

# ***An Overview of France***

## *The Main Regions of France*

### Alsace

- History
  - The most interesting places in the world are found where there is a melting pot of different cultures. Alsace is definitely one of those having been forced to change nationality and allegiances so often (due to wars between pitting France against Germany), for so long that its culture, language, and even cuisine is a mixture of French and German. This has created a unique culture that stands on its own as Alsatian.
  
- Location and Climate
  - Alsace is tucked into the northeast corner of France along the German border running north to south as a slender strip of vineyard land 75 miles long and an average of 3 miles wide. It is one of the most northerly wine regions in France, second only to Champagne
  - The climate is continental, with shorter hot summers and longer cold winters and considerable season and diurnal (day/night) temperature swings. Alsace is protected from the Atlantic influences by the Vosges Mountains which are high enough to block all rain clouds pushed by the west winds. This creates a rain-shadow making the Alsace the driest area of France. The result of being in a northerly climate with plenty of sunshine means that the grapes ripen slowly with more complex aromatics
  
- Geology
  - Incredibly diverse soil types, which is the reason for the diversity of grape varieties planted within the region (see below)
  - There are 13 different major soil types in Alsace. However, the most common and best is a Marly-Limy soil that is deep with good water retention. It yields powerful wines of structure and richness with noticeable spice aromas.
  
- Grape Varieties
  - Most French wines list the name of the producer and the wine region or zone of production on the front label. Only in Alsace will the label list the grape variety. This is in keeping with its German heritage.
  - There are 7 primary grape varieties in Alsace, and four of them are considered noble
  - The four noble grapes are:
    - Riesling
    - Pinot Gris
    - Gewurztraminer
    - Muscat
  - The other three primary varieties are Pinot Blanc, Sylvaner, and Pinot Noir

- Wine Styles
  - 90% of production is white and 80% is varietally labeled. If a grape is listed on the label, the wine must be 100% varietal
  - Alsatian wines have historically been dry. However, lately there has been an increasingly popular trend to leave a little residual sugar in the finished product giving an off-dry wine.
  - Crémant de Alsace are traditional method (like Champagne) sparkling wines usually made with Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc. They are extremely popular with the French people and they may be finished dry or off-dry.
  - Dessert Wines (two styles)
    - Vendange Tardives (VT) – late harvest wine made from Riesling, Pinot Gris, Muscat, or Gewurztraminer and contains considerable residual sugar
    - Sélections de Grains Nobles (SGN) – late harvest wines made from Riesling, Pinot Gris, Muscat, or Gewurztraminer grapes affected by noble rot. Wines are very sweet and honeyed.
- Appellations
  - Alsace (Vin d'Alsace)
    - Grapes can come from any vineyard in Alsace and can be white, red, or rosé, dry or sweet, a blend or single varietal and may boast a single vineyard designation on the label
  - Alsace Grand Cru
    - From grapes grown on one of the 51 Grand Cru vineyard sites. The appellation is for white wines only and must be made from one of the four noble grape varieties. The wines may be dry or sweet
  - Crémant de Alsace
    - Made from the traditional method and primarily made from Pinot Blanc, though Riesling, Pinot Gris, Chardonnay and pinot Noir can be used as well

## Beaujolais

- History
  - o Region was first cultivated by the Romans who planted vines all the way from the mouth of the Rhône through the Saône River Valley
  - o From the 7<sup>th</sup> century through the Middle Ages, Benedictine monks were responsible for cultivating the vineyards
  - o In 1395, Philippe the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, outlawed the cultivation of Gamay in that region. The ousted grape moved south to Beaujolais where it found a new home.
  - o When the railroad system expanded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Beaujolais expanded its wine sales and distribution and Paris became one of its top markets
  - o During the 1950s, Parisians became enamored of the Lyonnais (people from Lyon) tradition of drinking Beaujolais as it was first vinified. This created the fashionable trend of Beaujolais Nouveau
- Location
  - o Beaujolais is a small region whose vines are planted in a stretch of land 34 miles long from north to south and between 7-9 miles wide east to west.
  - o The region is bordered by Mâcon (Burgundy) to the north, the city of Lyon to the south, the Monts du Beaujolais Mountains to the west and the Saône River to the east. A little south of Lyon begins the Rhône Valley with the vineyards of the Northern Rhône.
- Climate
  - o Beaujolais has a semi-continental climate. The region experiences all four seasons, but because of its relative proximity to the Mediterranean Sea, summers tend to be both warm and dry.
- Geology
  - o The region is naturally divided into northern and southern halves by the Nizerand River with a distinct soil type found through each of the two halves and creates two very different types of wine. The overwhelming majority of Beaujolais AOC is produced on the marl and limestone soils of Southern Beaujolais, while most of the Beaujolais Villages and Crus are produced in the granitic and schist soils of Northern Beaujolais
- Grape Varieties
  - o Red grapes
    - Gamay – thin-skinned grape which characteristically produces low tannins and pigments and high acidity with red berry fruits such as cranberry, raspberry and strawberry and pretty aromas of rose, iris, and violet. It represents 98% of the plantings in Beaujolais
  - o White grapes
    - Chardonnay produces most of the extremely small amount of Beaujolais Blanc
    - Melon de Bourgogne (of Muscadet fame) and Pinot Gris are found in miniscule amounts.
- Wine Styles
  - o Beaujolais Nouveau is intensely fruit, barely there tannins and high acidity. The fruit often smells of bananas, candy, and even some nail polish (see Carbonic Maceration below)

- Beaujolais AOC / Beaujolais AOC Supérieur – can be labeled and sold as Nouveau, but Nouveau wines do not carry their own separate AOCs. Similar character to that of Nouveau
- Beaujolais Village – can be a serious wine. It is more densely pigmented and displays less overt grapiness and deeper berry fruit than regular Beaujolais. It is also slightly more tannic and possesses a solid core of minerality. This is due to the presence of granite in the zone of production (northern)
- Beaujolais Cru – 10 Cru vineyards. Each has its own characteristics. However, in general, they are more akin to their neighbor in the north (Burgundy) than Beaujolais AOC wines, without the candy and banana flavors and with more structure and minerality. After some years in bottle, they can be mistaken for a Pinot Noir quite easily
- A Note on Fermentation
  - Beaujolais wines are usually made in a method known as Semi-carbonic Maceration
    - Whole clusters are put into tank immediately after hand-harvesting where the weight of the grapes causes the clusters at the bottom of the tank to burst.
    - The wild yeasts, present on the grape skins, begin to transform the grape sugars in the juice into alcohol
    - During this yeast driven (normal) alcoholic fermentation, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is released and forces out all the oxygen in the tank, creating an anaerobic environment
    - This environment encourages an enzymatic fermentation inside each of the intact grapes towards the top of the tank where a small portion of malic acid is converted into ethanol. This is where the famous banana, candy, pear, raspberry, and cranberry aromas of Beaujolais are created.
    - The free-run juice (normal ferment) at the bottom is drained and the carbonic macerated grapes towards the top are pressed. The two juices are mixed and finished in a normal fermentation where yeasts turn the remaining sugar into alcohol.
  - There is a growing trend lately to make wines from Gamay using the Burgundian winemaking tradition (no carbonic maceration). The Crus are often made this way.
- Appellations
  - Beaujolais AOC / Beaujolais AOC Supérieur
    - Red, white and rosé made from vineyards south of the Nizerand River on limestone
    - Red and rose can be Supérieur, meaning the wine has slightly higher alcohol (0.5%) and more concentration due to lower yields
  - Beaujolais Villages AOC
    - 38 communes are permitted to use this appellation with 30 of those being allowed to append their village name onto the label
    - Wines are produced according to stricter laws that control pruning technique, planting density, grape variety, blend, yields, minimum alcohol level, and typicity and the wines must pass both chemical analysis and taste tests
  - Beaujolais Cru AOCs (10 separate AOCs)
    - From north to south, they are:

