

### French Quality System

- Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée → Appellation d'Origine Protégée
  - Area
  - Varietal
  - Yield
  - Ripeness
  - Vineyard management
  - Winemaking techniques
- Vin Délimité de Qualité Supérieure
- Vin de Pays → Indication Géographique Protégée
- Vin de Table

### Champagne

- Became an AOC in 1936
- Northern France: 48<sup>th</sup> parallel
- Cool climate: 50 degrees mean temperature
- Chalky soil from Belemnite fossils
- Broken up into five sub-regions:
  - Montagne de Reims
  - Vallée de la Marne
  - Côte des Blancs
  - Côte de Sézanne
  - Aube (aka Côte des Bar)
- Also Côteaux Champenois AOP, Bouzy Rouge, Rosé de Riceys AOP

### Champagne: Main Grapes

- Chardonnay contributes brightness, finesse, citrus fruit
  - Dominates Côte des Blancs
- Pinot Noir contributes structure, body, berry fruit
  - Dominates Montagne de Reims
- Pinot Meunier contributes softer roundness, red fruit
  - Dominates Vallée de la Marne

### Champagne: AOP Regulations

- Traditional method ONLY
- Base wine must be minimum 9% ABV
- After tirage, wine must rest sur lie for minimum 12 months before disgorgement



- Vintage-dated must be 100% stated vintage and must age an additional 24 months post-disgorgement
- Non-vintage must age an additional three months post-disgorgement
- Must be bottled in same bottle in which tirage occurred

Amount of sugar in dosage...

- Extra Brut = 0-6 g/l
- Brut = 0-12 g/l
- Extra Dry = 12-17 g/l
- Sec = 17-32 g/l
- Demi-Sec = 32-50 g/l
- Doux = 50+ g/l

NM = négociant-manipulant (buys grapes and makes wine)

RM = récoltant-manipulant (grows grapes and makes wine)

### Échelle des Crus

- Each village gets a percentage rating that suggests the price for which the grapes can be sold
- 17 Grand Crus (100%): Puisieulx, Sillery, Beaumont-sur-Vesle, Verzenay, Mailly-Champagne, Verzy, Louvois, Bouzy, Ambonnay, Ay, Tours-sur-Marne, Chouilly, Oiry, Cramant, Avize, Oger, Le Mesnil-sur-Oger
- 44 Premier Crus (90-99%)

### Alsace

- Gained AOC status only in 1962
- Northeast France
- Vosges Mountains make for a sunny and dry climate
- Wide variety of soil types including schist, granite, volcanic, limestone, clay, gravel
- Broken up into Bas Rhin and Haut Rhin
- Best known for dry, aromatic whites:
  - Riesling
  - Pinot Gris
  - Gewurztraminer
  - Muscat
  - Sylvaner



## Alsace: AOP Regulations

- Alsace AOP – generally varietal white wines unless labeled “blanc” or “edelzwicker,” which can be blends
  - Regulations for varieties, minimum potential alcohol, must weights, maximum residual sugar, planting density, yields, bottle shape
  - Rosé, red, VT or SGN allowed
- Alsace Grand Cru AOP – single-varietal wines from one of 51 Grand Crus (2 GCs allow blends)
  - Stricter regulations than AOP
  - No rosé or red, but VT and SGN allowed
- Vendanges Tardives (VT) – late-harvest but not necessarily sweet
- Sélections des Grains Nobles (SGN) – dessert wines made from botrytised fruit in exceptional years
- Crémant d’Alsace AOP – sparkling wines made in traditional method with minimum 9 months on lees before disgorgement

## Loire

- Northern/central France
- Coolish climate; most wines have bright acidity
- Runs along the Loire River (625 miles!) so provides plenty of diversity
- Broken up into four major, distinct sub-regions:
  - Pays Nantais
  - Anjou-Saumur
  - Touraine
  - Central Vineyards
- Loire is also second largest in sparkling wine production to Champagne

## Loire Sub-Regions

- Pays Nantais: closest to the Atlantic with a maritime climate
  - Muscadet dominates
  - Diverse soil types including granite, schist, silica, clay, gneiss
  - 4 AOPs: Muscadet, Muscadet Sèvre et Maine, Muscadet Côtes de la Loire, Muscadet Côtes de Grandlieu
- Anjou-Saumur: based around the towns of Anjers and Saumur
  - Mostly Chenin Blanc, Cabernet Franc
  - Major AOPs: Savennières, Quarts de Chaume, Bonnezeaux, Saumur-Champigny
- Touraine: based around town of Tours
  - Mostly Chenin Blanc, Cabernet Franc
  - Lots of tufa limestone soil
  - Major AOPs: Vouvray, Montlouis, Chinon, Bourgueil



- Central Vineyards: furthest east, based around town of Sancerre
  - Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir
  - Limestone and silex soils
  - Major AOPs: Sancerre, Quincy, Pouilly-Fumé, Menetou-Salon, Reuilly

