



MERLOTTA
VIGNAIOLI DAL 1962

LESSON 3

OENOGRAPHY
(BY FRANCO DALMONTE)



ITALY

Asti: in this area a third of all Italian sparkling wines are produced

Langhe: this is one of the best known wine producing areas where the Nebbiolo grape leads the way for the great wines mentioned above, Barolo and Barbaresco. Another important grape of this area is Barbera from which a variety of different wines are produced, according to the subzone.

LOMBARDY

Of international standing in Lombardy there is the district of Franciacorta which, in an area of 900 hectares with Chardonnay, Pinot Bianco and Pinot Nero grapes, are produced high quality sparkling wines.

TUSCANY

Tuscany is the best known Italian wine producing region in the world, where the Sangiovese grape is the variety.

Chianti: one of the historic registered designated wines

Montalcino: the land of the famous Brunello

Montepulciano: the Sangiovese here takes the name of Prugnolo Gentile

Bolgheri: who has not heard of Sassicaia



As far as regards Italy, the wine producing country I obviously know the best, I will limit myself to some areas, even though the choice is a hard one.

PIEDMONT

The Nebbiolo district from which comes the great Barolo and Barbaresco but also the territory of Barbera, of Dolcetto and of Freisa for red wines and of Muscat and Arnese for white wines.

FRANCE

ALSACE



The winegrowing area of Alsace is situated along the River Rhine, on the flatlands of Alsace and protected to the West by the Vosges mountains, on a strip of land 100 kilometres long and barely 5 kilometres wide, with a prevalence of white grape varieties (95%).

Alsace is the only region in France in which the name of the grape is an integral part of wine label. The grape varieties of this region are divided into two groups:

grape base or blending wine: Chasselas and Kriepplè, used for the production of the basic Vin d'Alsace

noble grape varieties: Gewurztraminer, Tokay-Pinot Gris (or Tokay of Alsace, Pinot Grigio), Riesling Renano, Muscat, Sylvaner, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Noir

Characteristic of this area are the fruit-driven and flowery wines (usually never matured in wood and without malolactic fermentation)

BORDEAUX



Bordeaux is the most famous winegrowing area in the world. The wide variety of different soil types allows fairly varied differentiation of grape variety. Amongst the red grape varieties there are Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot (which make up the so called famous Bordeaux) and the by now little used Malbec and Petit Verdot. Amongst the whites Semillon, Sauvignon and Muscadelle.

The Bordeaux region is subdivided into areas with different characteristics:

The Medoc: in the North and the best known; with the celebrated districts of St-Estèphe, Pauillac, St-Julien and Margaux in the Haut-Medoc where are produced the most sought after and prestigious wines of the region.

The Graves: the production is more or less divided between red and white wines and the most famous district is Pessac-Lèognan

Sauternes and Barsac: are the two districts most famous for the production of botrytis affected wines, sweet wines made from grapes affected by the noble rot *Botrytis Cinerea*

Saint-Emilion: this district is in the Libournais region and produces exclusively red wines. The wines of St-Emilion are quite different from the Medoc wines, a characteristic that is due to the different soil composition and a greater use of the Merlot grape which makes the wine more rounded and velvety.

Pomerol: also in the Libournais region and also here only red wines are produced

BORGOGNE



Competes with Bordeaux to be the most famous wine-growing region in the world. A substantial difference from the wines of Bordeaux, apart from the use of a small number of grape varieties (Pinot Nero and Chardonnay), is the use of the term "cru": in the Bordeaux area it signifies the property of a person or a company whereas in the Borgogne it means a cadastral unit and can belong to one or more owners.

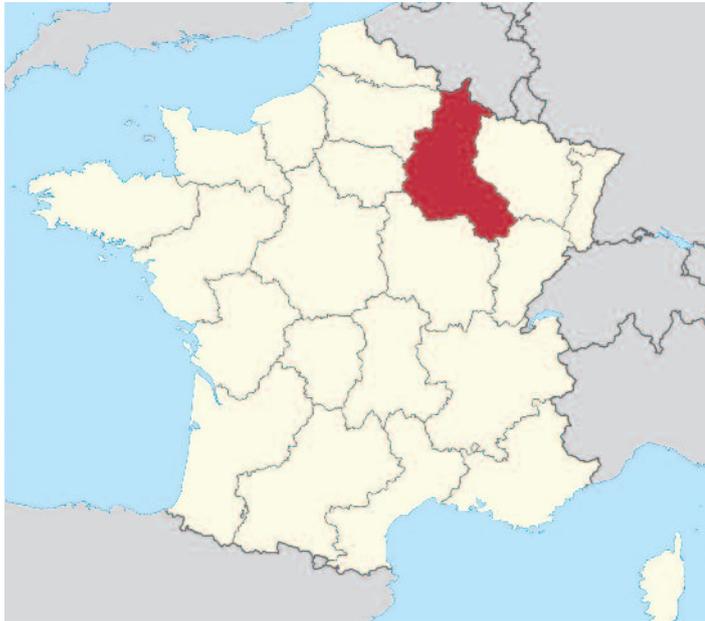
The Borgogne is also divided into different areas:

