

Famous Wine Regions

What Makes Each Region Unique — Soil · Climate · Geography · Grapes

Every great wine region is defined by a unique combination of geology, climate, and geography. The soil provides minerals, drainage, and stress. The climate determines ripeness and acidity. The geography — altitude, aspect, proximity to water — modifies both. This guide profiles each major region across its most defining characteristics, showing how the land shapes what ends up in the glass. kazmicellars.com

■■ FRANCE

Bordeaux — Left Bank

Bordeaux — Right Bank

Burgundy — Côte d'Or

Champagne

Northern Rhône

Southern Rhône

Loire Valley

Alsace

■■ ITALY

Piedmont

Tuscany

Veneto & Amarone

■■ SPAIN

Rioja

Ribera del Duero

Priorat

Rías Baixas

■■ GERMANY

Mosel

■■ AUSTRIA

Wachau & Kamptal

■■ USA

Napa Valley

Santa Barbara County

Willamette Valley

■ ■ AUSTRALIA

Barossa Valley

Margaret River

■ ■ NEW ZEALAND

Marlborough

■ ■ ARGENTINA

Mendoza — Uco Valley

■ ■ GREECE

Santorini

■ ■ PORTUGAL

Douro Valley

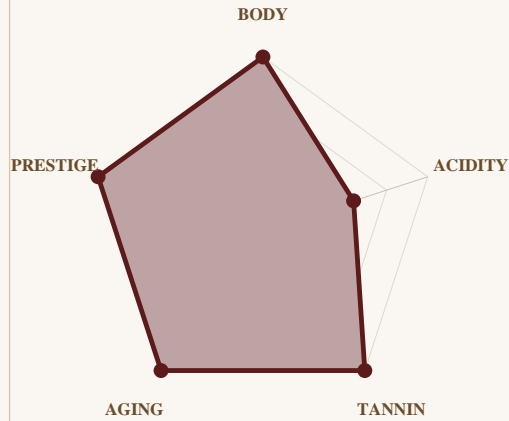
BORDEAUX — LEFT BANK

■ ■ France · Maritime Temperate

The world's most famous wine region · Cabernet country · Built to age

Cool ■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall Wet
 Dry ■ ■

Latitude	44–45°N
Elevation	0–100m
Rainfall	~900mm / year
Climate	Maritime Temperate



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

The Left Bank of the Gironde estuary is defined by its deep gravel beds deposited by the ancient Garonne river over millions of years. Cabernet Sauvignon dominates because its thick skin thrives in the well-drained, low-fertility gravel — the vine is forced to send roots deep to find water and nutrients, concentrating flavour. The gravel also absorbs heat during the day and radiates it back at night, extending the ripening season.

The 1855 Classification — still largely in use today — ranked 61 châteaux into five growths based on price and reputation. Pauillac alone contains three First Growth: Lafite Rothschild, Mouton Rothschild, and Latour. The wines are built for decades of aging — a Premier Cru Bordeaux at release is typically at least 15–20 years from its peak.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

The Médoc is a narrow strip of land between the Gironde estuary and the Atlantic Ocean. The estuary moderates the maritime climate, preventing frost and cooling the summers. The ocean provides humidity and rain.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Médoc</i>	<i>Haut-Médoc</i>	<i>Pauillac</i>
<i>Saint-Julien</i>	<i>Margaux</i>	<i>Graves</i>
<i>Pessac-Léognan</i>		

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

<i>Cabernet Sauvignon</i>	<i>Merlot</i>	<i>Cabernet Franc</i>	<i>Petit Verdot</i>
<i>Malbec</i>			

WHITE VARIETIES

<i>Sauvignon Blanc</i>	<i>Sémillon</i>	<i>Muscadelle</i>
------------------------	-----------------	-------------------

SOILS

Deep Gravel

Clay-Limestone

Sandy Gravel

Alluvial

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles

Cabernet-dominant blends · structured, tannic, cassis-driven · built for 15–50 years

Famous Producers

Châteaux Latour · Lafite Rothschild · Mouton Rothschild · Margaux · Haut-Brion · Léoville-Las Cases

"The Médoc's deep gravel beds were deposited by the ancient Garonne river — the geology of a great wine region written 2 million years ago."

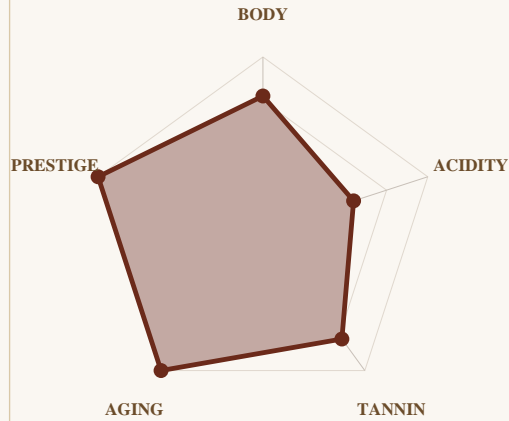
BORDEAUX — RIGHT BANK

■ ■ France · Maritime Temperate

Merlot's spiritual home · Pétrus · Clay over limestone

Cool ■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall Wet
 Dry ■ ■

Latitude	44–45°N
Elevation	5–120m
Rainfall	~900mm / year
Climate	Maritime Temperate



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

The Right Bank tells a completely different geological story from the Left. Pomerol's famous blue clay plateau holds moisture and warmth — perfect for Merlot's earlier ripening. The blue clay of Château Pétrus's plateau is unique even within Pomerol. Saint-Émilion sits on a limestone plateau with clay at its base and sandy slopes below.

Pétrus — arguably the world's most expensive wine — is almost 100% Merlot. This stands as the definitive rebuttal to anyone who dismisses Merlot as a lesser grape. The Right Bank's wines are generally more approachable younger than Left Bank equivalents, and the Merlot dominance gives them a plush, generous texture.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

Saint-Émilion is the region's historic heart — a UNESCO World Heritage Site built on limestone. Pomerol is a flat, unassuming plateau whose clay soils hide extraordinary potential.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Pomerol</i>	<i>Saint-Émilion</i>	<i>Fronsac</i>
<i>Canon-Fronsac</i>	<i>Lalande de Pomerol</i>	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

<i>Merlot</i>	<i>Cabernet Franc</i>	<i>Cabernet Sauvignon</i>
---------------	-----------------------	---------------------------

WHITE VARIETIES

<i>Sauvignon Blanc</i>	<i>Sémillon</i>
------------------------	-----------------

SOILS

<i>Blue Clay</i>	<i>Limestone Plateau</i>	<i>Sandy Gravel</i>	<i>Iron-rich Clay</i>
------------------	--------------------------	---------------------	-----------------------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Merlot-dominant blends · plush, velvety, earlier-maturing than Left Bank · great aging potential
-------------------	--

Famous Producers

Pétrus · Le Pin · Cheval Blanc · Lafleur · L'Angélu · Ausone · Canon · Troplong Mondot

"Pétrus is almost entirely Merlot grown on blue clay — the most expensive wine in the world from the world's most planted red grape."

BURGUNDY — CÔTE D'OR

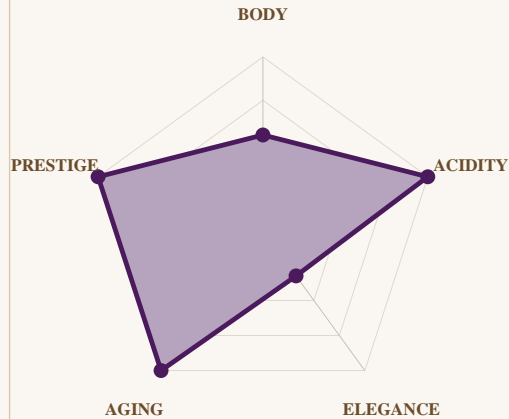
■ ■ France · Continental Marginal

The world's most compelling terroir argument · Pinot Noir + Chardonnay only

Cool ■ ■ **TEMPERATURE** ■ Warm

Dry ■ ■ **RAINFALL** ■ Wet

Latitude	47–47.5°N
Elevation	200–400m
Rainfall	~650mm / year
Climate	Continental Marginal



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

The Côte d'Or is the most expensive agricultural land in the world per hectare. The combination of cool climate, Jurassic limestone, and centuries of viticultural refinement has produced one of wine's greatest terroir arguments. Gevrey-Chambertin (power, structure) and Chambolle-Musigny (elegance, perfume) are adjacent villages producing wines that taste worlds apart.

The Grand Cru classification system represents less than 2% of total Burgundy production. Domaine de la Romanée-Conti's 1.8-hectare Romanée-Conti vineyard produces perhaps 6,000 bottles per year and sells for \$15,000–\$50,000+ per bottle. The scarcity, the terroir, and the grape's transparency to site make it irreplaceable.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

A narrow limestone escarpment running north-south for 60km. The slope angle, aspect, and drainage of each vineyard parcel varies dramatically, creating the mosaic of terroir that defines Burgundy.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Gevrey-Chambertin</i>	<i>Chambolle-Musigny</i>	<i>Vosne-Romanée</i>
<i>Pommard</i>	<i>Volnay</i>	<i>Meursault</i>
<i>Puligny-Montrachet</i>	<i>Chassagne-Montrachet</i>	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

Pinot Noir

WHITE VARIETIES

Chardonnay

Aligoté (minor)

SOILS

<i>Limestone</i>	<i>Marlstone</i>	<i>Clay-Limestone</i>	<i>Alluvial (valley floor)</i>
------------------	------------------	-----------------------	--------------------------------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Red: elegant, silky, transparent Pinot Noir · White: rich, complex Chardonnay · Both age magnificently
Famous Producers	DRC · Leroy · Rousseau · Roumier · Dujac · Leflaive · Coche-Dury · Roulot · Méo-Camuzet

"The Côte d'Or's soil changes every few metres — explaining why vineyards separated by a stone wall produce wines that taste worlds apart."

