

# Wine 101 Cheat Sheet

## What makes 1 wine different from another?

### Type of grape

- Each type of grape has unique physical characteristics (thickness of skin, acid content), growing requirements (amount of heat, sun, water, and time needed to fully ripen), and aromas/flavors (strawberries? black current? lemons?).
- Most of the world's wines are made from 6 grapes (3 whites and 3 reds):

Riesling  
 Sauvignon Blanc  
 Chardonnay

Pinot Noir  
 Merlot  
 Cabernet Sauvignon

### Climate and geography

Variations in growing conditions greatly affect the resulting wine. This is the concept of *terroir*.

These factors include:

- Amount of sunlight
- Amount of rainfall
- Type of soil
- Altitude (see the Wine Altitude Cheat Sheet)
- Topography
- Type of yeast in the air in that region (if wild yeasts are used)

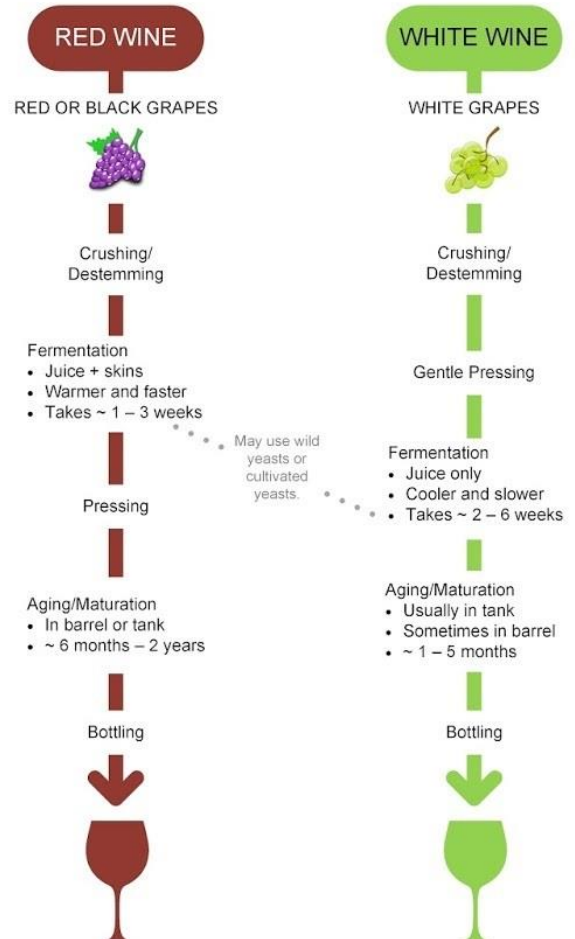
### Winemaker choices

- Hand harvesting or machine harvesting?
- Should it be sweet or dry?
- Still or sparkling?
- Oaked or unoaked?
- What type of bottle closure? (natural cork, synthetic cork, screw cap)

Type of Grape	White: Riesling Sauvignon Blanc Chardonnay	Red: Pinot Noir Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon
Climate/ Geography	Cooler climate: Lighter body Higher acid Lower alcohol Earthier aroma/flavor	Warmer climate: Fuller body Lower acid Higher alcohol Fruitier aroma/flavor
Winemaker Choices	Sweet or dry? Still or sparkling? Oaked or unoaked? Bottle closure?	

## How wine is made: Fermentation

- Sugar + yeast → alcohol + carbon dioxide.
- Most grapes, both red and white, produce white juice. The color in red wine comes from skin contact.
- Rosés are pale red due to less skin contact.



## Major components of wine

### Acid:

- Comes from the grapes.
- As grapes ripen, sugar levels increase and acids decrease.
- Winemakers may add acid during vinification.
- High-acid wines are often described as "crisp."
- Acid creates a mouth-watering feel.
- White wines usually have stronger acidity than reds.

### Tannin:

- Comes from the skins and seeds of the grapes.
- Reds only – white wines have no tannin. Rosés have a little.
- Creates a drying sensation in your mouth and may taste bitter.

