



German Wines

At a Glance



Wines of
Germany





2 THE BEST OF THE MODERN AND TRADITIONAL



The innovative wines and sophisticated packages emanating from Germany today please both the palate and the eye. There are German wines for every taste and every occasion – a diversity praised by renowned chefs and appreciated by wine novices and connoisseurs alike. A respect for 2,000 years of viticultural tradition, combined with quality-oriented, environmentally friendly vineyard practices and state-of-the-art cellar technology, put German vintners in the vanguard of contemporary winemakers.

Most of Germany's vineyards are planted on slopes or steep hills topped by protective forests that check the wind, and almost always near a sun-reflecting river – primarily the Rhine and its tributaries – which helps temper the climate.





Germany is one of the most northerly wine-growing countries in the world. The growing season is long, with a balance of rainfall and sunshine. It enables grapes to ripen slowly, and thus maintain their fruity acidity while developing natural sugars and absorbing minerals from the soil. The succession of warm days and cool nights in autumn fosters the development of incomparably rich, ripe aromas. “Cool climate” wines are generally lower in alcohol, yet more aromatic and fruitier – perfect prerequisites for a good food companion.

THE STYLE OF GERMAN WINES

HARMONIOUSLY DRY

The words trocken, halbtrocken, feinherb, CLASSIC and SELECTION signal drier-style wines.

These are excellent with food.

RICH, RIPE FRUITINESS

Traditional Spätlese, and the lusciously sweet “Auslese” categories and Eiswein offer concentrated fruit flavors and aromas.





A SAMPLE LABEL

Region, ripeness, grape variety, and style, as well as the name of the grower or producer, the guarantor of the bottle's content, are the keys to knowing what to expect from the bottle you purchase at a shop or in a restaurant.

MANDATORY DECLARATIONS (QUALITÄTS- AND PRÄDIKATSWEINE)

- [1] Name and address of the wine estate (Weingut).
- [4] Quality level of the wine, indicating the ripeness of the grapes at harvest.
- [7] Specified region – in Germany, there are 13 wine-growing regions.
- [9] Quality control number (A.P.Nr.), indicating the wine has passed the chemical and sensory tests required of all German quality wines.
- [10] Existing alcohol content in % by volume.
- [11] Bottle content.
- [12] Contains sulfites.
- [13] Country of origin.
- [14] As of 1 July 2012 (if applicable): certain allergens derived from eggs or milk products, e.g., the fining agents albumin and casein; the stabilizing agent lysozyme.





OPTIONAL DECLARATIONS (QUALITÄTS- AND PRÄDIKATSWEINE)

- [2] Vintage – the year in which the grapes were harvested.
- [3] Grape variety (up to three).
- [5] Style of the wine. Here, a dry (trocken) wine. Halbtrocken or feinherb indicates an off-dry wine. CLASSIC indicates a dry varietal. If none of these terms is on the label, expect a wine with some residual sweetness.
- [6] A more narrowly defined appellation of origin, e.g., district (Bereich), village or village + vineyard site.
- [8] Wines bottled and produced by a grower or a cooperative of growers (Winzergenossenschaft) from their own grapes may be labeled Erzeugerabfüllung. Estates and individual growers can use Gutsabfüllung as an alternative. Both terms mean estate-bottled. Other wineries and bottlers are identified as Abfüller, written on labels as bottler or bottled by.





6 THE LABEL – THE WINE'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE



CLASSIC – TASTE DRY. TASTE STYLE.

Since vintage 2000, there has been a new category of German wines – CLASSIC – denoting wines that are above average in quality, harmoniously dry in taste, and made from one of the classic grape varieties, such as Riesling, Silvaner or Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir). Vineyard names have been deliberately omitted so that labels are as uncluttered as possible. The concept is designed to impart a clear profile regarding a wine's quality and taste. The wines are full-bodied and rich in fruit flavor. CLASSIC: harmoniously dry wines that go well with meals. They are sold in the medium price range.