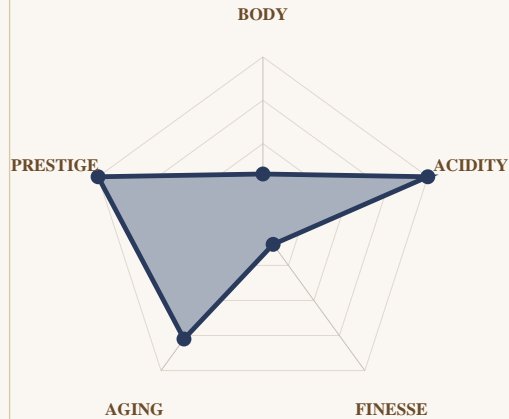
CHAMPAGNE

■ ■ France · Cool Continental

The world's greatest sparkling wine · Chalk · The northernmost great region

Cool ■ ■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall ■ Wet
 Dry ■ ■

Latitude	49–50°N
Elevation	90–300m
Rainfall	~650mm / year
Climate	Cool Continental



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

Champagne is the most northerly great wine region in France — so cold that grapes rarely ripen enough to make still wine of quality. This limitation became an extraordinary asset: the high natural acidity and lower alcohol of the base wines are perfect for the traditional method sparkling process. The chalk beneath the region not only gives the wine its mineral character but provides the caves where wine ages for years.

The traditional method — secondary fermentation in bottle — creates the fine, persistent bubbles and the autolytic complexity (brioche, toast, cream) that distinguishes Champagne from other sparkling wines. The grandes maisons blend dozens of base wines from different villages and sometimes different years to create a consistent house style.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

The coldest major wine region in France. The vast chalk deposits — up to 300m deep — moderate temperature and provide perfect drainage. The region's 320km of chalk caves maintain a constant 10°C, ideal for wine aging.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Montagne de Reims</i>	<i>Vallée de la Marne</i>	<i>Côte des Blancs</i>
<i>Côte des Bar</i>	<i>Côte de Sézanne</i>	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

<i>Pinot Noir</i>	<i>Pinot Meunier</i>
-------------------	----------------------

WHITE VARIETIES

<i>Chardonnay</i>

SOILS

<i>Chalk (Belemnite & Micraster)</i>	<i>Clay over Chalk</i>	<i>Kimmeridgian Limestone</i>
--	------------------------	-------------------------------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Non-vintage Brut (house style) · Vintage · Blanc de Blancs (Chardonnay only) · Blanc de Noirs · Prestige Cuvée · Rosé
Famous Producers	Krug · Dom Pérignon · Cristal (Roederer) · Bollinger · Salon · Selosse · Egly-Ouriat · Billecart-Salmon

"Champagne's chalk absorbs winter rain and seals it beneath a hard crust in summer — a natural underground reservoir feeding the vine through drought."

NORTHERN RHÔNE

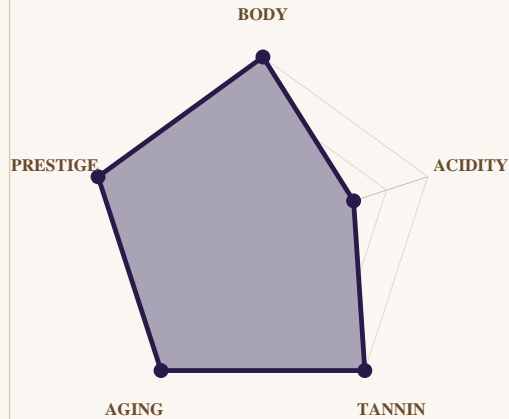
■ ■ France · Continental with Mediterranean influence

Syrah's spiritual home · Granite slopes · Iron and violets

Cool ❄️ ■ ■ ■ ■ Warm

Dry ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ Wet

Latitude	44.5–45.5°N
Elevation	100–400m
Rainfall	~650mm / year
Climate	Continental with Mediterranean influence



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

The Northern Rhône is Syrah's definitive home — the only red grape grown in this narrow granite corridor. The Mistral wind that roars down the valley keeps the vines dry and disease-free but forces the famous training systems (échalas — individual stakes) to protect against breakage. Côte-Rôtie ('roasted slope') is divided between the Côte Brune (iron-rich schist, structured) and Côte Blonde (granite, perfumed).

Hermitage — the granite hill above Tain-l'Hermitage — produces some of the most age-worthy wines on earth. Jaboulet's La Chapelle 1961 is considered one of the greatest wines ever made. Condrieu and Château-Grillet are unique white wine appellations dedicated entirely to Viognier — the most perfumed white grape.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

A narrow north-south corridor of the Rhône Valley, carved by the river through ancient crystalline rock. The steep granite slopes force intensive viticulture — terracing and individual vine staking. The Mistral provides ventilation and keeps disease pressure low.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Hermitage</i>	<i>Côte-Rôtie</i>	<i>Cornas</i>
<i>Saint-Joseph</i>	<i>Crozes-Hermitage</i>	<i>Condrieu</i>
<i>Château-Grillet</i>		

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

<i>Syrah</i>

WHITE VARIETIES

<i>Viognier</i>	<i>Marsanne</i>	<i>Roussanne</i>
-----------------	-----------------	------------------

SOILS

<i>Granite</i>	<i>Gneiss</i>	<i>Schist</i>	<i>Decomposed Granite</i>
<i>Loess</i>			

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles

Red: iron-mineral, peppery Syrah · White: perfumed Viognier (Condrieu) · aromatic Marsanne/Roussanne

Famous Producers

Guigal · Paul Jaboulet Aîné · Chapoutier · Jean-Louis Chave · Thierry Allemand · Clape · Delas

"Hermitage grown on ancient Precambrian granite produces Syrah that rivals any red wine on earth for complexity and longevity."

SOUTHERN RHÔNE

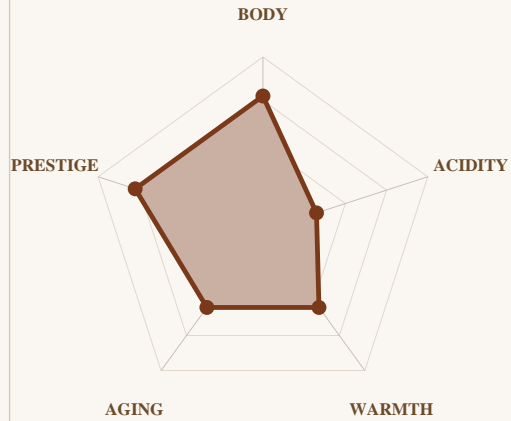
■ France · Mediterranean

GSM blends · Garrigue · Galets Roulés · The sun-drenched south

Cool ❄️ ■ **TEMPERATURE** ■ Warm

Dry ■■ **RAINFALL** ■ Wet

Latitude	43.5–44.5°N
Elevation	50–500m
Rainfall	~650mm / year
Climate	Mediterranean



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

The Southern Rhône opens into a much wider, sunnier, Mediterranean landscape than the narrow Northern corridor. Châteauneuf-du-Pape's famous galets roulés — large smooth river stones deposited by the ancient Rhône glacier — are one of wine's most iconic soil features. They absorb heat during the day and release it overnight, extending the ripening season and pushing Grenache to very high alcohol levels (often 15–16%).

Châteauneuf-du-Pape was the first French AOC (1936) and allows the highest number of permitted grape varieties of any major appellation — up to 18. In practice, most wines are dominated by Grenache blended with Syrah and Mourvèdre. The wines carry the distinctive garrigue character — wild Mediterranean herbs (rosemary, lavender, thyme) from the surrounding scrubland.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

A broad, flat basin surrounded by mountains (Dentelles de Montmirail, Mont Ventoux). The Mediterranean climate brings hot, dry summers moderated by the Mistral wind. Winters can be cold.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Châteauneuf-du-Pape</i>	<i>Gigondas</i>	<i>Vacqueyras</i>
<i>Lirac</i>	<i>Tavel</i>	<i>Ventoux</i>
<i>Luberon</i>		

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

<i>Grenache</i>	<i>Syrah</i>	<i>Mourvèdre</i>	<i>Cinsault</i>
<i>Counoise</i>			

WHITE VARIETIES

<i>Grenache Blanc</i>	<i>Clairette</i>	<i>Roussanne</i>	<i>Viognier</i>
<i>Bourboulenc</i>			

SOILS

Galets Roulés (rounded stones)

Clay-Sand

Limestone

Sandstone

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles

Full-bodied GSM blends · garrigue-scented · high alcohol · Tavel: France's most famous rosé

Famous Producers

Château Rayas · Château Beaucastel · Clos des Papes · Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe · Château Pégasi

"The large river stones of Châteauneuf-du-Pape absorb heat all day and radiate it back at night — the vineyard's own central heating system."