### Alcohol:

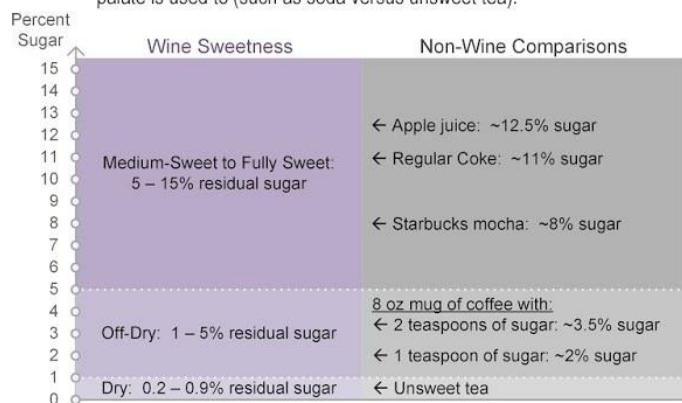
- Comes from the fermentation process (sugar → alcohol).
- Levels can be adjusted during vinification.
- Higher alcohol creates a more viscous, smooth mouth feel.
- Can create a slight perception of sweetness.

### Sugar:

- Comes from the grapes and converted to alcohol during vinification.
- Sugar may be added to the juice to increase alcohol or sweetness.
- Sugar remaining after vinification is called "residual sugar."
- More sugar creates a more viscous, smooth mouth feel.

## Sweet, dry, or fruity?

- Basic levels of sweetness are dry, off-dry, medium-sweet, and sweet. These are based on the amount of residual sugar.
- Sweetness and fruitiness can easily be confused. All wines are fruity (to varying degrees) because they're made from fruit. However, most wines are dry (not sweet).
- Levels of sweetness can be perceived differently, based on what your palate is used to (such as soda versus unsweet tea).



# ITALIAN WINE CHEAT SHEET

## Italian Wine Basics

- 2<sup>nd</sup> largest worldwide producer of wine (after France).
- Mild Mediterranean climate with Continental influences in the far north. Mountains run down the middle of the country.
- Many local varieties of *Vitis vinifera* grape (estimated 800-1000).

## Classification/Labeling: The Denomination System

- System based on geographic regions with requirements for grape variety, yields, and winemaking techniques. Smaller region usually means better quality.
- **DOP** (Protected Designation of Origin): Encompasses the **DOC** (controlled) and **DOCG** (controlled and guaranteed) levels. Italy has 300+.
- **IGP** (Protected Geographical Indication): Formerly known as **IGT**. Italy has 200+.
- Table wine, known as "varietal" or "generic." No geographic indication.



## Top Grape Varieties

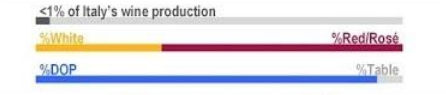
Reds 54%	
Sangiovese	23%
Montepulciano	11%
Merlot	9%
Barbera	6%
Nero d'Avola	5%
Whites 45%	
Trebbiano	17%
Catarratto	11%
Chardonnay	6%
Glera	6%
Pinot Grigio	5%

## Terms

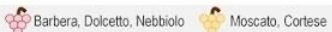
- Bianco: white
- Rosso: red
- Rosato: pink or rosé
- Classico: the historic center of a wine region, often encompassing the best vineyard sites (e.g., Chianti Classico)
- Riserva: wine that has a higher alcohol content and meets certain aging requirements (usually longer aging)
- Spumante: fully sparkling
- Frizzante: lightly sparkling
- Appassimento process/Passito style: making wine from semi-dried grapes

## Details on Major Regions (These are political regions, but some are also DOCs or IGP.s.)

### Aosta Valley



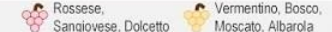
### Piedmont



- Barolo DOCG & Barbaresco DOCG: big reds from Nebbiolo
- Gavi DOCG: light, citrusy whites from Cortese
- Moscato d'Asti and Asti DOCGs: sweet, sparkling, made in the tank method from Moscato grapes