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SPARKLING WINE

Sekt, Winzersekt (a vintner’s vintage sparkling varietal), and Secco (a take on the slightly sparkling Italian Prosecco) all refer to sparkling wine.

Producers of Winzersekt must meet stringent production criteria. The base wines must be sourced exclusively from the vintner’s own grapes. The grower determines all the details – from the composition of the cuvée to the style of the finished product. Furthermore, all Winzersekt is produced according to the traditional method, i.e., fermented in this bottle. The vintage, grape variety, and producer’s name must appear on the label.

Although its name derives from Italian Prosecco, Secco is a German wine with a light effervescence. Its sparkle is naturally generated during fermentation and/or CO₂ can be added. Thanks to its relatively low alcohol content, Secco is a wonderful summer drink.

Both Winzersekt and Secco are particularly refreshing when served well chilled (6 – 8 °C / 42.8 – 46.4 °F) and best enjoyed within a year of the vintage date.





GERMANY'S WORLD CLASS GRAPES



RIESLING

Germany's – and perhaps the world's – premier white grape variety. The first documented mention of Riesling dates from the 15th century in an invoice for Riesling vines purchased just east of the Rheingau. Today, Germany is still home to more than half of the worldwide area planted with Riesling.

Unparalleled in its ability to bring forth brilliant wines of all styles, from bone dry to lusciously sweet, Riesling is distinctive for its elegance, firm acidity, complexity, longevity – and extraordinary versatility with food, including the spicy or sweet-and-sour flavors of Asian or Latin American cuisine. Crisp apple, ripe peach, mineral-rich or the honeyed tone of botrytis are variations on a theme: Riesling.





SPÄTBURGUNDER (PINOT NOIR)

Germany ranks third worldwide after France and the USA in area devoted to this variety. It is the nation's foremost and finest red wine grape. As of the 12th century, religious orders fostered the expansion of Pinot Noir in Germany during their medieval missions east and north of their Burgundian homeland.

Synonymous with top quality and legendary for its food compatibility, Spätburgunder yields mouth-filling, velvety smooth wines with slightly sweet, fruity, spicy, and floral aromas. With their softer tannins, they are more charming and accessible (less astringent) in their youth than Cabernet Sauvignon. The wines go well with roasted poultry, meat, and game; cheese; grilled or smoked salmon or tuna; and the flavors and spices of many Asian cuisines.

Spätburgunder Weissherbst is a light-colored, single variety rosé wine. Tasty with hors d'oeuvres and light meats or serve chilled (9 – 13 °C / 48 – 55 °F) as a refreshing apéritif or summer wine.





GERMANY'S TRADITIONAL FAVORITES: WHITES

SILVANER

An ancient variety that yields full-bodied, juicy wines with a fine-fruity acidity. Neutral enough to enhance the delicate flavors of seafood and light meats or white asparagus. Traditionally grown in Franken and Rheinhessen.

RIVANER (MÜLLER-THURGAU)

A drier, more food-compatible version of its synonym MÜLLER-THURGAU. The wines are flowery, with a light Muscat tone, and not too acidic – easy on the palate. They go well with herbed foods, salads, and vegetable dishes. Enjoy while young and fresh.

GRAUBURGUNDER (PINOT GRIS)

A sleeker, drier version of its synonym RULÄNDER. Both are powerful, mouth-filling white whites with a rounded acidity. Try it with flavorful foods (saltwater fish, lamb, game); a ripe, sweet Ruländer pairs well with blue-veined cheese and desserts.

WEISSBURGUNDER (PINOT BLANC)

Elegant white wines with refreshing acidity, a fine fruitiness, and a bouquet reminiscent of pineapple, nuts, apricots or citrus. Excellent with light meats and seafood; oak-aged versions go well with lamb or game.





KERNER

A crossing of the red variety Trollinger and the white variety Riesling, Kerner is prized for its Riesling traits: fresh acidity and rich, fruity character. Serve with fish or vegetable terrines, salads, and light meats. Richer, riper versions are delicious with poultry or meat in a fruit sauce.

