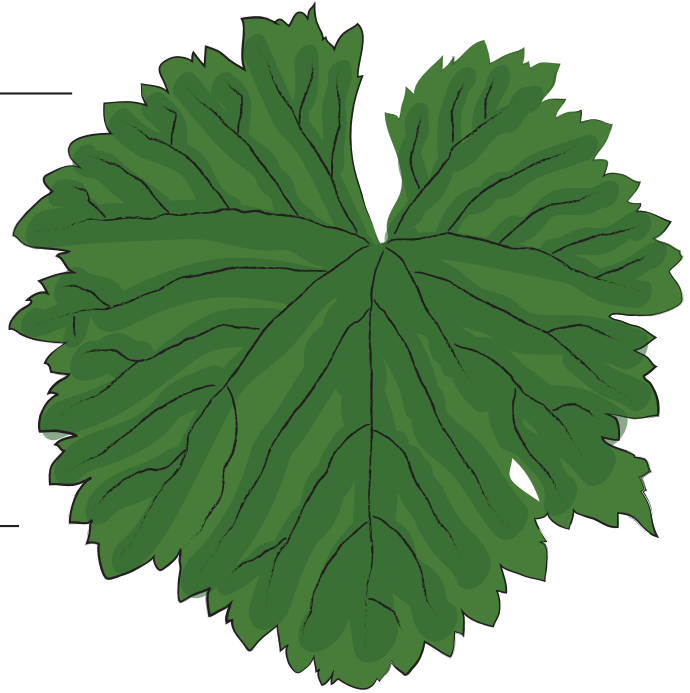
Bobotie is an all-time, local classic that pairs particularly well with Shiraz because of the spices.

12. CHENIN BLANC

Used to be called Chènere, but the name was changed in the 15th century to Chenin Blanc (after Mont Chenin, a mountain in the region).

Early budding and mid ripening.

Medium sized, round, dark green leaves with 3 to 5 lobes.



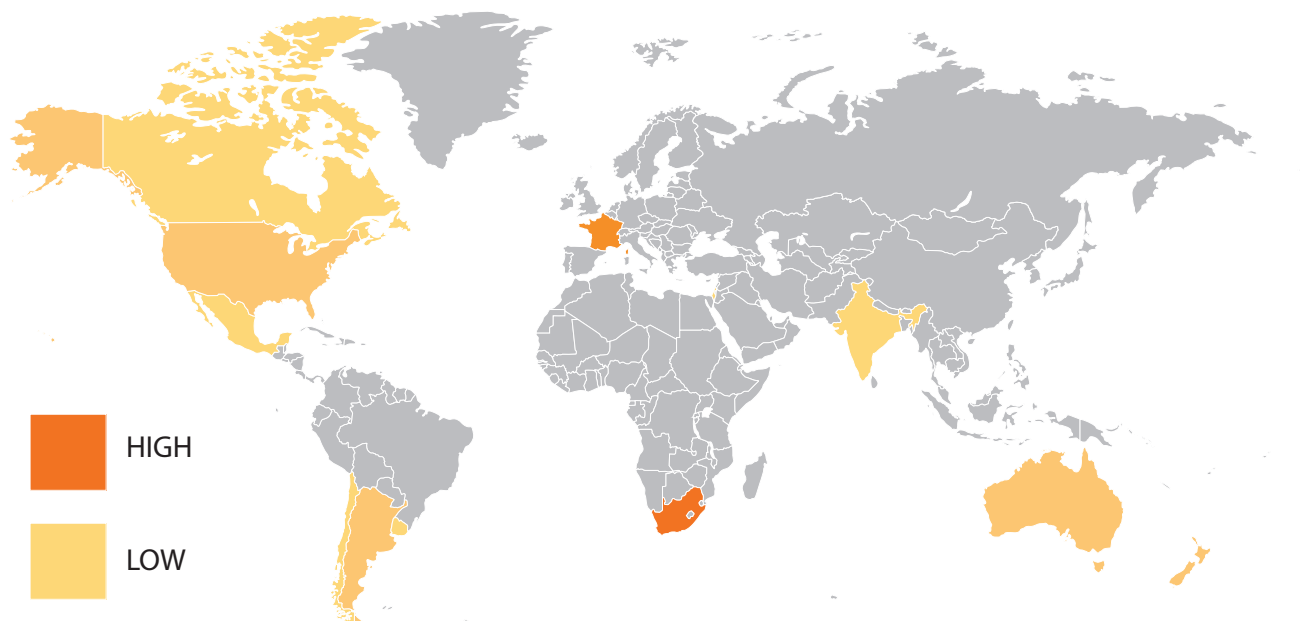
Vigorous growth when grown on its own roots in medium to fine textured soil - but does well on a variety of soils.

Susceptible to botrytis, sour rot, powdery mildew and downy mildew. Early budding makes it vulnerable to Spring frost.

Medium sized, oval shaped, yellow green berries with thick skins (phenols) and juicy flesh.

Chenin Blanc

Chenin Blanc is the most versatile grape in the world, able to produce a wide range of styles. In many ways, it is similar to Riesling, in terms of its versatility (barring oak and distillation). It works equally well, oaked or unoaked, and ranges from moderate to high alcohol. From bone dry, mineral and racy; to honey-sweet, late picked and botrytised honeyed examples. Still or sparkling.



Though not as overly aromatic as Riesling, its natural thick skin means it is not only prone to botrytis, but there is more of a natural phenolic 'bite' to the wine (think of it as white wine tannin). The wine is more cerebral than hedonistic and requires more involvement and process on the part of the consumer, particularly with the premium examples.

Grab the big glasses, spend more time swirling, and take your time with these wines. They can easily stay fresh for 24 to 36 hours once opened. You can even decant them. And be sure not to serve them too cold.

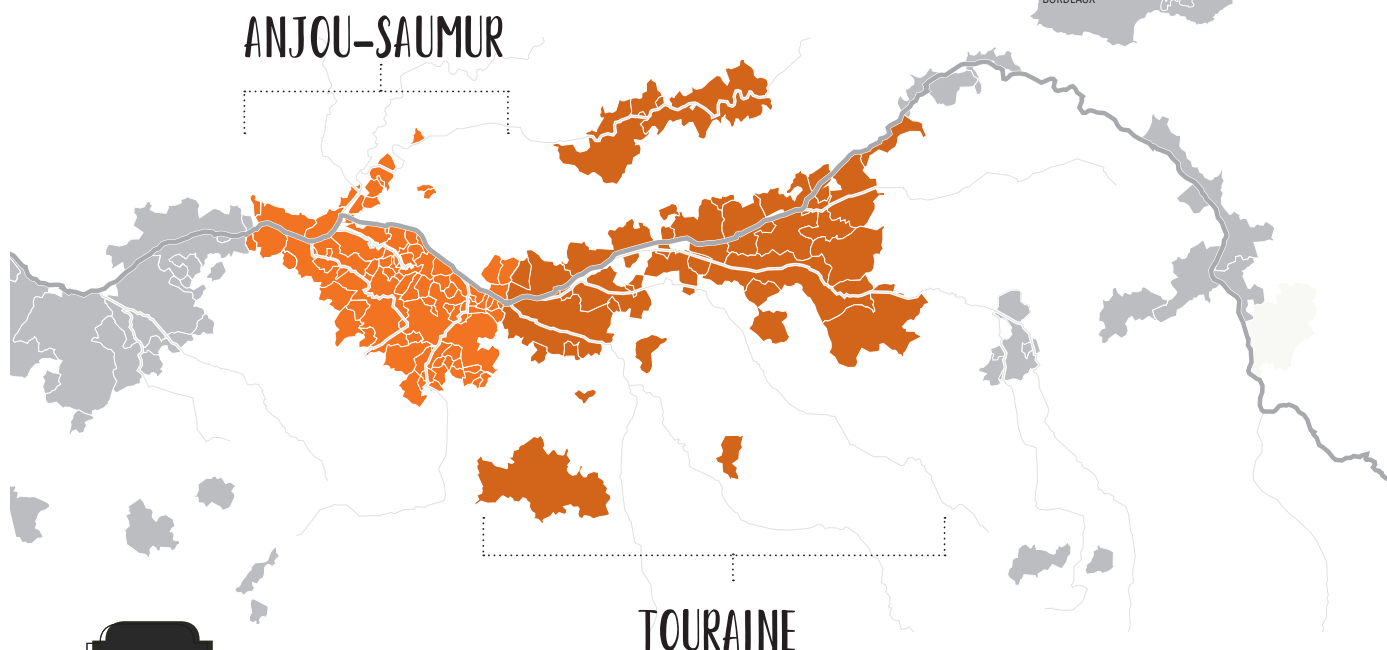
Chenin Blanc's calling card is its assertive acidity and the way that it is woven through the wine. That acidity is

always prevalent and forms the spine of the wine. It really needs time for the acidity to be fully integrated into the wine as the aromas develop over time (the acidity never softens analytically, but its taste perceptions change as the overall aromas of the wine become more tertiary). In the case of top SA Chenin, eight to 10 years is the optimal age, although the finest examples can last much longer.

