

# Wine Regions

## Wine Regions

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# Argentina

is the world's 5th biggest wine producer, and since the 1990s there has been considerable investments in new vineyards and winemaking techniques in the country. **Mendoza** is the best known region and represents about 70% of wine production. In the shadow of the Andes, it's a semi-desert at an altitude of ~600m to 1,100m (vs. Burgundy at 200m to 400m). Up here, very few pests or diseases exist, and as a result almost all wine production is organic. Half of wine production is red, dominated by Malbec, but you will also find Spain's Tempranillo and Italy's Sangiovese, as well as Cabernet Sauvignon, Bonarda, Chardonnay and Torrontés. Mendoza's most important sub-regions include Luján de Cuyo (where Malbec does very well) and Maipú (with compelling Cabs) as well as San Martín (east), San Rafael (south). Outside of Mendoza, **Salta** hosts the world highest vineyards (1,500m or more) and produces aromatic Torrontés, especially in the sub-region of Cafayate. **La Rioja** is home to Argentina's oldest wine production and also produces good examples of Torrontés.

# Australia

Australia has been producing wine since the 1700s. It is the

world's 6<sup>th</sup> largest wine producer and includes some of the world's oldest active vines. Given its hot dry inland climate, most wine regions are scattered across the southern coast, where the cooler ocean air offsets the heat. Many great vineyards are also found at higher altitudes where cooler nights allow the grapes to retain sufficient acidity and freshness. In addition, the country has historically been on the leading edge of research and innovation, enabling producers to mitigate vintage-to-vintage variations and maximize the quality of their wines. While [Shiraz](#) represents a quarter of all grapes planted, the country offers more than 90 different grape varieties and has become increasingly recognized for distinctive white wines like [Riesling](#) and [Sémillon](#). While Australia struggles with climate change, water shortages and wine oversupply, it also hosts an array of unique terroirs producing wines with character. ([Go to top](#))

**South Australia** represents almost half of the country's wine grapes and is home to the iconic Penfold's Grange. The wine regions surround (and lie to the east of) Adelaide, including Barossa Valley, Clare Valley, Coonawara, Eden Valley, and McLaren Vale. Barossa and Clare Valleys' hotter climate is tempered by altitude; Barossa's iron and limestone soils produce full bodied, soft and spicy Shiraz as well as [Grenache](#) and [Mourvèdre](#) while Clare Valley second produces racy, aromatic dry [Rieslings](#). Cooler Eden Valley rivals Clare Valley for the quality of its Rieslings, while McLaren Vale's boutique wineries were traditionally known for Shiraz but have evolved into quality producers of [Chardonnay](#), [Sauvignon Blanc](#), and [Sémillon](#) as well. 375km southeast, the Coonawara region has a maritime climate resembling Bordeaux, sitting on a chunk of limestone soils and 'terra rosa' red topsoil. Unsurprisingly, this regions is known for its compelling [Cabernet Sauvignon](#) and Bordeaux blends. ([Go to top](#))

**New South Wales** is an enormous area that encompasses the

bulk wine producing regions of Murray-Darling and Riverina and accounts for about a quarter of the country's wine production. It also includes the Hunter Valley, a region that would not normally be expected to produce wine due to its heat, humidity, clouds and rain. Strangely, [Sémillon](#) thrives here and is recognized globally for its complex, textured and age worthy white wines. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Victoria** accounts for almost a quarter of the country's wine production and after Tasmania it is the second coolest climate. Spreading out from Melbourne, it includes cooler climate Mornington Peninsula and Yarra Valley which produce wonderful [Pinot Noir](#) and [Chardonnay](#). Further inland, the region of Rutherglen has a long history of producing some of the country's best fortified (or 'sticky') wines from [Muscat](#), while newer regions like the Pyrenees (for elegant [Shiraz](#) and [Cabernet Sauvignon](#)) are only just being discovered by the rest of the world. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Western Australia**, just south of Perth, is one of the country's newest wine regions. Its climate is very similar to [Bordeaux](#) and while it produces only a few percent of the country's wines, it represents ~20% of its premium wines. Margaret River and Frankland River stand out for [Cabernet Sauvignon](#), [Merlot](#) and [Chardonnay](#) that are some of the best the country has to offer. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Tasmania** is Australia's coolest wine region and home to just a few hundred winemakers. Its cooler climate suits the likes of [Pinot Noir](#) and [Chardonnay](#), as well as [Riesling](#) and [Pinot Gris](#). The region is known to produce excellent sparkling wine in particular. [\(Go to top\)](#)

