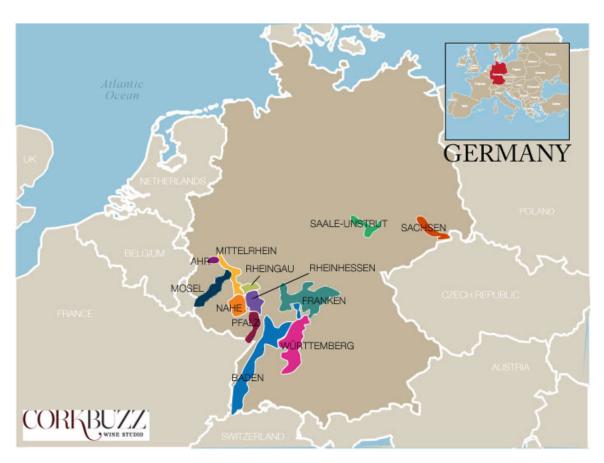
- Background and History
- · German Culture and Wine Laws
- Classic Regions:
 - Franken
 - Rheingau
 - Rheinhessen
 - Mosel
 - Nahe
 - Pfalz



Background and History

- 300 AD: Vitis vinifera arrives with the Romans; viticulture and winemaking established in the Mosel
- 500-1500: Church develops and names vineyards
- Early 1400s: First documented appearance of Riesling



- 1775: Spätlese "discovered" after making wine from grapes affected with noble rot
- Late 1700s: Napoleon defeats Germany and annexes all land west of the Rhine River
- 1803: All church-owned vineyards are secularized; Napoleonic code fragments vineyard holdings
- 1800s: "Golden era" for German Rieslings, commanding top dollar
- 1910: Formation of Verband Deutscher Qualitäts- und Prädikatsweingüter
- 1900s: Rise of crossings and bend to quantity over quality; phylloxera
- 1971: German Wine Law seeks to reorganize and condense existing 30,000 vineyard sites; also codifies must weight as quality hierarchy
- 1980s: Liebfraumilch is biggest export; mass market confusion over German labeling and wine styles
- 2001: VDP Vineyard classifications and attempt to better organize/codify

German Wine Culture and Style

- Value technical, specific, precise measurements
- Overall very cool climate, resulting in lighter, leaner wines
- Quality levels based on ripeness at time of harvest but also now carefully examining vineyard site
- Long history of considering and balancing dry vs. sweet

German Quality System: Prädikat

- Quälitatswein bestimmter Anbaugebiete (QbA): "quality" wine from one of 13 anbaugebiete (regions)
 - Other words on label may include "trocken" (dry); "halbtrocken" (off-dry); feinherb (off-dry)
- Prädikatswein: "quality" wine with a designated prädikat level; labeled with prädikat and often village and vineyard
 - Prädikat is based on must weight (measured in öchsle) at harvest:
 - Kabinett
 - o Spätlese
 - Auslese
 - Beerenauslese
 - Trockenbeerenauslese
 - o Eiswein



German Quality System: the VDP

- VDP: a growers' organization dedicated to high quality wines with a focus on vineyard site and notion of *terroir*
 - Widely accepted and many members, but not technically approved by German law
- Grosses Gewächs: "Great Growths" that are always dry and come from a specified, top vineyard; goes by GG on the label
 - · Goes by Erstes Gewächs in Rheingau
- Erste Lage: a top vineyard that, until 2012, was the highest site designation
- Grosse Lage: post 2012, the highest site designation—mimics the Grand Cru
 designation of Burgundy and puts Erste Lage next in line, like Burgundy's
 Premier Cru designation
- Ortswein: village-level wine
- · Gutswein: regional wine

Franken

- Central Germany, overlaps Bavaria (beer-centric)
- Based around Main River
- Most commonly planted grape is Silvaner; also Riesling, Bacchus, Kerner, Scheurebe; some Spätburgunder
- Nearly all dry wines
- Traditionally bottled in bocksbeutel

Tasting component

Rheingau

- Based on slopes of the Rhine River, which warms the vineyards as sunlight reflects back off of it
- · Soil is slate with clay, loess, sand, red slate
- Traditional stronghold of church; these were the first named vineyards in Germany
- During 1800s, home to the most world-famous Rieslings
- 80% of vines are Riesling; focus is on dry wines
- Fuller, more powerful style

Tasting component



Rheinhessen

- South of Rheingau and the Rhine River; east of Nahe; north of Pfalz
- Müller-Thurgau most planted variety, followed by Riesling, Silvaner, Kerner, Scheurebe, Portugieser, Spätburgunder
- · Red clay and slate soils
- Home of Liebfraumilch and Blue Nun from the expansive Rhineterrasse, but today many young producers are reviving historic vineyards and refocusing on very high quality

Tasting component

Mosel

- Based around the thin and very twisting Mosel River
- Vineyards are on very steep, slate slopes looking south and down on the river
- River reflects sunlight back onto vines to warm them
- Mosel region includes Saar and Ruwer, which are based around their respective tributaries
- Riesling dominates
- Lean, high acidity and graceful style, often with some sweetness (though a full range of dry to very sweet wines are made)

Tasting component

Nahe

- West of Rheingau and Rheinhessen; south of Mosel
- Based around Nahe River; best vineyards sit north of it, facing south
- Not as powerful as Rheingau but not as lithe as Mosel style
- · Often have some sweetness
- Riesling dominates, then Müller-Thurgau and Dornfelder (red)

Tasting component

Pfalz

- Warmer, sunnier climate
- Borders France's Alsace region
- Very diverse soil types, including limestone, loess, sandstone, basalt, red slate
- Riesling popular, but Grauburgunder, Weissburgunder, Dornfelder and Scheurebe also common; Spätburgunder in particular making waves
- Similar to Rheinhessen, a relatively recent push from younger growers to focus on quality over quantity