Chenin is also known as **Steen** (South Africa) and **Pineau de la Loire** (France). Tip: Look out for regional naming on French wine labels: **Vouvray, Quarts de Chaume, Bonnezeaux, Savennières**

Loire Valley

The Loire Valley is the home of Chenin Blanc and accounts for 90% of the surface area of all the Chenin Blanc planted in France. It contributes to 28% of the surface area cultivated worldwide.



Chenin is the fourth most planted white grape in France. It is produced in **Vouvray, Anjou, Saumur, Savennières** and **Coteaux du Layon**. Often there is a little bit of residual sugar in the wines from Loire. Vouvray has a style called *tendre*, which can have anything up to 15 grams of RS. Anjou too. Dry styles are made in villages, such as **Saumur Champigny**, Savennières and **Jasnières**. Coteaux du Layon, Bonnezeaux, Quarts de Chaume are all botrytis or late harvest sweet styles.

Chenin is produced in Vouvray (often with RS), Anjou, Saumur, Savennières and Coteaux du Layon

Sparkling wines made in the traditional method are called Crémant e.g. Crémant de Loire

Loire Chenin, compared to SA Chenin, has much more of a bruised yellow apple, wet wool, straw and hay character. It's much less overly fruity. Being a pretty cool climate, they struggle to get grapes to ripen. In difficult vintages, the wines have a strong green, harsh malic acidity - these more acidic wines can be used to make sparkling wines called Crémant de Loire.

America

Chenin Blanc was considered the 'workhorse' of California as they used the high acidity to boost white wine blends. In the 1970s and 1980s, there were 16,187 hectares of plantings in the **Central Valley**, California. Since the arrival of Chardonnay, the number has dropped to just over 2,000 hectares. Despite the reduction in the number of vines, 85% are deemed either mature or old vines. As a result, we're seeing a new wave of independent producers in the **Sierra Foothills, Mendocino, Santa Barbara** and Central Valley, who are looking to create a more fresh, mineral style similar to that of the Loire Valley.



Argentina

With 1830 hectares planted, Chenin Blanc makes up less than 1% of the total grape production in Argentina. The grape has adapted well to the climate, but the bulk of it is used for sparkling wine. Chenin Blanc has a great affinity for sparkling wine because of its natural high acidity.

Australia

Chenin Blanc is planted in almost all of the wine regions but is concentrated in Margaret River in Western Australia. It is usually blended with Chardonnay, Sémillon, and Sauvignon Blanc for mass-produced wines.



New Zealand

Chenin Blanc was traditionally blended with Müller-Thurgau to produce bulk, low quality blends. The grape was mostly planted on the North Island but has been largely overtaken by Sauvignon Blanc.

Other

The grape is also grown in Brazil, Canada, India, Israel, Mexico, Spain, Thailand and Uruguay, but these are not commercially relevant.

South Africa

"Steendruiven" was quite possibly one of the first grapes pressed in 1659, the year that wine was first made in South Africa, having been introduced to the Cape in 1655 by Jan van Riebeeck and the VOC (Dutch East India Company).

OLIFANTS RIVER

SWARTLAND

PAARL

BREDEKLOOF WORCESTER

Chenin Blanc was referred to as Steen and was believed to be indigenous to South Africa until 1963 when Professor C.J. Orffer confirmed Steen's match to Chenin Blanc. The name Steen is thought to have been used by Governor Simon van der Stel as he believed the grape to have originated in Germany, based on the quality, i.e., Stein. It is also thought to be a translation from the Afrikaans '*hoeksteen*', indicating that Chenin is the 'cornerstone' of the SA wine industry.

South Africa is the world leader, producing 53% of all Chenin Blanc made around the globe, despite a decline in production (bearing in mind that most replantings in SA started in 1997). It is the most planted grape in SA at 18.6% of total vine plantings.

The Old Vine Project celebrates vines that are 35+ years old. Chenin is the varietal featuring the oldest vines, with more than 6,000 hectares being 20 years or older.

The bulk of Chenin Blanc comes from **Olifants River**, followed by **Breedekloof** and **Worcester**. These tend to be used for mass, inexpensive, commercial wines, as well as brandy production. **Swartland**, **Paarl**, and **Stellenbosch** have some very old and interesting bush vines, which make exceptional examples.

South African Chenin Blanc displays a range of fruits such as apple, quince, melon, apricot, guava and pineapple. It often has a floral quality reminiscent of honeysuckle. Chenin always has natural high acidity that makes for fresh and crisp wines.

The addition of oak and lees can add complexity and a richer mouth feel, often adding notes of honey, nuts, toffee and toast.



Winemaking

The percentage of new French oak barrel + use of lees gets you closer to the oaked Chardonnay expression. Tropicality is dependent on when you pick the grapes.

Stainless steel tanks + bottled early = commercial, fruit-forward, easy-drinking style.

Old oak + reductive = mineral, austere, tighter more lean examples (that need time)

Making a commercial Chenin Blanc is fairly straightforward. The grapes can be picked by hand or by machine. We add a cultured yeast out of a bag, use stainless steel, ferment until dry, or leave a bit of residual sugar and bottle early for a fruit-forward, easy drinking style of wine that is often sealed with a screw cap.

The style of wine is dictated by when you pick the grapes picking earlier gives you a leaner and more mineral style, whilst picking riper will give you more sugar and phenolic characters. There are still styles of wines that use a percentage of new French oak (fermentation and barrel ageing) along with a fair amount of lees work. About 15 years ago, people were trying to put Chenin into Chardonnay clothes to make a very expensive Chenin. And you still get plenty of that style of Chenin Blanc in South Africa - high alcohol, quite ripe, quite rich, quite leesy, and quite oaky. Sometimes you can even mistake it for Chardonnay, except that it has more acidity.

The style that is increasingly prevalent at the very top end of winemaking is to make wine much more reductively. The wines are left for longer periods on their lees so that the dead yeast cells can impart interesting flavours to the wine. They are bottled after substantial time spent in old oak barrels. This creates a more mineral, austere, tighter and leaner example of the wine. These are wines that demand time...and they are expensive. These are the best examples of Chenin Blanc and are priced accordingly.

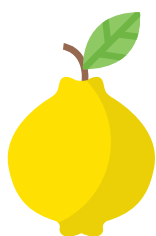
Winemakers are also experimenting with using concrete eggs and amphora.

Tasting Profile

The Old World wines, with their cooler climates, are high acid examples that sit on the **quince**, **apples**, and **pear** spectrum. As you increase in temperature and ripeness, you move into notes of **honeysuckle**, **ginger**, **melon**, and **pineapple**.

Chenin often has **honey** and **hay** characters. **Toffee** and **mango** are a function of grape ripeness. **Vanilla** and **toast** are linked to oak and lees. **Almond**, **hazelnut**, and toast are derived from oak. As you get into the sweeter styles, you get much more of the **marzipan**, **mango**, **ginger** and **lemon curd** notes.

There is a truly broad variety of styles to Chenin Blanc.



