

Wines of France

Imported by

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D'Agostini Vineyards

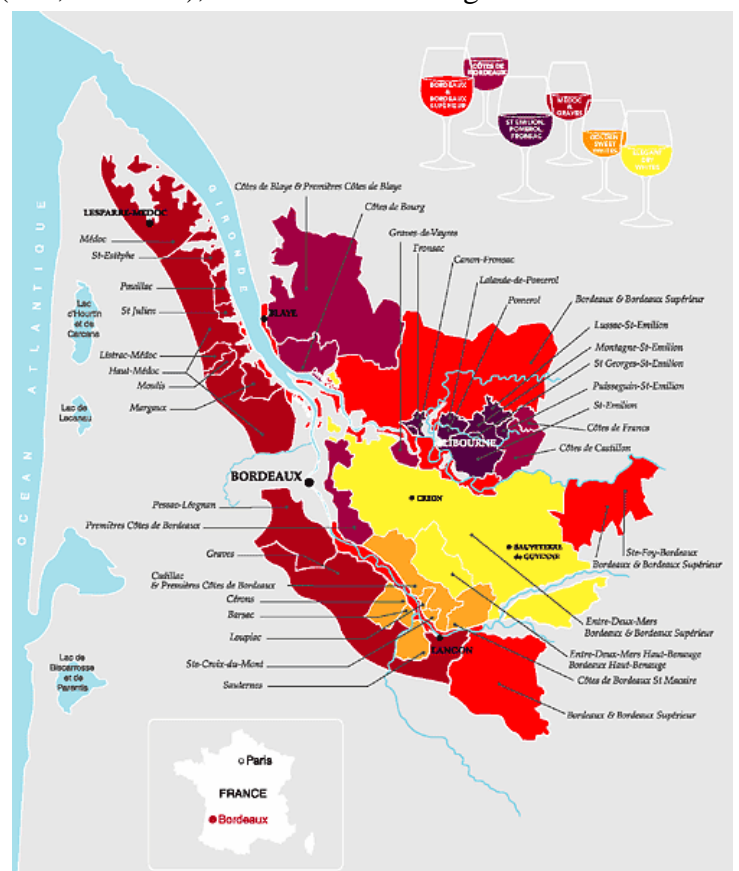
Bordeaux Wines

Bordeaux is one of the most important wine-producing areas in the world and, judging from the number of prestigious brands it produces, it must be gifted with some very special property.

The vineyards, which cover an area of 94,000 hectares (232,274 acres), form a kind of triangle which takes in the left bank of the Garonne and the right bank of the Dordogne, then grows narrower around the Gironde.

There is too much variety in the gravelly limestone and clay soils for the whole area to produce identical wines. The latter are usually the product of a mild maritime climate and of the use of particular kinds of grape.

The majority of Bordeaux wines are red, and the reds of the region are undoubtedly superior to the dry whites. Only the great sweet white wines can compete with them. There are three kinds of appellation, general ones such as Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur, regional ones such as Medoc and those denoting the commune of origin, such as Margaux. In addition to this there is a regional hierarchy, partly the result of the famous classification scheme of 1855 and partly due to a combination of classification schemes introduced since then as well as to commercial practices.



Distinctions are made between the different chateaux. The term chateau covers the whole of an estate and all the plats of land with it, even if these are somewhat scattered. When you realize that there are nearly 3000 chateau along the River Gironde, it becomes clear that the various gradings, which distinguish between 200 or so, are in no way superfluous despite their sophistication.



Gold Medal Selection

- Chateau Loumede, 2000 Cotes De Blaye
- Laurent Videau, 2002 Bordeaux Red
- Chateau Grand Tuillac, 2001 Cotes De Castillon
- Chateau Begadan, 2001 Medoc
- Chateau Loumede, 1999 Cotes De Blaye
- Domaine De La Jaufrette, 1998 Chateaneuf du De Pape,



Medoc

The name Medoc literally means “middle country” and, in fact. It covers an area of about 850 square miles with water on either side. It consists of a narrow strip of land only 3 to 6 miles wide and 44 miles long, stretching from the east bank of the Gironde to the Atlantic Ocean. The vineyards thus benefit from the presence of both the sea and the river, and these ensure sufficient humidity and keep temperatures at a moderate level all year round. Medoc is divided into two regional appellations.

