

GREECE



- Agiorghitiko ("St. George's [grape]") is a variety native to Nemea that grows mainly in the Peloponnese area, producing a soft, fruity red in many styles. Its sensory attributes are similar to Beaujolais Nouveau but, unlike its French counterpart, the St. George ages well for about 5 years.
- Xinomavro ("sour black") is the predominant grape variety in Macedonia, centered around the town of Naousa. This variety has great aging potential with a palate reminiscent of tomatoes and olives, and a rich tannic character. It is often compared to Nebbiolo.
- Mandilaria, also known as amorgiano, is mainly cultivated on the islands of Rhodes and Crete. Wine from this grape is often very tannic and frequently blended with other grapes to soften the mouthfeel.
- Mavrodaphne, or "black laurel", is a variety that grows in the Peloponnese and the Ionian Islands.

ITALY

Italian Wine Classifications

- Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita (DOCG) / Denominazione di Origine Protetta (DOP)
- Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC) / Denominazione di Origine Protetta (DOP)
- Indicazione Geografica Tipica (IGT) / Indicazione Geografica Protetta (IGP)
- Vino (formerly Vino da Tavola)

An ever-expanding host of DOCGs, coupled with an enormous range of DOC and IGT styles, provides a wide variety of wines culled from both indigenous and international grapes. Italy's axis runs north-south, resulting in a spectrum of climactic zones, and the country's terrain is generally rugged: the Apennine Mountains serve as the spine of Italy and the Alps bracket the northern regions. Today, German and Slavic influences abound in the Tre Venezie, and the regions of Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Trentino-Alto-Adige are nearly autonomous. Lombardy, Italy's most populous and most industrialized region, stands in stark modern contrast to the Valle d'Aosta, Italy's most sparsely populated. The Valle d'Aosta includes French as an official language, and Piedmontese viticulture shows a depth of French influence. Furthermore, the northern Italy of Turin in Piedmont is wholly dissimilar from the southern Italy of Naples in Campania: the climates, the cultures, even the languages—all are distinct. These permutations, influences and sharp differences are reflected in the country's unique pantheon of wines.

PIEDMONT

The region of Piedmont produces some of the finest wines in Italy, and is cited alongside Tuscany as one of Italy's two most significant wine regions. Piedmont—"the foot of the mountain"—is cradled on three sides by the Apennines and the Alps. The Po River cuts through the heart of the region as it flows eastward from its headwaters. In the Langhe and Monferrato hills, many of the prized southern exposures, known as **sori** in the Piedmontese dialect, are home to the region's most noble and age worthy red grape: the native Nebbiolo. The thin-skinned Nebbiolo, purportedly named for the morning fog (*la nebbia*) that prolongs the grape's ripening process in the fall, produces wines of high acid, alcohol and extreme tannin, yet the best examples offer haunting aromatic complexity and great longevity.

The late-ripening Nebbiolo, Dolcetto and Barbera form the trio of major Piedmontese red grapes. Dolcetto, the "little sweet one", is the earliest to ripen and provides tannic, fruity wines that are lower in acid and are generally designed for youthful consumption. Barbera, Piedmont's most planted red grape, demonstrates high acidity but low tannin, and is now subject to a range of stylistic interpretations. The incursion of modern winemaking techniques has, in some cases, diminished some of the obvious varietal differences between Nebbiolo, Barbera, and Dolcetto. Other lesser indigenous red grapes of Piedmont include Brachetto, Grignolino, Ruchè, Croatina, Vespolina, and Freisa.

Moscato Bianco (Muscat à Petits Grains) is Piedmont's most planted white grape, and is generally funneled into the production of the sparkling wines of Asti. Cortese, Arneis, Erbaluce and Favorita (Vermentino) are also grown in the region, in diminishing order of importance. International grapes—Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Merlot, Syrah, Sauvignon Blanc, etc.—have been growing in significance since the 1980s, although usage of such non-traditional grapes is currently limited to the less-specific DOCs and IGT wines.

Piedmont is home to more DOC zones than any other region in Italy—at the close of 2010, Piedmont could claim 16 DOCGs and over forty DOCs. The most prestigious DOCGs in Piedmont are **Barolo** and **Barbaresco**. Both zones produce red wines from the Nebbiolo grape; Barolo wines are typically more powerful and long-lived, whereas Barbaresco is slightly softer and regarded as Barolo's more feminine counterpart, although many individual examples contradict this generalization. The aromas of tar, truffle, rose petals, and dried fruits are classically attributed to both wines, and their color is characteristically moderate in concentration and orange-tinged even in youth.

Barolo is a massively tannic wine by nature, and prior to 2010, regulations called for a minimum three years of aging before release, two of which were in oak—or, rarely, chestnut—casks. Today, Barolo must be aged at least 38 months from November 1 of the harvest year, but only 18 months need be in oak. Barolo Riserva requires a total 62 months prior to release. Historically, longer periods of aging occurred in large neutral casks after extended macerations, requiring the consumer to cellar the wine for years—sometimes decades—before it was approachable, but a modernization in technique entered the region by the 1980s, resulting in an often-too-convenient split amongst producers. Barolo was divided between “the traditionalists” who retained faith in older winemaking techniques—Giacomo Conterno, Bartolo Mascarello, Giuseppe Rinaldi—and the “modernists” who embraced barriques, shorter macerations, and a rounder style of wine—Paolo Scavino, Luciano Sandrone, Elio Altare.

Like Barolo, the Nebbiolo wines of Barbaresco DOCG are perfumed, tannic, and age worthy, yet slightly lighter in body and more elegant. . The wines must be aged for a minimum of two years (including at least 9 months in cask) prior to release, or for a minimum of four years if labeled *riserva*. The wines have a much shorter history than Barolo, and are really a phenomenon of the 20th century, achieving acclaimed cult status through the efforts of the modernist Angelo Gaja, whose Nebbiolo-based wines are often no longer released as Barbaresco DOCG but rather as the regional Langhe DOC. The less iconic but equally talented Bruno Giacosa espouses the traditionalist approach in Barbaresco, and the local co-operative, Produttori del Barbaresco, offers great value and exemplifies the *terroir* of the region.

Barolo and Barbaresco are frequently compared to Burgundy—the wines show similar aromatic richness, and the Langhe’s climate, the importance of single vineyards, and the modern emphasis on domaine bottling parallel the structure of Burgundy. Single vineyard bottlings from the best crus, such as Cannubi in Barolo or Rabajà in Barbaresco, fetch high prices. In 2007, the Barolo/Barbaresco/Langhe Consorzio finally voted to enshrine the crus of Barbaresco as legal *menzioni geografiche aggiuntive* (geographic areas) of the DOCG; in early 2010 Barolo followed suit.

Barolo Chinato is a curiosity; a DOCG aromatized wine that is flavored with quinine.

Barolo Commune	Important Crus
Barolo	Cannubi, Brunate (shared), Sarmassa
La Morra	Brunate (shared), Cerequio, Le Rocche
Serralunga d'Alba	Lazzarito, Cerretta
Castiglione Falletto	Bricco Rocche, Monprivato, Villero, Bricco Fiasco
Monforte d'Alba	Bussia, Ginestra, Santo Stefano

Barbaresco Commune	Important Crus
Barbaresco	Asili, Roncaglette, Martinenga, Rabajà
Neive	Serraboella, Gallina, Basarin

Treiso	Pajorè, Bricco di Treiso
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The **Roero DOCG**, elevated from DOC in 2005, lies on the northwestern bank of the Tanaro River, opposite Barolo and Barbaresco. While the DOCG's red wines are based on a minimum 95% Nebbiolo, Roero also produces fresh and floral white wines from the Arneis grape. The sandy soils of Roero, north of the commune of Alba, provide a lighter style of Nebbiolo than Barolo or Barbaresco, and many producers here are experimenting with modern approaches. Two other Nebbiolo-based DOCG reds are produced in the hills north of the Po River, as **Gattinara DOCG** and **Ghemme DOCG**.

Two DOCGs exist for Barbera in the Monferrato hills east of the Langhe: **Barbera d'Asti** and **Barbera del Monferrato Superiore**. Each appellation requires a minimum 85% Barbera. Barbera d'Asti may be released as *normale* after a short four-month aging period, whereas Barbera del Monferrato must be *superiore*, and spends 14 months aging prior to release, including six months in cask. Modern Barbera often sees new wood.

Three DOCG wines are produced from 100% Dolcetto: **Dogliani**, **Dolcetto di Ovada Superiore** (Ovada), and **Dolcetto di Diano d'Alba** (Diano d'Alba). The Dolcetto wines show sweet black fruit in a typically rustic frame, although denser and more polished interpretations are available.

Gavi (Cortese di Gavi, or Gavi di Gavi) was the first still white wine in Piedmont to be promoted to the DOCG level. Gavi's dry, mineral-tinged whites are produced from the Cortese grape. **Erbaluce di Caluso**, an appellation just south of Carema, transitioned from DOC to DOCG in late 2010. The white wines, produced from the high-acid, herbal-scented Erbaluce grape, may be still, *spumante*, or *passito* in style, with the latter type generally provoking the most praise.

Of far more importance are the sparkling wines of **Asti/Moscato d'Asti DOCG**. Nearly 650,000 hl is produced each year, making Asti the largest producer of DOC wine in Italy. Asti shed the pejorative "Asti Spumante" label with its move from DOC to DOCG, but the wines are always fully sparkling (*spumante*). The wines are comprised solely of Moscato Bianco and blended from vast vineyards across the southern provinces of Piedmont before undergoing secondary fermentation via (usually) the **Charmat Method**. Moscato d'Asti is a rarer and more artisanal product crafted from riper Moscato Bianco grapes. Both wines are sweet, but the hedonistic fragrance of the Moscato grape is preserved more effectively in Moscato d'Asti. While Alta Langa's producers, including notable Nebbiolo craftsmen Fontanafredda and Enrico Serafino, aim for greatness with their sparkling wines, the sparkling reds of **Brachetto d'Acqui DOCG** retain a certain rustic charm. The wines are usually sweet, and suitable as a dessert accompaniment. Both dry and still versions of Brachetto exist, although they are increasingly rare.

