

The Wine Room Glossary

Common Terms Used to Describe Wines

Acidity: the liveliness and crispness noted in wine.

Aroma: the scent of the grape, as well as the smell of wine, especially young wines (different than “bouquet”).

Climate: the taste of wine is affected by climate, the presence of adequate sun, heat and water is all vital to the healthy growth and development of grapevines during the growing season.

Ferment: the biochemical process performed by yeast as they convert sugar into ethanol.

Robust: full-bodied, full-flavoured and high in alcohol content.

Screwcap: a metal cap that screws onto threads on the neck of a bottle as a modern Alternative to cork.

Tannins: chemical compounds in wine that can affect the color, aging ability and Texture of the wine. Tannins are found in the skin, stems, and seeds of wine grapes.

Terroir or Sense of Place: special characteristics of the wine including geography, geology and climate.

Varietals: describes a wine made primarily from a single named grape variety like Chardonnay or Merlot.

Vintage: the year in which the grapes were harvested – generally when the vintage date is printed on a label, it signifies that all the grapes used to make the wine were harvested that year.

Oak: choice of wood for making wine barrels. An oaky wine can have smoky and toasty flavours. Generally a full-bodied wine – i.e. chardonnay.

Wine Varietals

Champagne:

NV: a blend of wine from the produce of two or more years.

Brut: the designation of a dry sparkling wine.

Blanc de Blanc: French term that is used to designate champagnes made exclusively

from Chardonnay grapes.

Prestige Cuvée: a proprietary blended wine that is considered to be the top of a producer's range.

Cabernet Sauvignon: powerful, tannic red grape that is the base grape for many red Bordeaux that is capable of aging for decades.

Chardonnay: a popular choice for wine, Chardonnay boasts a range of flavours including buttered oak overtones to fresh, fruit flavours of apple, pear, tropical, citrus and melon.

Botrytis (dessert wines): a beneficial mould that causes grapes to shrivel and sugars to concentrate, resulting in sweet, unctuous wines; common botrytis wines include French Sauternes, Hungarian Tokay, and German beerenauslese.

Blends – GSM, Cab blend, Shiraz Blend, SSBs: the process whereby two or more grape varieties are combined after separate fermentation; common blends include Shiraz blend, Sauvignon Blanc Sémillon, Cab Sav.

Merlot: originating from the Bordeaux region of France, it typically produces a soft, medium-bodied red wine with juicy fruit flavours.

Nebbiolo: grape variety grown predominantly in Italy, typically characterised by the flavours of sweet fruits like blackberry and cherry.

Pinot Gris (vs Pinot Grigio): a white wine that is usually a medium full-bodied white wine with dominating flavours of pear, lemon, apple and melon.

Pinot Grigio: the flavours range from melon to pear and sometimes a subtle tropical or citrus fruit. Often there is a honey or smoky flavour component as well. Typically a pal, straw-like yellow colour with a texture that is very smooth and silk like. This is Italy's top selling wine variety.

Pinot Noir: the prime red grape of Burgundy that is typically a lighter-bodied, fruit-forward red wine with flavours reminiscent of sweet red berries, plums, tomatoes, cherries and a notable earthy or wood-like flavor.

Riesling: originating from Germany's Rhein and Mosel river valleys, it's a white grape variety that can be produced in both dry to sweet variations as well as light to full-bodied. Their flavours can be highly aromatic with apple, peach and pear at the forefront mixed with delicate floral undertones.

Rosé: French for "pink" and used to describe a category of refreshing wines that are pink in colour, with a pleasant fruity taste that carries a light berry flavour.

Sauvignon Blanc: usually a dry white wine with distinctive herbaceous qualities that is available as a single varietal or as a blend with Sémillon.

Sémillon: one of Bordeaux's big white wine grapes. While Sémillon is the major

contributing grape in Bordeaux's sweet wines, it's frequently blended with Sauvignon Blanc to create a dry, white wine known simply as Bordeaux blanc.

Shiraz :You say "Shiraz" I say "Syrah" – it's the same grape, in France it's known and grown as Syrah. However, in Australia and South Africa it goes by "Shiraz". This is one of Australia's well-regarded wine varieties typically from The Barossa, Hunter Valley and McLaren Vale. It's a medium to full-bodied wine that is a deep purple in colour.

Tawny (Port?): a sweet, fortified wine made typically from the Douro Valley of Portugal; variations include Vintage, Tawny, Late Bottled Vintage, Ruby, White and others.

Tempranillo: dominant grape varietal in Spain. It produces a medium to full-bodied red wine with lower acidity and full-fruit flavour characteristics. They have flavours of plum, cherry, and strawberry with earthy undertones.

Verdelho: fresh and flavourful with a balanced palate of fruit and a smooth buttery finish.

Vioignier: highly aromatic varietal with a flavour profile that can include peach, apricot, nectarine, lychee and musk.

Wine Regions

Margaret River: a region in Western Australia made up predominately of boutique-sized wine producers.

Hunter Valley: located in New South Wales, it was one of the first wine regions planted in the early 19th Century. The climate is sub-tropical with distinctive maritime influences from the Pacific Ocean. The Hunter Valley is one of Australia's hottest and wettest wine regions.

Barossa: the wine industry of the Barossa Valley in South Australia was founded by German settlers unlike the rest of Australia which was heavily influenced by the British. The Barossa Valley has a continental climate but its series of transverse valleys and sloping hills produces a wide range of mesoclimates.

Langhorne Creek: A town and wine region in South Australia, traditionally a red wine-growing district for producing outstanding Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz.

Granite Belt: found in the Great Dividing Range, the Granite Belt is distinguished by its elevation, which makes it the coolest part of Queensland. The elevation and its relatively low rainfall make it attractive for viticulture.

Frogmore Creek: Frogmore Creek in Tasmania produces genuine cool climate wines. Due to the southerly latitudes and the strong influence of the surrounding oceans, it allows grapes to ripen relatively slowly over a longer period that results in fruit that has more intense flavours, more acidity and better balance.

Central Otago: the most southerly wine producing region in the world, Central Otago in New Zealand has a continental microclimate characterised by hot, dry summers, cool autumns and crisp, cold winters.

Mornington Peninsula: found in Victoria, the Mornington Peninsula is a notable wine region producing small quantities of high quality wine from around 60 wineries. The cool, maritime climate of the Peninsula is particularly noted for pinot noir.

Coonawarra: one of the most famous terroirs in the New World boasting terra rossa soil, Coonawarra in South Australia. The area is known for the Cabernet Sauvignon wines, full of plum and blackcurrant fruit, produced on its “terra rossa” soil.

Rutherglen: a major wine producing area in Victoria with 17 wineries all located within a short drive from the town centre. Yielding the best fortified wines of which are highly regarded by wine critics, the muscat and tokay styles are sometimes described as having no worldwide equal.

Yarra Valley: a region surrounding the Yarra River in Victoria, the area’s relatively cool climate makes it particularly suited to the production of high-quality chardonnay, pinot noir and sparkling wines.