Bas-Medoc covers the northern part of the region. So many streams and canal run through the clay soil that the area is a little reminiscent of Holland. There are no crus classes in Bas-Medoc but it does produce some reputable, full-bodied red wines.



Haut-Medoc, on the other hand, where there are plenty of gravel outcrops, produces wines of great breeding. These have such distinction and finesse that they are numbered among the great aristocrats of Bordeaux.



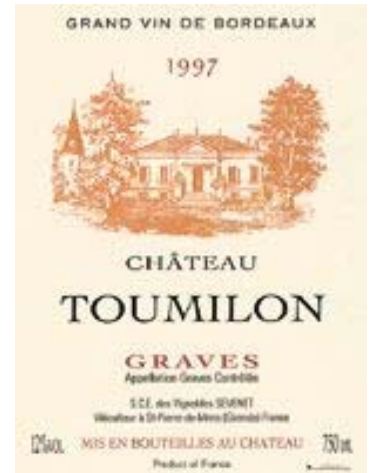
The Grapes of Medoc: Since Medoc only produces red wines, only the appropriate Bordeaux grapes are found here. Cabernet-Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc predominate, but Merlot is also used and, to a lesser extent, Malbec and Petit Verdot.



Graves

The Graves region is an extension of the Medoc. It is a strip of land between 6 and 9 miles across, which includes the city of Bordeaux itself and then stretches for 37 miles along the banks of the Garonne.

The Graves region covers some 1500 hectares (3706 acres). It produces both white wines and red wines. Almost all the great red wines come from the north.



The Grapes of Graves: For white wines, a combination of the classic Sauvignon and Semillon is used, with the addition in some cases of a little Muscadelle. For red wines, the traditional Bordeaux grapes are used, namely, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot, with the addition of small quantities of Malbec and Petit Verdot.

Saint-Emilion

Saint-Emilion is a paradise for lovers of Bordeaux wines. Although the growing area covers only 5300 hectares and is limited to eight communes, it produces more Grands crus than any vine growing region of France. Like Graves, vine-growing in Saint-Emilion has an extremely ancient tradition in the Bordeaux region.



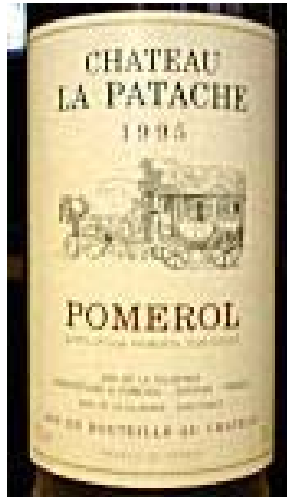
The Grapes of Saint-Emilion: Saint-Emilion uses the traditional Bordeaux grapes.

Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc are usually used in larger proportions than Merlot, whilst Malbec plays a minor role.

All the wines of Saint-Emilion are characteristically sound and clean. Although they improve greatly if left to mature, they are fully rounded and drinkable with a well-established flavor right from the start.

Pomerol

The appellation Pomerol covers a mere 750 hectares. It is situated north-west of Saint-Emilion, close to the town of Libourne. The only additional appellation is that of Lalande-de-Pomerol, which belongs to a small neighboring commune.



Pomerol is dedicated exclusively to the production of red wines, and since the soils vary, the wines vary too. The gravel beds of the south-east give way to a sandy soil in the west. Between these two areas stands a plateau which has a pale clay subsoil mixed with dark packed clay, shot through with iron.

Thanks to these soil properties Pomerol has a distinctive character all of its own. The combination of soil and grapes yields a deep ruby-red wine with a remarkably velvety quality. The wines of Pomerol have a finesse of Medocs combined with the rich generous character of Saint-Emilion.