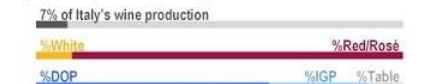
### Liguria



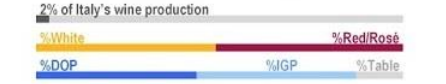
### Tuscany



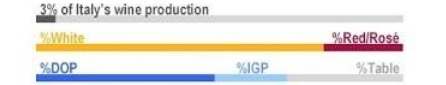
- Chianti and Chianti Classico DOCGs: variety of styles from Sangiovese (see Chianti Cheat Sheet)
- Brunello di Montalcino DOCG: big wine from Sangiovese
- Rosso di Montalcino DOC: "Baby Brunello"
- Bolgheri DOC: important DOC for "Super Tusans" (blends of Sangiovese with non-Italian grapes)
- Vino Nobile di Montepulciano DOCG: Sangiovese
- Vin Santo: red or white, sweet, made from partially dried grapes, aged and partially oxidized



### Umbria



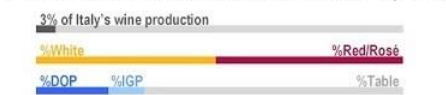
### Lazio



### Campania



- Taurasi DOCG: "Barolo of the south," made from Aglianico



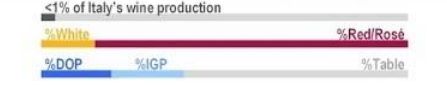
### Lombardy



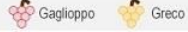
- Franciacorta DOC: traditional method sparkling wine



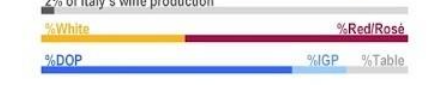
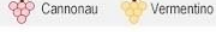
### Basilicata



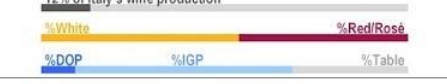
### Calabria



### Sardinia



### Sicily



### Trentino-Alto Adige



- Valadige DOC: important region for Pinot Grigio



### Friuli-Venezia Giulia



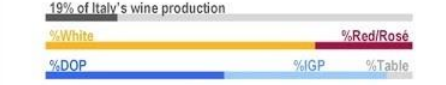
- Important region for Pinot Grigio



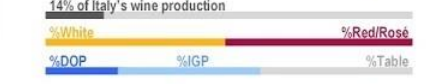
### Veneto



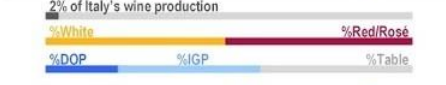
- Important region for Pinot Grigio
- 2 DOCGs for Prosecco, a tank-method sparkling wine made from Glera
- Valpolicella and Valpolicella Classico DOC: blends dominated by Corvina
- Soave and Soave Classico DOC: Garganega grape
- Recioto di Soave DOCG: sweet white passito wine
- Amarone della Valpolicella DOC: dry red passito
- Recioto della Valpolicella DOG: sweet red passito



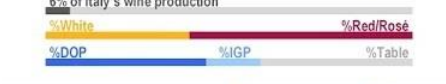
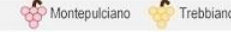
### Emilia-Romagna



### Marche



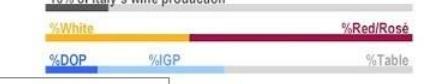
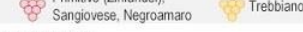
### Abruzzo



### Molise



### Puglia



# CALIFORNIA WINE CHEAT SHEET

## MAJOR REGIONS and AVAs

### North Coast AVA

- North Coast AVA encompasses 45 smaller AVAs in 6 counties.
- Mendocino County** has 10 AVAs, including Mendocino and Anderson Valley.
- Lake County** has 5 AVAs, including Clear Lake.
- Sonoma County**

- Cooler and more diverse than Napa County.
- 66% of production is red wines, focusing on Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir. Chardonnay is the most important white grape.
- AVAs (largest to smallest): Northern Sonoma AVA, Sonoma Valley AVA, Alexander Valley AVA, Russian River Valley AVA, Dry Creek Valley AVA, Sonoma Coast AVA, Los Carneros AVA (also in Napa County), Knights Valley AVA, Green Valley AVA, Chalk Hill AVA, Sonoma Mountain AVA, Bennett Valley AVA, Rockpile AVA