SCHEUREBE

Ripeness is essential to bring forth its characteristic bouquet of black currant or grapefruit and its fine, spicy undertones. A dry Scheurebe wine is delicious on its own; those with some sweetness enhance and refine the exotic spices and aromas of Asian cuisine.

GERMANY'S TRADITIONAL FAVORITES: REDS

DORNFELDER

A newcomer that yields deep-colored wines. Served chilled, the “youthful” style, rich in berry aromas, is a great picnic wine. The fuller-bodied, oak-aged versions with more tannin and depth are ideal with hearty roasts, game, and flavorful cheese.

PORTUGIESER

Portugieser wines are light red in color, low in acidity, and have a faint, berry-like bouquet. Charming, everyday wines, they are also well-suited to accompany platters of cold cuts and cheese. Portugieser is popular in Rheinhessen, the Pfalz, and the

Ahr, where it is often vinified as an off-dry or slightly sweet Weissherbst (single variety rosé).





12 THE GREAT TASTE OF GREAT GRAPES

TROLLINGER

These unpretentious red wines are light and fruity, crisp in acidity, and reminiscent of wild cherry or red currant on the nose. Grown almost exclusively in Württemberg, it is the locals' quaffing wine of choice.



LEMBERGER (BLAUFRÄNKISCH)

Grown primarily in Württemberg, where it is often blended with Trollinger. The finest wines are rich in fruit, acid, and tannin, with a bouquet ranging from berry-like to vegetal. A light, fruity Lemberger is ideal with light fare or a summer barbecue. Those with greater depth and more tannin partner well with hearty pâtés, grilled foods, and roasted poultry, game, beef or lamb.

FRÜHBURGUNDER (PINOT NOIR PRÉCOSE; PINOT MADELEINE)

An earlier-ripening mutation of Spätburgunder with low yields and high wine quality. A rarity.

SCHWARZRIESLING (PINOT MEUNIER)

Not related to white Riesling. Synonymous with MÜLLERREBE. It is vinified as a fuller-bodied wine that goes well with pork or lamb.



At a Glance





WARMING UP TO WORLDWIDE FAVORITES

The effects of climate change (gradual warming) and market globalization have led to changes in the official register of varieties permitted for the production of quality wines in Germany: several white and red grapes with a large international following have been added since the 1990s. Albeit on a small scale, four Old World favorites that have been embraced by New World growers – Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot – have also found favor with German vintners...not least among members of the younger generation who have encountered these grapes during apprenticeships abroad.





RIPENESS – A SIGN OF QUALITY

Germany's vineyard area comprises ca. 100,000 ha (247,000 acres) of vines, the majority of which yield grapes for quality wine production. Quality wines always originate from one of Germany's 13 wine-growing regions; are produced from fully ripened grapes; and undergo sensory quality controls. QUALITÄTSWEINE (QbA) and harmoniously dry CLASSIC wines are excellent everyday wines that go well with many types of food. Their aromas and flavors are best enjoyed when they are young and fresh.

In addition, a small proportion of simple Landweine as well as wines without a protected indication of origin are produced in Germany.

Germany's premium quality wines, PRÄDIKATSWEINE, are made from fully ripe and/or botrytis-affected grapes. They are elegant, noble, and long lived. The following Prädikats (special attributes) denote six ascending levels of ripeness and quality:



KABINETT

Fine, light wines made from ripe grapes. In general, they are low in alcohol.

SPÄTLESE

Literally, late harvest. Elegant, well-rounded wines with the depth of flavor imparted by very ripe grapes.

AUSLESE

Noble wines, intense in bouquet and taste. Made from very ripe grapes selected in bunches.





BEERENAUSLESE (BA)

Rare and exquisite wines with the unmistakable honey-like aroma of botrytis (“noble rot”). Made from overripe berries individually selected by hand.

raisins. It is said that it takes one person one day to pick enough berries to produce one bottle of this highly prized rarity. It is the perfect wine to store in the cellar for many years, then serve on a very special occasion.