The Grapes of Pomerol: The predominant grape, namely Merlot, is used in conjunction with Cabernet Franc and a smaller proportion of Cabernet Sauvignon. There is no petit Verdot at all in Pomerol, but small amounts of Malbec are used.

Cotes de Blaye

The Cotes of Blaye is situated approximately 50 km North-West of Bordeaux. Perched on a rocky ridge dominating the Gironde's estuary, the borough of Blaye lies in the middle of the largest area of the Right Bank. The region's weather is characterized by its moderate climate with slightly above average temperatures and a mild warm wind all year round. Côte de Blaye's vineyard is located on the hillside along the Gironde and further North on a vast plateau. The soils vary a lot. Depending on whether they are close to the river or higher on the plateau, they



can be argillaceous, sandy or gravelly. All these soils are appropriate for the culture of the red Merlot grapes.

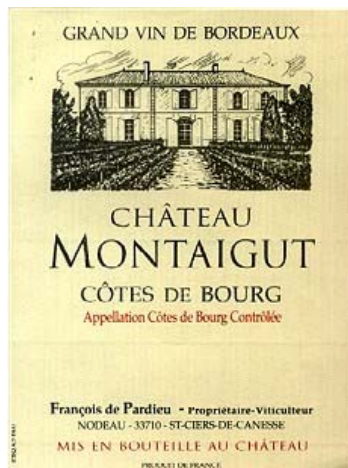
Growers mainly cultivate red wines but also a few dry white wines. The reds produced are fruity, rather powerful but still have a relatively flexible structure.

Cotes de Bourg

The appellation Cotes de Bourg was created by decree Sept. 11, 1936 for red wines and by the decree of May 14, 1941 for whites wines. It can only be used for wines coming from grapes harvested in number of demarcated plots in the canton of Bourg. To be entitled to this appellation the red wines must be made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot or Cot (Malbec) grape varieties. Since 1974, the wines are not allowed to proceed for sale without a certificate of quality from an official tasting panel appointed by the INAO (Institut National des Appellation d'Origine).



The location and its different soils, red graves and argile, affords the opportunity to produce grapes that make exceptional, well-balanced, full bodied and very typical Cotes de Bourg wines as well as offering an exceptional view of the hills, the river, and the Medoc region.



Cotes de Castillon

South of the Côtés de Francs, and about 60 km far from Bordeaux, the area of Côtés de Castillon is a lovely region of green hills, winding country roads, valleys and small river ports which marks the end of the Right bank's Eastern vineyards. The sloped vineyards tend to have clay soils which soak up maximum sunlight.

However, some vines grow on gravelly soil, which contributes to the diversity of Côtés de Castillon wines.

For a long time the wines of Castillon were only used as complementary alternatives to enhance Saint-Emilion blendings in poor years. But in the 1970's, a particularly dramatic effort by local wine growers improved the overall quality of the production. Producing rather light wines in the past, Castillon, in just a few years, has become a serious competitor of the main appellations of the Right bank. During the last 25 years or so, several growers of Saint-Emilion and Pomerol have recognized the region's potential and invested in local vineyards.. In style, the Côtés de Castillon are full bodied and quite tannic in their youth with rich plummy flavors and much personality.



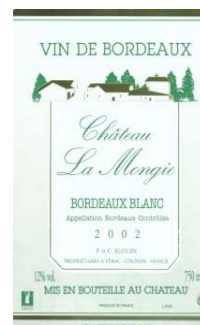
Bordeaux Superieur

Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur are in fact two different appellations, the latter often believed to be of a better quality. But more specifically a Bordeaux Supérieur wine contains more alcohol than a Bordeaux wine and its yield is approximately 10% inferior.