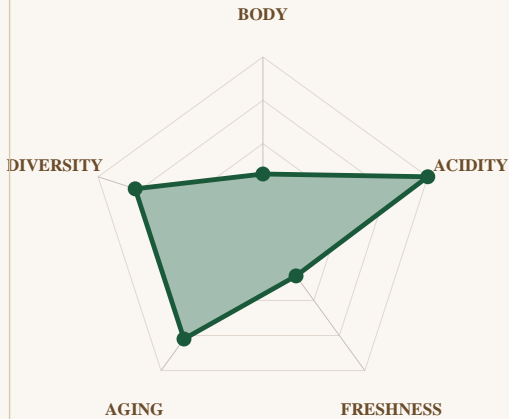
LOIRE VALLEY

■ France · Oceanic / Continental (varies by zone)

France's garden river · Chenin · Sauvignon · Cab Franc · 1000km of variety

Cool ❄️ Warm
 Rainfall Wet
 Dry ☀️

Latitude	47–48°N
Elevation	20–200m
Rainfall	~650–750mm / year
Climate	Oceanic / Continental (varies by zone)



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

The Loire is France's most geologically diverse wine river — running 1,000km from the Atlantic coast to the hills of central France. The western end (Muscadet) sits on ancient granite and schist giving saline, mineral whites. The middle (Anjou, Vouvray) has soft tuffeau limestone giving Chenin Blanc extraordinary aging potential. The eastern end (Sancerre, Pouilly-Fumé) has Kimmeridgian limestone and flint producing the world's most mineral Sauvignon Blanc.

Chenin Blanc's extreme versatility — bone dry to intensely sweet, still and sparkling — is best expressed in the Loire. Savennières is one of France's greatest dry whites; Quarts de Chaume can age 50+ years. Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé defined the 'mineral Sauvignon Blanc' style that Marlborough later reinvented. Chinon and Bourgueil produce France's most underrated Cabernet Franc.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

The longest river in France. The Atlantic influence moderates the western end (Muscadet); the continental climate dominates the eastern end (Sancerre). The tuffeau limestone formations in the middle are carved into the famous cave cellars and homes of the Touraine.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

Muscadet (west)	Anjou	Saumur
Vouvray	Chinon	Bourgueil
Sancerre	Pouilly-Fumé	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

Cabernet Franc	Pinot Noir (east)	Gamay
----------------	-------------------	-------

WHITE VARIETIES

Chenin Blanc	Sauvignon Blanc	Melon de Bourgogne (Muscadet)
--------------	-----------------	-------------------------------

SOILS

Tufa (tuffeau)	Schist	Granite	Limestone
----------------	--------	---------	-----------

Flint (silex)

Clay

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles

Bone-dry mineral whites · off-dry and sweet Chenin · elegant Cab Franc reds · sparkling Crémant de Loire

Famous Producers

Didier Dagueneau · Nicolas Joly · Domaine Huet · Henri Bourgeois · Charles Joguet · Clos Rougeard

"The Loire produces bone-dry mineral Muscadet, off-dry Vouvray, intensely sweet Quarts de Chaume, and elegant Sancerre — all from the same river valley."

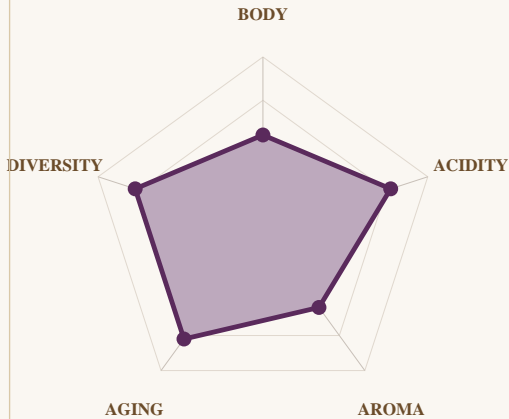
ALSACE

■ ■ France · Semi-Continental (protected by Vosges)

Germany's grapes · France's cuisine · The most aromatic whites in the world

Cool ■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall Wet
 Dry ■ ■

Latitude	47.5–48.5°N
Elevation	170–400m
Rainfall	~500mm / year (one of France's driest)
Climate	Semi-Continental (protected by Vosges)



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

Alsace is one of the world's most geologically diverse wine regions — 13 distinct soil types across a narrow north-south strip. The Vosges mountains to the west create a dramatic rain shadow, making Alsace paradoxically one of France's driest and sunniest regions despite its northeastern location. The wines tend toward richness and aromatic intensity unlike their German neighbours across the Rhine.

The 51 Grand Cru vineyards reflect the geological diversity — neighbouring Grand Cru sites taste completely different. Riesling from granite (Rangen, Schlossberg) is mineral and fine; from limestone it is more structured. The Vendange Tardive and Sélection de Grains Nobles sweet wine styles are among France's most compelling.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

A narrow strip of land between the Rhine River (German border) and the Vosges Mountains. The Vosges block Atlantic rainfall — some vineyards receive only 500mm/year. The Rhine plain's warmer microclimate allows full ripening.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

Bas-Rhin	Haut-Rhin	51 Grand Cru vineyards
Alsace AOC	Crémant d'Alsace	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

Pinot Noir (minor)

WHITE VARIETIES

Riesling	Gewurztraminer	Pinot Gris	Muscat
Pinot Blanc	Sylvaner	Auxerrois	

SOILS

Granite	Limestone	Sandstone	Schist
Gneiss	Clay	Marl (13+ soil types)	

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles

Full-bodied dry whites · Vendange Tardive (late harvest) · SGN (botrytis sweet) · Crémant d'Alsace (sparkling)

Famous Producers

Trimbach · Hugel · Zind-Humbrecht · Weinbach · Marcel Deiss · Léon Beyer · Josmeyer

"The Vosges mountains create a dramatic rain shadow — Alsace receives less rainfall than Marseille despite being in northeastern France."

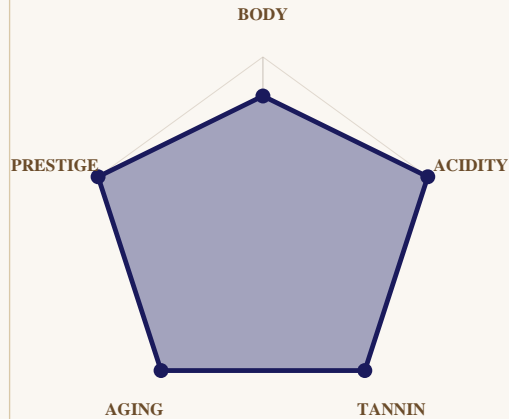
PIEDMONT

■ ■ Italy · Continental with Fog

Barolo · Barbaresco · Nebbiolo · The King and Queen of Italian wine

Cool ■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall Wet
 Dry ■ ■

Latitude	44–45°N
Elevation	150–600m
Rainfall	~700mm / year
Climate	Continental with Fog



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

Piedmont is Italy's greatest red wine region, dominated by the Nebbiolo grape which produces Barolo (the King) and Barbaresco (the Queen). The region takes its name from Piedmont (foot of the mountains) — the Alps to the north and west create a rain shadow while the Apennines block southern heat. The autumn fog (nebbia — which gives Nebbiolo its name) is characteristic of the Langhe hills.

The soil debate within Barolo is one of wine's great terroir arguments. The Tortonian soils (older, compact, calcareous clay) of Serralunga and Castiglione produce the most structured, tannic, long-lived wines. The Helvetian soils (sandier, less compact) of La Morra and Barolo commune produce more aromatic, earlier-drinking wines. A single grape on two different ancient seabeds producing completely different wines.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

The Langhe hills south of the city of Alba. A landscape of vine-covered hilltops, ancient villages, and the dramatic backdrop of the snow-capped Alps. The hills provide natural frost protection and the variation in slope aspect creates significant micro-terroir differences.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Barolo DOCG</i>	<i>Barbaresco DOCG</i>	<i>Barbera d'Asti</i>
<i>Barolo communes: La Morra · Serralunga · Barolo · Castiglione</i>		

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

<i>Nebbiolo</i>	<i>Barbera</i>	<i>Dolcetto</i>	<i>Grignolino</i>
-----------------	----------------	-----------------	-------------------

WHITE VARIETIES

<i>Moscato (Asti)</i>	<i>Arneis</i>	<i>Cortese (Gavi)</i>	
-----------------------	---------------	-----------------------	--

SOILS

<i>Tortonian Clay-Limestone</i>	<i>Helvetian Sandy Marl</i>	<i>Tufa</i>	<i>Calcareous Clay</i>
---------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------------	------------------------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Barolo: tar, roses, structured tannin, 15–40+ year aging · Barbaresco: earlier maturing, more elegant · Barbera: everyday, high-acid, food-friendly
Famous Producers	Gaja · Giacomo Conterno · Bruno Giacosa · Roberto Voerzio · Aldo Conterno · Vietti · Bartolo Mascarello

"Nebbiolo's tar and roses — the two most contradictory aromas in wine — appear nowhere else on earth in quite this combination."

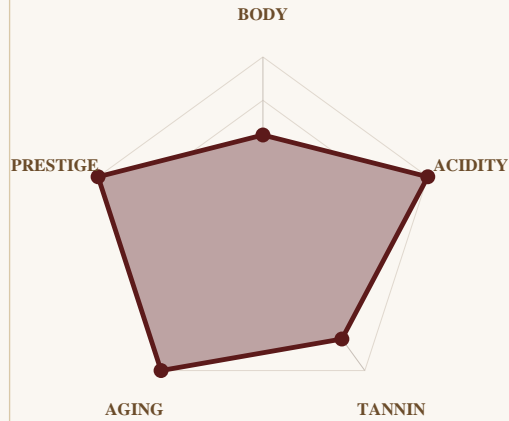
TUSCANY

■ ■ Italy · Mediterranean Continental

Sangiovese · Brunello · Chianti · Super Tuscans · Italy's wine heartland

Cool ■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall Wet
 Dry ■ ■

Latitude	42.5–44°N
Elevation	250–600m
Rainfall	~700mm / year
Climate	Mediterranean Continental



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

Tuscany is Italy's most internationally recognisable wine region and the heartland of Sangiovese, Italy's most planted red grape. Chianti Classico — the historic zone between Florence and Siena — is defined by the crumbly galestro limestone that keeps vines lean and stressed, producing the high-acid, sour cherry, leather-tinged wines that are among Italy's most food-friendly.