## Austria

Austria imploded as a wine producing country in 1985 due to a scandal when a couple of wine producers added chemicals to

their wines to give them extra “body”. The country’s wine industry has been recovering ever since, but nowadays it produces some of the finest white wines in the world under the most stringent regulations and quality assurance. The country is home to [Grüner Veltliner](#) and produces great [Riesling](#). Important regions include Wachau, Kamptal and Kremstal along the Danube, as well as the Weinviertel, Austria’s largest wine region which extends north from the Danube to the Czech border. To the east, the Neusiedlersee region includes a shallow lake with the perfect humidity for Noble Rot (*botrytis cinerea*) that produces fantastic sweet late harvest and dessert wine (Troockenbeerenauslese, or TBA). [\(Go to top\)](#)

## Chile

Chile boasts almost perfect conditions for producing wine. Its warm dry summers are regulated by cool air from the Pacific and natural irrigation from the Andes to the East. With an extensive range of latitude and altitude, there are vineyard sites for a range of different grape varieties, and Chilean producers are still exploring new sites to plant. Most of its varieties are from original Bordeaux clippings imported in the 1800s. [Cabernet Sauvignon](#), [Merlot](#), and [Carmenère](#) are the hallmark of the Maipo and Rapel valleys, while [Chardonnay](#) and [Sauvignon Blanc](#) thrive in cooler regions (like San Antonio and Casablanca) closer to the Pacific. Since the 1990s, the wine industry has received significant foreign investment, from California (Mondavi), France (Chateaux Mouton-Lafite-Rothschild & others) and Spain (Miguel Torres). [\(Go to top\)](#)

## France

France was the world’s leading wine producer in 2010 with 46 million hectolitres, although only slightly ahead of Italy and Spain. Beneath this fact lies a range of climates, topography and grape types that often represent the spiritual homes for

so many grape varieties and wines: Burgundy for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir; Bordeaux for Cabernet Sauvignon blends; Champagne for sparkling wine; the Alsace for Riesling, the Loire for Chenin Blanc and Cabernet Franc; and the Rhône valley for Syrah and Grenache. The country fields the whole range of wines styles, whether light or full-bodied, sparkling or still, sweet or dry, drinking young or old, fresh or oxidative. You can find it all here.

**Alsace** is tucked away in the northwest of France next to the Rhine on the border with Germany. It sits east of the Vosges Mountains, which create a rain shadow and protect the region. As a result, its south and southeast facing slopes get lots of consistent sun and warmth that offsets the effect of such a northern latitude. A little autumn humidity helps the creation of its famous sweeter “Vendage Tardive” and “Sélection de Grains Nobles” late harvest wines. About 90% of Alsace’s wines are white, including [Riesling](#), [Gewurztraminer](#), [Pinot Gris](#), [Pinot Blanc](#), and Sylvaner, with reds represented by [Pinot Noir](#). Only about 25% of the region’s wine is exported. ([Go to top](#))

**Bordeaux** is the largest wine producing region in France, four times the size of Burgundy and including 57 different appellations. The region has a moderate climate influenced by the Atlantic, and enjoys hot summers and a long ripening season, but does experience year-to-year weather variations that impact its wines. Unlike France’s other wine regions, it was started by merchants (especially the British and Dutch) instead of the church, and its wine is predominantly made by large wine estates. Broadly speaking, Bordeaux’s wines can be divided into the Left Bank of the Gironde and Garonne River and Right Banks of La Dordogne. The **Left Bank** includes the appellations of Médoc, Haut-Médoc, St Estèphe, Pauillac, St Julien, Margaux, Listrac and Moulis. Pessac-Léognan and Graves. Their gravel, clay and limestone soils suit the [Cabernet Sauvignon](#), [Merlot](#) and [Cabernet Franc](#) grown

here (as well as [Petit Verdot](#) and [Malbec](#) sometimes).

Further up river, the communes of Sauternes and Barsac experience humid conditions that are perfect for the 'Noble Rot' that creates their sought-after sweet wines based on [Sémillon](#). The **Right Bank** includes the likes of St. Emillion, Pomerol, and Fronsac and tells a different story. Unlike the Left Bank, the leading grapes here are Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Producers tend to be "Micro-Chateaux" or "Garagistes": small estates (like 'Le Pin') with low yields and small production of deep colored, full bodied, concentrated reds with softer tannins and berry fruit that are more approachable at a younger age than wines from the Left Bank. ([Go to top](#))

**Burgundy** is found between Dijon and Lyon in central eastern France. Renowned for its [Pinot Noir](#) and [Chardonnay](#), it is half the size of Bordeaux but much more complex: there are 100 different appellations here, reflecting a diversity of microclimates, soils and topography. Thanks to Napoleonic inheritance laws, vineyards have been broken up over generations and now there are more than 3,000 winemakers. From north to south, Burgundy is usually broken down as follows: Chablis, the Côte de Nuits, Côte de Beaune, Chalonais and Mâconnais. The Côte de Nuits is responsible for most of Burgundy's most well-known reds: Gevrey-Chambertin, Morey St Denis, Chambolle-Musigny, Vougeot, Vosne-Romanée and Nuits-St Georges. The Côte de Beaune is home to Corton, Pommard and Volnay, as well as the region's leading white appellations: Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet and Chassagne-Montrachet. 560 vineyard sites are considered Premier Cru and represent 11% of Burgundy's wine, while 30 sites are 'Grand Cru' and account for 1%. ([Go to top](#))