## Burgundy

- Northern/central France
- Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, plus Gamay and Aligoté
- Limestone and clay soil
- Broken up into five major sub-regions:
  - Chablis
  - Côte d'Or (Côte de Nuits, Côte de Beaune)
  - Côte Chalonnaise
  - Mâconnais
  - Beaujolais
- Grand Cru, 1er Cru, villages, lieux dits

## Burgundy Sub-Regions

- Chablis
  - Northernmost in Burgundy; soil is Kimmeridgian and Portlandian limestone
  - Exclusively Chardonnay
  - Grand Crus: Blanchot, Les Clos, Valmur, Grenouilles, Vaudesir, Les Preuses, Bougros
  - Top 1er Crus include Montée de Tonnerre, Montmains, Fôret, Vaillons, Fourchaume
  - Côte de Nuits
  - Pinot Noir
  - Main villages are Marsannay, Fixin, Gevrey-Chambertin, Morey-St-Denis, Chambolle-Musigny, Vougeot, Vosne-Romanée and Flagey-Echézeaux, Nuits Saint Georges
- Côte de Beaune
  - Chardonnay and Pinot Noir
  - Main villages are Pernand-Vergelesses, Aloxe-Corton, Ladoix-Serrigny, Beaune, Pommard, Volnay, Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet, Chassagne-Montrachet, Santenay



- Côte Chalonnaise
  - Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Aligoté
  - Major AOPs: Aligoté de Bouzeron, Mercurey, Rully, Givry, Montagny
  - Mâconnais
  - Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Gamay
  - Major AOPS: Pouilly-Fuissé, Saint Véran
- Beaujolais
  - Gamay
  - Granitic soil
  - 10 Crus: St. Amour, Julienas, Chenas, Chiroubles, Moulin-À-Vent, Fleurie, Morgon, Régnié, Brouilly, Côte de Brouilly

## Jura

- Eastern France, bordering Switzerland; continental climate
- Separated from the rest of France by the Jura Mountains
- Jurassic limestone soil
- Best known for oxidative whites and savory reds
- Grapes are Chardonnay, Savagnin, Pinot Noir, Poulsard, Trousseau
  
- Côtes du Jura AOP
- Arbois AOP
- L'Étoile AOP
- Château-Chalon AOP: Vin Jaune ONLY
- Crémant du Jura AOP
  
- Sous voile: wines aged under a veil of flor; creates a slight oxidative note
- Vin Jaune: wines aged sous voile for minimum six years
- Vin de paille: grapes dried on straw mats, then made into wine and aged at least three years

## Northern Rhône

- Southern/central France
- Runs along Rhône River (which runs from south to north)
- Continental climate and mistral winds
- Steep granite slopes as well as clay soil
- Mostly single-varietal wines from Syrah, Viognier, Marsanne, Roussanne



## Northern Rhône Major AOPs:

- Côte-Rôtie – Syrah with up to 20% Viognier
- St. Joseph – Syrah with up to 10% Marsanne/Roussanne; OR whites from Marsanne/Roussanne
- Hermitage – Syrah with up to 15% Marsanne/Roussanne; OR whites from Marsanne/Roussanne
- Crozes-Hermitage – same as Hermitage but a broader area behind the hill
- Cornas – 100% Syrah
- Condrieu – 100% Viognier

## Southern Rhône

- Southern France
- Based around Rhône River
- Mediterranean climate and mistral winds
- Soils are alluvial clay, with galets in Châteauneuf-du-Pape
- Mostly blends, particularly from Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre

## Southern Rhône Major AOPs:

- Gigondas – Red and rosé from minimum 50% Grenache
- Châteauneuf-du-Pape – Red (any blend of permitted grapes) or white
- Vacqueyras – Mostly red blends; white and rosé ok too
- Côtes du Rhône – Mostly red blends; white and rosé ok too
- Tavel – Rosé from Grenache, Cinsault
- 13 permitted grapes of Châteauneuf-du-Pape: Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Cinsault, Counoise, Terret Noir, Vaccarese, Muscardin, Picardin, Clairette, Roussanne, Picpoul, Bourboulenc

## Bordeaux

- Western/Central France
- Maritime climate
- Based around the Gironde estuary, which branches into the Garonne and Dordogne Rivers
- Red grapes: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Petit Verdot
- White grapes: Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon, Muscadelle



Left bank: Médoc and Graves... gravel soil = Cabernet dominated

- St. Estèphe, Pauillac, St. Julien, Lustrac, Moulis, Margaux

Right bank: Pomerol and St. Émilion... clay soil = Merlot dominated

## 1855 Classification

- Commissioned by Napoleon as part of Exposition Universelle de Paris of 1855; he wanted to show off the best that France had to offer
- Bordeaux brokers were asked to classify the top quality wines into five categories; they decided to do so based on price
- This list was intended only for the exposition but has gone down in history as the dominating classification
- First growths:
  - Lafite-Rothschild (Pauillac)
  - Latour (Pauillac)
  - Mouton-Rothschild (Pauillac; added in 1973)
  - Margaux (Margaux)
  - Haut-Brion (Graves)
- Properties or châteaux hold status rather than the plots of land, so any expansion of property maintains status