- Saint Amour, Julié纳斯, Chénas, Moulin-à-Vent, Fleurie, Chirobles, Morgon, Régnié, Côte de Brouilly, Brouilly
- Made in the style of Burgundy wines all from vineyards in the very north of the region on granite soils
- Lowest yields in the region with strict laws (see Beaujolais Village)

## Bordeaux

### - History

- The marriage of Duchess Eleanor of Aquitaine to Henry Plantagenet Count of Anjou (eventually became King Henry II of England and Duke of Normandy) in 1152 was one of the most significant in European history, for it gave England reign over Aquitaine, Gascony, and a good portion of western France. Ties to England established a strong maritime trade in Bordeaux wine, and the city and region flourished as never before.
- In 1453 France reclaimed Bordeaux and expelled the English during the Hundred Years War. The Dutch then became very involved with the Bordeaux wine region after the close of the war (though they wanted white wines for their tables). They are the ones who drained the Médoc peninsula in the 1600s, raising the gravel beds and beginning the famous terrior that we know today.
- In the 1700s, the Bordeaux wine market expanded and there was a second Golden Age. In a precedent established by Haut Brion, wealthy merchants began to build luxurious chateaux with surrounding vineyards
- The French Revolution destabilized the region and restoration was slow. Napoléon the III took over and he re-established ties with England. Around the same time the Bordelais vineyards were plagued by waves of vineyard pests - Powdery Mildew in 1852, Phylloxera in 1865, Downy mildew in 1880.
- In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, two World Wars and the Great Depression devastated the economy of Bordeaux. The Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée system was established in 1935. A deep freeze struck in 1956 killing one-quarter of the vine stock in Bordeaux and the vigneronns that chose to replant, did so with red grapes. Robert Parker launched his Wine Advocate and touted the merits of the 1982 vintage, refocusing world attention on Bordeaux, entering it into a third Golden Age
- Today, Bordeaux is a leader in the French wine industry. It boasts the greatest percentage of large wine estates of any wine region in France. It produces most of France's luxury or prestige wines, and it produces one-quarter of all the AOC wine in France.

### - Location

- Bordeaux lies in the southwest part of France. It is the largest wine producing region, stretching 63 miles from north to south and 78 miles from east to west, with 297,000 acres of vineyard. The main portion of the region surrounds the Dordogne and Garonne Rivers as they come together to make the Gironde Estuary, which pours into the Atlantic downriver from the city of Bordeaux.

- Climate
  - Bordeaux has a maritime climate as it lies on the Atlantic coast. The Gulf Stream warms and regulates temperatures. Winters are moderate and summers are mild and warm but the region receives plenty of rain during the growing season - 33 inches of rain a year.
    - Irrigation is neither necessary nor legal
  - It is protected from the ocean winds and storms somewhat from a 2.5 million acre pine forest called Les Landes.
  - Autumns are variable with always a possibility of rain which can bring rot or dilution to the harvest. This is why Bordeaux vintages are so closely watched each year.
- Geology – See Sub-Regions
- Grape Varieties
  - Red Grapes
    - The main 3 Bordeaux grape varieties are:
      - Cabernet Sauvignon – around 26% of red plantings
        - Native to Bordeaux; expresses black and red cherry fruit, black and red currant fruit, blackberries, tobacco, tea, coffee, herb, lilac, graphite and cedar notes
        - High acid, high pigment, high tannin, moderate alcohol
      - Merlot – around 60% of red plantings (more planted than any other wine region worldwide)
        - Native to Bordeaux; expresses blueberry, cherry and plum fruits with nuances of sweet cigar box, coffee, spice, and cocoa
        - Moderately tannic, moderately pigmented, low acid, high alcohol
      - Cabernet Franc – around 12% of red plantings
        - Expresses wild strawberry fruit, mulberries, cranberries, violets, sweet herb, mushroom, forest floor, tea, tobacco, and rich earth
        - Moderately tannic, moderately acidic, moderately pigmented
      - Petit Verdot and Malbec play supporting roles. Carmenere originates in Bordeaux but is rarely used or seen anymore.
  - White Grapes
    - Sémillon – 55% of white plantings
      - Subdued in aroma and waxy or lanolin in texture
      - Dry, it expresses pear, citrus, mineral and floral notes with a hint of nut skin, lanolin or beeswax
      - Sweet, it expresses tropical fruit, spice, honey, apricot, peach, citrus, nectarine and caramel
    - Sauvignon Blanc – around 34% of white plantings
      - High acid, aromatic
      - Native to Bordeaux; expresses hay, herbs, lemon grass, capsicum, gooseberry, grapefruit, lemon, pineapple, pear, and melon
    - Muscadelle – around 7% of white plantings

- Intensely aromatic
  - Native to Bordeaux; expresses an exuberant grapiness and slightly musky, floral character
- Wine Styles
  - Reds
    - Often less fruit-driven, less alcoholic and less overtly oaked than their new world counterparts. Bordeaux red wines are subtle and full-flavored with finesse on the finish rather than upfront.
  - Dry Whites
    - Often have oak influence (especially in Graves) and taste of tangy pineapple and floral perfume, with mineral edge and hints of herbs
  - Sweet Whites
    - Botrytized can be extremely complex with flavors of apricots, ripe citrus, honeysuckle, caramel, high acid balancing high sugar levels with around 13-13.5% alcohol.
- Appellations
  - Bordeaux is divided into three sections: Left Bank, Right Bank and Entre-Deux-Mers
    - Left Bank – stretches from the Médoc Peninsula to Graves. It is relatively level and flat. Soils are largely comprised of gravels. Red blends are based on Cabernet Sauvignon. The wines tend to be more firmly structured, possessing significant amounts of tannin, and are hallmarked by cassis and graphite, tobacco, cedar and sweet herb.
    - Right Bank – string of small hills stretching from Castillon to Blaye interrupted by a low-lying plateau and deep valleys. Soils are comprised of clay and limestone. Red blends are based on Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Wines tend to be more supple with soft plummy fruit. Limestone delivers wines of silky tannins and high acidity while clays will add a touch of walnut and prune.
    - Entre-Deux-Mers – land located between the Garonne and Dordogne Rivers southeast of the city of Bordeaux. This area possesses all of Bordeaux’s soil types. Red blends can be Merlot- or Cabernet Sauvignon-based. White blends are Sauvignon Blanc-based.
  - Three types of AOC
    - Regional (Bordeaux AOC, Bordeaux Supérieur for example)
    - Sub-Regional (Médoc, Haut-Médoc, Graves, Entre-Deux-Mers for example)
    - Communal (Pauillac, Pomerol, Sauternes for example)
  - Left Bank Appellations
    - *The Médoc*
      - Médoc AOC – located north of St. Estèphe to the tip of the peninsula
      - Haut-Médoc AOC – covers land south of St. Estèphe to the city of Bordeaux that is not a communal AOC (see below)
      - St. Estèphe AOC
        - Largest of the six communes. Historically, the wines have been blockbuster reds requiring time in the bottle to mellow and

soften. Today, producers are using a higher percentage of Merlot in the blend, making them more approachable sooner