Piedmont DOCGs

- Barolo
- Barbaresco
- Ghemme
- Gattinara
- Roero
- Barbera del Monferrato Superiore
- Barbera d'Asti
- Dogliani
- Dolcetto di Ovada Superiore
- Dolcetto di Diano d'Alba

- Brachetto d'Acqui
- Ruchè di Castagnole Monferrato
- Gavi/Cortese di Gavi
- Erbaluce di Caluso
- Asti/Moscato d'Asti
- Alta Langa

VALLE d'AOSTA

The Valle d'Aosta ranks last amongst Italy's twenty regions in volume of production. The Valle d'Aosta DOC is the sole DOC zone, although there are seven sub-appellations: Arnad-Montjovet, Blanc de Morgex et de la Salle, Chambave, Donnas, Enfer d'Arvier, Nus, and Torrette. A number of grapes, both local and international, provide a basis for the different red, white, and rosé blends and varietal wines of the DOC. The Petit Rouge grape dominates wines from Torrette, Chambave, and Enfer d'Arvier, whereas Picotendro—a local synonym for Nebbiolo. In addition, Valle d'Aosta DOC wines may be labeled as varietal wines. Examples of authorized varieties include Petit Arvine, Gamay, Petit Rouge, Fumin, and Premetta (Premetta is usually bottled as rosé).

LOMBARDY

Lombardy is a region of vast industrial, agricultural and viticultural importance. While Lombardy's winegrowing appellations tend to be far removed from the capital Milan, the presence of such an important and wealthy city has provided Lombardy's producers with a very thirsty, constant market for their wines. Lombardy is highly regarded for the modern quality of its sparkling wines, and the region's still wines are improving.

Franciacorta DOCG is the most important DOCG zone in Lombardy, and the only true rival to the style of Champagne in Italy. Chardonnay, Pinot Nero (Noir), and a maximum 50% Pinot Bianco are permitted for use in the wine. Non-vintage Franciacorta DOCG wines must spend a minimum 18 months maturing on the lees, and may not be released until 25 months after the harvest.

To the north of Franciacorta is Valtellina, Lombardy's most important zone for red wines. The Nebbiolo grape, known as Chiavennasca in Valtellina, provides a lighter and more angular style here than in neighboring Piedmont.

Lombardy DOCGs

- Franciacorta
- Oltrepò Pavese Metodo Classico
- Valtellina Superiore
- Sforzato di Valtellina
- Moscato di Scanzo

EMILIA-ROMAGNA

While the gastronomic creations of the Emilia-Romagna region are world-renowned—this is the home of Parmigiano-Reggiano, Prosciutto di Parma, and Modena's Balsamic vinegar—the wines are less remarkable. Promoted to DOCG status in 1987, **Albana di Romagna** is most notable for being Italy's first (and most regularly ridiculed) white wine DOCG, and it covers white wines made from the Albana grape in a range of possible styles.

TRENTINO ALTO-ADIGE

The mountainous, landlocked Trentino-Alto Adige region is subdivided into two nearly autonomous provinces: the Italian-speaking Trento in the south and the German-speaking Bolzano-Bozen, known as Alto-Adige or Südtirol, in the north. The two provinces share a tradition of the grape that dates to pre-Roman times, and today focus on varietal

wines. These designations permit a wide number of varietally labeled wines: Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Pinot Bianco, Müller-Thurgau, and Sauvignon Blanc are a sampling of the varieties encountered in Trentino DOC whites. These grapes form a major part of white Alto Adige DOC production as well; however, Sylvaner and Gewürztraminer—a grape genetically linked to the indigenous Traminer—are also utilized in the north to make intensely aromatic wines. Although many of the white wines of both zones are light in style and crisp in acidity, the sheer number of grapes and resulting styles renders generalization ineffective.

Trentino-Alto Adige is often primarily considered for its white wines, but the region supplies a larger quantity of reds than whites. Schiava (Vernatsch) is the predominant grape in both provinces and produces light red wines. Alto Adige's historically important Santa Maddelena (St. Magdelener) subzone is the premier geographical appellation for Schiava varietal wines. The Lagrein grape is native to Trentino but thrives in Alto Adige, where it produces a denser, spicier wine than Schiava. The red Teroldego grape can produce deeply colored wines in Trentino's Teroldego Rotaliano DOC, and the ancient Marzemino, a genetic parent of Teroldego, is one of the major Trentino DOC red varieties. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, and Pinot Nero have been steadily increasing in importance and plantings in both provinces, where producers have the opportunity to underscore the grapes' fragrant qualities.

VENETO

Veneto, with its capital at Venice, is the most significant of the three regions that comprise the Tre Venezie. It produces more wine than any other region in Italy, yet much of this falls at a lower level—an ocean of neutral, cheap Pinot Grigio (Pinot Gris) and sparkling wines comprises much of the bottom tier of Venetian winemaking. Veneto also produces some exciting wines, including the famous Amarone della Valpolicella—Amarone—one of the perennially expensive luxury wines of Italy.

The raisinated styles of **Amarone della Valpolicella** and **Recioto della Valpolicella** represent the height of complexity for the Valpolicella region. The cherry- and bitter almond-tinged red Valpolicella DOC wines are produced from 45-95% Corvina, blended with Rondinella. The standard DOC wines are usually refreshing, lively and uncomplicated. Wines labeled "Superiore" show a rounder character, with a higher minimum alcohol and a minimum of one year of aging. The Valpolicella Classico region is at the western end of the appellation, near the shores of Lake Garda.

Recioto della Valpolicella and Amarone wines are produced through the expensive **appassimento** process; the grapes—the *encépagement* for recioto wines is identical to Valpolicella DOC—are dried for over three months in special lofts (*fruttai*) before fermentation, effectively concentrating sugar and extract. Grapes destined for Recioto della Valpolicella are typically dried for an additional month, and the resulting wine is semi-sweet to sweet, whereas Amarone is fermented to dryness or near-dryness. The *appassimento* process adds complex dried fruit tones, additional alcoholic warmth and a round, glycolic mouthfeel to the final wines. Amarone spends an additional two years aging prior to release; some producers (Dal Forno, Allegrini) are utilizing new barriques to add spice and density to the wines, whereas others (Giuseppe Quintarelli) remain traditional, aging the wine in large, neutral Slavonian *botti*. Amarone may be labeled *riserva* if aged for a minimum four years. Valpolicella Ripasso, finally granted its own DOC in 2009, is a steppingstone in style between Valpolicella and Amarone: a wine "re-passed" over and refermented with the unpressed skins of grapes previously fermented for Amarone or Recioto wine. The Bardolino DOC zone lies between Valpolicella Classico and the eastern shores of Lake Garda. Corvina and Rondinella grapes dominate the blend of Bardolino, but the final wine is usually slightly lighter and more neutral than Valpolicella.

Soave DOC is the principal and most important white wine zone in Veneto, and its wines are comprised of a minimum 70% Garganega, plus Trebbiano di Soave, Chardonnay, and Pinot Bianco. Recioto di Soave is produced from grapes dried from four to six months in the same delimited area as Soave Superiore. Barrel fermentation is common in Recioto di Soave and the growth of **botrytis cinerea** is encouraged.

The sparkling wines of Veneto are a world apart from neighboring Lombardy's serious-minded, *metodo classico* wines. Here, over one million hectoliters of inexpensive, refreshing sparkling wine are annually churned out of the Prosecco grape; a relatively neutral variety whose inherent peachiness remains unadulterated by leesy, yeasty aromas as it undergoes, via the Charmat method, transformation into *frizzante* or *spumante* wine.

Two DOCG zones are in place for Prosecco from the 2009 vintage onward: **Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco DOCG** and the more obscure **Asolo Prosecco DOCG**. The hilly zone between the communes of Conegliano and Valdobbiadene represents the historical heartland of Prosecco production; in accordance with the area's new recognition as DOCG, the producers' *consorzio* ambitiously aims for the development of crus in the region. The most noteworthy cru is Cartizze, comprising a mere 106 of the DOCG's total 4,300 hectares.

Veneto DOCGs

- Soave Superiore
- Recioto di Soave
- Recioto di Gambellara
- Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco
- Asolo Prosecco
- Bardolino Superiore
- Amarone della Valpolicella
- Recioto della Valpolicella
- Piave Malanotte
- Lison (shared with Friuli)
- Colli Euganei Fior d'Arancio
- Colli di Conegliano
- Friularo di Bagnoli
- Montello Rosso

FRIULI-VENEZIA-GIULIA

The winemaking tradition of Friuli-Venezia Giulia borrows heavily from the neighboring Slavic, German, and Italian cultures. The introduction of controlled cold fermentations in stainless steel, coupled with the region's moderate temperatures, led to the Friulian style: crisp, aromatic, fruit-driven varietal white wines designed for quick consumption. A small subset of idiosyncratic producers spearheaded by Josko Gravner is taking another approach, making "orange" white wines with lengthy skin contact in ancient Slavic fashion.