**Chablis** (technically part of Burgundy) is found east of the Loire, west of Burgundy and just south of Champagne. The soil here is limestone and clay and contains small, fossilized oyster shells which many say add to the

complexity of its wines. Vineyards are planted on the south-facing slopes, and are almost completely devoted to [Chardonnay](#), most of which is unoaked. Generally speaking, only Grand Cru and Premier Cru wines are be matured in oak, since they have the concentration to balance the oak influence. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Champagne** is just an hour's train ride northeast of Paris, making it the most northerly wine region in the country. It is powered by three grapes and five vineyard areas. The Côte des Blancs vineyards have chalky soil suited to produce high acid [Chardonnay](#). The Côte des Sézanne also produces Chardonnay, but it tends to be less aromatic and acidic. The Montagne de Reims is home to high quality [Pinot Noir](#), while the more southern Aube's aromatic Pinot Noir is also less acidic. Lastly, the Vallée de la Marne grows mostly Pinot Meunier which is typically only a small part of blended Champagnes, providing fresh fruit flavour and aroma. Almost 300 Champagne houses represent more than 70% of production, purchasing grapes from 15,000 growers. Given the cold, northern climate, growing ripe grapes is a challenge, so the houses will blend different growers, grape varieties and different vintages in order to craft a consistent house-style of Non-Vintage (NV) Champagne. Overall, Chardonnay provides fruit and finesse, Pinot Noir provides structure, and Pinot Meunier delivers vibrant fruit. With increased demand—and prices—in recent years, growers have begun to produce and market their own Champagnes which has shaken up the traditional model and also represents great value. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Languedoc-Roussillon** in France extends from the Spanish border to the Rhone region. Unlike most of the country, it enjoys a warm Mediterranean climate and low rainfall. It is known for producing most of France's table wines (often on the flat coastal plain), but some excellent appellations are found on gravels & limestone soils in the hills. These

include **Corbières, Fitou, Minervois, Saint Chinian** and **Côtes de Roussillon**. It is known for red blends that are spicy, dense and full-bodied, but its whites (~13% of production) are becoming much more interesting in their own right. Carignan makes up more than a quarter of plantings here, but is also declining in favour of Grenache, Cinsault Syrah and Mourvèdre. Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon are planted but mainly used for table wine. Whites often include Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Marsanne, Roussanne, Rolle (Vermentino), and Viognier. [\(Go to top\)](#)

The **Loire** is France's longest river and cuts through diverse terrain hosting a range of often undervalued wines. It can be divided into 3 sections: (a) the west region of of Muscadet near the Atlantic, where Melon de Bourgogne is grown, (b) the east where Sauvignon Blanc dominates (Touraine, Sancerre, Pouilly-Fume, Menetou-Salon, Reuilly and Quincy) and (c) everything in between, where Chenin Blanc reigns (in Vouvray, Montlouis, Savennieres, Anjou, Saumur, Bonnezeaux, Coteaux du Layon) and Cabernet Franc delivers the Loire's main red wine (from Chinon, Saumur-Champigny, Bourgueil). Overall, Loire wines are delicate and lighter bodied with bracing acidity (and higher tannin in the case of Cab Franc). In many ways, Chenin Blanc is the 'bright light' here, whether dry, semisweet, sweet or sparkling. It is aromatic, crisp, concentrated and complex. [\(Go to top\)](#)

The **Northern Rhône** has some of the oldest vineyards in France and is the spiritual home of Syrah. The continental climate and cold Mistral wind make this a difficult places to cultivate grapes. Vineyards are often cut into steep hillsides and cultivation requires significant manual labour. At the north end, **Côte Rôtie** ('roasted slope') on the right bank's south-facing slopes gets as much sun as possible, producing intense, long-lived reds. **Condrieu** is a small appellation next door devoted to exquisite white wine

from Viognier. Further south, **Hermitage** sits at the top of a hill where at night cooler air drops down the hill, replaced by warmer air above which helps the grape ripen further. Further downhill, **Crozes-Hermitage** is a larger appellation that often represents good value for money. Across the river, **St-Joseph** is a large appellation producing a quarter of the Northern Rhône's wines. Even further south, **Cornas** has burgeoned since the 1980s but remains (relatively) undervalued for its structured, age-worthy Syrah that rewards patience. ([Go to top](#))