QUINCE



APPLES



PEAR



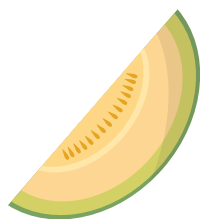
HONEY



HONEYSUCKLE



GINGER



MELON



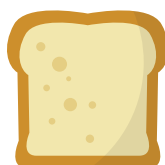
PINEAPPLE



MANGO



TOFFEE

ALMONDS
HAZELNUTS

TOAST



VANILLA

Food Pairings

Chenin Blanc is super versatile with food. The sweeter styles go very well with spicier food. Top examples of botrytis wines should be treated like other sweet wines, where they can hold their own against pungent cheeses and sweet desserts. But also try a nice hard cheese or blue cheese on its own, or with a plate of nuts, fruit, and raisins.

The more serious examples of Chenin Blanc can be drunk with anything as the acidity will match a wide variety of foods without becoming cloying. The wine has a real freshness to it that lends itself to seafood and a variety of meals.

More fun wines can be drunk with a wide variety of fruits. More serious wines pair best with more serious foods - richer fish dishes and roast chicken. Roast chicken is a wonderful go-to for any good bottle of wine. It's the ultimate food and wine combo.

YOUNG, FRUITY & ZESTY

Vegetable dishes and salads, especially when they include apple or pear

All the seafoods, including oysters

Fish and chips

Sushi

Avocado

Asparagus and peas

Light seafood pasta and risotto

MEDIUM-BODIED or OLD VINE

Fishcakes

Scallops

Quiches, frittata and omelettes

Onion tart

Mild cheeses like brie that's not too ripe

RICH BARRELAGED

Rich fish dishes

Fish pies

Creamy sauces on anything

Chicken livers

Roast vegetables like parsnips and sweet potatoes and butternut

Roast pork belly with apple sauce

Roast chicken

SOME SWEETNESS

Spicy foods like Cape Malay curries or other mildly spiced, but fruity, curries

Asian food like salads and stir fries

SWEET WINES

Rich and pungent cheeses

Apple or pear tarts

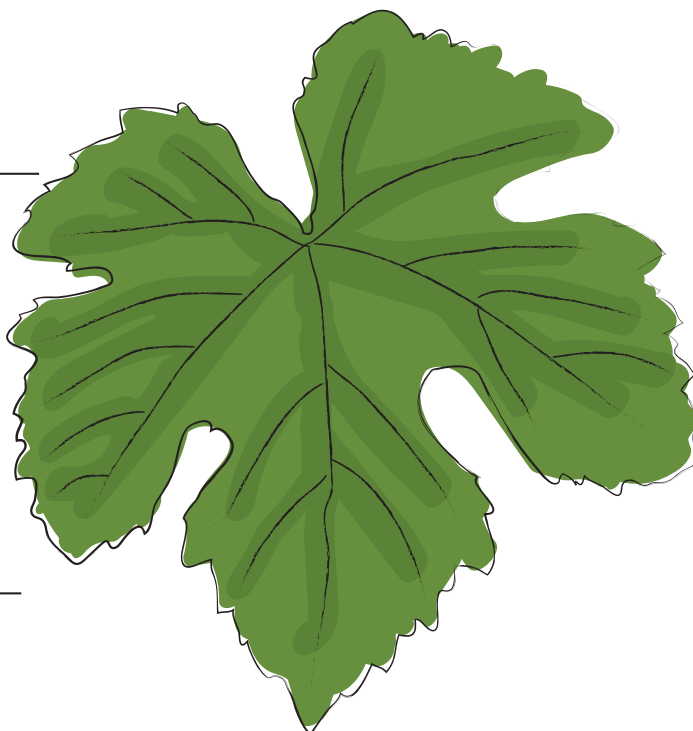
Pear and apricot desserts like peach cobbler

13. PINOTAGE

Cross between Pinot Noir X Cinsault developed for the classic Pinot Noir taste with easy-to-grow Cinsault characteristics.

Medium sized to relatively big, dark green, oblong with five lobes.

Moderate to good vigour, early ripening.



Early ripening, small oval dark blue-black berries with sticky thick skins and soft and juicy flesh.

Small to medium bunches that are cylindrical, wide & compact.

Not susceptible to powdery mildew, but it is less resistant to botrytis (most problems are moot as it ripens early).

Pinotage

97TH

Ranking 97th on the list of grapes planted around the world, Pinotage is without a doubt South Africa's national grape. A cross between Pinot Noir and Cinsaut (then known as Hermitage in SA), it was created in 1925 by Abraham Izak Perold, who was the first professor of viticulture at Stellenbosch University. His aim was to create a more robust Pinot Noir that offered the best characteristics of Pinot with the more dependable traits of Cinsaut.

The grape has been maligned with a reputation of 'rubbery tyre' and acetone notes in some commercial wines. And along with a history of insipid wine production prior to 1994 (when the South African Co-Operative Wine Growers Association emphasised quantity over quality), the grape has struggled to overcome its 'bad rap' for some.

The general characteristics are a dry, full-bodied, high tannin wine with both dark and red fruit but, it can be made in a variety of styles - both single varietal and blends. The way the grape is grown, choice of rootstock, and winemaking decisions all play a role in the style of wine being made.

The three styles of Pinotage that are most noticeable are:

- Lighter, fresher, easy drinking styles that show red fruits and can have similarities to the parent grapes
- Fuller-bodied wines where judicious use of oak creates rich, smoky, concentrated, spiced red and black berries that have more subtle chocolate and coffee notes
- Commercial wines that make deliberate use of toasted oak staves to produce pronounced chocolate or coffee aromas.



Pinotage is grown in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Israel, New Zealand, United States, and Zimbabwe. But South Africa is where the grape originated, and where the largest volumes and most meaningful wines are produced.

South Africa

The vines were initially referred to as “Perold’s Hermitage x Pinot”. The name Herminoire was also considered. The first grapes were grown at Elsenburg Agricultural College, and the first Pinotage wines were made here in 1941. The first Pinotage wine was made at Elsenburg in 1941. The first commercial vines were planted at either Myrtle Cove near Sir Lowry’s Pass or Muratie in Stellenbosch.

SWARTLAND

PAARL

STELLENBOSCH

BREEDEKLOOF

Kanonkop also planted the vines in 1941. Bellevue Pinotage brought recognition to the grape when it was named the General Smuts Trophy Winner at the Cape Wine Show in 1959. In 1961, the Kanonkop Estate Pinotage won the same award. But it was only in 1961 that the name Pinotage first appeared on the label – to market the 1959 Bellevue Estate Pinotage, branded under Lanzerac.

Pinotage is the third most planted red grape in South Africa. It makes up 7.2% of all the South African vine plantings, coming in before Merlot and behind Shiraz. Paarl, Swartland and Stellenbosch all have close to 2,000 hectares each, followed by Robertson at 875 hectares.

Stellenbosch Farmer’s Winery were the first to use the name Pinotage on a label in 1961, to market the 1959 champion Pinotage of Bellevue Estate under the Lanzerac brand.

1961

The 3 most noticeable styles of Pinotage are:

- Lighter, fresher, easy drinking styles that show red fruits.
- Fuller-bodied wines where judicious use of oak creates rich, smoky, concentrated, spiced red and black berries that have more subtle chocolate and coffee notes
- Commercial wines that make deliberate use of toasted oak staves to produce pronounced chocolate or coffee aromas.



Winemaking

Pinotage has the capacity to produce high yields that need to be controlled. This can be done through water stress or bunch thinning. The vines tend to grow upright, so they do well as a bush vine. Older fruit is always considered to have more concentrated flavour.

The cause of the burnt rubber character has never been pinpointed. But Stellenbosch University has done plenty of research, and it is thought that it could be a result of microbial spoilage. Picking in the heat of summer allows for a high microbial load that is then brought into the cellar. And if not treated correctly through basic cellar hygiene, these bad bacteria can start to take over. The burnt rubber is most likely a combination of bad grapes along with poor winemaking. Avoiding the heat of the summer and not waiting to pick too late helps to alleviate the burnt rubber issue as well as mitigate the volatile acidity associated with the grape.

Pinotage ferments incredibly quickly in the winery, resulting in the danger of over extraction of tannins and excessive banana flavours. Longer, cooler fermentations, along with short and frequent pump-overs that are gentler than punch-down, pull out all the best of the flavours, without too much of the tannin. Pinotage plays well with oak and can help to restrain the tannins.