The international grapes Pinot Bianco, Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, and Sauvignon Blanc—simply called "Sauvignon" in Friuli—are often bottled varietally in the region, but Friuli also has a wealth of notable native grapes. Picolit and Verduzzo Gialla (Ramandolo) produce sweet *passito* wines under two DOCG zones, **Colli Orientali del Friuli-Picolit DOCG** and **Ramandolo DOCG**. The highly acidic Ribolla Gialla has achieved recent fame as the subject of Gravner's "amphora" treatments, but it also provides fresh, malic-edged whites and the occasional sparkling wine. The region's trademark white varietal is Friulano—formerly called Tocai Friulano, also known as Tai—a light, refreshingly almond- and mineral-tinged wine that provides the perfect foil for the famous Prosciutto di San Daniele of Friuli.

Although Friuli receives the most acclaim for its white wines, Merlot is the most planted grape in the region. Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon may be blended with or vinified separately from Merlot, producing wines that tend toward lighter, fragrant, herbal flavors. Refosco, Schiopettino, and Pignolo are the most noteworthy indigenous red grapes. Refosco, a relative of Savoie's Mondeuse, is the most planted of the three but typically shows the least promise, producing light, fruity reds. Schiopettino and Pignolo are both much rarer, but produce wines of more density, spice, and ageworthiness.

Collio DOC, or Collio Goriziano, Colli Orientali del Friuli DOC, and Grave del Friuli DOC are the most relevant and quality-minded of Friuli's ten DOC zones. The nine geographic DOCs of Friuli all produce varietally labeled red and white wines. The tenth DOC appellation is Veneto's Prosecco DOC, which extends into Friuli.

Friuli-Venezia Giulia DOCGs

- Ramandolo
- Colli Orientali del Friuli-Picolit
- Lison (shared with Veneto)
- Rosazzo

TUSCANY

Wine and commercial agriculture are big business in Tuscany, and the hills are a patchwork of olive tree groves, vineyards, and wheat fields. In the past, Chianti was synonymous with Italian wine—and a reminder, not unfairly, of its troubled quality. Historically bottled in a *fiasco* due to the inferior quality of Italian glass, the squat, straw-covered Chianti bottles came to epitomize the rustic, cheap nature of Italian wine in the late 1960s, '70s, and '80s. Tuscany's winemakers have responded with a surge in quality over the last quarter century, slashing vineyard yields and building on the successes of the "Super-Tuscan" trailblazers Marquis Mario Rocchetta, who released the first commercial vintage of Sassicaia in 1968, and his nephew Piero Antinori, whose Tignanello bottling soon followed. While the benchmark for quality has been raised significantly, it may be at the expense of typicity—the Bordeaux grapes and model of winemaking extend great influence over the modern Tuscan estate.

The thin-skinned Sangiovese is the main red grape of Tuscany and is, alongside Nebbiolo and Aglianico, one of the great indigenous red grapes of Italy. Typically, Sangiovese wines are light in color, naturally high in acidity, firmly tannic, and medium- to full-bodied. Sour cherry notes and herbal undertones are common. When aged, Sangiovese traditionally spends time in large European—often Slavonian—casks, but modern wines are just as likely to be aged in new barriques, which infuse both flavor and texture into the wines. In appellations where blending is allowed, grapes such as Cabernet Sauvignon or the local Colorino are sometimes used to add color and power to Sangiovese, whereas the Canaiolo grape historically softened Sangiovese's hard attack.

Sangiovese is the principal red grape in the following DOCGs: Chianti, Chianti Classico, Carmignano, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, Morellino di Scansano, and Montecucco Sangiovese. It is the sole red grape allowed for Brunello di Montalcino DOCG. In addition to the native Colorino and Canaiolo Nero, the international grapes Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot wield influence in Tuscan wine production. While these two Bordeaux grapes can be added in minor proportions to the Chianti formula, they are of far more vital importance to DOC and IGT "Super-Tuscan" blends, ripening easily in the Tuscan climate and providing lushness and flesh to the skeleton of Sangiovese. The neutral Trebbiano Toscano, Italy's most planted white grape, is regularly encountered in the region alongside its common blending partner Malvasia, whereas the local white Vernaccia grape is more or less limited to the environs of San Gimignano. In the coastal vineyards of Maremma, the Mediterranean Vermentino shows great promise, and some producers are investing heavily in plantings of the grape.

Although Chianti was not elevated to DOCG until 1984, the limits of the modern Chianti zone were established in 1932, and seven subzones were created for the region: Classico, Rufina, Colli Fiorentini, Colli Senesi, Colline Pisane, Colli Aretini, and Montalbano. An eighth subzone, Montespertoli, was added in a 1997 decree. Chianti Classico, upgraded to DOCG alongside Chianti in 1984, is the heartland of the Chianti zone and consistently provides the best examples of wine in the region. Barrique is fast becoming the wood vessel of choice for aging *riserva* Chianti Classico.

Chianti DOCG subzones

- Rùfina
- Colli Fiorentini
- Montespertoli
- Colli Aretini
- Colline Pisane
- Colli Senesi
- Montalbano

Whereas Chianti enjoys a legacy dating back centuries, **Brunello di Montalcino DOCG**—the most powerful expression of Sangiovese in Tuscany—has only recently achieved its status as one of Italy’s most profound wines. History credits Clemente Santi of Tenuta Greppo’s Biondi-Santi with the invention of the Brunello style, as the producer was the first to isolate the Brunello clone and bottle it alone in 1865. Brunello di Montalcino is produced from 100% Sangiovese Grosso (Brunello), and aged in cask for a minimum two years and bottle for an additional four months—six months for *riserva*.

A “junior” version of Brunello, Rosso di Montalcino DOC, is produced in the same delimited region from 100% Sangiovese. The wines must be aged for one year prior to release, although cask aging is not required.

To the east of Montalcino, **Vino Nobile di Montepulciano DOCG** is produced in Montepulciano and several surrounding communes. The wines include a minimum 70% Sangiovese (Prugnolo Gentile clone) and, as of 2010, a maximum 30% other varieties of Tuscany, including no more than 5% of white varieties. *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* is aged for a minimum of two years, with at least one year in wood. *Riserva* wines are aged for at least three years. The wines tend to be less firm than Chianti and less aggressively tannic than Brunello, striking a softer balance.

The coastal **Morellino di Scansano DOCG**, in the southern Maremma, achieved DOCG status in 2006 for red wines based on a minimum 85% Sangiovese. *Riserva* wines are aged for a minimum of two years in barrel.

The red wines of **Carmignano**, a low-altitude territory which overlaps Chianti Montalbano, are a minimum 50% Sangiovese. Historically, winemakers in the region have added Cabernet grapes to the native grape, and 10% to 20% of Cabernet Sauvignon and/or Cabernet Franc is required in the blend. Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot may be added to Sangiovese in higher proportions in the new DOCG **Rosso della Val di Cornia**.

While the Sangiovese DOCG wines of Tuscany represent the region’s greatest homegrown noble wines, the explosion of the “**Super Tuscan**” style in the last 40 years is responsible for invigorating international interest. Constrained by the DOCG regulations of the time, Marquis Mario Rocchetta’s Tenuta San Guido released the 1968 Sassicaia, a barrique-aged Cabernet blend from Bolgheri in the Northern Maremma, as ***vino da tavola***. Antinori followed with the *vino da tavola* Tignanello 1971, a barrique-aged red whose proportion of Sangiovese was set with the 1982 vintage at 85%. These two wines signaled an upheaval in the region’s wines—the influence of Bordeaux loomed as Tuscany’s winemakers sought to add flesh and roundness to Sangiovese, or supplant the native Sangiovese with French grapes. More “Super-Tuscan” Bordeaux-style wines followed: Antinori’s Cabernet-based Solaia, the Bordeaux blend Ornellaia and the Merlot-based Masseto, and the 100% Cabernet Franc Paleo Rosso from Le Macchiole. Many great “Super-Tuscan” wines are today released as IGT, under a *nome di fantasia*, or fantasy name. Bolgheri in the northern Maremma was one of the original IGTs, although it quickly received a DOC in 1994 for red, white, and *rosato* wines. The red wines are blends usually dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon, although they may contain a majority of either Merlot or Sangiovese. The Bolgheri DOC surrounds Sassicaia, which earned the single-estate subappellation Bolgheri Sassicaia DOC in the late 1990s, as a tribute to its renown.

The only white wine in Tuscany to enjoy DOCG status is **Vernaccia di San Gimignano**: a crisp, pink grapefruit-tinged white wine produced on sandy, rock-strewn soils around the hilltop town of San Gimignano in the

Vin santo is a traditional dessert bottling in Tuscany, although the difficulty and time required in its production make it increasingly rare. *Vin santo*, or “holy wine”, is a high alcohol, almond- and honey-toned dried grape wine produced from Trebbiano and Malvasia grapes. The grapes are hung from rafters to dry for a specified time set by each DOC—the grapes are usually raisinated until December 1, at least. A period of slow fermentation and aging in **caratelli** barrels follows, for a period of between three and eight years, depending on the style. Chestnut wood is traditionally used, allowing rapid oxidation, although many modern producers have switched to oak. The barrels are never topped—alcohol is concentrated through evaporation and the wine gains its characteristic amber hue. The final style of *vin santo* may be dry or sweet, depending on the length of the *appassimento* process.

Tuscany DOCG

- Chianti
- Chianti Classico
- Carmignano
- Morellino di Scansano
- Brunello di Montalcino
- Vino Nobile di Montepulciano
- Vernaccia di San Gimignano
- Elba Aleatico Passito
- Montecucco Sangiovese
- Suvereto
- Rosso della Val di Cornia

UMBRIA

Umbria, one of Italy's few landlocked regions, has a much less illustrious reputation for wine than Tuscany, its neighbor to the west. Orvieto DOC, a clean, light white wine produced from Grechetto and Trebbiano Toscano (Procanico), is responsible for a majority of the region's production. Orvieto DOC wines are generally dry, although they may be sweet, and even botrytised.