- Pauillac AOC
  - South of St. Estèphe, delivering wines of structure and power with graphite and cedar notes and cocoa-like tannins
- St. Julien AOC
  - South of Pauillac. Is considered the most 'Californian' of the Médoc communes delivering more elegant wines with smoother textures
- Margaux AOC
  - South of St. Julien, just north of the city of Bordeaux. Considered the most feminine and perfumed of all the Médoc communes.
- Moulis en Médoc AOC and Listrac-Médoc AOC
  - Located halfway between Margaux and St. Julien but farther away from the river
- *Graves and Sauternais*
  - 2/3 production is red, 1/3 is white (both dry and sweet). Any red and dry white produced within Graves can bear the Graves AOC; semi-sweet whites are given the Graves Supérieures AOC
  - Pessac-Léognan AOC
    - Northernmost portion of Graves and produces note-worthy Cabernet Sauvignon-based reds on deep gravel soils
  - Sauternais sub-region includes Cérons, Barsac, and Sauternes AOCs that are sweet white AOCs. They form the southernmost portion of Graves where the cool Ciron River runs into the warm Garonne River, creating a special macro-climate that promotes the growth of Botrytis Cinerea.
- Entre-Deux-Mers Appellations
  - Entre-Deux-Mers AOC – dry whites
  - Entre-Deux-Mers-Haut Benauges AOC – dry whites
  - Bordeaux-Haut-Benauges AOC – dry, semi-sweet whites
  - Cadillac AOC – sweet whites
  - Loupiac AOC – sweet whites
  - Sainte-Croix-du-Mont AOC – sweet whites
  - Sainte-Foy-Bordeaux AOC – Red, dry, semi-sweet whites
  - Graves de Vayres AOC – red, dry, semi-sweet whites
- Right Bank Appellations
  - *The Libournais*
    - Fransac and Canon Fransac AOCs
      - Clay and limestone soils make this Merlot and Cabernet Franc territory.
    - Pomerol and Lalande-de-Pomerol AOCs
      - Unique iron-rich soils (especially in Pomerol) make Merlot and Cab Franc-based wines with heady aromas and textures.

Lalande-de-Pomerol wines tend to be less aromatic and less structured than Pomerol

- St-Emilion AOC and St-Emilion Grand Cru AOCs
  - Cover the exact same area of production; the Grand Cru AOC has tougher production standards. Most soils are comprised of limestone and clay with pockets of sand along the river.
- St-Emilion Satellite AOCs – similar aromas and flavors as St-Emilion, but in a more delicate structure
  - St-Georges-St-Emilion AOC
  - Lussac-St-Emilion AOC
  - Montagne-St-Emilion AOC
  - Puisseguin-St-Emilion AOC
- *The Côtes*
  - Regions of Bordeaux that slope to the rivers and estuary. They are all on the right banks of rivers and are west-facing
  - Principally clay and limestone soils and among the reds, Merlot and Cabernet Franc blends prevail
  - As of the 2008 vintage, Premières Côtes de Blaye, Bordeaux- Côtes de Francs, Côtes de Castillon and Premières Côtes de Bordeaux can label their wines as the new Côte de Bordeaux AOC
  - Côtes AOC
    - Premières Côtes de Bordeaux AOC
      - Reds and semi-sweet to sweet whites
    - Côtes de Bordeaux-Saint-Macaire AOC
      - Dry and semi-sweet whites
    - Côtes de Bourg AOC
      - Reds and dry whites
    - Blaye AOC
      - Reds and dry whites
    - Côtes de Blaye AOC
      - Dry whites
    - Premières Côtes de Blaye AOC
      - Reds and dry whites
    - Côtes de Castillon AOC
      - Reds
    - Bordeaux- Côtes de Francs AOC
      - Reds and dry to semi-sweet whites
- Bordeaux Classifications
  - Médoc and Sauternes-Barsac – 1855 Grands Crus Classification
    - 61 red wines:
      - 5 Premiers Grands Crus Classés (including 1 Pessac-Léognan) – 1<sup>st</sup> Growths
      - 14 Deuxièmes Grands Crus Classés – 2<sup>nd</sup> Growths
      - 14 Troisièmes Grands Crus Classés – 3<sup>rd</sup> Growths

- 10 Quatrièmes Grands Crus Classés – 4<sup>th</sup> Growths
  - 18 Cinquièmes Grands Crus Classés – 5<sup>th</sup> Growths
- 27 Sauternes and Barsac Sweet Whites:
  - 1 Premier Cru Supérieur
  - 11 Premiers Crus
  - 15 Deuxièmes Crus
- Médoc Crus Bourgeois
  - Crus Bourgeois are Médoc châteaux that produce wines of typicity and quality but generally without the breed of their finer aristocratic cousins from the 1855 Classification (a very French definition!)
  - After nearly a century of flawed rules and controversy, the modern Cru Bourgeois is a label rather than a classification. It is a mark of quality and is based on production and quality standards. It is awarded each year by tasting.
  - Please use this link to see the updated list (2011)
    - <http://www.crus-bourgeois.com/?lang=en>
- Médoc Crus Artisans
  - Identified as small (2.5-12.5 acre) estates that are entirely responsible for their own production process from vineyard to barrel to bottle
  - The classification recognizes 'boutique' wineries of quality
  - Currently, there are 44 Cru Artisans
  - For list of Chateaux please use this link
    - <http://www.terroir-france.com/wine/crusartisans.htm>
- Graves Crus Classés
  - 16 Crus Classés de Graves or Grands Crus Classés de Graves
    - 6 estates for red and white wines
    - 3 for white only
    - 7 for red only
  - For more information please use this link
    - <http://www.bbr.com/wine-knowledge/graves-classification>
- Saint Emilion Grands Crus Classés
  - St-Emilion is the only region on the right bank with a classification system
  - Rather than being judged on price, like the 1855 classification, châteaux have to apply for inclusion and are judged by a tasting of their wines from the previous 10 vintages. The classification groups the best wines into 2 categories: '**Premier Grand Cru Classé**' (which is sub-divided into the rather unglamorous tiers, 'A' and 'B'), and the less illustrious '**Grand Cru Classé**'
    - **This is why Chateau Lassegue is not classified. When the classification revision comes around again, expect exciting things for this wine!**
  - Do not confuse St – Emilion Grand Cru with St-Emilion Grand Cru Classé. The former is an AOC; the latter reflects a ranking within the classification system.
    - A wine that achieves Grand Cru Classé status must be a Grand Cru AOC before joining the classified ranks
  - 82 red wines (as of 2012 revision):
    - 4 Premiers Grands Crus Classés A

- 14 Premiers Grands Crus Classés B
- 64 Grands Crus Classés
- For a list of Chateau please use this link
  - [\*http://www.bbr.com/wine-knowledge/st-emilion-classification\*](http://www.bbr.com/wine-knowledge/st-emilion-classification)

## Burgundy

### - History

- There are over 470 AOCs in France and 101 of them are in Burgundy alone. Burgundy is responsible for just 6% of French wine production, yet represents 20% of all French AOCs.
- Almost every parcel of land, or 'climat' in Burgundy, has a name that recognizes its uniqueness.
- Monks of the Middle Ages who studied the vineyards as they worked are the main reason there is so much emphasis on terroir in Burgundy. They had no idea they worked a fractured landscape of diverse soil types, but they recognized the differences in terroir as they walked the hillside. They also had no clue why the wines they made tasted different from one parcel of land to the next, but they recognized and categorized those differences.
- During the French Revolution, church lands were confiscated and redistributed to the farmers that had worked the land. The great domains were broken up and few monopoles (vineyard owned by one person) survived. Clos de Vougeot (half the size of Ch. Lafite in Bordeaux) for example, has 100 owners. Then, Napoleon mandated that inheritable property be divided equally among siblings, beginning a long history of fractionalization of the vineyard holdings in Burgundy. The Bordelais, by contrast, incorporated their estates. Ownership was fragmented on paper in forms of 'shares' while the chateaux and its vineyards remained intact. This remains an essential difference between Bordeaux and Burgundy.
- Phylloxera hit in the 1800s and the economy took a turn for the worse.
- In 1847, King Louis-Philippe granted the village of Gevrey the right to append its most famous vineyard name to the name of the village itself. Gevrey became Gevrey-Chambertin. Most villages followed suit. The rationale was, if a customer associated Chambertin with Gevrey, for example, he might be inclined to purchase other Gevrey wines.
- The first official vineyard classification system was carried out of Beaune in 1861 setting the stage for the hierarchical quality pyramid we know today. In 1930, Burgundy's boundaries were legally defined. In 1936, AOC legislation gave form and structure to Burgundy's climats

### - Location

- Located in the northeastern section of France, two hours from Paris and one hour from Lyon. It lies along the Autoroute du Sud (highway to the South) linking Northern France to Lyon.