The majority of the top rated Pinotages in South Africa are usually single varietal and not blends.

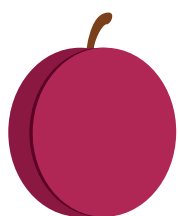
The Cape Blend is not a legislated, or registered style of winemaking according to SAWIS (South African Wine Industry Information and Systems). Rather, the minimum 30% and maximum 70% Pinotage guidelines are competition rules when submitting a wine for awards.

The beauty of Pinotage, Syrah, and Pinot Noir is that, unlike Bordeaux varieties, they don't show green methoxypyrazine characteristics.

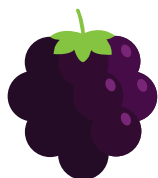
Tasting Profile

What to expect from your glass of Pinotage? It all depends on the style you're sipping. Look for **red berries**, **black berries**, **plums**, **cherries**, and **fig**. **Banana** is also a common marker in wines that are more extracted. **Hoisin**, **bacon**, **leather**, and **smoke** are beautiful descriptors that I often associate with my favourite Pinotage wines - these remind me of older, funky Pinot Noirs. **Smoke**, **tobacco**, **chocolate**, and **coffee** are indications of oak.

Look for wines where these oak notes are more integrated and less jarring - they should give the wine structure and depth to make an interesting and complex wine, rather than become the standout feature.



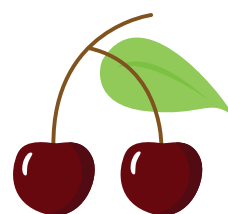
PLUM



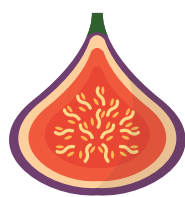
BLACKBERRY



RASPBERRY



BLACK CHERRY



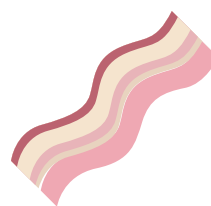
FIG



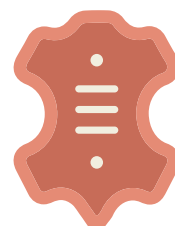
BANANA



HOISIN SAUCE



BACON



LEATHER



TAR



SMOKE



COFFEE



TOBACCO



CHOCOLATE

Food Pairings

Pinotage works incredibly well with a variety of food and should be considered when eating spicier foods that are often difficult to pair with wines.

As much as Pinotage is not Pinot Noir or Cinsault, the wine often works well with similar pairing dishes. Duck works well with Pinot Noir and Pinotage. Cinsault-inspired Mediterranean pairings such as red peppers and aubergines suit Pinotage too.

Perhaps I'm just obsessed with Moussaka, but the smoky, creamy aubergine bake is delicious with Pinotage. As are grilled mushrooms with their umami overload. Dark leafy greens dressed in olive oil, garlic, roasted walnuts, and finished with a sprinkle of high-quality sea salt could sing alongside the wine.

Pizza with your favourite toppings (I'm a plain jane margherita with extra cheese) just does so well with any high acid wine. It's the tomato sauce playing with the acid in the wine that makes this a classic.

And while we're speaking of cheese - Pinotage can hold its own against a solid hunk of mature cheddar. The richness of quiche and lasagna sometimes needs a palate-freshening high acidity wine.

Asian foods, made with teriyaki sauce and plum sauce, align with the umami notes that so many Pinotage wines exhibit. Hoisin is a note that I often pick up in Pinotage. Aligning those aromas and flavours with Asian meals highlights them in both the wine and the food.

Braai vleis and potjies paired with Pinotage is like freshly baked bread and butter. They belong together. I can't think of a more patriotic meal right now. Slow-cooked meats, such as lamb shanks or pulled pork or oxtail stew, are easy choices because they're so delicious.

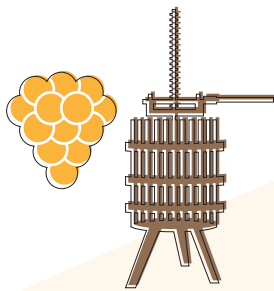
Pinotage is my go-to choice with venison pies and ostrich steaks served with a plum sauce.

But my all-time favourite Pinotage pairing has to be Indian dishes, such as biryani and curries. It's the intricate spices that create depth and add depth to the Pinotage. And when you have fruity, lighter wine, it can soothe the heat in the dishes.

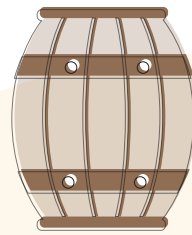
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14. SPARKLING WINE

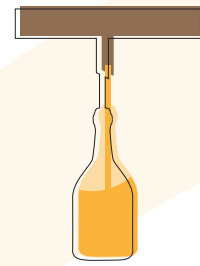
We humans are undoubtedly fascinated by a little fizz in our wines.



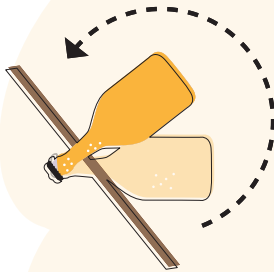
GENTLE PRESSING FOR A DRY, HIGH ACID, LOW ALCOHOL, NEUTRAL BASE WINE



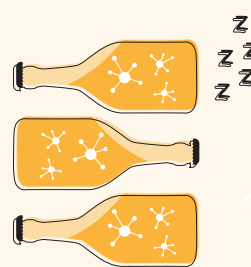
STILL BASE WINE MAY GO THROUGH MLF, OAKING, BLENDING



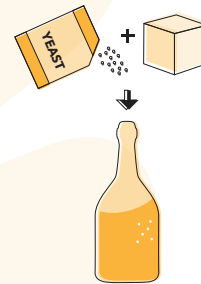
BOTTLES FILLED WITH BASE WINE



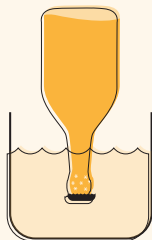
LEES IS REMOVED BY RIDDLING



LAI D TO REST HORIZONTALLY FOR SLOW FERMENTATION IN COOL CELLAR



LIQUEUR DE TIRAGE & SEALED WITH CROWN CORK



WINE IN BOTTLE NECK IS FROZEN



CROWN CAP RELEASED & CO₂ EJECTS THE SEDIMENT



LIQUEUR D'EXPEDITION (OR DOSAGE) IS ADDED



CORKED SECURED WITH A MUSELET AND BOTTLES ARE AGED



Sparkling Wine

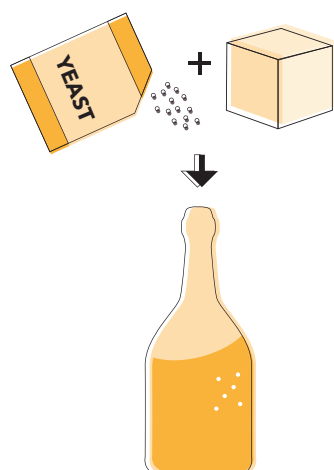
We humans are undoubtedly fascinated by a little fizz in our wines. Entire books have been dedicated to the marvel that is sparkling wine. We shall be covering the very basics of the 5 methods of sparkling wine production.

Méthode traditionnelle or Traditional Method

Known as Methode Cap Classique in South Africa, the key difference that sets *méthode traditionnelle* apart from all other methods of sparkling winemaking is that the second fermentation occurs in the SAME bottle in which it is sold.

Base wine

We start with a dry, high acidity, neutral flavour base wine that may or may not have gone through malolactic fermentation and/or maturation in oak.



Blending

The winemaker can then blend wines for style, balance, and complexity. In Champagne, with its erratic weather, blending is essential to making the wine. NV stands for Non-Vintage and is a blend that includes wines from previous vintages. Blending also allows the

producer to make a consistent 'house' style of wine.

Liqueur de tirage

The wine, blended or not, is then added to the bottle. A *liqueur de tirage* (a blend of wine, sugar, yeast, yeast nutrients, and clarifying agents) is added to the bottle and sealed with a crown cap. This will allow for second fermentation inside the bottle.

Second Fermentation

The bottles are then stacked on their sides in a cool cellar for a slow fermentation. The CO₂ that is generated is dissolved and creates the sparkle.