Bolgheri, on the Tuscan coast, is where the Super Tuscan revolution began — Sassicaia (a Cabernet-dominant blend) proved that Bordeaux varieties could thrive in Tuscany and challenged the DOC system. The region now hosts some of Italy's most expensive wines: Sassicaia, Ornellaia, Masseto (100% Merlot, Italy's most expensive wine). Brunello di Montalcino remains the pinnacle of Sangiovese expression.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

Hilly interior landscape with medieval hilltop towns, cypress-lined roads, and vine-covered slopes. The Apennines to the north and the Tyrrhenian Sea to the west moderate the climate. Montalcino sits at altitude on a southern spur providing warmer conditions for Brunello.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Chianti Classico DOCG</i>	<i>Brunello di Montalcino DOCG</i>	<i>Vino Nobile di Montepulciano</i>
<i>Bolgheri</i>	<i>Morellino di Scansano</i>	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

<i>Sangiovese</i>	<i>Cabernet Sauvignon (Super Tuscans)</i>	<i>Merlot</i>	<i>Syrah</i>
-------------------	---	---------------	--------------

WHITE VARIETIES

<i>Vermentino</i>	<i>Vernaccia di San Gimignano</i>	<i>Trebbiano</i>
-------------------	-----------------------------------	------------------

SOILS

<i>Galestro (schistous limestone)</i>	<i>Alberese (clay-limestone)</i>	<i>Alluvial (Bolgheri coast)</i>	<i>Sandy Clay</i>
---------------------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	-------------------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Chianti Classico: food-centric, sour cherry · Brunello: powerful, age-worthy · Super Tuscans: Bordeaux-influenced, international · Bolgheri: coastal, rich
Famous Producers	Biondi-Santi · Sassicaia · Ornellaia · Antinori · Isole e Olena · Felsina · San Felice · Montevertiline

"Brunello di Montalcino needs minimum 5 years aging before release — and can improve for 40 more. Patience is the price of entry."

VENETO & AMARONE

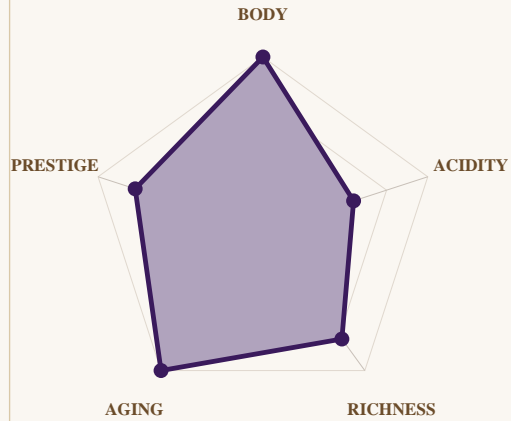
■ Italy · Continental with Lago di Garda influence

Amarone · Valpolicella · Italy's appassimento masters

Cool ■■■ Warm ■

Dry ■■■ Wet ■

Latitude	45–46°N
Elevation	50–500m
Rainfall	~800mm / year
Climate	Continental with Lago di Garda influence



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

The Veneto is Italy's most prolific wine region by volume, but its finest wines come from the Valpolicella hills west of Verona. The appassimento process — drying grapes on bamboo racks (arele) for 90–120 days — concentrates sugars, acids and flavours beyond what fresh-picked grapes can achieve. This ancient technique creates Amarone's extraordinary density and complexity.

Amarone della Valpolicella is one of Italy's most powerful wines — typically 15–17% alcohol with enormous concentration and aging potential. The name derives from 'amaro' (bitter) — it was originally an accident when Recioto (a sweet wine) fermented dry. Soave, from the same region, produces Italy's most under-appreciated dry white from Garganega grapes on volcanic soils.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

The Valpolicella hills form a natural amphitheatre north of Verona. Lake Garda moderates temperatures along the western edge. The narrow valleys allow cold air drainage that is essential for the appassimento drying lofts (fruttai) in autumn.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

Valpolicella	Amarone della Valpolicella DOCG	Soave DOC
Recioto della Valpolicella	Bardolino	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

Corvina	Corvinone	Rondinella	Molinara
---------	-----------	------------	----------

WHITE VARIETIES

Garganega (Soave)	Trebbiano di Soave	Pinot Grigio	
-------------------	--------------------	--------------	--

SOILS

Limestone	Volcanic Basalt	Clay-Limestone	Alluvial
-----------	-----------------	----------------	----------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Amarone: full-bodied, dried-grape intensity · Valpolicella Ripasso: medium-bodied, Amarone-influenced · Soave: mineral, almondine white
Famous Producers	Dal Forno Romano · Quintarelli · Allegrini · Masi · Bertani · Pieropan (Soave) · Inama (Soave)

"Amarone is made from grapes deliberately dried for 90–120 days — concentrating sugar, flavour and complexity before fermentation even begins."

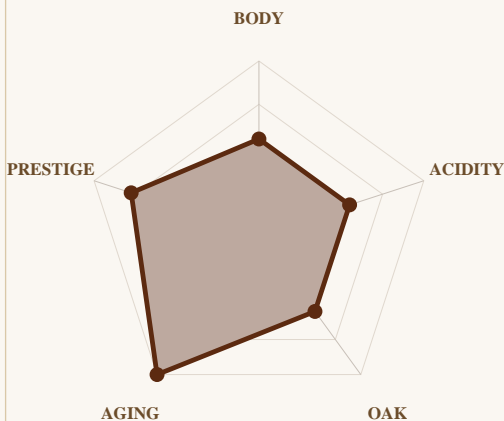
RIOJA

■ ■ Spain · Continental with Atlantic & Mediterranean influence

Spain's most famous red · American oak · Tempranillo · Crianza to Gran Reserva

Cool ■ ■ Warm
 Dry ■ ■ Wet

Latitude	42–42.5°N
Elevation	400–800m
Rainfall	~450mm / year
Climate	Continental with Atlantic & Mediterranean influence



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

Rioja is Spain's most internationally recognised wine region and home to the country's most elaborate aging classification. The region spans three distinct zones — Rioja Alta and Alavesa in the west (cooler, more elegant, calcareous soils) and Rioja Oriental in the east (warmer, fuller-bodied, alluvial soils). The quality hierarchy strongly favours Alta and Alavesa.

The traditional American oak aging (still used by many producers) creates Rioja's signature vanilla and dill character — unlike any other great wine region. Modern producers are increasingly using French oak and shorter macerations for a fresher, fruit-forward style. Both approaches can be excellent; the traditional style has historical authenticity, the modern style has international accessibility.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

Protected from Atlantic rains by the Cantabrian Mountains to the north and from Mediterranean heat by the Iberian Range to the south, Rioja enjoys a privileged in-between climate. The Ebro River runs through the region providing moisture.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

Rioja Alta	Rioja Alavesa	Rioja Oriental (formerly Baja)
------------	---------------	--------------------------------

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

Tempranillo	Garnacha	Graciano	Mazuelo (Carignan)
-------------	----------	----------	--------------------

WHITE VARIETIES

Viura (Macabeo)	Malvasía	Garnacha Blanca	
-----------------	----------	-----------------	--

SOILS

Calcareous Clay	Limestone	Alluvial Iron-Rich Clay	Sandy
-----------------	-----------	-------------------------	-------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Joven (young) · Crianza (2yr oak) · Reserva (3yr oak) · Gran Reserva (5yr oak) — the most celebrated
------------	--

Famous Producers

Vega Sicilia (honorary) · La Rioja Alta · CVNE Imperial · Muga · Roda · López de Heredia · Artadi

"The Gran Reserva aging system built around Tempranillo and American oak created one of wine's great flavour signatures — vanilla, dill, and dried cherry."

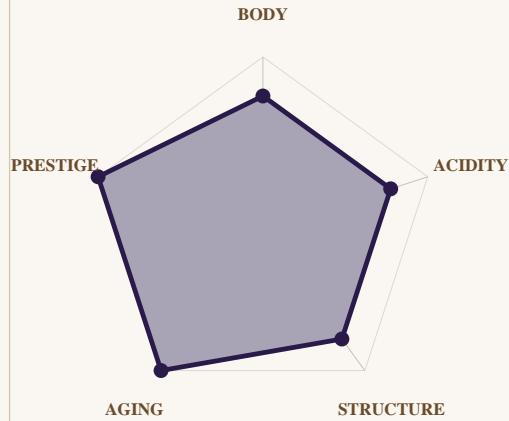
RIBERA DEL DUERO

■ ■ Spain · Continental Extreme

Spain's highest plateau · Extreme diurnal range · Vega Sicilia country

Cool ■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall Wet
 Dry ■ ■

Latitude	41.5–42°N
Elevation	700–900m
Rainfall	~400mm / year
Climate	Continental Extreme



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

The Duero river valley at 700–900m altitude produces Spain's most powerful and structured Tempranillo — called Tinto Fino here. The extreme continental climate (up to 20°C temperature difference between day and night) preserves natural acidity despite the warm, sunny days. The wines are darker, more structured, and less oak-dominated than Rioja.