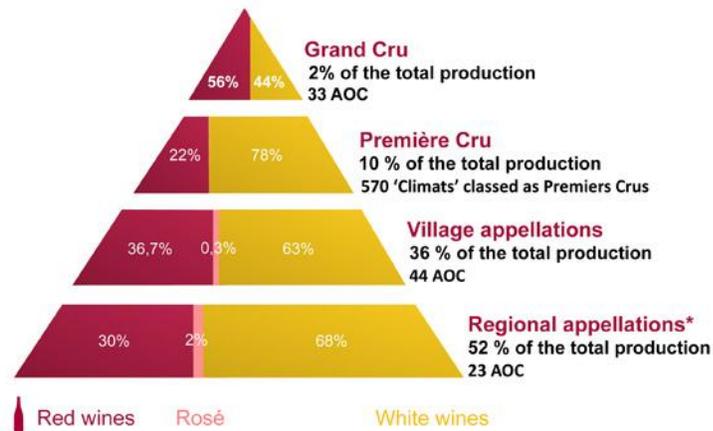
### - Climate

- Burgundy is completely land-locked and possesses a semi-continental climate due to oceanic influences at both its north and south extremities. The Atlantic impacts the north and the Mediterranean impacts the south.
- The region extends almost 140 miles from north to south. For this reason, there are significant temperature and climate variations along this expanse. Harvest comes early September for the warmer Mâconnais while cooler Chablis does not usually start until the end of September

- Geology
  - Soils in Chablis consist of:
    - Kimmeridgian marl (special kind of limestone) where the Premier Crus and Grand Cru vineyards are found
    - Portlandian marl – Chablis and Petit Chablis vineyard are found
  - Soils in Côte d’Or
    - Limestone and limestone-rich marls
  - Soils in Côte Chalonnaise
    - Limestone and marl
  - Soils in Mâconnais
    - Limestone and marl closer to Chalonnaise to the north
    - Granite and schist closer to Beaujolais to the south
- Grape Varieties
  - Two main varieties
    - Chardonnay
      - Ripens to high sugar and high extract levels. Its primary fruit typically consists of apple and citrus with secondary and tertiary aromas of butter, nuts, ginger, vanilla and nutmeg. It is pale white to yellow gold in color depending on age and its specific terroir
    - Pinot Noir
      - Aromatic grape characterized by good acidity and low to moderate grape tannins. Light red in color and lighter concentration. Its primary fruit typically consists of cherry and strawberry with secondary and tertiary aromas of earth, leather, violets, clove, cinnamon, smoke, and truffles
  - Secondary varieties
    - Aligoté (white) and Gamay (red)
- Wine Styles
  - Most wine in Burgundy is made from a single grape variety with two exceptions:
    - Passe-tout-Grains – 1/3 must be Pinot Noir and the rest Gamay
    - Crémant de Bourgogne – Sparkling wine mainly made with Aligoté but also Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Gamay, and a few other native varieties.
  - In general:
    - Bourgogne Blanc is made from Chardonnay
    - Bourgogne Aligoté is made from Aligoté
    - Bourgogne Rouge is made from Pinot Noir
- Appellation
  - All Burgundy wine is AOC wine, but within the region, there is also another qualitative ranking system
  - Unlike Bordeaux, which classifies its chateaux and ranks them into various quality tiers, the Burgundians classify the vineyards themselves. Single unclassified vineyards all have names that respect their unique terroirs. Good quality vineyards have earned 1er Cru status; great vineyards have earned Grand Cru status.

- This format is, in and of itself, not confusing. The point of differentiation between the vineyards is always the terroir. Where it gets confusing is that these single vineyards can have multiple owners. This means that the producer listed on the label is just as important as the origin of the wine itself.
- The quality pyramid in Burgundy is arranged from more general zones of production to more specific zones. Some of those more specific zones have been recognized since the Middle Ages or earlier as being far superior to all others.

### The 4 levels of AOC in Burgundy



\*Regional appellations include white and rosé sparkling wines

Image courtesy of the BIVB

- **Regional Wine**
  - Usually incorporates the word Bourgogne into the name and the grapes can be grown anywhere within the Burgundy region OR from a specific region within Burgundy. As a blend of terroirs, it demonstrates general regional typicity.
  - Regional wines can indicate a wealth of specific information. For example:
    - The grape variety: ex – Bourgogne Aligoté
    - Production method: ex – Crémant de Bourgogne (Sparkling)
    - Region of production: ex – Mâcon
    - Production area: ex – Bourgogne Chitry
    - A climat: ex – Bourgogne Côte Saint-Jaques
  - Varietal nomenclature is permitted on regional labels but not on any other higher levels within the wine quality pyramid.
  - A few highlights within the regional AOCs:
    - Coteaux Bourguignon AOC – most general; white wines can be from Chardonnay, Aligoté, Melon de Bourgogne and Sacy; reds can be from Gamay and/or Pinot Noir; can be from anywhere in Burgundy including Beaujolais

- Bourgogne Blanc AOC – only allows for Chardonnay
- Bourgogne Rouge AOC – allows for Gamay and Pinot Noir; maximum of 30% Gamay is allowed
- Bourgogne Gamay AOC – must have a minimum of 85% Gamay
- Bourgogne Pinot Noir AOC – must have a minimum of 85% Pinot Noir.
- Bourgogne Côte d’Or AOC (new in 2010) – encompasses inexpensive wines made from grapes sourced within the Côtes de Nuit and Côtes de Beaune; only Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are allowed.
- There are 24 regional AOCs, representing 52% of Burgundy’s total production
- **Village Wine**
  - Made from grapes grown within a specific zone of production surrounding a specific village within the Burgundy region
  - Like region wine, they also reflect a blend of vineyard sites. However, the zone of production is narrower than regional and the wines begin to demonstrate a typicity characteristic of its smaller and more focused zone of production
    - For example, the elegant and silky tannins and perfume of Chambolle-Musigny is worlds apart from a spicy Nuits St. Georges
  - If the village wine is from a single vineyard, the producer may put the name of that climat on the label.
  - There are 44 village wines representing 36% of Burgundy’s total production
- **Premier Crus**
  - Represents a single vineyard or climat with a reputation for producing high quality wine. The name of the vineyard appears on the label along with the village name and the words Premier Cru or 1er Cru.
  - If the village name appears on the label accompanied by the words ‘Premier cru’ but does not list the name of the vineyard, the wine in the bottle is a blend of more than one Premier Cru vineyard
  - There are 629 Premier Cru vineyards in Burgundy responsible for 10% of total production. Because they bear the village name on the label, they are incorporated into the village AOC category as separate climats NOT as separate and individual AOCs
    - When county up Burgundy’s 101 AOCs, the only thing tabulated are 24 regional, 44 village, and 33 Grand Crus
- **Grand Crus**
  - Represents a single vineyard with a reputation for producing truly exceptional wine.
  - The name of the vineyard appears on the label along with the word ‘Grand cru’. The exception to this rule is Chablis where the village of Chablis is always listed on the label along with the Grand Cru vineyard name.
  - There are 33 Grand Cru vineyards in Burgundy responsible for 2% of the total production
- The differences between regional, village, 1er Cru and Grand Cru: a study of terroir
  - From top to bottom, vineyards in the Côte d’Or are found on the mostly east-facing slopes of the hill.