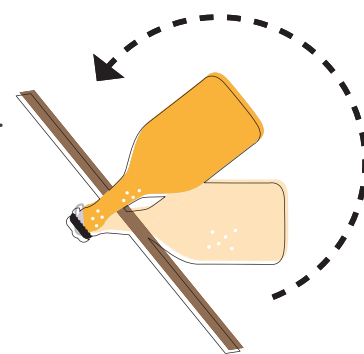
Autolysis

Once the second fermentation is complete, the yeast dies and forms lees. Over time, the lees will break down and release chemical compounds into the wine. This process is known as Yeast Autolysis and contributes flavours such as bread, biscuit, brioche, and toast. This Yeast Autolysis happens over four to five years, but can last up to 10 years. The longer the wine spends on the lees, the more pronounced the flavours.



Riddling

The wine is then riddled and disgorged. Traditionally, riddling was done by hand. The bottles are placed horizontally inside an A-frame stand called a *pupitre*. Each day, the stand is slowly raised, moving the bottles from a horizontal position to an upright position whilst being given a gentle shake and twist. The sediment slides into the neck of the bottle.



Riddling is now done by machine, but many premium wineries still use the traditional *pupitre*, which is labour intensive.



Disgorging

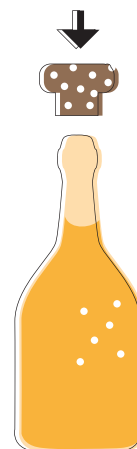
The upturned bottles are then placed in a cold solution that freezes the neck of the bottle along with the sediment. When the bottles are set right side up, the crown cap is removed, and the CO₂ ejects the sediment.

Dosage

A **liqueur d'expedition** (mixture of wine and sugar added as a dosage) is used to top off the bottle. This is called the dosage and it can vary in sweetness, which will adjust the overall sweetness of the sparkling wine.

A cork is inserted, and a *muselet* or wire cage is placed over the cork for added security.

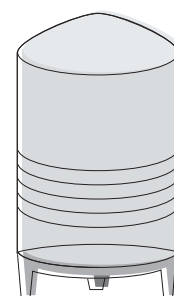
The sealed bottle can be kept for a few months to allow the **liqueur d'expedition** to integrate with the wine. Most sparkling wines are ready to drink on release, but the premium wines will benefit from further ageing in bottle.



Transfer Method

This is an adaptation of the Traditional Method that avoids riddling or disgorging. The methods are the same up until the process of riddling, at which point the wines are disgorged into a sealed pressurised tank. The *liqueur d'expedition* is added to the tank, and the wine is rebottled into a NEW bottle.

This method makes good quality wines that are easy on the wallet as they avoid the complex process of riddling and disgorgement.



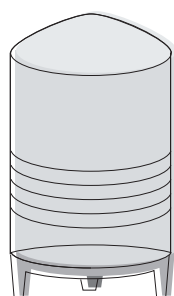
DISGORGED INTO
PRESSURISED TANK

NEW
BOTTLE

Charmat or Tank Method

The main difference between the Traditional Method and Tank Method is that the second fermentation happens in a tank and not in the bottle. The *liqueur de tirage* is added to the base wine, which has usually been fermented in stainless steel to retain the fruit flavours and freshness, and then the mixture is put into a stainless steel pressurised tank. This process usually takes between one and six weeks. There is no riddling. The bulk wine is filtered to remove the lees, the *liqueur d'expedition* is added, and the wine is bottled under pressure.

With far less time and labour involved, these wines cost less to make. The tank method is excellent for retaining the varietal characteristics of aromatic wines like Muscat, Riesling, or for the fruitier style of Prosecco.



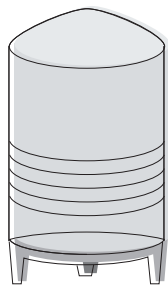
BASE WINE +
LIQUEUR DE
TIRAGE

2ND FERMENTATION

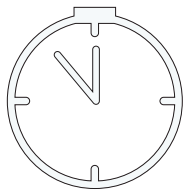
DOSAGE + BOTTLING

Méthode Ancestrale or Pétillant-Naturelle

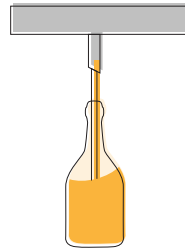
Méthode Ancestrale is the original method for making sparkling wines. It differs from the Traditional method in that there is no second fermentation. The fermentation of the wine is paused midway by chilling and filtering the wine. The wine is then bottled, and fermentation completes inside the bottle, resulting in CO₂. Once the desired amount of CO₂ is reached, the wine is chilled, riddled, and disgorged as per the traditional method. However, no *liqueur de expedition* is added.



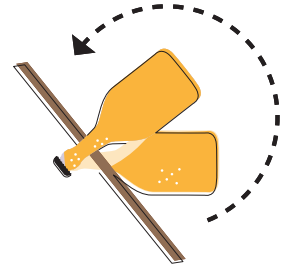
BASE WINE
BEGINS
FERMENTATION



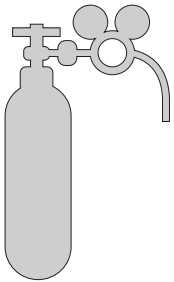
FERMENTATION IS
PAUSED HALFWAY
THROUGH & CHILLED FOR



BOTTLES FILLED
& FERMENTATION
CONTINUES



BOTTLES ARE RIDDLED
& DISGORGED
NO DOSAGE ADDED!



Carbonation

Carbonation is by far the easiest method to explain. CO₂ is added to a finished wine that could be dry, or sweet, or somewhere in between. My friend circle has always joked about MSS - Methode Sodastream! It's a fun, if unnecessary, way to liven up a sub-par white wine.

HOW TO OPEN A BOTTLE OF SPARKLING WINE CORRECTLY



15. FORTIFIED WINES

Sherry
Port
Fortified Muscats
& Jerepigo

Sherry

The name Sherry can only be used when the wines are matured in Jerez de la Frontera, Sanlúcar de Barrameda and El Puerto de Santa María, which are all towns in Spain.

Only three grapes are permitted to make Sherry in Spain. **Palomino** grapes have the majority of plantings. They are naturally low in acidity, have neutral flavours, and are used to make dry wines in Jerez. **Pedro Ximénez** (PX) grapes have very little varietal flavour. The thin skins allow the grapes to be dried by the sun, making excellent sweet wines. **Muscat of Alexandria** is grown in small quantities and is used to make sweet wines.

Sherry can be divided into wines made through **biological ageing**, those made through **oxidative ageing**, and a blend of the two.

The wines start off as white wines that are fermented in stainless steel at higher temperatures than usual to create a neutral wine. The wines are then categorised for either biological or oxidative ageing depending on the flavour characteristics of the base wine and then sent to a **sobretabla** where they are fortified with 96% ABV neutral spirits and kept in this nursery before being added to the solera system.

Biological ageing

The wines for biologically aged wines are fortified to between 15% to 15.5% ABV as this is the ideal environment for flor to flourish. Flor is made up of a number of yeast strains that feed off of the alcohol, nutrients in wine, and oxygen in the atmosphere to form CO₂ and **acetaldehyde**. Acetaldehyde gives biologically aged sherry its unique nutty,



