

### Italian Quality System

- Denominazione di Origine Controllata → Denominazione di Origine Protetta
  - Modeled after French AOC system
- DOCG: “guaranteed”
- Indicazione Geografica Tipica → Indicazione Geografica Protetta
- Vino da Tavola
- Expansion, credibility and the current perspective on the system

### Friuli-Venezia Giulia

- Bordering Slovenia
- Takes influence from Slavic, German, Austrian and Italian winemaking traditions and styles
- Some very modern winemaking techniques (introduction of stainless steel tanks and temperature control)
- Some super old-school producers (amphora, skin-contact whites)
- Most DOC wines are varietally labeled
- Picolit, Ribolla Gialla, Friulano, Verduzzo; Sauvignon, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay
- Refosco, Pignolo, Schiopettino; Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc
- Also two sweet *passito* wine DOCGs:
  - Colli Orientali del Friuli-Picolit
  - Ramandolo

### Trentino-Alto Adige

- Northeastern Italy
- Cooler, mountainous
- Typically grouped together but two different, distinct regions:
  - Trentino is in the south and typically speaks Italian
  - Alto Adige (aka Südtirol) is in the north and typically speaks German
- No DOCGs, but over 75% of wines are DOC quality (highest in Italy)
- Many cooperatives
- Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Pinot Bianco, Sylvaner, Müller-Thurgau
- Schiava, Lagrein, Teroldego, Refosco, Marzemino + international varieties



## Veneto

- Northeastern Italy
- Largest quantity output in all of Italy
- Currently battling problems with expansion of its DOC zones such as Soave and Valpolicella
- Wide range of styles from sparkling Prosecco to sweet *recioto* and Amarone
- DOCGs include:
  - Amarone della Valpolicella
  - Soave Superiore
  - Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco
  - ...as well as rather unknown areas such as Piave Malanotte, which fuel criticism of the DOCG system
- Soave grapes: 70% Garganega, plus Trebbiano, Chardonnay, Pinot Bianco
- Valpolicella grapes: 45-95% Corvina, plus Rondinella, Molinara
- Prosecco grape: Glera

## Valpolicella, Ripasso, Amarone, Recioto

- All styles are made from same grapes: 45-95% Corvina, plus Rondinella and Molinara

Valpolicella: still, typically dry, red wine

- Classico region is at western end, from four local valleys
- “Superiore” requires higher ABV and one year minimum aging

Amarone: still, sometimes dry, sometimes off-dry, red wine

- Made by *appassimento* process: drying grapes on straw mats to raisinate them, concentrate their sugars and flavors, then press and ferment
- Minimum two years’ aging; four for *riserva*

Recioto:

- Like Amarone but dried an additional month; always sweet (can be sparkling, too)

Ripasso:

- Valpolicella “re-passed” through skins of grapes fermented as Amarone or Recioto

## Lombardy

- Northern Italy; houses the capital, Milan
- Lots of flat plains with mountains in the north
- Famous for its sparkling wines in Franciacorta and, increasingly today, for its versions of Nebbiolo



## Franciacorta DOCG

- Gained status in 1995 (only for sparkling wines made in traditional method)
- Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and max 50% Pinot Bianco permitted
- NV = minimum 18 months on lees
- Vintage (*millesimato*) = minimum 37 months on lees
- Dosage (*dosato*) and RS same as Champagne

## Valtellina Superiore DOCG

- Alpine location and high altitude but lots of sunshine
- 100% Nebbiolo, aka Chiavennasca
- Generally leaner style than Piedmont's
- Five subzones: Valgella, Inferno, Grumello, Sassella, Maroggia
- Also Sforzato di Valtellina DOCG

## Piedmont

- Northwestern Italy, bordering France (to the West)
- "Foot of the mountain" – surrounded by Apennines and Alps
- Continental climate
- High number of DOCGs, including:
  - Barolo – Nebbiolo
  - Barbaresco – Nebbiolo
  - Roero – Nebbiolo and Arneis
  - Gattinara – Nebbiolo
  - Ghemme – Nebbiolo
  - Barbera d'Asti
  - Barbera del Monferrato Superiore
  - Gavi – Cortese
  - Asti/Moscato d'Asti – Moscato
  - Dogliani – Dolcetto
  - Dolcetto di Ovada Superiore
  - Dolcetto di Diano d'Alba

Barolo: Five main communes (listed below) south and west of Alba; broken into many individual crus

- Barolo (Tortonian soil)
- La Morra (Tortonian soil)
- Serralunga d'Alba (Helvetian soil)
- Castiglione Falletto (Helvetian soil)
- Monforte d'Alba (Helvetian soil)
- Slightly warmer climate, more masculine versions
- Three years minimum aging (two in barrel)