The **Southern Rhône** (Côtes du Rhône) is almost as large as Bordeaux, spreading out east of the Rhône as it widens out between Montélimar and Avignon. Unlike in the Northern Rhône, Grenache is the leading actor here, well supported by Syrah and Mourvèdre: together they produce wines that are fruity, rich, alcoholic and full-bodied. **Châteauneuf-du-Pape** is its most famous appellation, producing intense, spicy, complex and full bodied wines due to the small boulders ('Galets') in the vineyards that re-radiate the heat back into the vines to increase their ripening. 20km northeast from here, **Gigondas** is protected from the Mistral winds by the Dentelle Mountains, and mirrors Châteauneuf-du-Pape with somewhat more structure and spice. **Vacqueyras**, **Rasteau**, and **Cairanne** are other notable appellations within the Côtes du Rhône Villages. ([Go to top](#))

## Germany

Germany is the seventh largest wine producer in the world, and Europe's largest importer. Its vineyards are found along its main rivers (the Rhine, Neckar, Main, Nahe, Ahr, and Mosel) and often protected to the west by hills or mountains. The best sites sit on the sunniest steep slopes to attract the most light and heat. White grapes account for more than 80% of plantings, led by Riesling (25%), Müller-Thurgau and Silvaner. Since the 1990s, the country has been 'drying out' with more

dry-style wines being exported to the UK and North America. The **Mosel** region borders Luxembourg and Germany and meets the Rhine at Koblenz. Its red and blue slate soils absorb the sun's rays and re-radiate heat at night, ripening the grapes and enhancing quality in this cool climate. Its wines are light and low in alcohol, expressing steely acidity. Further south, the **Nahe** river's south facing slopes offer great conditions for late ripening Riesling: good ventilation, low precipitation, warm fall temperatures. **Rheinhessen** is Germany's largest wine area, and while much of its wine is sold in bulk to brands or wine merchants, there are many high quality wines produced, especially in the northern part of the region. The **Rheingau** marks an east-west section of the Rhine, where the south-facing slopes receive more of the sun's rays and produce more full-bodied Riesling (60% is 'Trocken' or dry) and Pinot Noir. Just south of the Rheingau, **Pfalz** is sunnier, drier and warmer, producing reds and more full-bodied white wines. ([Go to top](#))

## Greece

Greece is one of the world's hotter wine regions. To mitigate this heat, vines are often planted at altitude, on north-facing slopes and close to the sea's moderating influence. 70% of Greek wine is white and includes many ancient, indigenous varieties like Assyrtiko, Rhoditis and Savatiano. Since the 1990s Greece has seen significant investment in the industry resulting in increased wine quality. In northern wine regions like Naoussa and Goumenissa, red wines are produced predominantly from Xinomavro, while further south in the Peloponnese (Nemea and Patras) red wines like Agiorgtiko do well. Greece's wine producing islands (Santorini, Crete, Cephalonia and Samos) drive much of the country's white wines. Overall, wine production is dominated by a few producers including Achaia Clauss, Boutari, Kourtakis and Tsantali. ([Go to top](#))

# Northern Italy

**Piedmont** translates as “at the foot of the mountain” in reference to the Alps and Apennines that surround the region. History and proximity have brought significant French influence, especially to the region’s wines. Its long warm summers have similar temperatures and rainfall to Bordeaux. Its most well-known wine regions are Langhe (Alba, Barbaresco and Barolo) and Monferrato (Asti and Gavi), but quality vineyards can also be found in near Lake Maggiore. The best vineyards sit on south-facing slopes that enjoy more sun and heat, and are typically planted with Nebbiolo. Barbera is planted throughout Piedmont, as is Dolcetto, Arneis, Chardonnay and Moscato. ([Go to top](#))

**Barolo** is Piedmont’s—and perhaps Italy’s—flagship wine. Encompassing five towns in Langhe’s rolling hills, Barolo offers the topography and long, warm summer and autumn that Nebbiolo sorely needs. Two soil types divide Barolo: fertile calcareous marl in the west (around La Morra and Barolo) produce softer, fruitier and more aromatic wines that develop more quickly with age. In the east, the less fertile sandstone (around Castiglione Falletto, Monforte d’Alba, and Serralunga d’Alba) deliver more intense, structured wines that develop more gradually and are longer-lived wines. ([Go to top](#))

**Barbaresco** is Barolo’s smaller, younger brother to the northeast near the Tanaro River. Nebbiolo ripens earlier and the wines tend to be lighter, less astringent or structured in Barbaresco, although its aromas and flavors are similar to Barolo. As a result, Barbaresco develops and matures sooner than Barolo. ([Go to top](#))