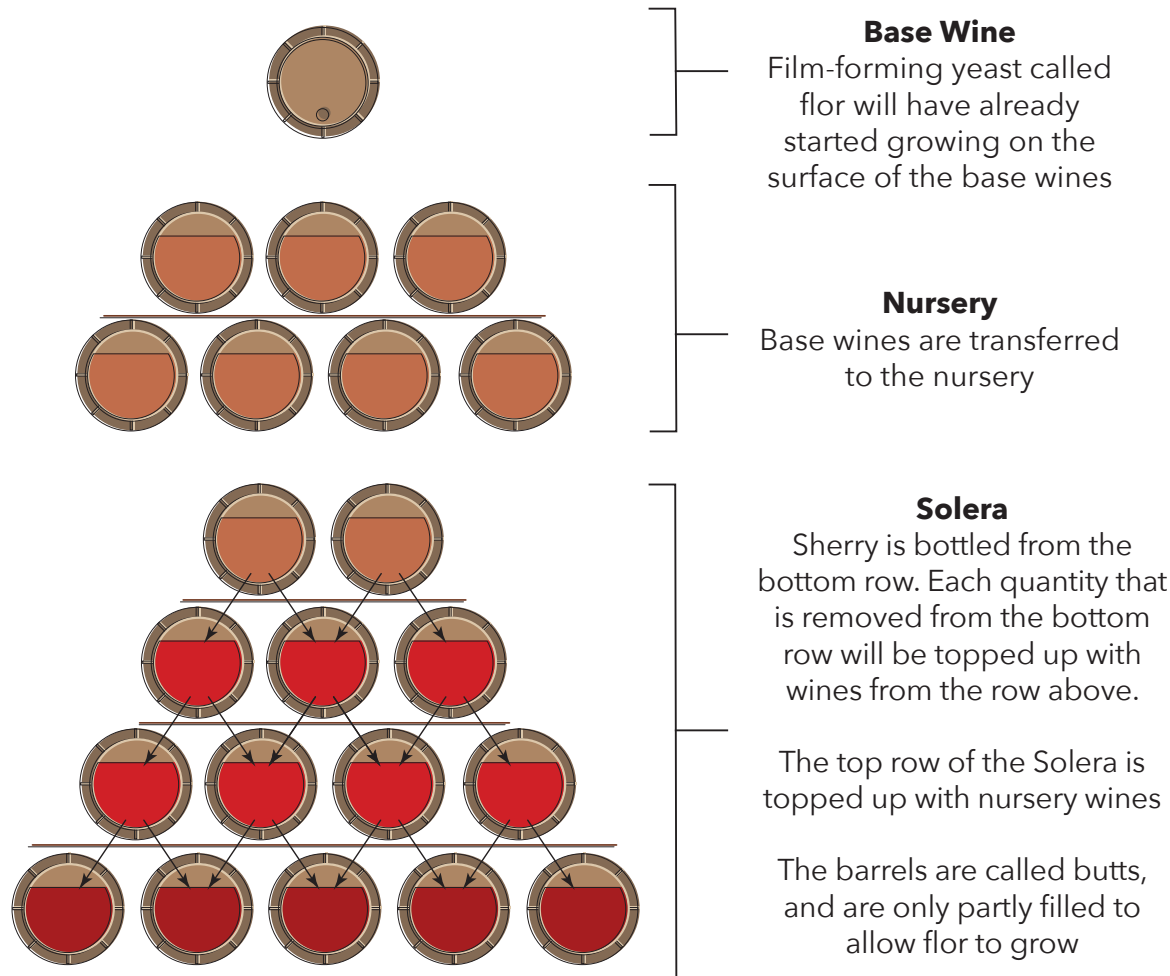
almond, saline, and lemon peel flavours. It is found as a thick layer on the surface of the wine, which also protects the wine from oxidation. The barrels in the solera are never fully topped up, allowing the flor to feast on the wine, its nutrients and oxygen.

Oxidative ageing

Wines for oxidative ageing are fortified to 17% ABV as this prevents any flor growth. Oloroso, PX, and some Muscat Sherries are aged oxidatively. Amontillado is aged oxidatively after a period of biological ageing. These Sherries can be aged for more than 30 years.

Solera System

Sherry is aged in large, old oak barrels called **butts**, which don't impart any oak flavour into the wines. Each level of aged wines is called a **criadera**. Solera refers to the final and oldest butt that the Sherry is drawn from and bottled. The amount of wine drawn from the Solera level is replaced by younger wine from the previous level. And in turn, that younger level is topped up with an even fresher wine. The youngest wine is added from the nursery. Solera systems can contain between three to thirteen criaderas. Despite the handy graphic, these criaderas are usually kept in separate buildings to protect against losing the entire Solera system.



Wines are gradually removed from the bottom row for bottling but are ALWAYS topped up from the row above.

Sherry can be dry or sweet:

Dry Styles

Fino + Manzanilla + Oloroso + Amontillado
+ Palo Cortado

Naturally Sweet

Pedro Ximénez

Sweetened

Pale Cream + Medium + Cream

Fino and Manzanilla Sherries are only aged biologically. Oloroso sherries are aged oxidatively. Amontillado is aged oxidatively after a period of biological ageing. Pedro Ximenez and Muscat sherries are sweet wines that are aged oxidatively. Pale Cream sherries must undergo a period of biological ageing before being sweetened with PX. Medium Sherries must have both biological and oxidative properties. Cream Sherries are only oxidative.

There are four categories for aged sherries:

VORS: Vinum Optimum Rare Signatum
(Very old rare Sherry) - at least 30 years old

VOS: Vinum Optimum Signatum (Very old Sherry) - at least 20 years old

12 years: applies to whole Solera system (flexible)

15 years: applies to whole Solera system (flexible)

Only Amontillado, Palo Cortado, Oloroso and PX can qualify for age-indicated status!

Sherry-style wines are named Pale Dry, Medium or Cream, etc., when made in South Africa. We essentially drop the word Sherry. They are mostly made from Chenin Blanc, though some are made from Palomino grapes.

Port

Only wines made in the twin coastal cities of Porto and Vila Nova de Gaia on opposite sides of the mouth of the river Douro can be called Port.



Port was created when wines were shipped from Oporto in Portugal to England. The wines were strengthened (or fortified) with spirit on their journeys to act as a preservative.

The best-known red varieties include the Touriga Francesa, Touriga Nacional, Tinta Roriz, Tinta Barroca, Tinta Amarela, and Tinto Cão, but in total there are around 30 types of Port grapes. Most of these grape varieties have small thick-skinned berries that produce dense concentrated must (grape juice) needed to make Port. Whilst the grapes are planted separately, they are normally fermented together.

Traditionally, the grapes were placed in wide, thigh high tanks called lagares where large teams of workers would tread the grapes by foot for three to four hours. Foot treading is the gentlest as well as most complete extraction method. It is costly and no longer widely used other than by premium producers.



Fermentation is stopped by fortification once the alcohol reaches 5-9% abv to create a sweet wine. Fermentation typically lasts 24 to 36 hours. This is done by adding aguardente (white spirit at 77% ABV) that leaves 100g/l RS and alcohol of around 19% ABV.

Port style wines are called Ruby or Tawny etc (without the word Port) when made in South Africa. In South Africa, they are mainly made in Calitzdorp and the Klein Karoo where the climate is hot and arid, not dissimilar to the Douro and suited to Portuguese styled varieties.

PORTO



Ageing depends on the style being produced: vintage wines are aged in bottles, and tawny wines are aged in 500L used oak casks called a pipas or pipes. Ruby Ports are generally transported downstream to the cooler coastal town of Vila Nova de Gaia for maturation. Some Tawny Ports are sent upriver, where the temps are higher and will result in faster aging and colour loss.

Ruby Ports are deeply coloured with mostly primary fruits. They are aged for a short period in stainless steel or large oak barrels. These wines have less complexity, tannins, and flavour concentration. They are ready to drink and don't benefit from bottle age.

Tawny Ports show browning from long oxidative maturation in barrels called pipas. With age, they will turn garnet, and eventually brown. Age will also produce raisin, walnut, coffee, caramel, and chocolate flavours. These wines are ready to drink and don't benefit from bottle age.

Reserve / Reserva are Ruby and Tawny Ports of higher quality. Reserve Tawny must be wood aged for a minimum of six years.

Late Bottled Vintage (LBV) are vintage ports aged in large oak barrels for between four and six years before they're bottled. They are ready to drink and don't benefit from bottle age.

Tawny with indication of age wines spend long periods of oxidative maturation in pipes. They can be labelled 10, 20, 30 or 40 years old, and the label must include the year it was bottled as they lose freshness after bottling. The best versions are complex and concentrated.

Vintage Port needs to be registered when the producer plans on releasing a Vintage Port. They must be bottled at least three years after harvest. They are the most complex, concentrated and tannic of the Port wines and can bottle age for decades, often

needing decanting because of the sediment. Vintage Ports are produced roughly three times a decade.

Port style wines are called Ruby or Tawny (without the word Port) when made in South Africa. In South Africa, they are mainly made in Calitzdorp, and the Klein Karoo, where the climate is hot and arid, not dissimilar to the Douro and suited to Portuguese styled varietals.