Barbaresco: Three communes (listed below) north and east of Alba; broken into many individual crus

- Barbaresco
- Neive
- Treiso
- Slightly cooler climate, slightly finer versions
- Two years minimum aging (one in barrel)

## Tuscany

- Hills between sea and Apennine Mountains; diverse soil and climate
- Legislation delimiting Chianti zone dates to 1716
- Downfall of Chianti and rise of the “Super Tuscan” IGT; subsequent additions of new DOCs
- Sangiovese grape reigns
- Also Colorino and Canaiolo; Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah
- Trebbiano Toscano, Vernaccia, Malvasia, Vermentino
- Vin Santo: a traditional Tuscan dessert wine (can be dry or sweet)
  - Trebbiano and Malvasia grapes dried by hanging from ceiling
  - Slow fermentation followed by long aging in chestnut barrels
  - Permitted to be made in many DOCs

## Chianti Classico Communes:

- Radda in Chianti
- Gaiole in Chianti
- Castellina in Chianti
- Castelnuovo Berardenga
- Poggibonsi
- Greve in Chianti
- Barberino Val di Pesa
- San Casciano Val di Pesa
- Tavernelle Val di Pesa

## Chianti DOCG subzones:

- Classico
- Rufina
- Colli Fiorentini
- Montespertoli
- Montalbano
- Senesi
- Colli Aretini
- Colline Pisane



## Tuscan Sangiovese

Chianti DOCG: minimum 70% Sangiovese from hills around Florence and Siena

- Eight sub-zones
- Heartland is Chianti Classico (80% Sangiovese minimum)
- Riserva requires minimum two years aging

Brunello di Montalcino DOCG: 100% Brunello strain of Sangiovese from hills of Montalcino, Tuscany

- South of Chianti, south of Siena
- Hotter climate, more limestone soil, more powerful Sangiovese
- Four years minimum aging (two in barrel)
- Rosso di Montalcino = one year aging

Vino Nobile di Montepulciano DOCG: minimum 70% Prugnolo clone produced in Montepulciano

- Two years minimum aging (one in barrel)
- Riserva requires minimum three years aging

Morellino di Scansano DOCG: minimum 85% Sangiovese from coastal Maremma

- Hotter climate, coastal influence
- Riserva requires minimum two years in barrel

Super Tuscans:

- Unofficial category of Tuscan wine that doesn't follow DOC(G) requirements
- IGT / Vino da Tavola / new DOCs
- Usually involves a blend of international varietals

## Marches

- Central Italy, Adriatic coast
- Separated from the rest of Italy by the Apennines
- Mostly Mediterranean climate
- Vermentino rules for whites:
  - Verdicchio di Matelica Riserva DOCG (further inland and higher altitude)
  - Castelli di Jesi Verdicchio Riserva DOCG (closer to the sea)
  - Minimum 18 months aging required
- Sangiovese and Montepulciano for reds:
  - Rosso Conero = 85% Montepulciano
  - Rosso Piceno = mostly Sangiovese with Montepulciano and others



## Campania

- Southern/central Italy on Amalfi coast
- Warmer, Mediterranean climate
- Less than 10% of wines at DOC level, but quality steadily increasing
- Whites = Falanghina, Fiano, Greco, Coda di Volpe
  - Fiano di Avellino DOCG (85% Fiano)
  - Greco di Tufo DOCG (85% Greco)
- Reds = Piedirosso, Aglianico
  - Taurasi DOCG (85% Aglianico; minimum three years aging, including one in wood)
  - Aglianico del Taburno DOCG (85% Aglianico; minimum two years aging)

## Sicily

- Island off the southern tip of Italy
- Arid, Mediterranean climate
- Many of best vineyards at altitude
- Traditionally, quantity over quality; though a quality surge of late
- Whites: Catarratto, Inzolia, Grillo, Grecanico, Carricante, Zibbibo, Malvasia
- Reds: Nero d'Avola, Frappato, Perricone, Nerello Mascalese, Nerello Cappuccio
- One DOCG: Cerasuolo di Vittoria:
  - 50-70% Nero d'Avolo with Frappato
- Other DOCs showing promise:
  - Mt. Etna, with its volcanic soils
  - Faro (far northeast of island)
- Marsala
  - *Oro, ambrata or rubino* styles
  - *Secco, semisecco or dolce* styles
  - Fine = aged one year
  - Superiore = aged two years
  - Vergine or Solera = aged at least five years



## 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