In all, there are German wines suitable for every occasion – from an informal get-together or picnic to the most elegant dinner or reception.

EISWEIN

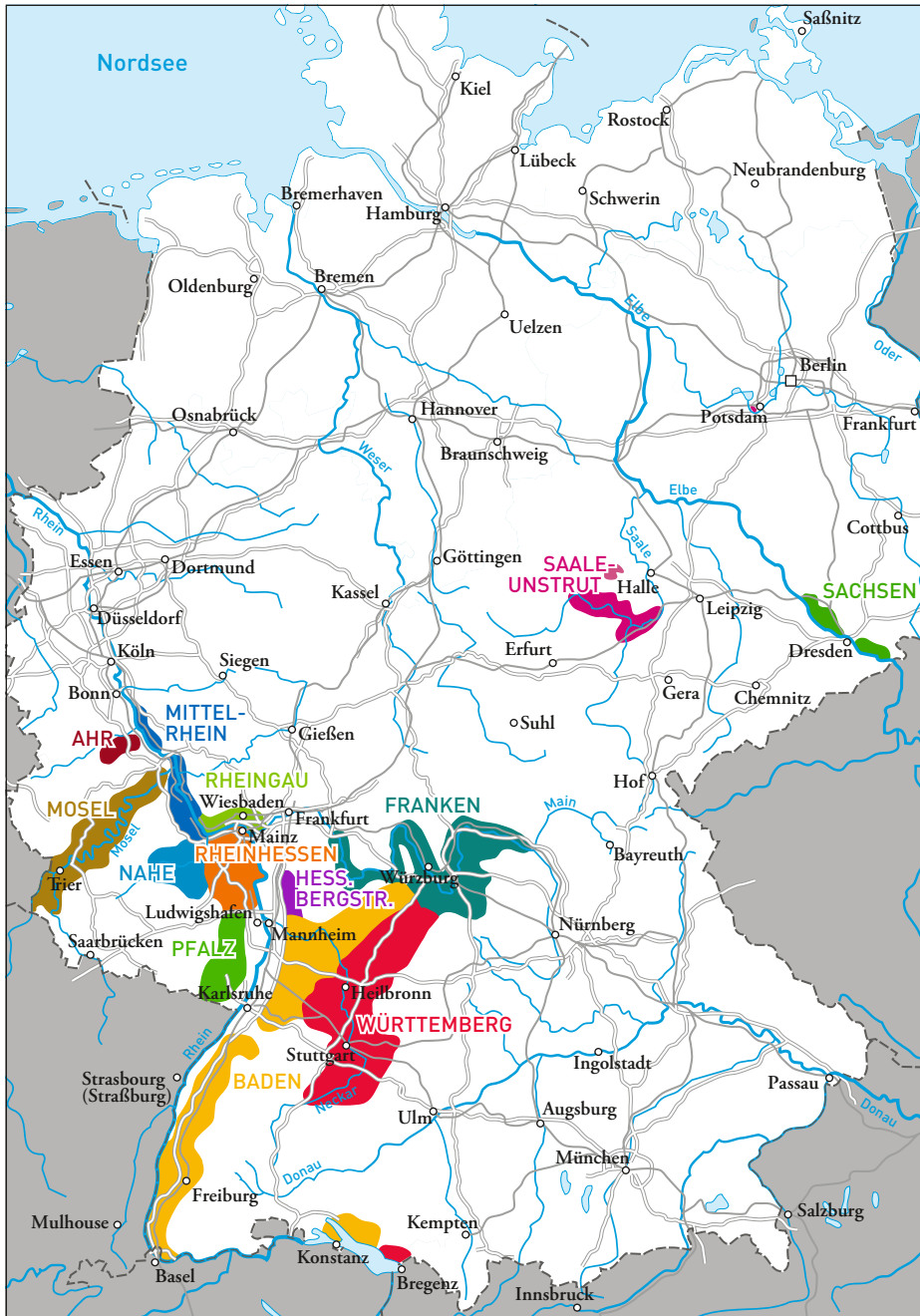
Unique wines made from grapes of BA quality, harvested and pressed while frozen. Thanks to their remarkable concentration of fruity acidity and sweetness, they have, perhaps, the greatest aging potential of any wines in the world. Highly sought by collectors the world over and produced in minute quantities, Eiswein often fetches very high prices. As an apéritif, digestif or served with a fruity dessert, Eiswein provides an unforgettable taste sensation.

TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE (TBA)

The crowning achievement of German viticulture. A wine with a unique concentration of luscious, fruity sweetness made from individual berries shriveled almost to



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AHR

DISCOVER THE AHR



The vineyards of Germany's "red wine paradise" line the valley of the Ahr River, which joins the Rhine south of Bonn. From the heights of a basalt cone to the east or the slate cliffs to the west of the elegant spa Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler there are magnificent views of the steep vineyards. Riesling is the premier white grape, but the tiny region is especially known for its fine red wines, particularly Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) and its early-ripening cousin, the rare Frühburgunder. Portugieser is the other important red wine grape.

BADEN

KISSED BY THE SUN

Warm and sunny Baden, the southernmost region, stretches some 400 km (240 miles) along the Rhine from the Bodensee (Lake Constance) to Heidelberg, taking in the Black Forest, as well as the vine-clad terraces of the Kaiserstuhl, a volcanic massif. As in neighboring Alsace and Switzerland, Baden has a great tradition of wine and food. Dry, food-compatible "Burgunders" (Pinots), red and white, have long been popular throughout the region. Rivaner vineyards are also widespread, while other classic whites, e.g., Riesling, Silvaner, and Gutedel, are more localized.





FRANKEN

BOCKSBEUTEL AND BAROQUE

Franken, the hilly region east of Frankfurt, follows the zig-zag of the Main River. Distinctive wines and the Baroque Residence in Würzburg make it a mecca for art and wine lovers alike. Not only the Bocksbeutel – a flat, round-bellied bottle – but also climate and drier-style wines set Franken apart. Cool climate and soil types make Riesling the exception and earlier-ripening white grapes, e.g., Rivaner or Bacchus, the rule. Above all, the region is known for powerful, earthy Silvaner wines. Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) and Domina, seldom seen elsewhere, are the main red grapes.



HESSISCHE BERGSTRASSE

GERMANY'S SPRING GARDEN



The old Roman trade route *strata montana* (mountain road) runs parallel to the Rhine along the foothills of the Odenwald (Oden Forest) south of Frankfurt. Known as “Germany’s Spring Garden” – almond and fruit trees blossom early here – the Bergstrasse landscape is attractive, with castle ruins overlooking

the hillside vineyards and orchards. Most of the small region’s wines are produced in Bensheim and Heppenheim. Riesling is the predominant variety, accounting for over half the vineyard area, followed by Rivaner and Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris).





MOSEL

LEGACY OF THE ROMANS

The valleys of the Mosel River and its tributaries, the Saar and the Ruwer, have been the setting for some of Germany's most romantic wine country since Roman times. Vines and forests carpet the steep slate slopes framing the river as it loops its way toward the Rhine at Koblenz. It is a Riesling region par excellence. These are wines of incomparable finesse, rich in fragrance and fruity acidity and often, a mineral undertone. A speciality from the vineyards opposite the country of Luxembourg, southeast of Trier, is Elbling, prized as a racy, light, still or sparkling white wine.



MITTELHEIN

THE ROMANTIC RHINE

The Mittelrhein is the spectacular stretch of the Rhine River between Bonn and Bingen known as the Rhine Gorge. Here the river has carved its course through the slate stone hills to form a steep, narrow valley with a microclimate in which vines have thrived for 2,000 years. Ancient castle ruins tower over vine-covered cliffs and medieval villages. Steeped in legend (the Loreley, the Nibelungs), the Mittelrhein has long been a source of inspiration to artists and winemakers. Crisp, fragrant Riesling wines are the hallmark of the region.