White Bordeaux

Vineyards ideally suited to producing dry white wines in Bordeaux are located on a great variety of soils and sub-soils. Gravelly soil is the speciality of the



Garonne river's left bank. The right bank vineyards are composed of soil that is more a

mixture of clay and limestone, or clay and sand. The triple alliance of soil, sub-soil and climate explains the amazing diversity and individual character of Bordeaux vineyards



The Grapes of White Bordeaux: The elegant aroma, softness and vivacity of

Bordeaux dry white wines comes from the subtle blend of several grape varieties. Main variety is Sauvignon Blanc, which provides a concentrated bouquet and crispness on the palate. Semillon gives a delicately scented wine that is very full and round. Muscadelle makes wine that is low in acidity quite round and aromatic. Small quantities of Colombard and Ugni Blanc are sometimes added.

Sauternes

This region is located near a river, and the resulting misty conditions helps breed a noble rot-pourriture noble. Early winemakers found that this rot turned the flavor of the grapes into a rich, honey flavor, with a deep brown color. This wine can age almost indefinitely.

It is difficult to make a Sauternes. The rot must be of just the right level, and only the most affected grapes are picked. The grapes get up to 14% alcohol in them - this kills off the yeast, leaving behind much of the sugar that normally would be fermented away.



Flavors in sauternes range from apricot, peach, pineapple, and vanilla. The wines are smooth and creamy. More so than many other wine types, vintage in Sauternes is *extremely* important. The weather conditions can make or break and entire year's crop in this region.



The Grapes of Sauternes: Semillon is heavily predominant here, with the addition of Sauvignon and a little Muscadelle.



Wines of Burgundy

Burgundy is probably one of the most fascinating wine-growing regions in the world. This is partly due to the region's magnificent castles and monasteries which bear witness to its glorious past, and partly on account of the vineyards (38,000 hectares), laid out like some huge mosaic. This peculiar characteristic, much in evidence in the departments of Yonne and Cote d'Or, becomes less pronounced as you move south into Saone-et-Loire and Rhone. In Yonne and Cote



d'Or, it seems as if every little patch of suitable hillside had been carefully selected for vine-growing. This jig-saw puzzle produces a fabulous variety of wines. The fact that only two grape stocks –the Pinot Noir for red wines and the Chardonnay for white- predominate in this region, makes it seem all the more mysterious. The



semi-continental climate seems to suit these grapes amazingly well. In any case, combining them with a great variety of predominantly limestone soils has something of a miraculous effect.

Cotes du Rhone

The norther Cotes du Rhone, from Vienne to Valence, have predominantly granite soil, hot summers and autumns and a significant degree of humidity regulated by the river. About 25 miles further south, around Avignon, Orange and Chateauneuf de Pape, the southern Cotes de Rhone have sandy soil containing an abundance of gravelly alluvial



deposits and drift boulders. This is an area of summer drought, exacerbated by that violent wind, the mistral.



The Grapes of Cotes du Rhone: The syrah is the only vine used for the red wines. The whites are made from the Viognier, Roussane and Marsanne vines.

Chateauneuf du Pape

Its 3000 hectares make Chateauneuf du Pape the largest appellation district in the Cotes du Rhone. The popes of Avignon were originally responsible for introducing the cultivation of the vine on these vast hills, on which the soil is buried beneath a layer of drift pebbles suited to the accumulation of heat. Unusually, 13 types of vine are authorized here. Although the yield for both red and white wines is limited



to 35 hectolitres. The fact remains that a traditional Chateauneuf du Pape is an ample, rich and full wine, which gains greatly in smoothness as it ages. Thus the present tendency of some producers to make use of carbonic maceration is regrettable; even if they are more immediately pleasing, such wines nevertheless lose in presence and body.

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Esterlin Champagne

The vineyard overlooked by the towns of Rheims and Epernay covers more than 20,000 hectares to the north-east of the Paris basin. Its primary distinctive feature is its soil, which consists of a layer of chalk thick enough to accommodate the miles of tunnels in which the bottles are stored.



Only three varieties of frappe are grown. These are the Chardonnay (25%), the only

white vine of champagne; the Pinot Noir (30%) which gives structure and sap to the wine; and the Pinot Meunier (45%), a less noble vine, so-called because its young shoots are covered with a fine white down. These different vines possess complementary qualities so it is easy to see that one of the most important secrets of Champagne lies in the art of blending.