**Emilia-Romagna** lies south of the Po River as it widens out towards the Adriatic Sea. The Apennine Mountains to the west protect it and create hot, dry summers and cooler winters. The most planted varieties include Lambrusco, Trebbiano,

Albana, and Sangiovese. Appellations of note include Sangiovese di Romagna, Colli Piacentini, Gutturnio, and Albana di Romagna. ([Go to top](#))

**Friuli-Venezia Giulia** is in Italy's northeast just next to Slovenia. It is recognized for the quality of its fresh, fruit-driven white wines, while its reds have seen a gradual resurgence in recent years. It also has a tradition of experimentation: producers use winemaking practices from the cutting edge to the ancient. ([Go to top](#))

**Lombardy's** three vineyard areas have different grape varieties and different wine styles. **Valtellina**, near the Swiss border, has steep slopes and rocky soils absorb sunlight during the day and re-radiate it at night which helps mitigate the lower temperatures. Chiavennasca (Nebbiolo) is the grape of choice here. Lesser known **Oltrepo Pavese** to the south is home to chalky soils that suit Barbera, Pinot Noir and Croatina well. Franciacorta to the east is moderated by Lake Iseo and produces low alcohol, lightly sparkling international varieties. ([Go to top](#))

**Trentino-Alto Adige** is set along the Adige river in the northeast of Italy in mountainous terrain with some of Italy's hottest summer temperatures but also wet, cold winters. German-speaking Alto Adige in the South Tyrol (or Südtirol) borders on Austria and surrounds the city of Bolzano. Further south, Italian-speaking Trentino offers warmer climes and more scope for red wines (like Teroldego) to thrive. Both sub-regions produce a range of international and local grapes. ([Go to top](#))

**Veneto** is Italy's largest wine producing province, from Lake Garda in the west to the Alps in the north and to Venice in the east. Home to Amarone, Prosecco, Soave and Valpolicella, the Veneto's diverse soil, topography and microclimate offer suitable sites for the regions range of grapes. **Valpolicella** and **Amarone** della Valpolicella DOC are its best known

appellations, based on the grapes of Corvina, Rondinella and Molinara, Barbera, Negrara trentina and/or Rossignola and/or Sangiovese. "Ripasso" occurs when young Valpolicella is refermented on the skins of the Amarone wines to add body, complexity and alcohol. Amarone is produced when Valpolicella grapes are dried out before fermentation to create extra concentration (if they do not get fermented completely, the remaining sugar creates the sweet "Recioto" style). **Soave** is found just east of Valpolicella and was established in 1927 and has expanded since its DOC designation in 1968. Its best examples come from the hillside vineyards in the Classico zone. **Prosecco**, in the hills of Conegliano Valdobbiadene, is produced from the Glera grape. ([Go to top](#))

### Central Italy

**Abruzzo** encompasses inland mountains descending into a long eastern coastline on the Adriatic. Like le Marche to the north, the mountains create hot, dry summers and cooler winters. Montepulciano d'Abruzzo is the most renowned red grape here, and Trebbiano its white partner. While much of the Montepulciano d'Abruzzo is well rounded and easy drinking, it can also be produced in a deeper, fuller bodied style. ([Go to top](#))

**Marche** lies east of Tuscany on the Adriatic coast. Coastal, chalky plains rise westward from the sea into rolling hills and eventually the Apennine Mountains. Its hot and dry summers and cooler winters suit the Sangiovese, Montepulciano, Trebbiano, and Verdicchio that are found across the region. Recent years have seen increased interest and investment which bodes well for improving quality, and notable quality sub-regions include **Rosso Piceno** and **Rosso Conero** which offers blends of Sangiovese and Montepulciano for consumption within two to four years. ([Go to top](#))

**Sardinia** lies 200km west of Italy and has significant

Catalan influence of history. As a result, the island's grape mostly come from Spain: Cannonau (Garnacha) and to a lesser extent Carignano (Carignan) as well as Graciano and Mazuelo. In contrast, Italy's Vermentino produces whites wines of wide-ranging quality. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Tuscany** is Italy's oldest wine producing region and home to many well-known appellations and leading producers like Antinori, Frescobaldi and Ricasoli. The region's rolling hillsides provide day-to-night temperature swings that enable grapes to maintain acidity and freshness and develop fruity aromas while ripening. Sangiovese is the star grape of the region, while Super-Tuscan wines like like Sassicaia, Tignanello and Ornellaia emerged in the 1970s adding Cabernet Sauvignon (and more recently Merlot and Syrah). [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Chianti** lies between Florence and Siena and encompasses eight sub-regions where the soil and topography can vary. It is traditionally based on Sangiovese, Canaiolo and Colorino, but over time its wine laws have adapted to allow up to 15% of international grape varieties as well (Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon can only reach 10%). Sangiovese is 75% at a minimum. [\(Go to top\)](#)

In contrast, **Brunello di Montalcino** south of Siena and enjoys a warmer, drier climate and higher altitude than Chianti, offering Sangiovese optimal conditions to create higher quality wines that are richer, more powerful and age-worthy. Because of this, Brunello is aged for a minimum of two years in oak and four years before being released to the market. [\(Go to top\)](#)

Further inland, **Vino Nobile di Montepulciano** produces Sangiovese from in and around the town of Montepulciano, where warmer temperatures and sandy soil result in wines that are more full-bodied and higher in alcohol, but typically less aromatic.