Yonne (Chablis): here there is the perfect soil for the Chardonnay grape with which is produced dry white wines of great clarity, full bodied, lively and at times with a flinty overtone..

Coté d'Or: in this area (Cote de Nuits) one can find Vougeot and Vosne-Romanée (where the famous wines of Romanée-Conti and the Tache are produced)

Beaujolais: the area which is famous for the production of Beaujolais nouveau from the Gamay grape variety

CHAMPAGNE



Champagne is found in the northernmost part as regards the growing of the grape. The belemnite soil is an essential element for the delicacy and lightness of champagne, together with the particular micro-climate created by the surrounding forests and woods and the combination of the mild Atlantic climate and the rigid continental climate. The only grape varieties used in Champagne are: Chardonnay, Pinot Nero and Pinot Meunier

PORTUGAL

PORT



Port is a fortified wine, with the addition of alcohol. The wines of Porto are produced in very particular conditions: wide range of temperature, little rain, strong sun, vines planted on terraces which are difficult to cultivate. Port can be produced with a balanced blending of 5 different types of grape, not necessarily always present: Tauriga, Nacional, Tinto Cao, Tinta Barroca,

Tinta Roriz and Touriga Francesca. The assemblage can be done with wines of different years.

Ports are divided into two main categories:

Port without specified year: Ruby (young Ports), Vintage character, Tawny (aged in wood), Tawny with number of years in bottle indicated (10,20,30)

Port with year specified: best quality Ports; Colheita, Late Bottled Vintage (LBV), Vintage

UNITED STATES

NAPA VALLEY



The most famous wine producing area in America, well known for its red and white wines produced with innovative techniques. The characteristic red grape variety of the area is the Zinfandel, of European origin but cultivated for so long that by now it is considered an indigenous American variety. The most common variety is Cabernet Sauvignon. Other red grape varieties are Pinot Nero, Merlot and Petite Syrah. The white grape is represented by Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc and Sémillon.

SPAIN

ANDALUCIA



An area known for the production of Jerez-Xeres-Sherry with the Palomino of Jerez and Pedro Ximenez.

Sherry is created through the production of the classic *velo de flor* and with added alcohol: these are divided into Finos (added alcohol up to 15°-16° and the use of flor during all of maturation, subdivided into two types Fino and Manzanilla) and Oloroso (up to 18°-19° and the use of flor only at initial stage, subdivided into Amontillado and Oloroso).

The classic ageing technique of Jerez is the solera method, a term which defines the system of fractional blending with barrels of wine of the same type, but different vintage, stacked on top of each other, the oldest on the bottom, and the youngest on the top.

Some wineries produce Palo Cortado, a rare Sherry of exceptional quality.

HUNGARY

TOKAY HILLS REGION



Famous the world over for its sweet white wine Aszù which is mainly produced with the Furmint grape variety.

It is a sweet white wine which is obtained by using 136 litres of must or a good quality Tokai wine and three, four, five or six panniers (Puttonyos = 27-30 litres) of paste made up of dried grapes affected by noble rot. Depending on the addition made the quality of the wine increases. The Tokai Essencia is the best quality of this wine.

SOUTH AFRICA



raz) with the exception of the local Pinotage, a cross between Pinot Nero and Cinsaut with which interesting wines are produced. The most cultivated white grape is the Chenin Blanc, called by the locals "Steen" but also Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, the Muscat of Alessandria from which is mainly produced fortified wines like Reising and Colombard. The historically most famous area is that of Costantia where the famous sweet whites and reds were produced. Today the main regions of interest are Paarl and Stellenbosch, the latter home to a university.

All the grape varieties cultivated in South Africa are of French origin (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Shi-

AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA MERIDIONALE



Southern Australia is where more than half of Australian wine is produced and here can be found the most prestigious vineyards; Barossa Valley (strong reds produced from the Shiraz grape or white wines like Chardonnay produced using barrels), Coonawarra (Cabernet Sauvignon), Adelaide Hills and McLaren Vale.