Fortified Muscats & Jerepigo

Muscat is used to make fortified wines around the world. There are many different grape varieties called Muscat. They're all lower in acidity and show aromas of orange blossoms, rose, and grape. Muscat is one of very few grapes where the wines smell like grapes!

Unaged Muscat wines are golden in colour and floral and aromatic. They are made from ripe, healthy grapes that are often left in contact with the skins after crushing to maximise their aromatics and add richness. Fermentation is stopped, and 96% ABV grape spirit is added to make the wine sweet. These wines aim to preserve the aromatic characters and primary fruit aromas.

Fully Developed Aged Muscat can be amber to brown in colour. Some producers might wait for the grapes to raisinate on the vines to make a more luscious wine. Fermentation takes place on the skins before it is halted by fortifying with grape spirit. These wines are then aged oxidatively in old, large wood vessels that won't impart any flavours (sometimes in warm environments). The wines develop oxidative aromas.

Jerepigo wines are made by adding neutral grape spirit to freshly harvested juice at the start of fermentation. The spirits halt

fermentation allowing the aromatics of the grape to be retained. Fortifying results in a 17% to 20% ABV wine. The wines are usually aged in large old vats for years before bottling. Jerepigo can be made from any grape. They are high alcohol, full-bodied, sweet wines (at least 160 grams/litre of residual sugar) that retain their fresh grape flavours.

Muscadel grapes, thought to be one of the original four grapes planted by Jan van Riebeeck in South Africa, can be made in the vin doux naturel style (where brandy spirit is added to the wine at some point before the end of fermentation). It can also be made in the Jerepigo style (spirit is added before fermentation starts)

In South Africa, we often refer to the Muscat d'Alexandrie grape as Hanepoot. Both grapes are part of the Muscat family that display floral, musk, rose, lychee, grape, orange rind, and sweet stone fruit characters. Their aromatics make them ideal for fortified wines.

16. GLOSSARY

ABC: Anything but Chardonnay - a term that describes a dislike of chardonnay - originated as a reaction to the 'butter bomb', heavily oaked styles

ABV: abbreviation of alcohol by volume, required by law to be listed on the wine label

Acidity: all grapes have acidity that gives liveliness and crispness to a wine and activates your salivary glands - a wine with low acid can be described as flabby.

Aeration: deliberately adding oxygen to soften a wine

Ageing: or maturation - takes place in the winery where wine is kept in barrels, vats, tanks, and bottles to evolve them to their desired level.

Alcohol: xethanol (ethyl alcohol), the product of fermentation of sugars by yeast

Angular: think of a triangle in your mouth - these wines are usually acidic and hit your mouth in specific places with high impact

Anosmia: the loss of smell

Aperitif: an alcoholic beverage served before a meal to whet your appetite. e.g. champagne or Sherry

Appellation: a geographically delineated wine region

Aroma: the smell of wine, especially young wines where it refers to the primary notes

Anthocyanins: the red pigments found in grape skins that are responsible for the colour of wine - they are polyphenols with antioxidant properties

AOC: abbreviation for Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée, (Appellation of controlled origin), specified under French law. The laws specify and delimit the geography from which a particular wine (or other food product) may originate and methods by which it may be made

Astringent: harsh, bitter and drying sensations caused by high levels of tannins

Balance: a wine that has harmonious levels of sugars, tannins, alcohol, and acids

Blanc de blancs: a term for describing white wines made from white grapes and most commonly found on sparkling wine labels

Blanc de noirs: a term used to describe white wines made from red grapes and mostly used on sparkling wine labels

Botrytis: A fungal disease caused by Botrytis Cinerea that can be both negative (grey rot) or positive (noble rot). Noble rot pierces the skin of the grapes causing dehydration that concentrates the flavours, sugars, and acidity. These make the greatest sweet wines, but can also make dry wines with typical botrytis notes of marmalade, honey, apricot etc.

Body: a sense of the weight and fullness of the wine in your mouth

Breathe: exposing wine to oxygen to improve its flavours

Brut: a French term for dry champagne or sparkling wine

Cooper (cooperage): a cooper is a craftsman who makes and repairs wine barrels

Complex: wines that show a number of aromas and flavours

Corked: or cork taint - a wine fault caused by TCA (trichloroanisole) from the cork, making the wine smell like wet cardboard or mould

Cuvée: in Champagne this means a blended batch of wine. In other regions, it has no official meaning but generally denotes a proprietary blend by the winery.

Decant: to pour a wine out of the bottle and into another vessel to aerate a younger wine, and/or remove sediment from an older wine or vintage Port.

Demi-sec: French word meaning half-dry - it is used to describe a sweet sparkling wine

Disgorgement: the winemaking process of removing lees from champagne that makes the wine clearer.

Fermentation: conversion of grape sugars to alcohol by yeast

Fining: adding egg whites, gelatin, isinglass and other materials to add in the clarity of the wine

Finish: the textures and flavours that linger in your mouth after swallowing

Fortified Wine: Adding further alcohol, usually neutral brandy spirits, to a wine. e.g., Sherry, Port, Madeira, Jerepigo

Full-bodied: a wine high in alcohol and flavours and possibly tannins

Grand Cru: French word meaning Great Growth - it is the highest possible ranking given to chosen vineyards within an AOC

Hectare: a metric measurement unit equal to 10,000 square meters (100 meters by 100 meters square) or 2.47 acres

Herbaceous: aromas and flavours of fresh herbs E.g. rosemary, fynbos and basil

Ice Wine: Ice Wine in Canada, Eiswein in Germany. These are wines made from frozen grapes. The water is frozen in the grapes and is left behind in the press, concentrating the sugar, acidity, and flavours of the wine.

Late Harvest: refers to grapes left to hang on the vine for longer, resulting in higher sugar levels - they are used for sweet or dessert wines.

Lees: sediment made up of dead yeast cells, grape pulp, seeds, and other grape material

Maceration: mostly used in red winemaking - the grape skins, seeds, pulp and stems are steeped in the must to extract colour, tannin and flavour.

Magnum: large-format wine bottle containing double the quantity of a standard bottle

Malic acid: one of the three main acids found in grapes. Malic acid tastes tart and is found naturally in apples, plums, cherries, etc.

Malolactic fermentation: a secondary process that occurs after alcoholic fermentation where lactic bacteria transform harsh malic acids into smooth, lactic acids. The wines have a buttery, creamy quality.

Méthode Traditionnelle: the traditional method for producing quality sparkling wines used in Champagne, France, and all around the world. The second fermentation occurs in the bottle. Also known as Método tradicional in Spanish, Metodo Classico in Italian, Methode Cap Classique in South Africa, and Crémant in other regions of France and Luxembourg.

Minerality: a descriptor for the mineral quality in a wine that isn't edible. E.g. wet stone, petrichor, clay flint

Must: the unfermented juice of crushed grapes that can include pulp and seeds

Negociant: French word for a wholesale merchant, blender, or shipper of wine

New World: Generally speaking, these are wine-making countries outside of Europe - often these countries have Old World heritage e.g. South Africa, Argentina

Non-Vintage: The wine is a blend of grapes from at least two different vintage years. Most commonly seen in sparkling wines

Nose: term used to describe how wine smells

Oak/Oaky: smells and flavours of vanilla, baking spices, coconut or cocoa caused by barrel ageing

Oenology: the science of wine and winemaking

Off-Dry: A description for a wine that has some residual sugar and tastes slightly sweet.

Old World: Countries with a long history of winemaking, usually from Europe, but can include the Middle Eastern and North Africa.

Organic: Wines made from grapes grown without the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides. An organic wine must be made from organically grown grapes.

Oxidation: when wine is exposed to air it undergoes a chemical change.

Pétillant: Light effervescence sometimes found in non-sparkling wines, caused by leftover CO₂. It is called frizzante in Italy.

Phenolics: also called polyphenols or tannins, these are naturally occurring compounds that contribute colour, flavour, and tannin to wine

Phylloxera: a microscopic insect that kills grapevines by attacking their roots

Pomace: the skins, seeds and stems left behind after pressing. In France it can be distilled into a brandy known as Marc. In Italy it is distilled into Grappa.