- Gevrey-Chambertin (26 Premier Crus, 9 Grand Crus)
- Morey Saint-Denis (20 Premier Crus, 5 Grand Crus)
- Chambolle-Musigny (24 Premier Crus, 2 Grand Crus)
- Vougeot (4 Premier Crus, 1 Grand Cru)
- Vigne-Romanée (14 Premier Crus, 8 Grand Crus)
- Nuits-Saint-George (41 Premier Crus, No Grand Crus)
- **Côte de Beaune** villages from North to South
  - Ladoix-Serrigny (11 Premier Crus, 2 Grand Crus- shared with Aloxe-Corton and Pernand-Vergelesses)
  - Aloxe-Corton (14 Premier Crus, 3 Grand Crus)
  - Pernand-Vergelesses (8 Premier Crus, 2 Grand Crus)
  - Chorey-lès-Beaune (no Premier Crus, no Grand Cru)
  - Savigny-lès-Beaune (22 Premier Crus, no Grand Cru)
  - Beaune (42 Premier Crus, no Grand Cru)
  - Pommard (28 Premier Crus, no Grand Cru)
  - Volnay (30 Premier Crus, no Grand Cru)
  - Monthelie (15 Premier Crus, no Grand Cru)
  - Auxey-Duresses (9 Premier Crus, no Grand Cru)
  - Meursault (18 Premier Crus, no Grand Cru)
  - St. Romain (no Premier Cru, no Grand Cru)
  - Puligny-Montrachet (17 Premier Crus, 4 Grand Crus)
  - Chassagne-Montrachet (55 Premier Crus, 3 Grand Crus)
  - Saint-Aubin (30 Premier Crus, no Grand Crus)
  - Santenay (12 Premier Crus, no Grand Crus)
  - Maranges (7 Premier Crus, no Grand Crus)
- **Côte Chalonnaise** – Communes from North to South
  - Bouzeron (no Premier Cru)
    - Known for its perfumed Aligoté
  - Rully (23 Premiers Crus – red and white still wine)
    - Also known for its Crémant de Bourgogne production
  - Mercurey (31 Premiers Crus – predominantly red wine production)
  - Givry (26 Premiers Crus)
    - Predominantly produces red wine
  - Montagny (49 Premiers Crus)
    - White AOC wines only

- **Mâconnais** (Principal Communes)
  - Pouilly-Fuissé AOC
    - Lies within a topographical bowl rimmed by three large limestone walls which produce a sun trap for the vines
    - Neighboring AOCs are Pouilly-Vinzelles and Pouilly-Loché
  - St. Véran AOC
    - Once part of Beaujolais. Grows Chardonnay and makes soft everyday drinking wines
  - Viré-Clessé AOC
    - Located between the towns of Viré and Clessé, 9 miles north of the town of Mâcon.

## Rhône Valley

- History
  - The Rhône River originates high up in the Alps in southeastern Switzerland and falls 6,000 feet in the span of 500 miles emptying out into the Mediterranean Sea. The Rhône River links to the Rhine, Seine and Loire rivers through a network of canals and waterways effectively connecting the Mediterranean with the rest of Northern Europe
  - The river was a principal trade route throughout all of written history and, as such, the Rhône region has long been the cultural nexus between Burgundy and the colder climes to the north and Provence and the warmer regions to the south
  - Fun fact
    - The Rhône Valley is France's second largest producer of AOC wines (Bordeaux is first) and wine is its number one business activity in terms of direct or indirect employment, selling around 35 million cases a year. Six thousand individuals grow the grapes that go into those bottles.
- Location
  - The Rhône Valley is in southeastern France and is bordered by Lyon and Beaujolais to the north, Languedoc and Provence on the southwest and southeast (respectively), the pre-Alps to the east, and the mountains of the Massif Central on the west
  - The river runs the length of the entire region, a 120-mile expanse which extends from Vienne to Nimes
- Climate
  - The Northern and Southern Rhône have distinctly different climates but the river and a fierce wind called the Mistral are two common denominators
    - In the Northern Rhône, the river effect (moderating temperature in summer and winter) is intensified because most of the vineyards flank the steep and narrow banks of the river. In the Southern Rhône, the landscape flattens and the vineyards stretch far, wide and away
    - The Mistral blows sporadically year-round and it can reach speeds of more than 60 miles an hour. This can be both beneficial and catastrophic as it helps prevent frost and can keep diseases at bay, but can also rip a vine out of the ground.
- Appellations
  - AOCs of the Rhône Valley are categorized into two groups: those that can produce regional Côte du Rhône wines and those that cannot
    - AOCs that can produce regional Côte du Rhône wines (i.e. Cornas and Gigondas) lie within what is called the Côte du Rhône zone of production.
    - Other Rhône Valley AOCs (i.e. Luberon and Ventoux) lie outside the Côte du Rhône zone of production and are not allowed the appellation

- Côte du Rhône Zone Appellations
  - There are 5 categories of AOCs
    - Côtes du Rhône AOC (CDR AOC) – regional AOC where grapes can be sourced from anywhere in the designated Côte du Rhône region. CDR AOC spans both the Northern and Southern sub-regions, but most of the production (95%) is focused in the southern sub-region. This is the largest in terms of vineyard acreage and volume
    - Côte du Rhône Villages AOC
    - 17 Côte du Rhône Villages – Named Villages AOCs
    - 16 Crus AOCs
    - 2 Vins Doux Naturels AOCs (fortified wine made in a similar method as Port)
  - Each of these appellations is smaller and more specific than the general CDR AOC. The regions are located within the Côte du Rhône production zone and must adhere to more stringent production standards
- Other Rhône Valley AOCs
  - These wines often use the same grape varieties as the CDR wines and produce wines of a similar style
    - Clairette de Die and Crémant de Die (both sparkling) in the North
    - Coteaux de Die and Chatillon de Diois (both still) in the North
    - Côte du Vivarais
    - Grignon Lès Adhémar
    - Ventoux
    - Luberon
    - Costières de Nimes
    - Clairette de Bellegarde
  - Each is a unique AOC of the Rhône Valley which is NOT located in the Côte du Rhône region and therefore cannot produce CDR AOC

#### Northern Rhône

- Location
  - Begins 20 miles south of Lyon and stretches for 45 miles between Vienne and Valence with vineyards flanking the river.
- Climate
  - Continental, with a general Mediterranean influence. More similar to the climate of southern Burgundy than the southern Rhône
- Geology
  - Mostly granite sub-soils with fine topsoil of decomposed mica-schist and granitic sands, pockets of calcareous soils mixed with galets and patches of shingle-clay. Some vineyards are pure sand or pure clay (more suitable for white grapes).
- Grape Varieties
  - Red Grape
    - Syrah is the only red grape allowed in the Northern Rhône

- White Grapes
  - Viognier, Marsanne, and Roussanne
- Wine Styles
  - Most white wines made in the Northern Rhône are still and dry, with a small amount of sparkling produced. In some appellations, the whites can be blended in small proportions with the Syrah to provide some aromatics and lift.
  - Syrah produces a densely pigmented, tannic wine with moderate alcohol and refreshing acidity. There are varying levels of complexity and structure, from the usually silky textured and mineral driven St. Joseph, to the rustic and enormously tannic Cornas.
- Appellations
  - The vast majority of the wine made in the Northern Rhône is from Cru appellations, with only 5% being from the large Côtes du Rhône AOC production (the rest is in the south)
  - The Cru AOCs (from north to south):
    - Côte-Rôtie (100% Red)
    - Condrieu (100% White, Viognier only)
    - -Grillet (100% White, Viognier only)
    - Saint-Joseph (Majority red, some white)
    - Crozes-Hermitage (Majority red, some white)
    - Hermitage (Majority red, some white)
    - Cornas (100% Red)
    - Saint-Péray (Still and Sparkling Roussanne and Marsanne, white)