Vega Sicilia — Spain's most revered wine estate — is based here, producing Único aged for up to 12 years before release, making it one of the world's most age-worthy reds. Pingus, made by Peter Sisseck from a tiny 4-hectare parcel of old vines, has become one of Europe's most sought-after wines.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

A high plateau (meseta) along the Duero River, surrounded by arid, semi-desert landscape. The altitude brings intense UV radiation and sharp temperature contrasts. Rivers and reservoirs provide limited moisture in this very dry region.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Pesquera</i>	<i>Peñañiel</i>	<i>Roa</i>
<i>Aranda de Duero</i>	<i>Quintanilla de Onésimo</i>	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

<i>Tempranillo (Tinto Fino)</i>	<i>Cabernet Sauvignon</i>	<i>Merlot</i>	<i>Malbec</i>
---------------------------------	---------------------------	---------------	---------------

WHITE VARIETIES

<i>Albillo Mayor (minor)</i>

SOILS

<i>Limestone</i>	<i>Chalk</i>	<i>Sandy Clay</i>	<i>Alluvial Gravel</i>
------------------	--------------	-------------------	------------------------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Powerful, dark, structured Tempranillo · more blackberry and graphite than Rioja · built for long aging
-------------------	---

Famous Producers

Vega Sicilia · Pingus · Dominio de Atauta · Pago de los Capellanes · Emilio Moro · Protos

"At 850m altitude with temperature swings of 20°C between day and night, Ribera del Duero produces Spain's most structured and complex Tempranillo."

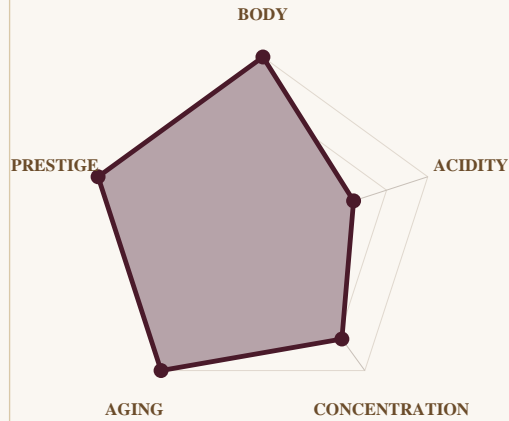
PRIORAT

■ ■ Spain · Mediterranean Continental Extreme

Llicorella slate · Tiny yields · Spain's most dramatic landscape · Extreme concentration

Cool ❄️ ■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall: ■ Wet
 Dry ■ ■ ■ Wet

Latitude	41°N
Elevation	100–800m
Rainfall	~500mm / year
Climate	Mediterranean Continental Extreme



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

Priorat was virtually abandoned in the 1970s — only 600 hectares remained under vine. A group of producers including Álvaro Palacios and René Barbier revived the region in the late 1980s, and it is now one of Spain's two DOCa (Denominación de Origen Calificada) regions alongside Rioja. The llicorella slate — a unique local mix of Silurian-Devonian slate and quartz — gives the wines a distinctive iron-graphite mineral edge.

The near-zero fertility of llicorella forces vines deep through fractured rock to find water and nutrients, producing tiny yields — sometimes as little as 1–2 kg per vine. This extreme stress concentrates the fruit to an extraordinary degree. Old Garnacha and Cariñena vines (some 100+ years old) produce wines of remarkable complexity and longevity.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

Dramatic terraced hillsides in the mountains behind Tarragona. Ancient stone terraces built by Carthusian monks in the 12th century. The landscape is one of the most spectacular in European viticulture — steep, arid, rocky.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

Gratallops	El Lloar	Porrera
Bellmunt del Priorat	La Vilella Alta	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

Grenache (Garnacha)	Carignan (Cariñena/Samsó)	Cabernet Sauvignon	Syrah
---------------------	---------------------------	--------------------	-------

WHITE VARIETIES

Grenache Blanc	Macabeo	Pedro Ximénez (minor)	
----------------	---------	-----------------------	--

SOILS

Llicorella (Slate-Quartz mix)	Schist	Volcanic Granite
-------------------------------	--------	------------------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Full-bodied, concentrated Garnacha blends · iron-graphite mineral edge · 15–30+ year aging potential
Famous Producers	Álvaro Palacios · Clos Mogador · Clos de l'Obac · Mas Doix · Terroir al Límit · Vall Llach

"Priorat's llicorella slate has almost zero fertility — vines send roots metres deep through fractured rock, producing tiny yields of ferocious intensity."

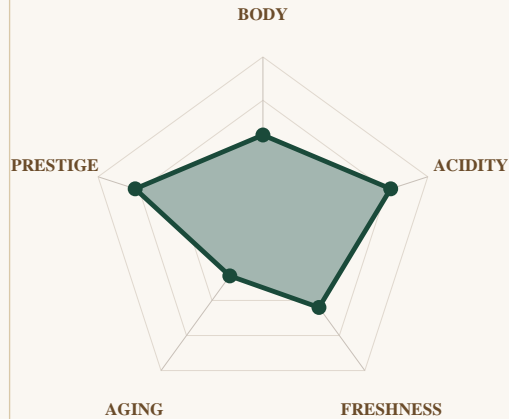
RÍAS BAIXAS

■ ■ Spain · Oceanic Atlantic

Albariño · Atlantic winds · The greenest corner of Spain · Seafood country

Cool ■ ■ ■ Warm
 RAINFALL
 Dry ■ ■ ■ Wet

Latitude	42–42.5°N
Elevation	0–400m
Rainfall	~1,700mm / year (wettest major wine region in Spain)
Climate	Oceanic Atlantic



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

Spain's greenest, rainiest wine region sits at the far northwest corner of the Iberian Peninsula — closer to Portugal (which it borders) than to the rest of Spain's wine geography. The Atlantic rías (estuaries) create a unique marine microclimate and the granite soils give Albariño its characteristic saline, mineral quality.

The classic local pairing — Albariño with Galicia's extraordinary seafood (octopus, percebes, clams, sea urchin) — is one of the world's most intuitive regional food and wine matches. The wine literally tastes of the same Atlantic that produces the seafood. Thick-skinned Albariño grapes are naturally resistant to the high humidity and rainfall that would devastate thinner-skinned varieties.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

The coastal rías (drowned river valleys) create a complex microclimate with marine influence. The pergola training system (on high trellises) keeps grapes off the damp ground and promotes air circulation — essential in this wet climate.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Salnés Valley</i>	<i>O Rosal</i>	<i>Condado do Tea</i>
<i>Soutomaior</i>	<i>Ribeira do Ulla</i>	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

<i>Caiño Tinto</i>	<i>Espadeiro (minor)</i>
--------------------	--------------------------

WHITE VARIETIES

<i>Albariño</i>	<i>Loureira</i>	<i>Treixadura</i>	<i>Caiño Blanco</i>
-----------------	-----------------	-------------------	---------------------

SOILS

<i>Granite</i>	<i>Sandy Alluvial</i>	<i>Schist</i>
----------------	-----------------------	---------------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Crisp, saline, citrus and white peach Albariño · best drunk young · rare barrel-aged and skin-contact versions emerging
-------------------	---

Famous Producers

Pazo de Señoráns · Do Ferreiro · Mar de Frades · Zárata · Fillaboa · Adega Morgadío · Bodegas Gallegas

"Rías Baixas receives 1,700mm of rain annually — more than Bordeaux, more than Burgundy — and produces some of Spain's most vibrant, marine-fresh whites."

MOSEL

Germany · Cool Continental (moderated by river)

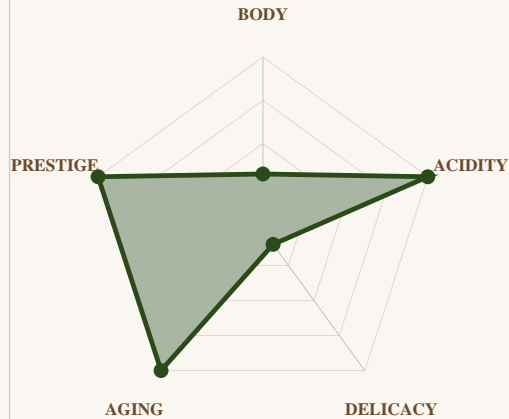
World's finest Riesling · Blue Devonian slate · Impossibly steep slopes

Cool Warm
 Dry Wet

TEMPERATURE

RAINFALL

Latitude	49.5–50.5°N
Elevation	80–350m
Rainfall	~700mm / year
Climate	Cool Continental (moderated by river)



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

The Mosel is arguably the world's most dramatic wine landscape — vineyards at up to 65° gradient, carved into ancient Devonian slate beside the meandering river. Dark slate absorbs heat during the day and radiates it back at night — essential for ripening grapes at this northerly latitude (50°N). The river's reflection amplifies light onto the steep slopes. Without these mechanisms, ripening would be impossible.

