

MANY WORDS AROUND WINES !

Wine is the result of alcoholic fermentation of the must.

It can be still or sparkling like Champagne or Crémant de Limoux.

To help wine-waiters match different foods and wine, winegrowers make various types of wines:

- Whites range from dry and fruity, dry and balanced and sweet (from semi-dry to very sweet ones sometimes called noble rotted wines).
- Reds can be light and fruity, fleshy, powerful or sometimes full-bodied for the strongest!
- Rosés are generally dry; nevertheless Loire valley vineyards produce some appellations which give semi-dry rosé wines. Concerning their method of production, the lightest and clearest are called “grey wines” (from direct pressing), the others, “bled rosés”, are more intense (Bordeaux claret are among the most powerful). Note that, except for Champagne, it is forbidden to mix black and white grapes to make a rosé wine.

Depending on the grape colours used, you will sometimes read on the label “blanc de noirs” (white from black grapes) or “blanc de blancs” (white from white grapes)...these denomination feature more often on sparkling wines labels.

- As regards sparkling wine, you can note that, , white or rosé wines can be produced under appellations. Some are only fizzy, that means lightly sparkling like “Montlouis sur Loire pétillant”

Some wines require ageing, many must be drunk young.

French «terroirs» allow us to drink very exotic wines such as straw wines in Jura mainly (few in Rhône valley) and yellow wines such as Chateau-Chalon based on Savagnin grape variety. We can also find some wines grown on the lees, some appellation from the Pays Nantais for example.

Various fortified wines are famous as aperitif or can be paired with desserts.

In south of France, sweet natural wines like Banyuls Grand cru or Muscat de Beaumes de Venise are great and they are nearly brothers with liqueur wines from Gers and Charente departments (Floc de Gascogne and Pineau des Charentes).

As far as official types of appellations are concerned, in France, you will find:

- Appellation wines (AOVQPRD) which are AOC and AOVDQS ;
- Table wines which include “vins de pays” and “vins de tables = table wines”.

Nevertheless, you will soon discover on the French labels, three new European appellations which are AOP (“appellation d’origine protégée” - former appellation wines), IGP (“indication géographique protégée” - former “vin de pays”) and VSIG (“vin sans indications d’origine” – former “vin de table”).

France is a true mosaic of «terroirs» : Bordeaux (claret wines) and Burgundy are among the best but, anywhere you go, you will find wines ranging from very good to great from specific vineyards, often made with local grapes, like in the south-west (Len de lel, Petit Manseng or Tannat and Négrette...).

Enjoy your tasting!