## Southern Rhône

- Location
  - Extends from Montélimar to Nimes. Vineyards don't always flank the river as in the north, but spread out up to 50 miles from the actual river bed
- Climate
  - Mediterranean
    - Arid, sunny climate with long hot summers and moderate, wet winters
- Geology
  - Landscape is comprised of broad rocky plains and rugged mountain terrain
  - Few things grow here, with the exception of the vine, due to the soil being so rocky and infertile
  - The Southern Rhône possesses five principal soil types:
    - Galets (rounded river stones) – give rise to dense, layered, powerful wines
    - Shingle Clay – Delivers powerful tannic, age-worthy wines
    - Limestone – Crafts long-lived wines with distinct minerality, good acidity, and sleek, polished tannins
    - Red Sandstone – Gives rise to wines that are full of black fruit, spice and leather
    - Loess/molasses (windblown silts and sands) – Crafts bright whites, rosés and simple reds that are fruit-forward

- Grape Varieties
  - White Grapes
    - Grenache Blanc, Clairette, Viognier, Bourboulenc, Roussanne, Marsanne, Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains, Piquepoul Blanc, Ugni Blanc, Picardan, Rolle (Vermentino), Maccabeu (Macabeo in Spain), Pascal
- Red Grapes
  - Grenache Noir, Syrah, Mourvèdre (Monastrell in Spain), Carignan, Cinsault, Counoise, Muscardin, Vaccarèse, Piquepoul Noir, Terret Noir, Calitor, Grenache Gris, Clairette Rosé
- Wine Styles
  - Whites can be dry or sweet fortified
    - Primary grape is Grenache Blanc with Clairette, but all can be used
  - Reds can be dry or sweet fortified
    - Primary grape is Grenache Noir with Syrah and Mourvèdre, but all can be used
  - Rosés are still and dry
- Appellations
  - CDR AOC and CDR Village AOC discussed above
  - Cru AOCs
    - Vinsobres (100% Red)
    - Rasteau (dry Red, plus Red, White and Rosé VDN)
    - Gigondas (95% Red, 5% Rosé)
    - Vacqueyras (98% Red, 2% White and Rosé)
    - Beauges-de-Venise (Red)
    - Châteauneuf-du-Pape (95% Red, 5% White)
    - Lirac (80% Red, 15% Rosé, 5% White)
    - Tavel (100% Rosé)
  - Vins Doux Naturels (fortified wines made in a similar method, but different style, as Port)
    - Muscat de Beauges de Venise AOC – made from Muscat Blanc à Petite Grains variety
    - Rasteau AOC – made from Grenache Noir, Grenache Gris and Grenache Blanc

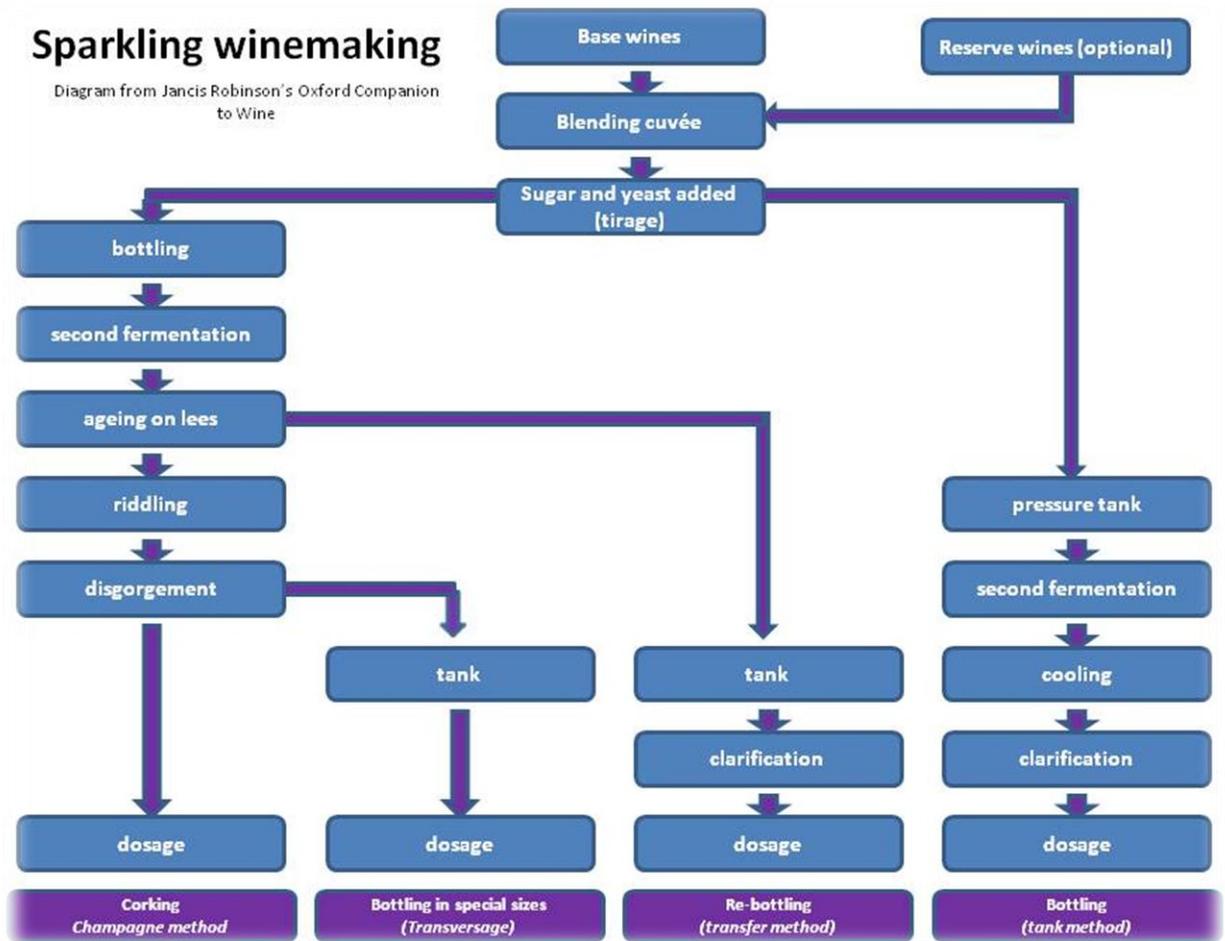
## Champagne

### - History

- Champagne's location was at the crossroads of two major trading routes: east-west between Paris and the Rhineland and north-south between Flanders and Switzerland
  - Brought the region prosperity and fame
  - Made the region in the forefront of many battles and occupations throughout history
- First mention of vines in the area was at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century
  - The wines were known then as *vin de Reims* and *vins de la rivière* after the city and the Marne River respectively
  - The Marne River provided the vital east-west trade route via the Seine with Paris
  - Vin de Champagne' first mentioned in the 17<sup>th</sup> century
  - The First Sparkle
    - Last half of 17<sup>th</sup> century, wine-making in the region greatly improved under the leading clerical winemakers, led by Dom Perignon, who transformed Hautvillers, above Epernay, into the region's leading center of viticultural progress
    - In the cold winters normal in the region, the wines had a tendency to stop fermentation and then to start re-fermenting in the spring.
      - Was detested by Dom Perignon, who was a perfectionist and viewed this as a fault
    - Was considered a nuisance especially because, until the development of stronger bottles by the British, half the bottles would violently burst!
      - British started using coal to make bottles which burned hotter and could make bottles to withstand the intense pressures better
- Over the next half century, into the 1950s, Champagne suffered a number of problems
  - Important Russian market collapsed in 1917, and two World Wars, separated by the slump, closed the export markets on which the region depended so heavily.
  - Phylloxera arrived in the region in 1890 which intensified competition from other **sparkling** wines, from Germany and other French winemakers
  - Fraud
- Modern Champagne industry we know today was born in the first 40 years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