Mosel Riesling at its finest (Trockenbeerenauslese, Auslese) has no equal in the world of white wine for the combination of sweetness, acidity, aromatic complexity, and longevity. The TDN compound ('petrol') develops after 5–10 years and is considered a mark of greatness. The great estates — Egon Müller, Moselland, J.J. Prüm — produce wines that can age 50+ years.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

The Mosel River makes dramatic S-shaped bends through the Rhenish Massif, creating south-facing slopes that capture maximum sunlight. The river modulates extreme temperature swings. Some of the world's steepest vineyards — workers use monorails and ropes.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

Bernkastel	Wehlen	Graach
Ürzig	Piesport	Brauneberg
Bremmer Calmont (65° gradient — world's steepest)		

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

Pinot Noir (minor)

WHITE VARIETIES

Riesling Müller-Thurgau (minor) Elbling

SOILS

Blue Devonian Slate (Grauwacke) Red Slate (Rotschiefer) Volcanic Basalt Weathered Slate

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles

Kabinett (light, barely sweet) · Spätlese · Auslese · Beerenauslese · TBA (intensely sweet) · Sekt (sparkling)

Famous Producers

Egon Müller · J.J. Prüm · Moselland · Fritz Haag · Reinhold Haart · Selbach-Oster · Clemens Busch

"Mosel Riesling grows on slate formed 400 million years ago — before dinosaurs existed. When you drink it, you are tasting deep geological time."

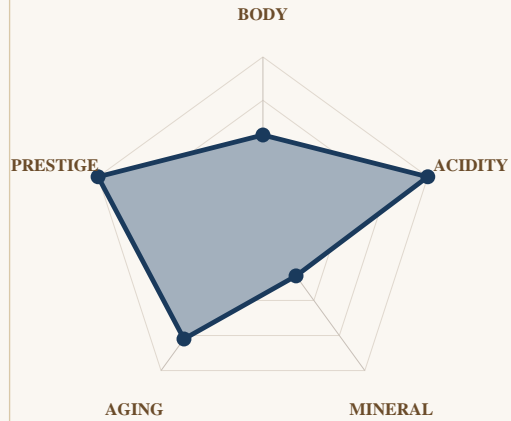
WACHAU & KAMPTAL

■ Austria · Cool Continental (Danube moderated)

Europe's oldest rocks · Danube carved · Grüner Veltliner + Riesling

Cool ■■■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall ■ Wet
 Dry ■■■

Latitude	48–48.5°N
Elevation	200–500m
Rainfall	~500mm / year
Climate	Cool Continental (Danube moderated)



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

The Wachau is Austria's most prestigious wine region — a dramatic 35km stretch of the Danube carved through ancient crystalline rock. The terraced vineyards of gneiss and granite date back to Roman times. The Wachau DAC classification (Steinfeder · Federspiel · Smaragd) is one of Austria's most important quality systems, with Smaragd representing the finest, most concentrated wines.

The Kamptal valley runs north from the Danube, and producers like Hirsch and Bründlmayer have established it as a source of world-class Grüner Veltliner and Riesling. Austrian Riesling — particularly from the Wachau — is arguably more powerful and mineral than its German equivalent, and can rival Alsace Grand Cru for complexity.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

The Wachau benefits from cool Pannonian air flowing from the east and warm Mediterranean air from the south, creating a unique continental microclimate. The Danube acts as a heat moderator. Loess deposits (wind-blown glacial silt from the Ice Age) cap some vineyards, adding mineral richness.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

Wachau DAC (Steinfeder · Federspiel · Smaragd)	Kamptal DAC	Kremstal DAC
--	-------------	--------------

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

Blaufränkisch (minor)	Zweigelt
-----------------------	----------

WHITE VARIETIES

Grüner Veltliner	Riesling
------------------	----------

SOILS

Gneiss	Granite	Loess	Schist
Alluvial			

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Grüner Veltliner: white pepper, mineral, food-friendly · Riesling: powerful, mineral, structured · Smaragd: Austria's finest designation
Famous Producers	F.X. Pichler · Emmerich Knoll · Hirsch · Bründlmayer · Rudi Pichler · Prager · Loimer

"The Wachau sits on some of Europe's oldest exposed rocks — ancient gneiss and granite terraces carved by the Danube over millions of years."

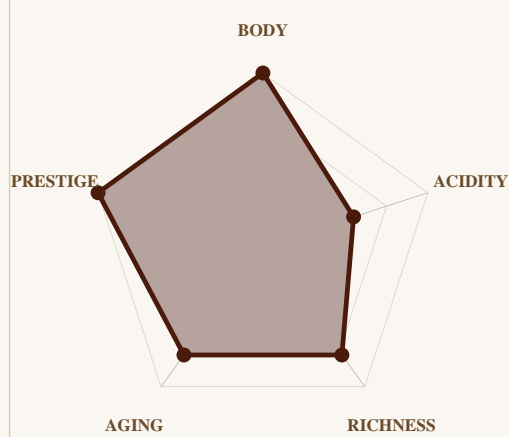
NAPA VALLEY

■ ■ USA · Mediterranean (warm)

California's most famous valley · Cabernet King · The 1976 Judgment of Paris changed everything

Cool ■ ■ Warm
 Dry ■ ■ Wet

Latitude	38–38.8°N
Elevation	0–600m (valley to mountains)
Rainfall	~750mm / year (winter-dominant)
Climate	Mediterranean (warm)



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

Napa Valley runs 50km north-south between the Mayacamas Mountains (west) and the Vaca Range (east). The valley's famous thermal diversity — cool morning fog from San Pablo Bay, warm afternoons — is ideal for Cabernet Sauvignon. The 1976 Judgment of Paris blind tasting (where California wines beat French Premiers Crus) changed the world's perception of New World wine permanently.

The valley floor's deep alluvial soils produce Cabernet's rich, opulent style. Mountain AVAs (Howell Mountain, Mount Veeder) sit on volcanic and rocky soils — producing more structured, tannic, age-worthy wines with better natural acidity despite the warm climate. The Rutherford and Oakville benchland is considered the finest Cabernet terroir.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

A narrow valley floor (1–8km wide) flanked by mountain ranges. Carneros at the southern end is the coolest zone — Pacific influence. The northern end (Calistoga) is the warmest. The mountain AVAs above the fog line have intense sunlight and cooler temperatures.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

Rutherford	Oakville	Stags Leap District
Howell Mountain	Mount Veeder	Spring Mountain
Yountville	Coombsville	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon	Merlot	Cabernet Franc	Petit Verdot
Zinfandel	Syrah		

WHITE VARIETIES

Chardonnay	Sauvignon Blanc
------------	-----------------

SOILS

Alluvial Gravel (valley floor)	Volcanic (mountain AVAs)	Clay-Loam	Benchland Loam
--------------------------------	--------------------------	-----------	----------------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Full-bodied, opulent Cabernet Sauvignon · rich Chardonnay · 'cult' Cabernets from small producers
Famous Producers	Screaming Eagle · Harlan Estate · Opus One · Stag's Leap Wine Cellars · Caymus · Diamond Creek · Dunn

"The 1976 Judgment of Paris — when California wines beat France's best in a blind tasting — put Napa Valley on the world wine map overnight."

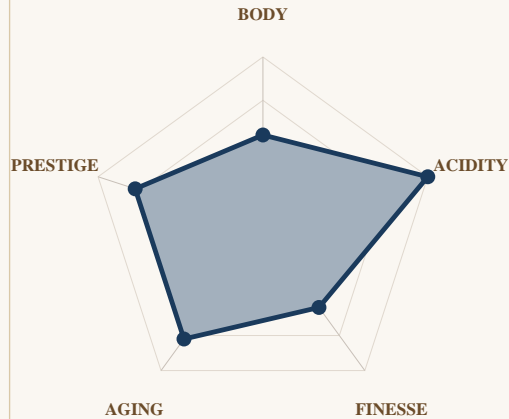
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

■ ■ USA · Cool Mediterranean (transverse valleys)

Transverse valleys · Pacific direct access · California's coolest south · Burgundian soul

Cool ■ ■ **TEMPERATURE** ■ Warm
 Dry ■ ■ **RAINFALL** ■ Wet

Latitude	34.5–34.8°N
Elevation	60–600m
Rainfall	~350mm / year
Climate	Cool Mediterranean (transverse valleys)



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

Santa Barbara County's defining geographical feature is unique in California: its mountain ranges run east-west (transverse) rather than north-south. This creates a natural wind tunnel that channels cold Pacific air and marine fog directly inland — making the Sta. Rita Hills and Sta. Ynez Valley dramatically cooler than their southern latitude would suggest. At 34°N, the region produces wines that taste like they come from 48°N.

The diatomaceous earth of the Sta. Rita Hills — compressed ancient marine algae — gives Pinot Noir and Chardonnay a distinctive chalky mineral texture unlike anything else in California. Syrah from Santa Barbara can rival the Northern Rhône in its iron-mineral, peppery character. The Rhône Rangers movement has championed Grenache, Mourvèdre, and Viognier from this region.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

The transverse mountain ranges open directly to the Pacific Ocean, allowing cold marine air to flow unobstructed. The Sta. Rita Hills is furthest west and coolest. Moving east, temperature and sun exposure increase through Sta. Ynez to Happy Canyon.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Sta. Rita Hills AVA</i>	<i>Sta. Ynez Valley AVA</i>	<i>Happy Canyon</i>
<i>Los Olivos District</i>	<i>Ballard Canyon</i>	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

<i>Pinot Noir</i>	<i>Syrah</i>	<i>Grenache</i>	<i>Mourvèdre</i>
<i>Cabernet Sauvignon</i>			

WHITE VARIETIES

<i>Chardonnay</i>	<i>Sauvignon Blanc</i>	<i>Viognier</i>	<i>Roussanne</i>
-------------------	------------------------	-----------------	------------------

SOILS

<i>Diatomaceous Earth (Sta. Rita Hills)</i>	<i>Sandy Loam</i>	<i>Clay-Shale</i>	<i>Limestone</i>
---	-------------------	-------------------	------------------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Elegant, Burgundian Pinot Noir and Chardonnay · Northern Rhône-influenced Syrah · Rhône blends · fresh Sauvignon Blanc
Famous Producers	Foxen · Hitching Post · Melville · Sanford · Brewer-Clifton · Au Bon Climat · Sine Qua Non · Zaca Mesa

"Santa Barbara's east-west mountain valleys funnel Pacific cold air directly inland — making it one of California's coolest regions despite being at 34°N latitude."