Further south and closer to the coast, **Morellino di Scansano**'s up-and-coming vineyards sit at 150m to 500m on higher acid levels in soil which suits Sangiovese well.

**Umbria** boasts a similar climate to Tuscany, but is further inland and doesn't receive the moderating influence from the sea. The region became more popular starting in the 1990s, buoyed by neighbouring Tuscany's growing reputation and similar wine styles. Its most famous whites come from **Orvieto** and are comprised of Trebbiano and Verdello grapes. Its most famous reds include **Sagrantino di Montefalco**, where the indigenous Sagrantino grape's intense tannins and structure have been tamed by improved winemaking techniques over the past 25 years. In addition, **Montefalco Rosso** is gaining recognition as an earlier drinking alternative based on Sangiovese, Sagrantino, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. ([Go to top](#))

## Southern Italy

**Basilicata** is a mountainous province in the arch of Italy's boot, in between Campania, Puglia and Calabria. It is sparsely populated, with little to no commercial activity and only a small amount of wine growing inland, in **Aglianico del Vulture**. The extinct volcano of Mt. Vulture provides the unique soils, while the altitude (450m to 600m) allows for cool nights so that the vines can rest and retain acidity. As Aglianico del Vulture has earned increasing international attention (and rising prices) in recent years, growers can afford to reduce yields to ensure that the Aglianico ripens fully and create higher quality wines. ([Go to top](#))

**Calabria** lies on Italy's toe. Only 5% of its agricultural land are vineyards, which are often quite small, local operations. Two thirds of these on hillside sites and another 15% in more mountainous, difficult sites. Almost 90% of its wines are red and only 3% are quality wines. ([Go to](#)

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**Campania** is one of Southern Italy's stars, situated east of Naples on volcanic soils that impart distinctive character and complexity. Impressive quality comes from the Taurasi sub-region, where the red Aglianico grape can achieve great complexity and finesse. In addition, Falanghina, Fiano di Avellino and Greco di Tufo produce excellent white wines. ([Go to top](#))

**Molise** neighbours Abruzzo, Campania and Puglia to the south. It receives most of its wine-making influences from Abruzzo, as its main grape types are Montepulciano d'Abruzzo and Trebbiano d'Abruzzo. Still an 'up-and-comer', its lack of international recognition has led producers to experiment a little more, planting and marketing Fiano, Greco, and international grape varieties under IGT labels. ([Go to top](#))

**Puglia** lies on the Italy's heel on the Adriatic and accounts for a large part of Italy's overall production. It offers a combination of chalky hills and an iron-rich fertile flat plain where most grapes are planted. Heat is the challenge here, often driving high yields of low quality grapes. Quality wines amount to ~2% of the regions production and include red wines from places like Salice Salentino and Copertino (using the Negroamaro grape) and Manduria (using Primitivo). ([Go to top](#))

**Sicily's** wines have received increasing international interest in recent years, driven by more modern dry reds and whites of increasing quality. The island's hot climate also has mountainous terrain with poor soil and low rainfall, offering plenty of sites for diverse grape varieties achieve ripeness, balance and character. Its best sites are typically found inland, including **Cerasuolo di Vittoria**. Nero d'Avola is Sicily's most widely planted grape but Frappato, Nerello, Syrah and Chardonnay are also increasingly planted here. ([Go to top](#))

# New Zealand

New Zealand (in contrast to its bigger brother Australia, produces about 10% of Australia's wine output, but similarly most of this is intended for export. 1600km east in the southern Pacific, the two islands have a mostly cool, maritime climate. The vineyards are mostly planted on the east side of the country protected from the rains coming in from the west. Across the islands, varied soil types and topography offer vineyard sites for a range of grape varieties. While it has become the benchmark for Sauvignon Blanc, the country produces excellent Pinot Noir, Riesling and Chardonnay that cannot be ignored. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Gisbourne** is considered the leading region for New Zealand's Chardonnay and Gewurztraminer.

**Hawkes Bay** is the sunniest, warmest part of New Zealand and is full of complex soils and microclimates and well suited to Bordeaux varieties. It is also the home of "Gimblett Gravels", a small district of deep shingle soil that produces high quality Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

**Marlborough** is responsible for about 60% of New Zealand's vines and about three quarters of its Sauvignon Blanc, and was popularized by producers like Cloudy Bay back in the late 1980s. It's a large flat river valley on the northern tip of South Island, with varied soil patterns including shallow/stony soils, silt and gravel.