### Napa County

- This county's share of California's wine industry makes up:
  - 10% of vineyard acreage
  - 4% of production (low yields)
  - ~ 50% of sales by dollar value
- 75% of production is red wines, with a focus on Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. 25% is whites, focusing on Chardonnay.
- AVAs (largest to smallest): Napa Valley AVA surrounds: Oakville AVA, Los Carneros AVA (also in Sonoma County), Yountville AVA, Oak Knoll AVA, Rutherford AVA, Calistoga AVA, Atlas Peak AVA, Stag's Leap AVA, Mt. Veeder AVA, Spring Mountain AVA, St. Helena AVA, Chiles Valley AVA, Howell Mountain AVA, Diamond Mountain AVA, Wild Horse Valley AVA

### Solano County

- Solano County has 2 AVAs.
- Marin County** shares several AVAs with other counties.

### Central Coast AVA

- Central Coast AVA encompasses 28 smaller AVAs in 9 counties.
- San Francisco Bay AVA spans 8 of them.

### Contra Costa County

- Includes portions of the San Francisco Bay AVA.

### Alameda County

- Livermore Valley AVA

### San Mateo County

- Santa Cruz Mountains AVA\* (also in Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties)

### Santa Cruz County

- Ben Lomond Mt. AVA\*

### Santa Clara County

- San Ysidro District AVA
- Santa Clara Valley AVA (also in San Benito County)

### San Benito County

- Cienega Valley AVA
- Lime Kiln Valley AVA
- Mt. Harlan AVA
- Pacheco Pass AVA (in multiple counties)
- Paicines AVA
- San Benito AVA

### Monterey County

- Arroyo Seco AVA
- Carmel Valley AVA
- Chalone AVA (in multiple counties)
- Hames Valley AVA
- Monterey AVA
- San Antonio Valley AVA
- San Bernabe AVA
- San Lucas AVA
- Santa Lucia Highlands AVA

### San Luis Obispo County

- Paso Robles AVA
- Edna Valley AVA
- Arroyo Grande Valley AVA
- York Mountain AVA

### Santa Barbara County

- Santa Maria Valley AVA (also in San Luis Obispo)
- Santa Rita Hills AVA
- Santa Ynez Valley AVA
- Happy Canyon AVA

\*surrounded by, but not considered part of, the larger Central Coast AVA

### South Coast AVA

- Warm region producing a wide variety of grapes.
- Covers parts of 5 counties: Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego.
- The largest AVA is Temecula Valley.

## CLASSIFICATION and LABELLING

Wines may be labeled with the state, county, or AVA. **American Viticultural Areas (AVAs)** are legally recognized wine regions, distinguished by geographic features.

The percentage of wine that must come from the place, grape, or vintage stated on the label is:

- State – 100%
- County – 75%
- AVA – 85%
- Grape variety – 75%
- Vintage – 85% if naming the state or county; 95% if listing an AVA

## CALIFORNIA WINE BASICS

- 90% of U.S. wine is made in California.
- If it were its own country, California would be the 4<sup>th</sup> largest wine producer in the world.
- More than 100 official wine regions (AVAs).
- Broadly Mediterranean climate, but lots of variation across the state. Coastal areas are cooler and inland areas are warmer.
- Cooler areas tend to produce the best wine.

## MAJOR GRAPE VARIETIES

(as of 2014, by acreage)

### Reds 67%

Cabernet Sauvignon	22%
Pinot Noir	20%
Merlot	4%
Petite Sirah	4%
Rubired	3%
Syrah	3%
Zinfandel	2%
Malbec	2%
Other Reds	7%

### Whites 33%

Pinot Gris	15%
Chardonnay	11%
French Colombard	3%
Sauvignon Blanc	< 1%
Other Whites	4%

### Klamath Mts. Region

- Contains 3 AVAs.

### Central Valley/Inland Areas

- Very warm climate.
- Large volume produced, but not top quality.
- Covers portions of 19 counties.
- Contains 17 AVAs. Most important is **Lodi AVA** in northern San Joaquin County, which focuses on Zinfandel, and Rhone and Spanish varieties.

### Sierra Foothills AVA

- Higher elevations.
- Produces mainly reds, with a focus on Zinfandel.
- Covers portions of 8 counties.
- Contains 5 AVAs.