The most celebrated red wines of Umbria are the ageworthy **Sagrantino di Montefalco DOCG** and **Torgiano Rosso Riserva DOCG**. Sagrantino di Montefalco is produced from 100% Sagrantino; the resulting wines are naturally high in alcohol and tannin, and are aged for a minimum 30 months, including 12 months in wood for the dry wines.

Torgiano Rosso Riserva DOCG is produced from 70-100% Sangiovese, with a minimum three years of aging prior to release—including six months in bottle. The Lungarotti family, Torgiano's largest producer, was instrumental in the elevation of Torgiano Rosso Riserva to DOCG in 1990.

Umbria DOCG

- Sagrantino di Montefalco
- Torgiano Rosso Riserva

MARCHES

Verdicchio, the most important grape of the Marches, has the capacity to produce ageworthy, focused, green-tinged white wines with a distinctive lemony, stony character and a bitter almond tang. The coastal Castelli di Jesi and the more inland and higher-altitude Matelica are the best zones for the wines, with *normale* versions released as DOC and the *riserva* versions, aged for a minimum of eighteen months, released as DOCG. The Matelica wines are often sharper, whereas Castelli di Jesi provides wines of a fuller, rounder character.

Red wines are produced as **Conero Rosso Riserva DOCG** and **Vernaccia di Serrapetrona DOCG**. Conero Rosso Riserva is produced just south of the regional capital Ancona, and the wines are comprised of a minimum 85% Montepulciano and a maximum 15% Sangiovese. It is matured for two years prior to release, and many producers rely on a percentage of new barriques for aging rather than the traditional old botti. Surrounding the coastal Conero zone is the larger Rosso Piceno DOC, which typically offers lighter Sangiovese and Montepulciano blends.

Marches DOCG

- Vernaccia di Serrapetrona
- Conero Rosso Riserva
- Offida
- Castelli di Jesi Verdicchio Riserva
- Verdicchio di Matelica Riserva

ABRUZZO

Immediately south of the Marches on the Adriatic Coast, Abruzzo is a huge contributor to Italy's lower quality wine lake. The Montepulciano grape is the region's most cultivated varietal and the second most planted red grape in Italy. It easily produces ripe, tannic and full-bodied wines of deep color. *Rosato* versions of the wine are called "Cerasuolo", in reference to the cherry red hue of the rosés.

LATIUM (LAZIO)

Trebbiano Toscano and Malvasia are the principal grapes of the region, and are produced in mass quantities as Castelli Romani DOC, a broad zone that encompasses several smaller appellations. In 2011 Italian authorities awarded **Frascati Superiore** and **Cannellino di Frascati DOCG** status.

SOUTHERN ITALY

MOLISE

The small, mountainous region of Molise to the south of Abruzzo produces an equally small amount of wine. Most winemaking is handled by co-operatives, and less than 5% of the region's production is at the DOC level.

CAMPANIA

Naples, the capital of Campania, is a World Heritage Site and the largest and most important city in Southern Italy; but the region itself, like much of the southern peninsula, reflects a growing disparity of immense poverty and natural beauty. The ancient red varieties Aglianico and Piediroso ("red feet") and the white Falanghina, Greco, and Fiano comprise a majority of the Campanian DOC wines.

The tannic, high-acid Aglianico shares a structural similarity with Sangiovese and Nebbiolo—although it displays a darker fruit profile—and has the capacity to produce the longest-lived and noblest red wines of Southern Italy. While tempered with the lighter Piediroso in the velvety blends of Falerno del Massico DOC, Aglianico shines as a varietal wine in **Taurasi DOCG** and **Aglianico del Taburno DOCG**, a zone promoted to DOCG in 2011. Taurasi wines are produced in the inland area of Irpinia, in the province of Avellino. Taurasi wines must be aged a minimum of three years prior to release, with one year in wood. The aging requirement increases to four years—and eighteen months in wood—for *riserva* wines. Mastroberardino, Terredora and Feudi di San Gregorio exemplify the quality of wines in the region.

The white DOCG wines of Campania are **Greco di Tufo** and **Fiano di Avellino**. Greco, a lighter but more intensely

aromatic grape, is grown at higher altitudes to the immediate north of Fiano di Avellino. While not at DOCG level, Falanghina produces dry and sweet *passito* whites in the inland Sannio DOC north of Avellino. Alongside Forastera, the Biancolella white grape produces more delicate varietal whites in the offshore Ischia DOC, in the Bay of Naples. More prevalent on the island are the reds based on Piediroso and Guarnaccia, a Grenache variant.

Campania DOCG

- Taurasi
- Fiano di Avellino
- Greco di Tufo
- Aglianico del Taburno

PUGLIA

Apulia's flat, fertile plains provide an easy outlet for high-yielding viticulture, and much of the region's mass production is devoted to base wines destined for vermouth, bulk blending material, or distillate. Negroamaro, the most cultivated red grape in the region, is prized for its deep color and powerful tannic structure, and is encountered as the major component of nearly every *rosso* and *rosato* DOC on the Salento peninsula. Salice Salentino DOC and Brindisi DOC are two of the more prominent appellations. The third major red grape of Apulia is Primitivo, which has been genetically linked to Zinfandel and shares a softly tannic, syrupy character with its American cousin. Primitivo di Manduria DOC lies to the east of Salice Salentino DOC, on the Ionian Coast. The wines are 100% Primitivo.

Apulia DOCG

- Primitivo di Manduria Dolce Naturale
- Castel del Monte Rosso Riserva
- Castel del Monte Nero di Troia Riserva
- Castel del Monte Bombino Nero

BASILICATA

Basilicata, Italy's third least populous region—only Molise and the Valle d'Aosta have a smaller population—is a mountainous, poor region producing little wine. Aglianico del Vulture remains the region's only real wine of note, and arguably one of the finest expressions of the thick-skinned Aglianico grape. As a DOCG wine, Aglianico must show a minimum alcohol content of 13.5% and undergo three years of aging, including one in wood. If aged for a minimum five years, including two in wood, the wine may be labeled *riserva*. Grown on the volcanic soils of the slopes of Mount Vulture, Aglianico can develop great complexity as it slowly ripens.

Basilicata DOCGs

- Aglianico del Vulture Superiore

CALABRIA

Calabria is the "toe" of the Italian boot; like its neighbors it is covered in mountains, dividing the region climatically between the hot Mediterranean coast and the more continental, higher-altitude interior. The chief red grape of Calabria is Gaglioppo, a thick-skinned grape encountered in the reds and *rosatos* of Cirò DOC, on the Ionian Coast. The Gaglioppo variety was long thought to be of Greek origin, and local legend ascribes the wines of Cirò as the beverage of ancient Olympians; however, it has more recently been genetically linked to Sangiovese.

SICILY

Sicily is one of Italy's largest producers of wine, usually surpassed in volume only by Veneto. Marsala is the island's most famous vinous product—a wine from the eponymous seaport on Sicily's western edge, famously discovered by the Englishman John Woodhouse in 1773, who first fortified the wine to ensure safe shipment to his home country. Marsala, which fed the British thirst for fortified wine (alongside Port, Sherry, and Madeira) in an era when taxes on the beloved claret of Bordeaux were raised to a trade-stifling level, suffered in the 20th century as a result of being essentially rebranded as a “cooking” wine. Marsala DOC, created in 1969, struggles to find a place in a crowded marketplace shifting away from fortified wines.

Sicily, like the other regions of Southern Italy, produces very little wine at the DOC level. Viticulture on the island focused on productivity in the latter half of the 20th century, creating a glut of low quality bulk wines and grape concentrate to be shipped as a blending ingredients throughout Italy and France. While some of Sicily's modern success can be attributed to IGT Sicilia wines produced from international varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon or Syrah, the island has a wealth of indigenous grapes uniquely suited to its warm, dry climate. White grapes include the native Catarratto, Inzolia, Grecanico, Carricante, and Grillo. Zibibbo (Muscat of Alexandria) and the ubiquitous Malvasia are also commonly encountered on Sicily. Native red grapes include Nero d'Avola (although Calabrese, its synonym, suggests Calabrian origins), Frappato, Perricone, Nerello Mascalese and Nerello Cappuccio.

Catarratto is the island's most heavily planted grape and the third most cultivated grape in Italy, despite being found only in the vineyards of western Sicily. The grape, utilized in Marsala blends and the Alcamo Bianco DOC table wines, churns out millions of hectoliters of juice destined for grape concentrate or distillation. Inzolia and Grillo are better alternatives, for Marsala and table wines. Nerello Mascalese and Carricante are the dominant varietals of the Etna DOC *rosso* and *bianco* wines, respectively. The Etna DOC is in eastern Sicily, and the vines on the Mount Etna's slopes benefit from well-drained volcanic soils—but viticulture in the shadow of an active volcano is a risky proposition. Nerello Mascalese also dominates the blends of Faro DOC on Sicily's extreme northeastern coast, exemplified by the wines of Palari.

Nero d'Avola, crowned with the recent DOCG **Cerasuolo di Vittoria**, is the island's most planted red grape. Often likened in flavor to Syrah, Nero d'Avola is blended in Cerasuolo di Vittoria DOCG wines with the lighter, grapey Frappato in a ratio of 70-50% to 30-50%. DOCG regulations limit maceration in order to maintain the vibrant cherry-red, or “Cerasuolo”, color of the wine.

Dessert styles have always been prominent in Sicily. Beyond the sweeter versions of Marsala, the island offers several notable dessert wines produced from the Moscato/Zibibbo and Malvasia grapes. The exceedingly rare Moscato di Noto and Moscato di Siracusa DOCs, with seventy acres and five acres respectively, are located to the east of Vittoria in southeastern Sicily. Off the northern coast of Italy, the Malvasia delle Lipari DOC wines are produced in purely sweet, *passito*, and fortified styles. Zibibbo is fashioned into sweet Moscato di Pantelleria DOC and the superior Passito di Pantelleria on the volcanic island of Pantelleria, near the African Coast. In legend, the wine possessed such character as to dupe the Greek god Apollo into assuming that he was drinking ambrosia—a beverage, reserved for gods, that confers immortality upon the imbiber.