**Otago Valley** is the southernmost wine region in the world. Unlike the rest of the country it has a dry and continental climate, with vineyards planted on hillsides to maximize sun exposure. It has quickly emerged as the best Pinot Noir producing area in the country and one of the best in the world. [\(Go to top\)](#)

# Portugal

Portugal produces a remarkable range of wines from across the country. Light and fresh white wines from the Vinho Verde region in the northeast are great value (based on the Loureiro and Alvarinho grapes). Bairrada is Portugal's answer to Piedmont, with red wines based on the Baga grape producing concentrated but smoothly textured wines. In contrast, the Douro—traditionally known for Port which makes up more than 50% of production—is increasingly producing still reds with deep colour and concentrated fruit and tannin. South of the Douro, the Dão region has woken up since the 1980s from an oppressive monopoly structure and is now seeing significant investment and modernization. The result is improving reds (from the Touriga Nacional, Tinta Roriz and Jaen grapes) that are aromatic, spicy, and balanced by sufficient acidity and tannin. Further south, the regions of Ribatejo, Estremadura and Alentejo produce the bulk of Portugal's wine and the latter two in particular are characterized by hotter climates. [\(Go to top\)](#)

# South Africa

South Africa has been making wine since the 1680s, but only since the end of apartheid in 1994 did the wine industry truly take off. Once dominated by a single cooperative (KWV), the industry now boasts an array of more than 3,000 producers offering a quickly improving range of wines. Further inland the climate becomes quite hot, while on the coast the Atlantic and Antarctic air has a cooling influence. Somewhere in the middle there are the perfect conditions for high quality vineyards. Near Cape Town, the areas of **Constantia** and **Tygerberg** see a cooler climate that produces lovely Sauvignon Blanc and other white varieties. To the east, **Stellenbosch** is the country's best known region and the heart of quality wine production. It has the greatest concentration of leading wine

producers and is best known for its Bordeaux blends, Pinotage (unique to the country). Neighbouring **Paarl** is further inland and warmer, producing more Shiraz. Southeast along the Cape South Coast, the newer areas of Elgin, Walker Bay and Elim produce Pinot Noir, Merlot, Chardonnay, and Sauvignon Blanc that the world is only beginning to discover. ([Go to top](#))

## Spain

Spain has historically been seen as a large producer of cheap red wines that—with the exception of Rioja—were largely undistinguished. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the past 20-30 years Spain's diverse wine regions have seen a wave of investment and innovation that has transformed their quality. From fresh, lively white wines in the northwest to ripe, full bodied and high alcohol reds of the southeast, Spain has so much to offer. This modernization vies with long traditions, and the result is an expanding variety of high quality wines for the consumer. ([Go to top](#))

**Bierzo** straddles the Minho River in northwest Spain. While part of Castilla y León, its wines are more akin to neighbouring Galicia: fresh, elegant and aromatic. Like the red wines of Ribera Sacra, these reds are based on the Mencía grape, just slightly fuller bodied. ([Go to top](#))

**Jerez** (Xérès, **Sherry**) is found in Andalucía in the south of Spain between the cities of Jerez de la Frontera, El Puerto de Santa María and Sanlúcar de Barrameda. These fortified wines can be produced in a wide range of styles, from light, delicate Fino and Manzanilla, and Amontillados, Oloroso, Palo Cortado which can be produced dry or sweet. Palomino is the main grape varietal here, followed by Pedro Ximénez. ([Go to top](#))

**Jumilla** is located in the southeast of Spain, in between the Mediterranean and the high, dry La Mancha plateau. As a

result, the region gets lots of sun, temperatures up to 45 °C and very little rain. The region was wiped out from 1989-1994 by a bug called Phylloxera, but this offered a fresh start, and producers invested in new vineyard management and winemaking techniques. The result is a region that boasts full bodied, fruity and high alcohol reds based on the Monastrell (Mourvèdre) grape. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Rias Baixas** is the leading white wine region in Galicia, northwest Spain. It has a cool climate, influenced by exposure to the Atlantic Ocean. The Albariño grape accounts for 90% of vineyards here, producing fragrant, intensely fruity, dry white wine. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Ribera del Duero** spans the upper valley of the river Duero (Douro) that runs into Portugal. It is famous as the home of Vega Sicilia, often referred to as Spain's leading red wine. Ribera del Duero has a continental climate and sits on a limestone plateau at 700m & 850m above sea level. The main grape here is Tinto Fino (a local version of Tempranillo) but Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, & Malbec are also permitted here. These wines are typically deeply colored, full bodied reds. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Ribera Sacra** is found along the banks of the Minho River in Galicia, northwest Spain. The region's red wines are produced from the Mencía grape and tend to be a little lighter bodied and fruitier than its more well-known neighbour, Bierzo. Its white wines tend to be produced mainly from Godello, producing a range of light to full bodied wines. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Rioja** is Spain's leading wine region, found along the banks of the Ebro River around Logroño in northeast Spain. It is known for red wines that have been produced there since the 1860s. The region has 3 distinct subregions. Rioja Alavesa in the north, Basque part of Rioja is found on chalky soils with cooler climate due to more Atlantic influence,