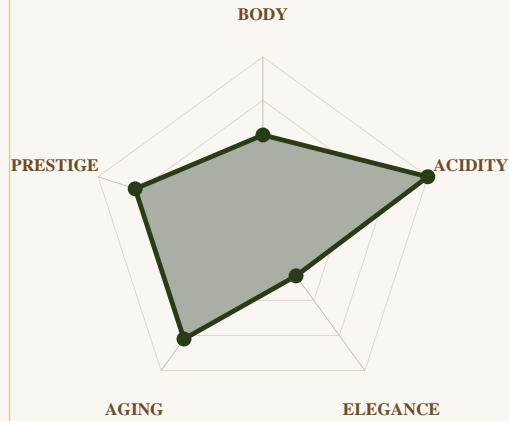
WILLAMETTE VALLEY

■ ■ USA · Cool Maritime / Continental

Oregon's great Pinot Noir · Jory volcanic soil · America's Burgundy

Cool ■■■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall ■ Wet
 Dry ■■■

Latitude	44.5–45.5°N
Elevation	60–300m
Rainfall	~1,100mm / year
Climate	Cool Maritime / Continental



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

Oregon's signature wine region sits at 45°N — the same latitude as Burgundy — and the comparison is not coincidental. Willamette Valley Pinot Noir is more Burgundian in character than any other New World expression: earthy, mineral, silky, with high natural acidity and restrained fruit. The Missoula Floods of the Ice Age deposited complex layers of soil across the valley floor.

Jory soil — deep, well-draining red volcanic clay from ancient Columbia River Basalt flows — is Oregon's signature. It produces Pinot Noir with great fruit concentration and structure. The cooler Eola-Amity Hills, influenced by the Van Duzer Corridor (a gap in the Coast Range that channels cold Pacific winds), produce the most elegant and age-worthy wines.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

A broad valley south of Portland, enclosed by the Coast Range to the west and the Cascades to the east. The Coast Range blocks most Pacific rain but the valley still receives significant winter rainfall. Warm, dry summers are ideal for slow ripening.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

Dundee Hills	Chehalem Mountains	Ribbon Ridge
Yamhill-Carlton	Eola-Amity Hills	McMinnville

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

Pinot Noir

WHITE VARIETIES

Chardonnay Pinot Gris Pinot Blanc Riesling

SOILS

Jory (Volcanic Basalt) Willakenzie (Marine Sediment) Loess Alluvial

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles Elegant, earthy Pinot Noir · mineral Chardonnay · fresh Pinot Gris · some of America's finest Riesling

Famous Producers

Domaine Drouhin Oregon · Eyrie Vineyards · Ponzi · Adelsheim · Beaux Frères · Cristom · Elk Cove · Chehalem

"The Willamette Valley sits at the same latitude as Burgundy — and produces America's most Burgundian Pinot Noir on ancient volcanic soils."

Key Styles	Full-bodied, chocolate, dark fruit Shiraz · GSM blends · Eden Valley: elegant Riesling · Seppeltsfield 100-year-old Tawny
Famous Producers	Penfolds · Henschke · Torbreck · Two Hands · Yalumba · Elderton · Langmeil · Rockford · Seppelt

"Phylloxera cannot survive in Barossa's sandy soils — the world's oldest ungrafted Shiraz vines have grown uninterrupted since the 1840s."

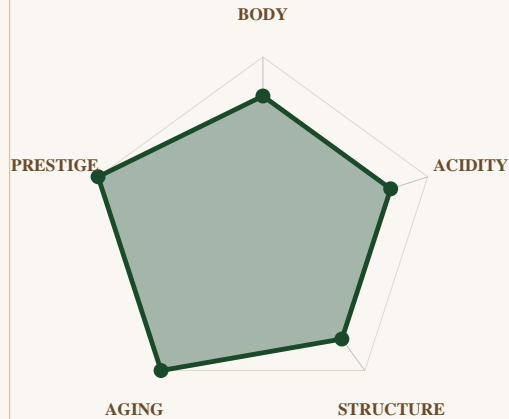
MARGARET RIVER

■ ■ Australia · Maritime Mediterranean

Western Australia's finest · Cabernet-Merlot · Indian Ocean influence

Cool ■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall Wet
 Dry ■ ■

Latitude	33.5–34.5°S
Elevation	50–100m
Rainfall	~1,150mm / year
Climate	Maritime Mediterranean



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

Margaret River was 'discovered' as a wine region in 1967 by a medical researcher who noted its climate similarity to Bordeaux. The Indian Ocean to the west moderates temperatures significantly — the region has one of the smallest diurnal temperature ranges in the world, meaning grapes ripen slowly and evenly. The result is consistently elegant, structured wines.

Margaret River produces less than 3% of Australia's total wine but accounts for over 20% of premium wine sales — a remarkable concentration of quality in a small region. Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay are the flagship varieties, with a style more restrained and Bordeaux-like than other Australian regions. Sémillon-Sauvignon Blanc blends are uniquely regional.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

A narrow cape in extreme southwest Australia, nearly surrounded by ocean — Indian Ocean to the west, Southern Ocean to the south. The peninsula's orientation moderates temperatures year-round. Laterite soils with good drainage.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

Wilyabrup	Yallingup	Karridale
Wallcliffe	Jindong	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon	Merlot	Cabernet Franc	Shiraz
--------------------	--------	----------------	--------

WHITE VARIETIES

Chardonnay	Sauvignon Blanc	Sémillon	
------------	-----------------	----------	--

SOILS

Gravelly Sandy Loam	Laterite	Red Loam over Clay	Alluvial
---------------------	----------	--------------------	----------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Structured, elegant Cabernet-Merlot blends · rich, complex Chardonnay · distinctive Sem-Sauv blends
------------	---

Famous Producers

Vasse Felix · Cullen · Leeuwin Estate · Moss Wood · Xanadu · Cape Mentelle · Voyager Estate

"Margaret River produces less than 3% of Australia's wine but accounts for over 20% of its premium wine sales — a remarkable concentration of quality."

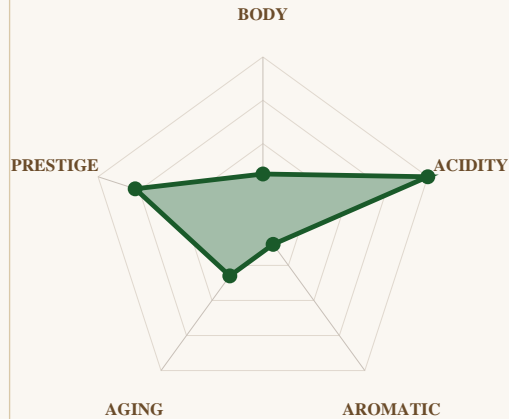
MARLBOROUGH

■ ■ New Zealand · Cool Maritime

Sauvignon Blanc capital of the world · Cloudy Bay · UV intensity

Cool ■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall Wet
 Dry ■ ■

Latitude	41.5°S
Elevation	10–100m
Rainfall	~650mm / year
Climate	Cool Maritime



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

Marlborough is the reason New Zealand wine exists internationally. Before Cloudy Bay's first vintage in 1985, New Zealand was a non-entity in global wine. The combination of high UV radiation (the ozone layer is thinnest here), cool temperatures, and free-draining alluvial gravels creates conditions that amplify thiol compounds in Sauvignon Blanc — producing the passion fruit, guava, and fresh herb intensity that made the region world-famous.

Free-draining river gravels over impermeable clay — vines receive water then dry out quickly, stressing the plant. The Awatere Valley to the south is cooler and produces more intense, herb-driven Sauvignon Blanc. Pinot Noir has emerged as a serious secondary variety, with Central Otago to the south now regarded more highly for the grape.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

At the northern end of New Zealand's South Island, sheltered from the prevailing westerlies by the Kaikōura Ranges. The Wairau Plain's river gravels are free-draining. High sunshine hours and UV radiation, combined with cold nights.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

Wairau Valley	Awatere Valley	Southern Valleys
Rapaura		

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

Pinot Noir

WHITE VARIETIES

Sauvignon Blanc Riesling Chardonnay Pinot Gris

SOILS

Alluvial Gravel River Silt Sandy Loam Clay (Awatere)

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Explosive, aromatic Sauvignon Blanc · fresh Pinot Gris · emerging Pinot Noir · developing Riesling
Famous Producers	Cloudy Bay · Greywacke · Dog Point · Seresin · Clos Henri · Fromm · Huia · Villa Maria

"Cloudy Bay's 1985 launch single-handedly put New Zealand on the international wine map. One wine from one region changed everything."