- First notable step was taken by Madame Clicquot when one of her employees developed the system of pupitres to assist in the Remuage process
    - Corks were improved, and a corking machine developed
    - Within a generation Champagne had become dominated by a number of Internationally famous brand names
      - Messrs Krug, Bollinger, and Roederer from the Rhineland showed greater commercial savvy than the local merchants, only a few of whom, apart from Madame Clicquot and Monsieur Moët, survived
  - Since the 1950s, the region has enjoyed unprecedented prosperity with sales quadrupling.
  - Traditional export markets, such as Britain, the US, Belgium, and Switzerland, took increasing quantities.
    - But the French market has always consumed far more Champagne than all export markets
- Traditional Method
- Pick whole bunches by hand
  - Whole-bunch pressing – gentle extraction of juice with minimal phenolics
  - First ferment – usually rapid and can be warm and oxidative, as fruit and fermentation esters are generally not desired
  - Blending – of parcels and often of reserve wines
  - Bottling and Tirage – addition of wine, sugar and yeast
    - In Champagne it is known as Liquer de Tirage
  - Second Fermentation – slow (between 4-8 weeks)
    - Around 24 g/l sugar creates a pressure of 5-6 atm of CO<sub>2</sub>, and extra 1.2 – 1.3% abv
  - Lees aging – Minimum of 15 months (NV) and 36 months (Vintage)
  - Riddling – Moves yeast plug into neck of bottle
    - Usually by Gyropalette (takes about 3 days) but can be by hand still (takes 6 weeks or more)
    - This may be followed by a period of aging sur point (with neck pointing downwards)
  - Disgorging – usually done mechanically by freezing the bottle neck, and allowing the internal pressure to push the slushy yeast plug out
  - Topping up and Dosage – Determines the sweetness of the final wine

- May be followed by aging on second cork, which helps the Dosage integrate with the wine
- Note – for formats larger than Jeroboams, and most quarter bottles, the wine is transferred to a tank after disgorgement and bottled under pressure.
  - The Dosage is added in tank
  - Called the Transversage Method



## The Champagne Region

- Location
  - North East France just an hour and a half by car north east from Paris.
  - Most northerly growing region in France
  - The three famous towns of Champagne are Reims, Épernay, and Ay
- The Five Major Districts of Champagne and the Primary Variety Grown
  - Montagne de Reims
    - Pinot Noir
  - Vallée de la Marne
    - Pinot Meunier
  - Côte des Blancs
    - Chardonnay
  - Côte de Sézanne
    - Chardonnay
  - Aube
    - Pinot Noir
- Climate
  - Continental Climate with influence from the Atlantic
  - Cold and wet; producers walk a knife's edge
  - Stretches the duration of the vine's growth cycle to the limit, making frost a major problem during spring and autumn
  - Champagne is usually a blend of vineyards, grapes, and wine due to the uncertainty of the climate
- Soils
  - Montagne de Reims, Vallée de la Marne, Côte des Blancs, and Côte de Sézanne are all situated on a porous chalk subsoil
  - The pure-white chalk in the soil drains well, yet retains enough water for the vines to survive a drought
  - The chalk's high active lime content encourages the vines to produce grapes that have relatively high acid when they become ripe.

- Champagne Styles

- Non-Vintage – A blend of several years (in practice, the majority of most blends come from a single year, boosted by some reserve wines).
  - This is a Champagne producer’s most important wine.
  - A master blenders
  - Minimum 15 months total aging for NV Champagne (of which 12 months must on the lees)
- Vintage – can use base wines from a single year only.
  - 20% of every vintage is held in reserve for NV production
  - Minimum of 36 months total aging for vintage Champagne
- Rosé – may be made by skin contact or by adding red wine (more common). Both methods are suitable for top-quality rosé
- Blanc de Blancs
  - Literally meaning ‘white of whites’
  - Produced entirely from white Chardonnay grapes and possesses the greatest aging potential of all Champagnes
- Blanc de Noirs
  - Literally meaning ‘white of blacks’
  - Made entirely from black grapes (Pinot Noir and/or Meunier)

Label Language	Sweetness Level
Brut Nature/Sans Dosage	No sugar added
Extra Brut	Extremely dry - <6 g/l or 0.6% RS
Brut	Dry - <15 g/l or 1.5% RS
Extra Dry/Extra Sec	Off dry - 12-20 g/l or 1.2 – 2.0% RS
Sec	Slightly sweet - 17-35 g/l or 1.7-3.5%
Demi-Sec	Sweet - 35-50 g/l or 3.5-5.0% RS
Doux	Very sweet - >50 g/l or 5.0% RS

## Types of Producers

- NM – Négociant-Manipulant
  - Traditional referred to as a 'house', an NM is a producer that is allowed to purchase grapes and vins clairs in large volumes from growers, cooperatives, and other houses.
  - A few houses, such as Bollinger and Louis Roederer, own sufficient vineyards to supply as much as two-thirds of their own needs, whereas some own none or hardly at all.
- RM – Récoltant-Manipulant
  - Grower-producer, or grower.
  - In principle, a grower is not allowed to buy grapes or vin clairs, as the Champagne sold under their label is supposed to be 100% from their own vineyards. However, growers are legally permitted to purchase grapes or wines from each other, up to a maximum of 5% of their total production. The reasoning for this is to enable those with exclusively Chardonnay vines to buy Pinot Noir for the production of rosé.
- CM – Coopérative-Manipulant
  - A cooperative of growers that makes and sells Champagne under one or more brands that it owns
- RC – Récoltant- Coopérateur
  - A grower who delivers grapes to a cooperative and, in part or full payment, receives back ready-made champagne, which they sell under their own name
  - Although more than 4,000 RC brands are registered, they are seldom encountered even in France
- SR – Société- de Récoltants
  - A publicly registered firm set up by two or more growers – often related – who share premises to make and market their Champagne under more than one brand
- ND – Négociant-Distributeur
  - A company that sells Champagne it did not make to others, who then retail it.
- MA – Marque d'Acheteur
  - A brand name owned by the purchaser, such as a restaurant, supermarket, or wine merchant