Sicily DOCG

- Cerasuolo di Vittoria

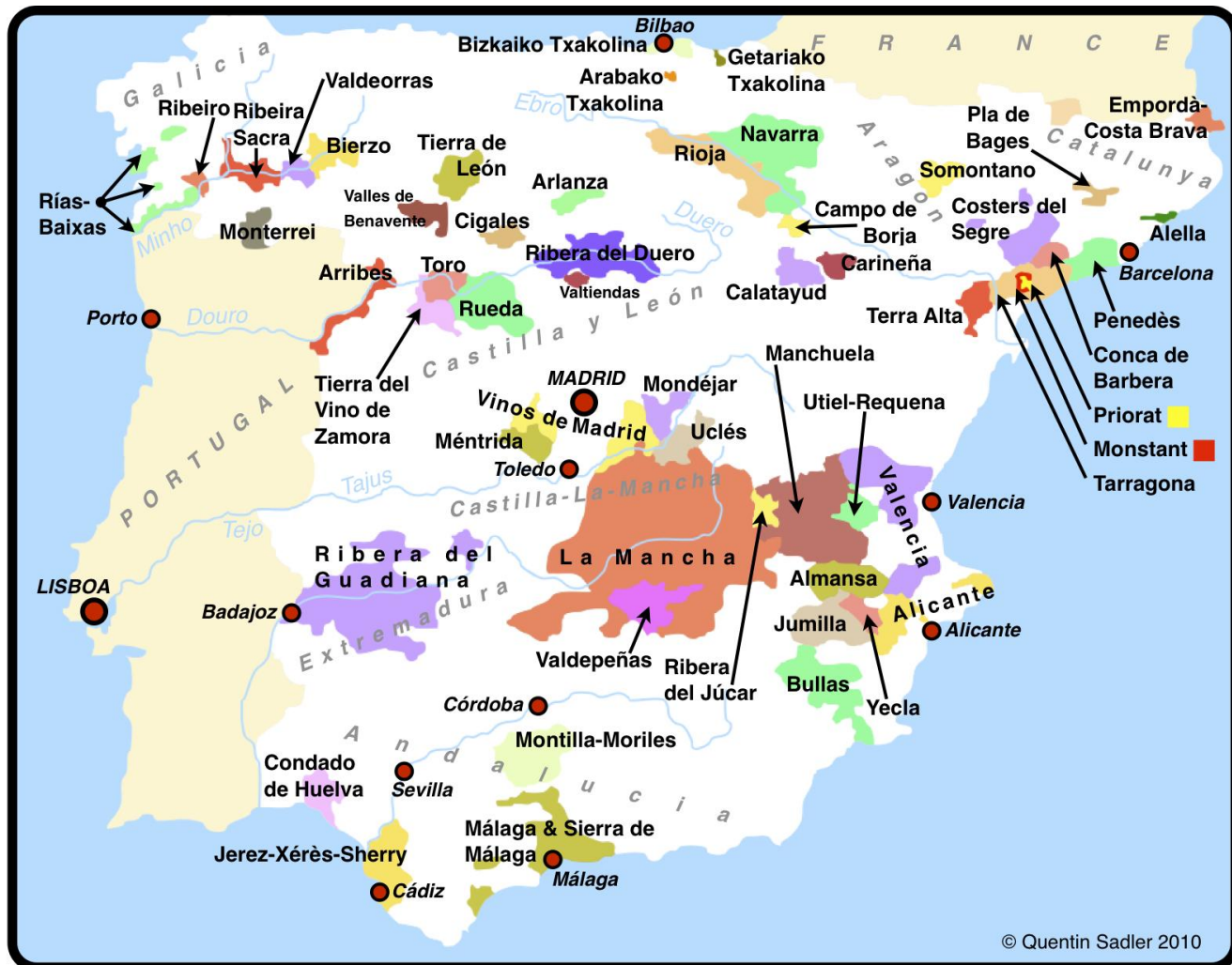
SARDINIA

South of Corsica, the island of Sardinia owes a great debt to Spanish grape varietals. Cannonau (Garnacha, or Grenache) and Carignano (Cariñena, or Carignan) are the dominant red varietals, and the island's dominant white grape, Vermentino, is likely of Spanish origin. These grapes were likely introduced to the island during a period of general cultural assimilation, as the Spanish Kingdom of Aragon ruled Sardinia until the early 1700s, for a period of nearly 400 years. **Vermentino di Gallura** is the island's sole DOCG zone. While Vermentino dominates white grape plantings in the northern reaches of Sardinia, Nuragus is more common in the south. The grape tends to produce

tart, apple wines; the best versions are Nuragus di Cagliari DOC. Cannonau, the island's premier red grape, is often rustic and spicy, with a fuller body than its color would indicate—premature oxidation is especially virulent in Sardinia's Grenache.

Sardinia DOCG

- Vermentino di Gallura



SPAIN

When **oidium** and **phylloxera** struck France in the 1850s and 1860s, an abrupt change occurred, particularly in Rioja, where a sudden influx of French winemakers and merchants sought to bridge the interruption of their own disease-ridden vineyards with Spanish wine. During this period the Bordeaux-trained Marqués de Riscal and Marqués de Murrieta returned to Rioja with grape varieties and lessons from the Médoc, including barrique aging (called *barricas* in Spain) and estate bottling. However, a significant alteration to the Bordeaux technique of barrique aging was implemented in Rioja: the Spaniards used American oak (*Quercus alba*) rather than French—an economic decision based on Spain’s history of transatlantic colonial trade. Many of today’s great traditionalist Rioja wineries got their start in the latter half of the 19th century: López de Heredia, CVNE, La Rioja Alta, and Berceo. The second half of the 19th century also saw the birth of Spanish traditional method sparkling wine—*champaña*, now known as Cava—at San Sadurn d’Anoia.

In Spain, Denominación de Origen (DO) and the superior **Denominación de Origen Calificada** (DOCa) represent the two highest tiers of quality wine. **Vinos de Calidad con Indicación Geográfica** (VCIG), once considered a steppingstone to DO, is also considered DOP in the new European appellation scheme. The lowest level of quality wine, **Vino de la Tierra** (VdIT), falls within the EU’s Protected Geographical Indication (IGP) scheme. The **DO Pago** (Vinos de Pago) estates represent a sub-classification of the DO level; however, each estate guides its own

production, and the legal framework adapts to fit the wine, rather than requiring the wine to fit the parameters of the DO. Wines at the DO level and above must observe standardized aging criteria. With the exception of a few regions—chiefly Rioja and Ribera del Duero—that have adapted more stringent requirements, the following label definitions are consistent throughout Spain:

Age Category	Red Wine	White/Rosado Wine
Vino Joven	less aging than required for Crianza	less aging than required for Crianza
Crianza	2 years (including 6 months in cask)	18 months (including 6 months in cask)
Reserva	3 years (including 1 year in cask)	2 years (including 6 months in cask)
Gran Reserva	5 years (including 18 months in cask)	4 years (including 6 months in cask)

Additionally, quality wines may use the following aging terminology:

- Noble: 18 months aging in a cask of less than 600 L or bottle
- Añejo: 24 months aging in a cask of less than 600 L or bottle
- Viejo: 36 months aging, demonstrates marked oxidative character

NORTH CENTRAL SPAIN

North-Central Spain essentially comprises the three *autonomías* of Navarra, La Rioja, and Aragón.

Rioja, named not after the Ebro but for the Oja, a smaller tributary, was the first region in Spain to be christened as Denominación de Origen Calificada—in 1991—and has been a viable wine-producing area for over 2000 years. Tempranillo is the main grape of red Rioja; its traditional blending partners are Mazuelo (Carignan), Graciano, and Garnacha. Together, these four grapes (along with Maturana Tinta, authorized for Rioja in 2007) must comprise a minimum 85% of the red Rioja blend, or 95% if destemmed. “Experimental” grapes such as Monastrell or Cabernet Sauvignon may make up the remainder. Viura—known elsewhere as Macabéo—is the dominant white grape, followed by Garnacha Blanca, Malvasía Riojano, and Maturana Blanca. Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, and Verdejo may be used but cannot account for a more than a combined 49% of the blend. Rosado wines require a minimum 25% of red grapes. Red *crianza* wines require a total two years of aging prior to release, with a minimum year in oak. Red *reserva* wines are aged for three years, including one year in oak. *Gran Reserva* red wines must age for at least two years in cask and three years in bottle. Rioja casks must be 225 liters—the size of a barrique. Rioja white wines and rosados are also eligible for these categories: *crianza* and *reserva* wines age for two years, and *gran reserva* wines age for four. All three categories require a minimum six months in cask. Whereas producers may age white and rosado *crianza* wines in a non-oxidative environment like stainless steel, *reserva* wines must remain in oak or bottle for the the minimum period of aging. From Haro in the northwest to Alfaro in the southeast, Rioja follows the path of the Ebro through three climatically distinct subzones: Rioja Alta, Rioja Alavesa, and Rioja Baja.

Navarra DO is adjacent to the northern and eastern borders of Rioja, and has long been famous for rosado bottlings. Garnacha and Tempranillo are the major red varieties and Viura is the most prominent white variety, but white grapes account for only about 6% of vineyard acreage. A host of international grapes, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, and Pinot Noir, is also allowed. As a testament to the rising quality of Navarra’s red wines, three estates

recently received their own **DO Pago** appellations: Señorío de Arínzano and Prado Irache in Tierra Estella, and Bodegas Otazu in Valdizarbe.