producing lighter, more elegant reds dominated by Tempranillo. Rioja Alta is west and south of here, with a slightly warmer & drier climate, producing more assertive Tempranillo which requires more aging to reach its peak. Rioja Baja is a large swath of land in the south and east of Rioja with a continental climate and dominated by Garnacha-based reds suited for early drinking. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Rueda** straddles the Duero on the same plateau just to the southwest of Ribera del Duero, but unlike Ribera, Rueda is known for white wines made from Verdejo and Viura. Modern Rueda white wines are light, fruity, dry and can have a range of oak influence. Sauvignon Blanc was also introduced to the region in early 1980s. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**Toro** is found in Castilla y León in north-western Spain near the Portuguese border. Established in 1987, it sits on the banks of the Duero and neighbours Rueda and Ribera del Duero. Unlike Rueda, Toro is known for its red wines made from Tinta de Toro (Tempranillo). Signalling its potential, several Spanish, Bordelais and international winemakers have invested in Toro in recent years. [\(Go to top\)](#)

## The USA

America is the world's 4<sup>th</sup> largest wine producer. While vineyards exist in more than 45 states, California represents 90% of the country's wine production, followed by Oregon and Washington State. Like many new wine regions, the USA continues to innovate and experiment with different grape varieties and terroirs and there will be more to come. [\(Go to top\)](#)

**California** is the world's 4<sup>th</sup> largest producer, with 90% of wine produced and 3 out of 4 bottles sold domestically. Vines were first planted in 1770. In 1945 there were 120 wineries and in 2004 there were more than 1,700. In the north of the state the regions of Mendocino, Anderson

Valley, Dry Creek Valley, Russian River, Sonoma, Napa, Carneros stand out. ([Go to top](#))

**Mendocino County** in the north is protected by coastal mountains, creating a cooler climate Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc are reliable along the Russian River, while good examples of Chardonnay, Zinfandel & Petite Sirah can also be found here. Anderson Valley is a very cool climate found on western slope of the coastal mountain range, suited to Riesling, Gewürztraminer and Chardonnay as well as Zinfandel. ([Go to top](#))

**Napa Valley** is perhaps the best known region in the country. Long summers and cool ocean air coming up from San Francisco Bay set the stage, with cooler climates to south and on the hills creating more structured and tannic wines while further north and on the valley floor the wines tend to be richer and more concentrated. Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay dominate the vineyards here, but there are also interesting wines to be found from Sauvignon Blanc, Zinfandel, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and some Italian varietals as well. ([Go to top](#))

**Sonoma County** falls between the coast and Napa Valley. Near the coast the regions of Russian River, Sonoma Coast and Green Valley deliver high quality Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, and further inland Alexander Valley, Chalk Hill and Dry Creek also produce Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc and Zinfandel. **Carneros** straddles Napa and Sonoma at the south end of Napa Valley. The cool ocean influence is strong here, making it suitable for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. ([Go to top](#))

Further south, regions like **Paso Robles** and **San Luis Obispo** are emerging as producers of quality Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre while Santa Ynez Valley and Santa Rita Hills are becoming known for some interesting high-altitude Pinot Noir. ([Go to top](#))

**Oregon** has grown significantly and in the mid 2000s it was home to more than 300 wineries. While it is a wet state, most rain falls btw Oct and April, not during the growing season. In the southwest of the state, Willamette Valley produces excellent Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris while Umpqua and Rogue Valleys produce these as well as Merlot, Chardonnay and Viognier. In the northeast, the Columbia Gorge, Columbia Valley and Walla Walla Valley on the southern banks of the Columbia River produce Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Chardonnay. ([Go to top](#))

**Washington** is the second largest wine producing state in the US, but only amounts to 5% of the nation's total. In comparison to California, it enjoys two more hours of sunlight per day during the summer, and its continental climate exhibits hot days and cool nights that help grapes develop flavour concentration while also retaining fresh acidity. Columbia Valley and Yakima Valley lie in the shadow of the Cascade Mountains, creating semi-arid desert conditions. White grapes dominate plantings, especially Riesling, Sémillon and Chardonnay, while Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah are the state's leading red grape. ([Go to top](#))