NAHE

JEWEL OF THE SOUTHWEST

Nestled between the Mosel and Rhine valleys, the Nahe is named after the river that traverses the forested Hunsrück Hills as it gently flows toward Bingen on the Rhine. Striking rock formations, mineral deposits and gemstones attest to the remarkable geological diversity that also accounts for the Nahe's broad spectrum of wines. Sleek, piquant Riesling, fragrant Rivaner, and hearty Silvaner wines are longtime classics. White and red Pinots, e.g., Grauburgunder, Weissburgunder and Spätburgunder, and the red variety Dornfelder are on the rise.



PFALZ

VOLUPTUOUS PLEASURES

For 85 km (53 miles) the Deutsche Weinstrasse (German Wine Road) winds its way through the picturesque villages and lush vineyards between the borders of Rheinhessen and France. Vines

thrive in the warm, sunny climate of the Pfalz, yielding voluptuous, full-bodied wines. Riesling, the leading variety, and the white Pinots Weissburgunder and Grauburgunder are among the finest white wines, while Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir), Dornfelder and the rare St. Laurent are foremost for top-quality reds. Rivaner and Portugieser are favorites for easy drinking.





RHEINGAU

A TRADITION OF QUALITY

The heart of the Rheingau borders the Rhine on its east-west course from Wiesbaden to Rüdesheim, where noble Riesling and Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) vines carpet the slopes of the Taunus Hills. The region's success is due to an optimal climate and an ongoing commitment to the high quality standards set centuries ago by the Benedictines at Johannisberg, the Cistercians at Kloster Eberbach and the local aristocracy. The fortuitous "Spätlese" (late harvest) at Johannisberg in 1775 set the stage for the rich, ripe botrytis wines for which Germany is renowned.



RHEINHESSEN

1,000 HILLS WITHIN A RIVER'S BEND



The "land of a thousand hills" lies within the large elbow formed by the Rhine as it flows from Worms to its bend at Mainz, then westward to Bingen. A region of this size, Germany's largest, offers a great diversity of wines. Innovative varieties, such as RS (Rheinhessen Silvaner) or Selection Rheinhessen, and the increasing importance of white and red Pinots, highlight the region's quality potential. The classic whites Rivaner, Silvaner and Riesling predominate, but aromatic varieties are grown too, as are the red grapes Portugieser and Dornfelder.





SAALE-UNSTRUT

A MILLENNIUM OF VITICULTURE

The vineyards of the northernmost German wine region are about equidistant between Weimar and Leipzig. For ten centuries vines have been grown on the steep, terraced, limestone slopes of the Saale and Unstrut river valleys – a gentle landscape of hills ringed by forests, poplar groves and broad plateaus. Freyburg, Naumburg and Bad Kösen are the main towns. It is a small region known for dry varietals with a delicately spicy bouquet. Rivaner, Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc) and Silvaner are the most important varieties.



SACHSEN

ITALIAN FLAIR ON THE ELBE

Germany's smallest and easternmost wine region lies in the Elbe River Valley. Dresden, nicknamed the "Florence of the Elbe" because of its cultural ambience and mild climate, and Meissen are the main towns. Vines are planted mostly on steep, terraced slopes of granite. Although the palette of Saxon wines is diverse, Rivaner, Riesling and Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc) are foremost, and sold as dry varietals. A small quantity of Goldriesling, a rare Riesling-Muscat crossing, is produced – a specialty found nowhere else in Germany.





WÜRTTEMBERG

HOME OF RED WINE SPECIALTIES



Württemberg is a rural, hilly region adjacent to Baden and south of Franken. Metropolitan Stuttgart and Heilbronn are wine centers, but most of the vineyards are scattered amidst fields and forests throughout the Neckar River Valley. Red wine predominates and ranges from crisp, light Trollinger – the “Swabian national drink” – to wines with more color, body and substance, e.g., Schwarzriesling (Pinot Meunier) and Lemberger. Riesling is by far the most important white variety, followed by Kerner, a crossing which has affinities with Riesling.



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