The *autonomía* of Aragon, to the east of Rioja and Navarra, contains four DOs: **Campo de Borja**, **Calatayud**, **Cariñena**, and **Somontano**. Red and rosado wines are produced, principally from Garnacha and Tempranillo, and white wines are based on Viura. Cariñena, one of Spain's long standing delimited zones (dating to 1932) is the ancestral home of the Carignan/Mazuelo grape, but today the grape is a secondary player in the region's blends. Finally, the up-and-coming Somontano DO ("beneath the mountain") lies in the foothills of the Pyrenees near Catalonia, producing wines from local grapes such as the white Alcañón and red Parraleta, as well as a larger compliment of Spanish and international varieties.

DOs of La Rioja, Navarra, and Aragón

- Rioja
- Navarra
- DO Pago Arínzano
- DO Pago Prado Irache
- DO Pago Otazu
- DO Pago Aylés
- Campo de Borja
- Calatayud
- Cariñena
- Somontano

GALICIA & BASQUE COUNTRY

The cooler maritime climate of the region is ideal for the production of crisp, refreshing white wines, and Galicia is emerging as one of Spain's best areas for such wines. As the moniker of "Green Spain" implies, Galicia is a world removed from the popular conception of an arid Spanish landscape. Within Galicia, there are five DOs: **Rías Baixas**, **Ribeiro**, **Valdeorras**, **Ribeira Sacra**, and **Monterrei**.

Mencía is a Spanish grape variety primarily found in the Bierzo, Ribeira Sacra and Valdeorras regions. Most wines produced from Mencía have traditionally been light, pale, relatively fragrant red wines for early consumption. In recent years, much more concentrated and complex wines have been produced by a new generation of winemakers, primarily from old vines growing on hillsides, often on schist soils, in combination with careful vineyard management.

The País Vasco contains three principal DO zones: **Getariako Txakolina**, **Bizkaiko Txakolina**, and **Arabako Txakolina**. Wines from all three DOs may be white, red, or rosado, but the white wines, produced from the native Ondarrabi Zuri grape, are predominant. In Getariako alone, Ondarrabi Zuri (Hondarribi Zuri) accounts for 95% of vineyard acreage, with the remaining acreage planted to Ondarrabi Beltza, the preferred local red variety. The rare rosado wines, traditionally known as Ojo de Gallo, are often blends of the two grapes. The white wines, a perfect compliment to oily seafood, are low in alcohol, high in lemony acidity, and retain a light effervescence. Txakoli wines should be consumed in their youth.

DOs of Galicia and Basque Country

- Rías Baixas
- Ribeiro
- Ribeira Sacra
- Valdeorras

- Monterrei
- Getariako Txakolina
- Bizkaiko Txakolina
- Arabako Txakolina

CASTILLA Y LEON

Castilla y León, or Old Castile, is Spain's largest *autonomía*. "The land of castles" includes a number of such fortifications built to repel the Moors in the early Middle Ages, and the dynastic union of Castilla y León and Aragon through marriage in the 15th century led to the birth of the Kingdom of Spain. The Duero River flows westward through the center of the region and passes the DOs of **Ribera del Duero**, **Rueda**, **Toro**, **Tierra del Vino de Zamora**, and finally **Arribes** on its path toward Portugal. **Arlanza DO** is located directly north of Ribera del Duero, with **Cigales DO** to the west of both appellations. **Tierra de León DO** and **Bierzo DO** are located in the mountainous northwestern corner of Castilla y León; Bierzo borders Valdeorras in Galicia.

The Mencía grape is at home in the Bierzo DO; the grape comprises a minimum 70% of red wines and 50% of rosé wines, although many of the region's newer and more serious reds are solely produced from Mencía. The young Alvaro Palacios, already a marquee name in Priorat, founded Descendientes de José Palacios with his cousin Ricardo Palacios in 1999, and achieved instant recognition for Bierzo with their biodynamic "Corullón" bottlings: extracted, pure old vine Mencía wines sourced from mountainside schist soils. The project, along with other modern trailblazers such as Dominio de Tares and Pittacum, is commanding top dollar for its wines. The Tierra de León DO, recently upgraded from Vino de la Tierra in 2007, produces reds, whites, and rosados. Recommended red grapes include Mencía and the local Prieto Picudo.

Ribera del Duero DO, which surrounds the town of Arranda de Duero in the Duero River Valley, is considered one of Spain's top red wine-producing regions. The region's flagship estate has long been Vega Sicilia, founded in by Don Eloy Lecanda y Chaves, who in 1864 planted a number of Bordeaux varietals.. In 1929, following an ownership change and a transition to estate-bottled table wines, new winemaker Domingo Txomin achieved international acclaim at the Barcelona World's Fair with his 1917 and 1918 vintages of Único, Vega Sicilia's benchmark wine. Único, blended from Tinto del País, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot and aged, often for a decade or more in American and French oak barrels, has long commanded extravagantly high prices. Despite its mammoth influence, Vega Sicilia remained the only serious producer in the region until the 1980s, when the wines of Pesquera began achieving critical acclaim. Since the mid-1980s, however, quality, investment and interest have skyrocketed in Ribera del Duero, and the region now supports a number of cult wine estates, including Dominio de Pingus and Emilio Moro.

Ribera del Duero produces reds and a small amount of rosados; whites are not allowed. Tempranillo, variously known as Tinto del País and Tinto Fino, is the region's premier grape, alongside Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, and Garnacha Tinta. The red wines may be labeled *crianza*, *reserva*, or *gran reserva*. Like Rioja, the requirements for these categories differ slightly from the normal DO standards: *crianza* wines must age for two years prior to release (including one year in cask), *reserva* wines must age for three years prior to release (including one year in cask), and *gran reserva* wines must age for a minimum two years in cask and three years in bottle, for a total of five years. Rosados and red wines that do not fulfill the minimum aging requirement for *crianza* are considered **vino joven**, or young wines.

Rueda received its DO shortly before Ribera del Duero, in 1980. The white Verdejo grape, easily prone to oxidation, was rejuvenated by Marqués de Riscal in the 1970s as a fresh, crisp counterpart to their red Rioja.

To the west of Rueda, Toro DO produces red, white and rosado wines, although it is the region's red wines that have attracted the most international interest. Red wines require a minimum 75% Tinta de Toro.

Tierra del Vino de Zamora DO lies to the west of Toro, and produces red, white, rosado, and the lighter clarete (rosé)

wines from similar grapes. Reds require a minimum 75% Tempranillo. Vega Sicilia's Ribera del Duero rival Alejandro Fernández of Pesquera staked his claim in Zamora, with the founding of the Dehesa la Granja estate.

Cigales DO is located to the north of old capital city of Valladolid, and to the northwest of Ribera del Duero. The region produces red wines from Garnacha Tinta and Tinto del País, at a combined minimum 85%, but is particularly noted for its rosado and *nuevo* (primeur) rosado production.

DOs of Castilla y León

- Ribera del Duero
- Arlanza
- Cigales
- Rueda
- Toro
- Tierra del Vino de Zamora
- Arribes
- Tierra de León
- Bierzo

CATALONIA

The *autonomía* of Catalonia, or Catalunya in the Catalan language, is a stone's throw (and a trek over the Pyrenees) from Roussillon in France, a region with which it shares a common culture and lineage. Catalonia and Roussillon split in the 17th century, when the king of Spain ceded Roussillon to France, a political division that has existed to this day. The region of Catalonia exemplifies the modern face of Spanish winemaking and technological innovation; however, amidst the new is a backbone of tradition and older styles—wines produced in the same fashion for generations.

Priorat DOCa (DOQ in Catalan) in the southwest of Catalonia is the site of René Barbier's project and home to some of Spain's richest, most concentrated red wines. The second region in Spain to be promoted to DOCa, Priorat derives its name from *Priorato de Scala Dei*, a Carthusian monastery (priory) founded on the site of a boy's vision of angels ascending to heaven. The region is overwhelmingly devoted to red wine production, although some white and rosado wine is produced. Garnacha and Cariñena are the traditional varietals of Priorat, struggling to achieve even small yields in the rock-strewn schist soils of the region. **Llicorella**, a mix of black slate and quartzite, characterizes the best vineyards, requiring vines to dig deeply for water. In 1979 Barbier, a winemaker for Alvaro Palacios, planted a mix of local and French vines in the Llicorella soils of Gratallops, and convinced Palacios and several others to join him. In 1989 they cooperatively produced a first effort—a single red wine bottled under five different labels—and turned the eyes of the wine world towards Priorat. The five original "Clos" wines of Priorat, commonly acknowledged as Barbier's Clos Mogador, Palacios' Clos Dofi, Clos Erasmus, Clos de l'Obac, and Clos Martinet, were released as *vino de mesa*, yet they represented a new pinnacle of quality for the region. Priorat's best red wines are usually dominated by Garnacha or blended from Spanish and French varietals, and subject to varying shades of French barrique treatment. Managing alcohol is a key factor in a warm, Mediterranean region where grapes can ripen unchecked to a potential alcohol of 18%.

Priorat DOQ is almost entirely surrounded by the **Montsant DO**. Like Priorat, Garnacha and Cariñena are dominant, and the region seems poised to offer a value alternative as Priorat's prices continue to rise. **Tarragona DO** is much larger, encompassing a swath of the Catalan coast to the west of Penedès DO. Historically, Tarragona wines were generally fortified *rancio* or *mistela*, the Spanish version of *vin de liqueur*. Today, much of the vineyard area has been converted to white varieties for Cava, but these old styles are still made in small quantities.