## Loire Valley

- Location
  - The wine regions along the Loire River valley run from around Pouilly-sur-Loire in the middle-north of the country and follow the river west to where it dumps into the Atlantic Ocean at the city of Nantes, around 3 hour car drive north of Bordeaux.
- Climate
  - Extremely varied, with the Central Vineyards around Pouilly-sur-Loire seeing the extremes of a fully continental climate, and getting progressively more maritime as the river approaches the Atlantic Ocean and the warmer Gulf Stream. The city of Nantes at the Loire delta is moderate and wet.
- Geology
  - Varied - See Appellations
- Grape Varieties
  - Major White Grapes
    - Melon de Bourgogne
    - Chenin Blanc
    - Sauvignon Blanc
  - Major Red Grapes
    - Cabernet Franc
- Wine Styles
  - Greatest diversity of styles of all the French appellations
    - Still through all types of sparkling wines
    - Bone dry and searingly tart to the unctuously sweet Liqueureux styles
    - Water white in color through to deep purple hues
- Appellations (Divided into 4 Main Regions)
  - Central Vineyards
    - Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé
      - Location: upstream from the city of Orleans and facing each other on opposite sides of the river
        - Sancerre on the left bank and Pouilly on the left
      - Climate: Continental with short hot summers and long cold winters
      - Geology: dominated by clay or limestone, topped with gravel and flinty pebbles
        - Pouilly-Fumé has a higher concentration of flint in the limestone soils and shows itself in the wine by exhibiting a smoky flavor, or whiff of gunflint
      - Grape Varieties: Mostly Sauvignon Blanc; Sancerre can be red from the Pinot Noir grape
      - Wine Styles:
        - Sancerre Sauvignon is bone dry, highly aromatic with an intense flavor of gooseberries and peaches (in ripe years)
        - Pouilly Sauvignon is crisp with gooseberry flavor and can have a smoky flintiness due to different soils from Sancerre.
    - Other Appellations in the Central Vineyards area
      - Cotes du Gien Cosne-Sur-Loire AOC
      - Coteaux du Giennois AOC

- Menetou-Salon AOC
    - Pouilly-Sur-Loire AOC
    - Quincy AOC
    - Reuilly AOC
    - Vins de L'Orleanais AOC
  - Touraine (downriver from the Central Vineyards)
    - Relevant Appellation
      - Vouvray
        - Location: upstream from the city of Tours on the right (north) bank of the river and directly across from the Montlouis AOC
        - Climate: Continental but with some moderating affects coming from the Atlantic Ocean, not to mention the river
        - Geology: clay and gravel over limestone 'Tuffeau', a soft limestone with particularly good drainage properties
        - Grape Varieties: Chenin Blanc
        - Wine Styles: white wine only; bone dry to lusciously sweet; still to fully sparkling
          - Styles depend heavily on vintage characteristics
            - Example – in riper vintages, the wines are full bodied and rich with more sweet wine made. In cooler vintages more still wine and sparkling is made
    - Other Major Regions in the Touraine
      - Touraine AOC
      - Montlouis AOC
      - Chinon AOC
      - Bourgueil AOC
- Anjou-Saumur
  - Location: downstream from Touraine surrounding the towns of Anjou and Saumur
    - Climate: Atlantic Ocean influence with light-rainfall, warm summers, and mild autumns. Frost can still be a problem (especially in Savennières)
    - Geology: in the west and around Layon, the soil is schist with dark, shallow topsoils. In the east, there is chalk-tufa soil around Saumur producing lighter wines, while the shale and gravel in Saumur-Champigny favors Cabernet Franc
    - Grape Varieties: Chenin Blanc and Cabernet Franc
  - Major Regions in Anjou-Saumur
    - Anjou
    - Saumur
    - Saumur-Champigny
    - Coteaux du Layon
    - Savennières

- Pays Nantais
  - Location: vineyards around the down of Nantes just before the Loire River empties itself into the Atlantic Ocean
  - Climate: Extreme maritime. Mild and damp but winters can be harsh and spring frosts can be a problem. Summers are generally warm and sunny, although there is plenty of rain
  - Geology: light and stony with varying proportions of sand, clay, and gravel
  - Grape Varieties: Melon de Bourgogne
  - Relevant Appellations
    - Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine Sur Lie
      - Location: immediately east/south-east from the city of Nantes
      - Grape Variety: Melon de Bourgogne (Muscadet)
      - Wine Style: White wine only. Bone-dry to dry and light in body. Best should have fruit, acidity, and elegance with a hint of yeasty character from aging on the lees (Sur Lie). Typically a high intensity of minerality with more neutral intensity of fruit
      - Note: the term Sur Lie may be used if the wine comes from one of the three sub-regions (Coteaux de la Loire, Grandlieu and Sèvre-et-Maine. Sur lie wines are aged on their lees over the winter, and are bottled directly off the fine lees (without filtering) between March 1 and November 30 of the year following the harvest. The process adds complexity, richness and a slight sparkle to the finished wines.
  - Other Appellations In Pays Nantais
    - Muscadet AOC
    - Muscadet des Coteaux de la Loire AOC
    - Muscadet Cotes de Grandlieu AOC

## Provence

- Location
  - Southeast France, between the Rhone delta and the Italian border
- Climate
  - Strong Mediterranean. Mild winters, hot summers that stretch into sunny autumns. Heavy rain falls over a limited number of days in the winter months
- Geology
  - Complex soils with sand, red sandstone, and granite being the most common
- Grape Varieties
  - Variety of different varieties with the most common being Carignan, Cinsault, Grenache, Mourvèdre (all reds), Clairette, Ugni Blanc, and Vermentino (all whites)
    - 'Improving varieties' such as Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon are seen more and more
- Wine Styles
  - Varied, from dry whites to deep reds and many different rosé wines
- Relevant Appellations
  - Côtes de Provence
    - Location: large, varied region that covers most of the eastern portion of Provence and has 3 sub-regions within its borders that have distinct terroirs
      - Fréjus – in the eastern part of the region, not from the city of Cannes
      - La Londe – very center-south, where the foothills of the Massif des Maures meet those of the La Londe les Maures
      - Sainte-Victoire – western borders of the region sandwiched between Coteaux Varois and Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence. It is north east from the city of Marseille.
    - Grape Varieties: Grenache, Syrah, Cinsault, and Mourvèdre must comprise at least 80% of any blend in red and rosé Côte de Provence
    - Wine Styles: Most of the production is dry rosé but red wine is starting to cut into rosé percentages.
- Other Appellation in Provence
  - Les Baux de Provence AOC
  - Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence AOC
  - Coteaux Varois AOC
  - Cassis AOC
  - Palette AOC
  - Bandol AOC
  - Bellet AOC

## ***The French Appellation System***

### *Appellation Hierarchy (Highest to Lowest)*

- *AOC – Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée*
  - Represents the highest rung on the French wine quality pyramid
  - The Institut National des Appellations d’Origine (INAO) governs the zone of production, grape varieties, viticultural practices (such as pruning method, planting density, training system, right to irrigate), crop yield, minimum alcohol level, winemaking practices (such as specifics with regard to fortified wine production) and labeling practices.
- *Vin de Pays – ‘Country Wine’*
  - There are over 150 VdP, each conveying some type of identification market. These can be:
    - Regional, as in Vin de Pays d’Oc, which covers the whole of the Languedoc-Roussillon region of southern France
    - Departmental, such as Vin de Pays de l’Ardèche, which is an area within the Rhône Valley
      - Historical/geographical, such as Vin de Pays des Côtes de Gascogne in southwest France
  - Vin de Pays must come from a specified zone of production, be made from authorized grape varieties, achieve a prescribed minimal alcohol level, and obtain tasting panel approval.
  - This tier is intended to benefit both consumers and wine producers. It provides consumers with clarity about a wine’s provenance, while producers are empowered to make wine outside the constraints of traditional AOC laws.
    - The most obvious freedoms are the higher permitted yields and a more comprehensive list of approved grape varieties.
    - Most significant in commercial terms is the fact that the wines may be varietals and labeled as such. This has proved beneficial – particularly in New World markets, which are much more focused on varietals than those in Europe
- *Vin de France – Table Wine*
  - The lowest rung on the French wine quality pyramid
  - Vin de France wines are those which do not meet the criteria stipulated by the AOC or VDP appellation laws
    - For example, if a winemaker produces a wine from grapes sourced outside the delimited production area, or if vinification techniques used do not conform to the rules of the local appellation.

- Wines must be made from grapes sourced exclusively from French vineyards and vintage and region statements on the label are optional

