

ALSACE WINE INFORMATION

Alsace Wine Information

Alsace produces excellent dry and sweet white wines. The vineyards spreads over 15 600 ha and produces around 1,15 million hl, exclusively bottled in "la flûte d'Alsace".

Alsace Geography

Alsace is situated north East of France. It is bordered on the West by the Vosges and on the East by the Rhine which separates it from Germany.

Alsace had a chaotic history between France and Germany. It put the region at the centre of Europe. Strasbourg, the main city of Alsace, hosts the European parliament.

Alsace is a lovely region with green hills and medieval villages. The Alsace wine road is one of the most beautiful wine sceneries in the world!

Wine making in Alsace

Alsatian vine growers have been producing wine since the Roman conquest.

Alsace production is very exclusive among French production. It is easy to understand it from the name of the grape-varieties used for the production of the wine, such as Riesling, Gewurztraminer or Sylvaner.

More than 90% of the wines in **Alsace** are white. They are all of them excellent refreshing white wines.

Alsace Wine Classification

The wine classification in **Alsace** includes as in Bordeaux and Burgundy a "grand cru" grade to distinguish the best of the best. The classification of wine in Alsace is as follow:

AOC Alsace Grand Cru (45 000hl): This is attributed only to wines that meet numerous criteria of quality: strict vineyard delimitation, lower than average yields, specific vineyard cultivation rules, minimum natural ripeness level, a blind tasting test before sale... The label must always show the vintage, and the name of one of the 51 terroirs that are entitled to Grand Cru status and may indicate the grape variety. Only the four "noble" Alsace grapes are permitted. AOC Alsace Grand Cru designates a selected vineyard site and endows the wine with its own specific character, expression and authenticity. Note that, recently, a fifth grape (Sylvaner) has been allowed to be used (for the ZOTZENBERG.)

AOC Alsace (851 000 hl) : The label generally shows the name of the grape, or a brand name or the term "Edelzwicker" or "Gentil". Some geographical indications may also appear, such as the name of the village or vineyard...

AOC Crémant d'Alsace (241 000hl)

A sparkling wine made the same way as Champagne with mainly Pinot Blanc grapes but also with Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, Riesling or Chardonnay.

Wines from Alsace

More than 90% of the wines in Alsace are white. Riesling and Gewurztraminer are among the best white wines in France. Wine makers raise them in a style you can't find anywhere else.

Riesling is the most elegant grape of the Alsace region. It gives dry, neat, graceful and well-balanced wine. Riesling is known to be the finest Alsace wine.

Riesling is brilliant with fish, shell-fish, poultry, cold meat and famous Alsatian dishes such as sauerkraut or smoked ham.

Gewurztraminer is the most typical Alsatian wine. "Gewürz" means "spicy" in German. It is the main characteristic of the Gewurztraminer. "Traminer" means "coming from Tramin", a small city of Italy located in the "Haut-Adige" where the grape is coming from. The wine is delicious, fruity and with strong aromas, a very perfumed and flowery bouquet. Thick and rich wine, which can age, Gewurztraminer is better with sauerkraut, sausages and the Alsatian cheese Munster, curry seasoned dishes, Chinese and Mexican cooking and other spiced dishes. A Gewurztraminer can even be served as a dessert wine.

Pinot Blanc is less aromatic than other white wines in Alsace. However Pinot Blanc balances between softness and freshness to make the lightest wine in Alsace. Pinot Blanc grape is often combined with Klevner and Auxerrois grapes which give more Alsatian flavour to the wine.

Pinot Gris is a full-body white wine. It is such a rich and round white that it can even replace red wine with a meat dish. However white meat is generally recommended with Pinot Gris. At its best, it can be served with Foie Gras!

Sylvaner is originally coming from Austria and was introduced in Alsace only 2 centuries ago. It gives a pleasant, fresh, fruity and dry wine. It is better young served as an aperitif or with fish.

Klevener de Heiligenstein

This less aromatic grape variety derived from the old Traminer or Savagnin Rose is much appreciated by gastronomes. It is grown only in a defined area in Heiligenstein and nearby.

Gentil and Edelzwicker

Gentil and Edelzwicker are names for harmonious blends of several white grape varieties (Gentil must contain at least 50% of Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Gris and/or Muscat).

Pinot noir

The only Alsace variety producing red or rosé wines, the wines have a typically cherry-like, fruity character. Matured in oak barrels, it gains additional structure and complexity.

Vendange(s) Tardive(s) or VT (late harvest)

These wines may only be made from the same 4 grape varieties authorised for AOC Grand Cru. The grapes are picked when over-ripe, often several weeks after the start of the harvest.

The aromatic character of the grape is enhanced by concentration and the development of "noble rot" (Botrytis Cinerea).

Sélection de Grains Nobles or SGN (noble rotted wines selection)

"Sélection de Grains Nobles", individual grapes are harvested in successive pickings. The character of the grape variety may be overshadowed by the concentration of natural sugar, resulting in powerful wines of great complexity and exceptional length on the palate, truly masterpieces of viticulture art.

Alsace wine and food

White wines from **Alsace** such as Riesling, Sylvaner and Pinot Blanc go very well with fish and seafood meals. Gewurztraminer is better with "foie gras", spiced dishes, and strong cheeses like the Munster or as a dessert wine.