Northeast of Tarragona, along the Catalan coast, is the **Penedès DO**. The land is perfectly suited to cultivation of the

white Parellada grape, one of the principal grapes in the **Cava** sparkling blend. Although Cava has its own DO, 95% of Cava is produced in the region of Penedès, and four of Cava's authorized white grapes—Parellada, Xarel-lo, Macabéo (Macabeu), and Chardonnay—comprise a large majority of the Penedès vineyards.

San Sadurní d'Anoia, the birthplace of Cava, lies in the Alt-Penedès. Here, Jose Raventós of Codorníu introduced *método tradicional* sparkling winemaking to Spain, in 1872. Today, Codorníu is second in size only to the competing house of Freixenet, the world's largest producer of sparkling wines. Cava debuted as *champaña*, a clear Spanish copy of Champagne; now it is the world's leader in sparkling wine production and has even contributed certain innovations to the houses of Reims and Épernay: the **gyropalette** originated in Spain, and Champagne has refined its **dosage** levels to those already in place in the Cava DO. Bottles of Cava can always be spotted by the mark of a four-pointed star imprinted on the cork.

DOs of Catalonia

- Priorat
- Montsant
- Tarragona
- Penedès
- Alella
- Empordà
- Pla de Bages
- Conca de Barberà
- Terra Alta
- Costers del Segre

SOUTHERN SPAIN

Wine is produced in every *autonomía* of Southern Spain. **Valencia**, a region steeped in both Catalan and Moorish tradition, is a DO zone focusing on white wines produced from the local Merseguera grape and other varieties. The wines can be fairly neutral, and the region is better known for its oranges and its paella—Valencia is the birthplace of the famous Spanish rice dish. The other DO zones within the *autonomía* of Valencia are **Alicante** and **Utiel-Requena**. Alicante DO is known for dessert wines: a local specialty is Fondillón, a solera-style, oxidative dessert wine produced from overripe Monastrell (Mourvèdre) grapes aged for a minimum of ten years. Utiel-Requena DO red wines are primarily produced from the Bobal grape and **doble pasta** is a traditional style. *Doble Pasta* red wines are macerated and fermented with twice the normal amount of grape skins and pulp, resulting in a wine of intense concentration, tannin and color.

Murcia, the southern *autonomía* in the Levant, comprises three DO zones: **Jumilla**, **Yecla**, and **Bullas**. The sandy soils of Jumilla resisted phylloxera until the 1980s, nearly one hundred years after the bug entered Spain, and the resulting vineyard decimation allowed the region's producers to refocus, pivoting away from generic bulk wine production to the cultivation of the drought-resistant, thick-skinned Monastrell. The region now represent some of Spain's best values and make up over 95% of the DO's output. Garnacha, Petit Verdot, and other grapes may be used for blending, but Monastrell alone occupies over 80% of the region's vineyards.

To the west of the coastal Levant appellations, **La Mancha DO** lies within the Castilla-La Mancha *autonomía* and is Europe's largest single demarcated wine region. Windmills dot the flat plain, recalling Don Quixote, Cervantes' delusional knight-errant, whose silhouette adorns the logo of the La Mancha DO *Consejo Regulador*. The principal grapes of the region are Cencibel (Tempranillo) and Airén, which thrive in La Mancha's hot, dry environment—an inhospitable region for fungus and mold. Within the **Méntrida DO**, the Marqués de Griñon estate planted Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Syrah, and Merlot and adopted the illegal practice of drip irrigation, releasing modern, concentrated wines as *vino de mesa*. Officials rewarded the estate's controversial methodology and *encépagement*

in 2003, granting Marques de Griñon an estate appellation: DO Pago Dominio de Valdepusa.

Spanning Spain's southern coastline, Andalucía includes the DO zones of **Málaga, Sierras de Málaga, Montilla-Moriles, Condado du Huelva, Jerez-Xérès-Sherry, and Manzanilla Sanlúcar de Barrameda**. This is the Spain of bullfighting, of flamenco, of authentic gazpacho—the stereotypes of Andalusian culture that often serve to characterize all of Spain. The city of Jerez de la Frontera was known as “Sherish” in Arabic—key to a successfully prosecuted case in more recent times contesting British use of the term “sherry”. Columbus set sail from Andalucía to find his ocean route to the East Indies. This event, sparking the race for colonial power and discovery in the Americas, was to have a profound effect on the future of Spanish wine—particularly the fortified wines of Andalucía. Jerez, Málaga, and the neighboring Canary Islands, which, along with Porto and Madeira, supplied the New World. Ferdinand Magellan, who led the first circumnavigation of the globe in 1519, spent more of his budget on sherry than weapons. The wines of Jerez, known to English-speakers as “sack”, also found a market in England, France, and Flanders.

Sherry became an incredibly popular export to Great Britain in the ensuing three centuries. British firms—Osbourne, Garvey, John Harvey (now Domecq)—arrived in the 17th and 18th centuries to found bodegas. Three towns—Jerez de la Frontera, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, and El Puerto de Santa Maria—form a “golden triangle” of production; all sherry wines must be shipped from one of the three. The three authorized grapes are, in descending order of importance, Palomino, Pedro Ximénez and Moscatel.

DESSERT WINES

There is no simple definition of a dessert wine. In the UK, a dessert wine is considered to be any sweet wine drunk with a meal, as opposed to the white fortified wines (fino and amontillado sherry) drunk before the meal, and the red fortified wines (port and madeira) drunk after it.

Makers of dessert wines want to produce a wine containing high levels of both sugar and alcohol. There are many ways to increase sugar levels in the final wine:

- grow grapes so that they **naturally** have sugar to spare for both sweetness and alcohol.
- **add sugar**, either:
 - before fermentation as sugar or honey (**Chaptalization**)
 - after fermentation as unfermented must (**Süssreserve**).
- **add alcohol** (typically brandy) before all the sugar is fermented, this is called **fortification**, or 'mutage'.
- **remove water** to concentrate the sugar:
 - In warm climates, by air drying the grapes to make **raisin wine**
 - In frosty climates, by freezing out some of the water to make **ice wine**
 - In damp temperate climates, by using a fungal infection, *Botrytis cinerea*, to desiccate the grapes with **noble rot**

FORTIFIED WINES

Fortified wines are manipulated through the addition of neutral grape spirit, in order to strengthen the base wines for the purpose of added body, warmth, durability or age worthiness. Port, Madeira, and Sherry represent the three great archetypes of fortified wine, yet each is utterly distinct. Vermouth and quinquinas, fortified wines flavored by maceration with additional herbs and spices (cinchona bark is essential to the flavor of quinquinas) are properly considered **aromatized wines**.

There are three general methods of fortification. A wine's fermentation may be arrested through the addition of spirit while sugars remain (as in the case of Port) or the wine may be fortified after the fermentation has concluded (as in the case of Sherry). The latter method produces a dry fortified wine, although the winemaker may restore sweetness by the addition of sweetened wine or grape syrup. The third method, in which grape must is fortified prior to fermentation, produces a **mistelle or vin de liqueur** rather than a fortified wine. The popular connotation reigns in France, where many grape-growing regions are associated with a style of *vin de liqueur*: in Champagne, there is Ratafia; in Cognac, Pineau des Charentes; in Armagnac, Floc de Gascogne; in the Jura, Macvin du Jura.

PORT

Port, the famous fortified wine of Portugal's Douro Valley, enjoys the protection of one of the world's oldest appellations—the Douro was first demarcated in 1756. F

For Porto, the preferred red grapes are Touriga Nacional, Touriga Francesa, Tinta Roriz, Tinta Cão, Tinta Barroca, Tinta Amarela, Tinta Francisca, Bastardo and Mourisco Tinto. They must constitute a minimum 60% of the blend.

Preferred white Port grapes include Gouveio, Malvasia Fina, Viosinho, Rabigato, Esgana Cão, and Folgasão.

After the harvested fruit arrives at the winery, the grapes are destemmed (fully or partially) and crushed. Traditionally, grapes were foot-crushed and fermented in low, open granite troughs called *lagares*. Smaller *quintas* may continue this practice, sometimes set to music for the benefit of both worker and tourist, but most large Port houses have switched to more modern means. Autovinifiers, an Algerian vinification technology in which the fermenting wine would be pumped over the cap by virtue of its own buildup of gas, became more and more common during labor shortages in the 1960s and 1970s. Automated treading machines, designed in the 1990s, and open-top fermenters with pump-over systems are newer alternatives for the region. Ultimately, the goal of the short, two-to-three day Port fermentation is to maximize extraction of color and flavor in the limited available time. Once the winemaker has reached the desired amount of residual sugar, the fermenting wine is pressed off the solids and prepared for fortification. *Beneficio*—the fortification of wine with spirit—occurs when approximately one-third of the sugar content has been converted to alcohol. The wine is fortified to 19-22% abv by the addition of *aguardente*—“burning water”—a 77% abv neutral grape spirit. The spirit is raw and uncomplicated; it is a young, fiery alcohol that contributes nothing to the character of the wine, rather it imparts the robustness necessary for the new Port to reach a proper maturity. The process of *beneficio* (known to the French as *mutage*) halts fermentation, killing the yeasts and preserving sweetness in the Port.

STYLES OF PORT

There are two broad, fundamental styles of Port: Ruby and Tawny. Ruby Ports, which include Vintage Ports, are bottle-aged. With the exception of well-aged, venerable Vintage Ports, Ruby Port wines will display darker color, more youthful fruit and spice tones, and a more aggressive, fiery character. Tawny ports are cask-aged, and develop more complex, mature tones of toffee, dried fruits, and toasted nuts with time. Tawny Port, naturally, develops lighter, amber tones of color as it ages in wood.