## Other Bordeaux Classifications & Appellations

- Graves AOP (left bank, below Médoc)
  - Pessac-Léognan AOP
  - Sauternes
    - Had its own 1855 Classification; 1 Premier Cru Supérieur: Château d'Yquem
  - Barsac and Cérons AOPs (also dessert wines from botrytis-affected Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon and Muscadelle)
- St. Émilion AOP (right bank)
  - Has its own classification that (more or less) got revised every 10 years
  - New classification in 2012:
    - 4 Premier Cru Classé A (also qualifies for St. Émilion Grand Cru AOP)
    - 14 Premier Cru Classé B (also qualifies for St. Émilion Grand Cru AOP)
    - 64 Grand Cru Classé
  - Pomerol, Lalande-de-Pomerol, Fronsac, Canon-Fronsac AOPs (right bank)
- Bourg, Blaye, Côtes de Bordeaux, Entre-Deux-Mers



## Southwest France

- South of Bordeaux, north of Spain
  - Wine style takes influences from both
- Warmer climate

### Southwest France Major AOPs:

- Cahors (Malbec, Tannat, Merlot)
- Madiran (Tannat, Cab, Cab Franc, Fer Servadou)
- Jurançon (dry or sweet wines from Gros Manseng and Petit Manseng)
- Marcillac (Fer Servadou)
- Gaillac (Duras, Fer Servadou, Syrah, Gamay)
- Irouleguy (Tannat, Cab, Cab Franc)

## Languedoc-Rousillon

- Southern France along the Mediterranean coast
- Mediterranean climate
- Historically more quantity than quality: contributes 30% of France's total wine production
  - Today, quality is improving and appellations are defining themselves
- Major Languedoc AOPs for blended reds, whites and rosés include:
  - Corbières
  - Fitou
  - Minervois
  - St. Chinian
  - Limoux & Crémant de Limoux
- Rousillon best known for dessert wines:
  - Vin doux naturel = fortified
  - 90% of France's fortified wines made in Rousillon
  - Major AOPs:
    - Rivesaltes
    - Muscat de Rivesaltes
    - Maury
    - Banyuls





## Provence

- Southern France along the Mediterranean coast (Mediterranean climate)
- Said to be the birthplace of French wine
- Rosé dominates (especially from Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Cinsault, Carignan), though reds and whites also made

## Provence AOPs

- Côtes de Provence
- Bandol (famous for reds from Mourvèdre)
- Côteaux d'Aix en Provence
- Les Baux de Provence
- Cassis
- Bellet
- Palette
- Côteaux Varois en Provence

## Classic White Grape Markers

**Albariño:** stone fruit and citrus, medium-bodied, salty, floral

**Chardonnay:** orchard fruit, neutral on its own, usually full-bodied, usually oaked

**Chenin Blanc:** bruised apples, wool, honey, dry or sweet, full-bodied, high acidity

**Gewürztraminer:** strong floral/spice perfume, dry to off-dry, moderate acidity

**Grüner Veltliner:** citrus and stone fruit, white pepper, vegetal, celery

**Melon de Bourgogne:** briny minerality, low aromatics, high acidity

**Muscat:** very floral, green grape, melon and tropical fruit, musky

**Pinot Grigio/Pinot Gris:** melon, light-bodied, almond or slightly bitter, very simple, sometimes slightly pink or grey in color

**Riesling:** stone fruit, petrol, can be dry or sweet, high acidity

**Sauvignon Blanc:** citrus, herbaceous, usually medium-bodied, straw, hay, jalapeño

**Torrontès:** ripe citrus, jasmine, orange blossom, soapy, high alcohol

**Viognier:** fruit cocktail notes, oily, full-bodied, low acidity



## Classic Red Grape Markers

**Barbera:** tangy red fruit, purple color with blue tones, high acid, light tannins

**Cabernet Franc:** red fruit, herbal, bell pepper, medium-bodied and medium tannins, earthy-funky

**Cabernet Sauvignon:** black fruit, usually full-bodied, high tannins

**Gamay:** tart red fruit, pink and purple flower notes, medium-bodied, light tannins

**Grenache:** cooked and dried fruit, dried herbs, leather, baked earth, medium tannins and acidity, high alcohol

**Pinot Noir:** red fruit, high acid, light-bodied, light tannins

**Malbec:** vibrant purple rim, black fruit, violets, medium tannins and full-bodied

**Merlot:** red/blue/black fruit, bay leaf or fern, medium plus tannins

**Nebbiolo:** neon orange rim, deceptively light in concentration but high in acid and tannins, rose petals, tar, red fruit, potpourri

**Sangiovese:** medium garnet, red fruit, savory herbs, tarragon, tomato water, high acid and medium plus tannins

**Syrah:** black fruit, medium-plus tannins, pepper, gamey, dark opaque color

**Tempranillo (from Rioja):** red and black fruit, usually aged in American oak so flavors of coconut and dill, medium tannins and acidity

**Zinfandel:** red fruit, jammy, raisins, figs, soft tannins and higher alcohol