Premier Cru: First Growth in French. In Bordeaux these are wineries with the highest classification. In Burgundy, this is the second highest classification after Grand Cru.

Press Fractions: when making wine, the juice must be separated from the must. Initially, there will be free run juice that flows naturally from the grapes. Thereafter, pressure is added to extract further juice. This pressing extracts extra flavour as well as tannins. Winemakers may separate the different parcels of free run and pressed wines, blending them together at the end to make a balanced wine.

Racking: the process of transferring the wine from one vessel to another in the winery. This is done to remove sediment and also adds oxygen to the wine.

Reserve / Reserva: This word has no official meaning in the New World and usually denotes a higher quality wine. In Italy, Portugal, and Italy, the term is governed and can only be used after a wine has been aged for a legislated period of time in barrel and bottle.

Reduction: a term that means the opposite of oxidation. When wine is protected from oxygen in all areas of the winemaking process, it can become reduced where the chemical compounds can display bad odours.

Sec: French word for Dry

Sediment: tiny particles gather at the bottom of the tank or barrel during the winemaking process. These are usually removed by racking and/or filtering and/or fining. Tannins and natural compounds form grainy deposits over time and settle along the side or bottom of the bottle. Decanting is used to remove the sediment in the bottle.

Simple: a wine that is not complex and does not show varying levels of aromas and flavours. Most wines are simple, with only the best displaying complexity.

Sommelier: A wine professional working in the hospitality industry (usually a restaurant) who has in-depth knowledge of wine.

Sound: a way of describing a wine without any obvious flaws. Any wine made properly should be sound, therefore it is not used as praise, despite being a positive term.

Spumante: The Italian term for sparkling wine. Frizzante is the term for a lightly effervescent Italian wine.

Structure: refers to the framework of wine - alcohol, acidity, tannins, fruit and glycerin.

Sulfites: SO₂ is a common preservative used in winemaking for antioxidant and antiseptic purposes. Sulfites protect the wine's flavours from being oxidized and prevents spoilage organisms from developing. They also occur naturally, therefore all wines contain sulfur.

Sweet: wines with perceptible sugar noticeable on the nose and in the mouth

Tannins: Phenolic compounds found in the skins and stems of grapes (most red). They add structure to a wine and can be felt as a bitter, dry and puckery sensation on the teeth and tongue. Tannins have no smell or taste.

Tartaric acid: the principal acid in grapes that adds flavour and allows ageing.

Terroir: French term meaning soil, but that is used to describe the combination of the various growing conditions in a vineyard, including the climate, soil composition, exposure (direction it's facing), topography (angle and position on a slope or plain), proximity to a body of water, and altitude. In France, this also includes traditional customs and regulations for various appellations.

Typicity: a term that describes how well a wine expresses the characteristics inherent to the variety of the grape.

Ullage: The space between the wine and the top of the barrel or bottom of the cork. In older wines, ullage can be a way of gauging the soundness of the wine as wine evaporates through the cork over time and allows oxygen in.

Varietal: Describes a wine made from a single grape variety (or predominantly from one grape variety), as opposed to a blend. It can also refer to a typical character in a grape variety, e.g., black pepper in Syrah, gooseberry in Sauvignon Blanc.

Vegetal: description of fresh or cooked vegetables aromas or flavours of the wine, e.g., green peppers, grass, and asparagus

Veraison: originally a French word but now used in English - it designates the time of year when grape's change colour and build sugar. It is the start of grape ripening. White grapes change from green to translucent yellow. Red grapes change from green to pink, red, or black

Viniculture: the whole business of wine production that includes viticulture, winemaking, marketing and sales

Vinification: the process of turning grapes into wine

Vintage: refers to the picking or harvest process each year. The year the grapes were picked is the year/vintage that appears on the bottle label.

Viticulture: the study of specifically growing grapevines - not to be confused with viniculture

Vitis vinifera: the species of grape that comprises the majority of the world's wine grapes

Volatile Acidity (VA): A wine is considered volatile when there are excessive amounts of volatile acids. All wines contain VA, but higher levels of acetic acid and ethyl acetate produce unpleasant vinegar and nail varnish aromas.

Yeasts: yeasts are microorganisms responsible for converting sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide. They occur naturally on the grape skin (natural/wild/ambient) or can be created commercially in laboratories.

Yield: the productivity of a vineyard or wine estate. In the U.S., it is referred to as tons per acre. In South America, Australia, South Africa and Europe it is referred to as hectolitres per hectare.

Young: an immature wine that is usually bottled and sold within a year of its vintage and is meant to be consumed 'young' to enjoy their fresh flavours. In age-worthy wines, it can also mean an undeveloped wine that is not yet ready to be enjoyed.

Tasting Descriptors

Primary Aroma and Flavour Examples

Florals: honeysuckle, chamomile, elderflower, geranium, blossoms, rose, violet, lily, acacia, lavender, hibiscus

Green Fruits: apple, gooseberry, pear, quince, grape

Citrus Fruits: lemon, lime, orange, grapefruit, lemon, lime (think about whether it's the juice or the zest)

Stone Fruits: apricot, peach, nectarine

Tropical Fruits: pineapple, passion fruit, mango, litchi, melon, guava

Red Fruits: strawberry, red cherry, red plum, raspberry, cranberry, pomegranate

Black Fruit: mulberry, blackberry, black cherry, black plum, blackcurrant, blueberry

Dried/Cooked Fruits: prune, raisin, fig, baked or stewed fruit, jam, date, fruit cake

Noble Rot: beeswax, ginger, saffron

Herbaceous: green pepper, grass, tomato leaf, asparagus

Herbal: eucalyptus, mint, fennel, dill, medicinal

Spice: pepper, liquorice, cinnamon, anise, cardamom

Minerality: flint, wet stones, wet wool, clay, pencil shavings, iron, chalk

Secondary Aroma and Flavour Examples

Yeast (lees and/or autolysis): biscuit, bread, toast, pastry, brioche, sourdough

MLF: butter, cheese, cream

Oak: vanilla, cloves, nutmeg, coconut, butterscotch, toast, chocolate, coffee, cedar, charred wood, smoke, cigar box

Tertiary Aroma and Flavour Examples

Oxidation: almond, hazelnut, cocoa, coffee, toffee, caramel

Fruit Development: dried fruit, marmalade, dried apricot, dried banana (white wines) / fig, prune, tar, dried red or black berry, cooked red or black berry (red wines)

Bottle Age (white wines): petrol, kerosene, wax, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, toast, nuts, hay, honey, mushroom

Bottle Age (red wines): forest floor, wet leaves, earth, mushroom, leather, game, tobacco, savoury, meaty, barnyard

Observation Tip:

If you can see your fingernails through the wine = pale
If you can see your fingers = medium
If you can't see anything = dark

Tears/legs could indicated alcohol or sugar

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DATE:

REGION:

NAME OF WINE:

Producer / Name / Grape Variety / Vintage

OBSERVE:

Pale

Medium

Deep

WHITE

LEMON-GREEN

LEMON

GOLD

AMBER

LEMON

ROSÉ

PINK

SALMON

ORANGE

RED

PURPLE

RUBY

GARNET

TAWNY

BROWN

SMELL:

INTENSITY

LIGHT

MEDIUM

PRONOUNCED

DESCRIPTION

TASTE:

SWEETNESS

DRY

OFF-DRY

MED-SWEET

SWEET

LUSCIOUS

ACIDITY

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

BODY

LIGHT

MEDIUM

FULL

TANNIN

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

ALCOHOL

LOW

MEDIUM

HIGH

INTENSITY

LIGHT

MEDIUM

PRONOUNCED

FINISH

SHORT

MEDIUM

LONG

DESCRIPTION

CONCLUSION:

Balance

Length

Intensity

Complexity

[rate the wine 0, 1/2, or 1]

COMMENTS

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Wine Wise - some of the stuff you've always wanted to know about wine, from a South African perspective.

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www.thewinewise.co.za
hello@thewinewise.co.za

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References: Pages 40, 50, 58 and 68 most planted grape varieties from www.forbes.com ; Pages 45, 53, 62, 73, 81 and 87 vine planting statistics from www.sawis.co.za