- **Ruby Port:** Ruby Port is often aged in bulk (in wood, cement, or stainless steel) for two to three years prior to bottling. The wine is uncomplicated, deeply colored, and inexpensive. Ruby Port does not carry a vintage date.
- **Ruby Reserve Port:** Ruby Reserve, or Premium Ruby, replaced the term “Vintage Character” and offers more complexity and character than a basic Ruby Port.
- **Vintage Port:** Vintage Port is the most expensive style of Port to purchase and constitutes approximately 1-3% of production. A Port house will usually declare a vintage year only in exceptional harvests
- **Single Quinta Vintage Port:** A single *quinta* Vintage Port is the product of one estate’s harvest. Often, if a Port house cannot confidently declare a vintage, it may nonetheless showcase the fruit of one of its better estates as a vintage wine.
- **Late-Bottled Vintage Port:** Late-Bottled Vintage Port (LBV) spends between four and six years in cask prior to bottling. Thus, the wines obtain some of the mellowed tones of a Tawny Port, while retaining the youthful fruit and directness of a Ruby Port. LBV Port is always the product of a single vintage, but quality may vary greatly.

Tawny

- **Tawny Port:** Many wines labeled as “Tawny Port” do not undergo the extensive cask aging that is critical to the style, but are simply paler wines—due to the provenance of grapes, a less-thorough extraction, or the addition of white Port to the blend.
- **Reserve Tawny:** Reserve Tawny Port ages for at least seven years prior to bottling. Reserve Tawny wines are blended from several vintages, and retain some youthful freshness while gaining a hint of the creamy, delicate nature of a true old Tawny. Tawny Port will not improve with additional bottle age.
- **Tawny with Indication of Age:** Tawny Port may be labeled as 10, 20, 30, or 40 Years Old. These wines show a progressively more concentrated and developed character, reaching a pronounced oxidative, *rancio*

state by forty years of age.

- **Colheita Tawny:** Colheita Tawny Port is a vintage-dated Port that spends a minimum of seven years in cask—many stay in cask for decades.

MADEIRA

The fortified wines of **Madeira**, a subtropical island rising sharply from the Atlantic nearly 625 miles off the coast of Portugal, are among the longest-lived wines in the world. The wines of Madeira originally developed their distinctive character on lengthy ocean voyages through the tropics, where the wines would be subjected to repeated heating and cooling. The *torna viagem* (“round trip”) is approximated today by heating the wine during the production process. When coupled with lengthy cask aging, the resulting wine is nearly indestructible—the ravages of heat and air are embraced, as they impart Madeira’s distinctive character!

After fortification, the young wine is then subjected to either the **Estufagem** or **Canteiro** process, the two modern heating methods that lend Madeira its distinctive character. Most wines are transferred to the **estufa**, a stainless steel vat that warms the wine by circulating hot water through serpentine coils inside the tank. In this method, the wine is heated to a temperature of 45-50° C (113-122°F) and held there for at least three months; during this period sugars in the wine will slowly caramelize and give the *estufa* wine its distinctive character. A more delicate variation on the *Estufagem* process involves placing the wine in *armazens de calor*, rooms warmed by nearby tanks or steam pipes rather than the direct heat of the *estufa*.

Main Varietal Styles of Madeira

- **Sercial:** The driest varietal Madeira, Sercial displays searing acidity and, over time, its youthful citrus notes evolve into a more complex almond bouquet. Sercial is a suitable aperitif, and often a good accompaniment to light soups and consommés.
- **Verdelho:** Verdelho produces a medium dry wine of high acid, with a smoky, honeyed character. The wines are slightly fuller in body than Sercial.
- **Boal:** Boal produces a medium sweet, rich style of wine, in which the acidity is still powerful enough to dominate the finish. Highly aromatic, the wines tend to display classic chocolate, roasted nut, and coffee notes. With age, Boal tends to be the darkest Madeira wine in color.
- **Malvasia (Malmsey):** The Malvasia wines represent the sweetest and softest style of Madeira. On the nose, Malmsey evokes toffee, vanilla, and marmalade aromas. The wine can frame a cheese course or dessert flavors of nut, caramel, and dried fruits equally well.

Madeira Multi-Vintage Blends

- **Rainwater:** A popular style in the US, Rainwater Madeira is usually 100% Tinta Negra, and the youngest wine in the blend is a minimum three years old. The wine is medium dry, and light in style.
- **Reserve (Reserva):** Madeira that is 5 years of age or older (but below 10 years of age) may use this designation.
- **Special Reserve (Reserva Especial):** Madeira that is 10 years of age or older (but below 15 years of age) may use this designation. Wines of this category (and all older designations) are often made of a single noble variety, heated by the *Canteiro* method.
- **Extra Reserve:** Madeira that is 15 years of age or older (but below 20 years of age) may use this designation.
- **20 Years Old, 30 Years Old, Over 40 Years Old**
- **Solera:** Madeira wines produced by fractional blending and the *Canteiro* method. The EU does not permit its production, but the wines are still available on the island.

SHERRY

Sherry is a fortified wine from Andalucía on the southern coast of Spain. It reached its apex as a British favorite by the 1870s, and it became one of the first protected Spanish appellations in 1933 with the establishment of a *Consejo Regulador*. Sherry is the product of two DO zones: Jerez-Xérès-Sherry and Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda. The two DOs share an identical production zone and similar production guidelines, but the latter must be aged in the seaside town of Sanlúcar de Barrameda. The hot, dry *levante* wind intensifies the region's heat. Said to drive men mad, the howling *levante* blows from the east and essentially cooks the grapes on the vine during ripening. The humid Atlantic *poniente* wind alternates with the *levante*, and promotes the growth of *flor*, a film-forming yeast necessary in the maturation of Sherry.

Three principal soil types characterize the Jerez region: **albariza**, **barros**, and **arenas**. *Albariza*, a chalky, porous, limestone-rich soil of brilliant white color, produces the best Sherry. The moisture-retentive *albariza* retains water from autumn and winter rains, while the friable soil structure allows vine roots to penetrate deeply in a search for water trapped beneath its baked, impermeable surface during the arid growing season.

Three white grapes are authorized for the production of Sherry: Palomino (Listán), Pedro Ximénez (PX) and Moscatel (Muscat of Alexandria). Moscatel and Pedro Ximénez are predominantly used for sweetening Sherry; varietal bottlings of either grape are extremely rare in Jerez.

Two divergent paths of biological and oxidative aging divide Sherry wines. At the conclusion of fermentation, the wine is classified: each tank is either classified as *palo* and marked with a vertical slash, or as *gordura*, marked with a circle. Wines marked as *palo* are fortified to 15-15.5% abv and are destined to become the more delicate *Fino* or *Manzanilla* styles. Wines marked as *gordura* are fortified to 17-18%—a high level of alcohol that will not permit the growth of *flor*—and will become *Oloroso* Sherries. Neither wine is fortified directly with spirit, rather a gentler mixture of grape spirit and mature Sherry, *mitad y mitad*, is used to avoid shocking the young wine. Both sets of wines are transferred to old Sherry butts of American oak. At the heart of the biological aging process in Sherry is the film-forming yeast known as the *flor del vino*—the “flower”. As *flor* requires contact with oxygen, it forms a film on the surface of the wine that will protect the liquid from oxidation.

Rarely are Sherry wines marketed as vintage wines; most enter a system of fractional blending known as the **solera**, wherein new vintage wines enter an upper scale, or tier, of butts known as a *criadera*. There may be as few as three to four *criaderas*, or as many as fourteen. *Solera* wines are often marked with the year the *solera* was started.

Fino Sherry is a light, delicate, almond-toned style characterized by a high concentration of acetaldehydes, a salty tang, and a final alcohol content of 15-18%.

Amontillado is characterized by being darker than Fino but lighter than Oloroso

The darker *Oloroso*, meaning “fragrant”, demonstrates spicy, walnut tones and a smooth mouthfeel. The rare *Palo Cortado* combines the rich body and color of an *Oloroso* with the penetrating yet delicate bouquet of an *Amontillado*, and is greatly prized by Sherry aficionados.

These styles—*Fino*, *Amontillado*, *Oloroso*, and *Palo Cortado*—are *generoso* wines, totally dry in character.

Manzanilla is similar in style to *Fino*, although the harvest occurs about a week earlier, and the resulting wines are lower in alcohol and fortified to a lower degree.

Although Sherry may be bottled as a dry wine directly from the *solera*, it is more likely to be sweetened and blended before sale. Several sweetening agents are available to the Sherry producer. Pedro Ximénez is preferred, but expensive. *Dulce pasa*—*mistela* produced from “sunned” Palomino—is the most common sweetening agent in modern Jerez. *Generoso Liqueur* wines produced by this blending process include Pale Cream, a lighter, fresher style blended from *Fino* wines; Cream, a darker, denser product of blended *Oloroso*.

MARSALA

Marsala is a fortified wine from the island point of Sicily, first manufactured in 1773 by the English Port and Sherry merchant, John Woodhouse. Marsala wines are fortified with grape spirit either during or after fermentation, depending on the desired level of sweetness. Marsala is further classified by the time it spends in cask: one year for Fine, two years for Superiore, four years for Superiore Riserva, five years for Vergine, and a minimum ten years for Vergine Stravecchio.

VINS DOUX NATURELS

Vins doux naturels are lightly fortified wines typically made from white Muscat grapes or red Grenache grapes in the south of France. As the name suggests, Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise, Muscat de Rivesaltes, and Muscat de Frontignan are all made from the white Muscat grape, while Banyuls and Maury are made from red Grenache. Regardless of the grape, fermentation is stopped by the addition of up to 10% of a 190 proof (95%) grape spirit. The Grenache vins doux naturels can be made in an oxidised or unoxidised style whereas the Muscat wines are protected from oxidation to retain their freshness.