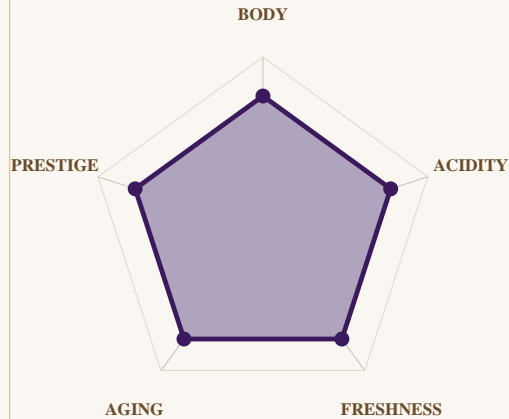
MENDOZA — UCO VALLEY

■ ■ Argentina · Warm Continental with Altitude Cooling

High altitude Malbec · Andes snowmelt irrigation · UV intensity at 1,000m+

Cool ❄️ ■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall ■ ■ Wet
 Dry ■ ■

Latitude	33–35°S
Elevation	900–1,500m
Rainfall	~250mm / year (one of the driest wine regions)
Climate	Warm Continental with Altitude Cooling



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

The Uco Valley at 900–1,500m altitude is the current excitement centre of Argentine wine. The intense UV radiation produces thick-skinned grapes with deep colour and natural richness impossible at lower elevations. Cold nights (temperature drops of 20°C from day to night) preserve natural acidity despite the warm, sunny days — essential for fresh, structured wine at this latitude.

Zuccardi Valle de Uco was named World's Best Winery three consecutive years, validating the extraordinary quality achievable at high altitude. The Andean glacial melt provides irrigation — without the snowmelt, viticulture would be impossible in this near-desert climate. The calcareous soils at the highest elevations (1,300–1,500m) give Malbec a precision and freshness that low-altitude versions cannot match.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

The Andes Mountains rise dramatically behind the vineyards — the highest peaks exceed 6,000m. The entire region relies on Andean snowmelt for irrigation via an ancient acequia (canal) system. The desert landscape with the snow-capped mountains as backdrop is one of the most dramatic wine landscapes in the world.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Luján de Cuyo (classic Malbec)</i>	<i>Uco Valley (premium altitude)</i>	<i>Tupungato</i>
<i>San Carlos</i>	<i>Tunuyán</i>	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

<i>Malbec</i>	<i>Cabernet Sauvignon</i>	<i>Bonarda</i>	<i>Cabernet Franc</i>
<i>Petit Verdot</i>			

WHITE VARIETIES

<i>Torrontés</i>	<i>Chardonnay</i>	<i>Viognier</i>	<i>Sauvignon Blanc</i>
------------------	-------------------	-----------------	------------------------

SOILS

Rocky Alluvial (Andean glacial deposits)

Sandy-Clay

Limestone (highest elevations)

Loam

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Violet-scented, dark-fruited Malbec · structured Cabernet Sauvignon · aromatic Torrontés · high-altitude freshness
Famous Producers	Zuccardi · Achaval Ferrer · Catena Zapata · Cheval des Andes · Clos de los Siete · Viña Cobos · Achával Ferrer

"At 1,000m altitude, UV radiation is 30% more intense than at sea level — producing thick-skinned grapes with deep colour and natural richness unlike anything possible at lower elevations."

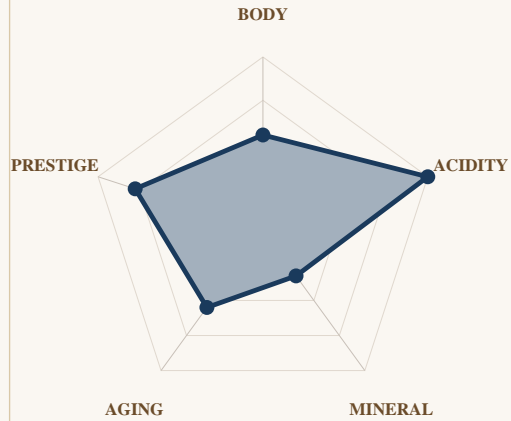
SANTORINI

■ ■ Greece · Hot Arid Mediterranean (unique volcanic)

Volcanic island · Basket-trained vines · Phylloxera-free · Ancient and ungrafted

Cool ■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall Wet
 Dry ■ ■

Latitude	36.3°N
Elevation	0–500m
Rainfall	~370mm / year
Climate	Hot Arid Mediterranean (unique volcanic)



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

Santorini is one of the world's most dramatic wine landscapes — volcanic island vines trained in basket shapes (kouloura) to protect from the fierce Aegean meltemi winds, growing in lunar-looking volcanic ash. The island has never been treated with pesticides (volcanic sulphur protects the vines naturally) and phylloxera cannot survive in the volcanic ash soil — making many vines effectively ungrafted and centuries old.

Despite the hot, dry, sunny climate, Santorini produces wines of extraordinary acidity — the Aegean winds and the volcanic soil's ability to retain overnight moisture create a temperature moderation that preserves freshness impossible elsewhere at this latitude. Assyrtiko is one of the world's great white grapes, producing wines that age magnificently.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

A volcanic caldera in the Southern Aegean. The island is the remnant of a catastrophic volcanic eruption (~1600 BCE) that destroyed the Minoan civilisation. The soil is almost entirely volcanic ash, pumice, and basalt — one of the most extraordinary viticultural substrates on earth.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Pyrgos</i>	<i>Megalochori</i>	<i>Akrotiri</i>
<i>Finikia</i>	<i>Oia</i>	

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

<i>Mandilaria</i>	<i>Mavrotragano</i>
-------------------	---------------------

WHITE VARIETIES

<i>Assyrtiko</i>	<i>Athiri</i>	<i>Aidani</i>
------------------	---------------	---------------

SOILS

<i>Volcanic Pumice</i>	<i>Ash</i>	<i>Basalt</i>	<i>Volcanic Mineral Soil</i>
------------------------	------------	---------------	------------------------------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Electric, saline, mineral Assyrtiko · Nychteri (oaked, skin-contact) · Vinsanto (sun-dried sweet wine) · rare red Mavrotragano
Famous Producers	Domaine Sigalas · Gai'a · Argyros · Santo Wines · Hatzidakis · Domaine Karamolegos

"Santorini has never had phylloxera — the volcanic ash soil kills the louse. The vines are some of the oldest ungrafted vines on earth, producing some of the world's most mineral white wines."

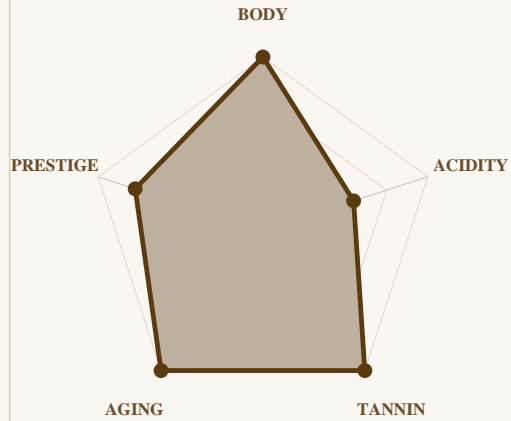
DOURO VALLEY

■ ■ Portugal · Continental Extreme (rain shadow)

Port's birthplace · Ancient schist terraces · Some of the world's oldest wine culture

Cool ■ ■ Warm
 Rainfall Wet
 Dry ■ ■

Latitude	41°N
Elevation	100–700m
Rainfall	~400–800mm / year (varies dramatically)
Climate	Continental Extreme (rain shadow)



WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE

The Douro Valley is one of the world's most ancient wine regions and certainly one of its most dramatic — steep terraced hillsides of purple-grey schist carved by the Douro River, baking in summer temperatures that regularly exceed 40°C. The schist rock is so hard that vines must fracture it to find water — roots reaching 20m deep. This geological violence creates extraordinary concentration.

Port wine (fortified with grape spirit during fermentation to halt it, leaving residual sugar and alcohol) has defined the region for centuries. The Symington family (Dow's, Graham's, Cockburn's) and the Fladgate Partnership (Taylor's, Fonseca, Croft) control much of the trade. Unfortified Douro reds — pioneered by Barca Velha in the 1950s and more recently by wines like Chryseia — are emerging as world-class.

GEOGRAPHY & LANDSCAPE

The Douro River cuts east-west through the ancient Iberian Massif. The mountains to the west (Serra do Marão) create a dramatic rain shadow — the western Baixo Corgo receives 900mm while the eastern Douro Superior receives under 400mm. Summer temperatures are ferocious.

KEY SUB-REGIONS & APPELLATIONS

<i>Baixo Corgo (west, cooler)</i>	<i>Cima Corgo (central, classic Port)</i>	<i>Douro Superior (east, hottest)</i>
<i>Quinta do Crasto · Quinta do Vesuvio · Quinta da Romaneira</i>		

GRAPES GROWN

RED VARIETIES

<i>Touriga Nacional</i>	<i>Touriga Franca</i>	<i>Tinta Roriz (Tempranillo)</i>	<i>Tinta Barroca</i>
<i>Sousão</i>			

WHITE VARIETIES

<i>Viosinho</i>	<i>Rabigato</i>	<i>Gouveio</i>	<i>Malvasia Fina</i>
-----------------	-----------------	----------------	----------------------

SOILS

<i>Schist (Xisto)</i>	<i>Granite</i>	<i>Alluvial (river edge)</i>
-----------------------	----------------	------------------------------

WINE STYLES & FAMOUS PRODUCERS

Key Styles	Vintage Port (finest years, 20–50yr aging) · LBV · Tawny (oxidative, nutty) · Colheita · Douro DOC table wines
Famous Producers	Quinta do Crasto · Niepoort · Quinta do Vesuvio · Symington · Ramos Pinto · Vale Meão · Ramos Pinto

"Douro schist is so hard that vine roots must fracture the rock to survive — some reach 20 metres deep. The geological violence that makes viticulture brutal is what makes Port irreplaceable."