

Alsace

ITS VINEYARDS , ITS WINES...



A HISTORIC LAND AND NOBLE

WINES



**Like the region they wind their way across,
the vineyards of Alsace have gone
from strength to strength over the centuries.**

Its geographic situation, at the junction between Germanic and Roman influences, tells its own story: a culture dating from the Roman era, revitalised by Merovingians and Carolingians who consumed great quantities of "this stimulating wine that makes you happy". By the end of the first millennium, 160 Alsace villages were already growing vines and, by the Middle Ages,

the wines of Alsace were among the most highly prized in all of Europe. Winegrowing in Alsace reached its peak in the 16th century. This period of prosperity was brutally interrupted by the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) which devastated the region. Pillaged, depopulated and ravaged by disease, all commercial activity declined dramatically.

The re-birth of Alsace viticulture came three centuries later, after the First World War, when winegrowers adopted a policy of "quality first" and decided to produce wines only from the traditional, high-quality grape varieties. From 1945 onwards, this policy was reinforced by delimitation of the vineyard area, and by strict enforcement of production and vinification legislation. Finally, these efforts were officially rewarded by Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée status: AOC Alsace in 1962, AOC Alsace Grand Cru in 1975 and AOC Crémant d'Alsace in 1976.

Thanks to the consolidated and relentless efforts of the Alsace wine industry in recent decades, the quality of Alsace wine is recognised the world over.

Today, joined together under the CIVA (Conseil Interprofessionnel des Vins d'Alsace), producers and merchants alike combine their efforts to promote the general image of Alsace wines around the world.



THE IMPORTANCE OF TERROIR

Sheltered from oceanic influence by the Vosges mountains, the Alsace wine region enjoys one of the lowest rainfall in France (only 500-600mm per year) and is blessed with a semi-continental climate, being sunny, hot and dry. Situated on the sub-Vosgian foothills, at an altitude of between 200 and 400 metres, the vineyards take maximum advantage of their exposure to the sun, particularly as the vines are trained along high wires. These specific advantages of the Alsace vineyards favour a slow, extended ripening of the grapes, resulting in wines with very elegant, complex aromas.

The geology of Alsace is a real mosaic of soils, made up of granite, limestone, gneiss, schist, sandstone and many others. Such a wide variety of soils, covering about 15 000 hectares, helps to bring out the finest characteristics of each grape variety, while the imprint of a particular terroir gives each Alsace wine its individuality, complexity and own unique hallmark.



ALSACE WINE ROUTE

The Alsace Wine Route winds its way from north to south, for more than 170 kilometres along the eastern foothills of the Vosges. This delightful itinerary runs across a succession of undulating hills, through pretty villages with narrow streets of flower-decked, half-timbered houses, clustered around their church steeple.

Visitors can easily explore the heart of the vineyards, along numerous vineyard paths leading to the crest of each slope, where signs explain the work of the winegrower and the diversity of the grape varieties. They are welcomed into "winstubs" and tasting cellars to instantly discover the traditional appeal of both the vine and the wine.



TASTE & COLOUR

IN ALSACE, THE WINES DERIVE THEIR NAME PREDOMINANTLY FROM THE GRAPE VARIETY FROM WHICH THEY ARE MADE.

THEY REVEAL A SUCCESSION OF TASTING DELIGHTS TO THE ENTHUSIAST, BOASTING A UNIQUE RANGE THAT VARIES FROM THE VERY DRY AND LIGHT-BODIED, TO THE MOST OPULENT AND FULL-FLAVOURED.

THEIR DIVERSITY MEANS ALSACE WINES ARE PERFECT FOR A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT OCCASIONS.

SYLVANER D'ALSACE



Fresh and light-bodied, with a fruity, floral nose that conjures up citrus fruits, white blossom and freshly cut grass. The ideal match for a seafood platter, fish or charcuterie.



MUSCAT D'ALSACE



With a fragrance of fresh grapes and, occasionally, subtle floral aromas. In contrast with the southern muscats, it is dry and gives the delicious sensation of biting into a tasty grape. It's the perfect apéritif wine, and is a wonderful partner for asparagus.

PINOT GRIS D'ALSACE



Generous and full-bodied, it develops smoky aromas along with delicious notes of dried fruit, toast and beeswax. Drier styles are delicious with white meats, terrines and sautéed mushrooms. Richer styles work well with foie gras, Comté cheese and Asian dishes. It gains expression after a few years.



PINOT BLANC D'ALSACE

Subtly fruity, with notes of orchard fruits and floral nuances. Delicate and soft, it combines freshness with suppleness, allowing it to match a wide range of dishes. Perfect for buffets, seafood platters, etc.



RIESLING D'ALSACE



Dry, classy and delicately fruity, it offers an elegant bouquet with hints of citrus but also floral and mineral notes. This grape makes wonderful gastronomic wines that excel when partnered with fish, shellfish, white meats, goats' cheeses and, of course, a choucroute garnie (sauerkraut with sausages and smoked meats).



PINOT NOIR D'ALSACE



Redolent of ripe red fruits such as cherries, raspberries and redcurrants, often underpinned by subtle aromas of undergrowth and autumnal leaves. When matured in oak, the wines tend to be more firmly structured and complex. A terrific match for red meat, game and charcuterie.

GEWURZTRAMINER D'ALSACE



A grape that offers a whole palette of aromas! Full-bodied and generous, it develops complex aromas of exotic fruit, flowers or spices. Powerful and exuberant, with a full-bodied roundness. A perfect apéritif wine, and also a great partner for exotically spiced dishes, powerful cheeses and desserts.



APPELLATIONS

AOC ALSACE

This appellation is a guarantee of the authenticity of Alsace's terroir and the expertise of its producers. It can be used for wines bearing the name of any one of the seven permitted grape varieties, and for blends. Since 2011, the words AOC Alsace can be supplemented by a communal designation or a lieu-dit (named place):

THE LOCAL DENOMINATIONS refer to wines that are characterised by a specific local origin. These wines are subject to more demanding production rules than standard AOC Alsace wines:
 Bergheim - Blienschwiller - Côtes de Barr - Côte de Rouffach -
 Coteaux du Haut-Koenigsbourg - Klevener de Heiligenstein - Rodern -
 Saint-Hippolyte - Scherwiller - Ottrott - Vallée Noble - Val Saint-Grégoire - Wolxheim.

THE LIEUX-DITS (named places) offers a way of identifying terroirs that lend their wines specific characteristics. Even stricter rules of production are implemented for these wines than for those pertaining to local denominations.

A SINGLE GLANCE IS ALL IT TAKES TO PICK OUT A BOTTLE OF ALSACE WINE, WITH ITS INSTANTLY RECOGNISABLE, LONG AND SLENDER, DISTINCTIVE "FLÛTE" SHAPE, WHICH IS COMPULSORY FOR ALL STILL WINES FROM THE REGION. IN ADDITION, THE 53 OFFICIAL WINE APPELLATIONS CAN ONLY BE BOTTLED IN ALSACE.

AOC ALSACE GRANDS CRUS

These appellations are granted only to fine wines that meet very strict quality criteria. They apply to 51 exceptional terroirs. This appellation is only given to fine wines that meet strict quality criteria. The wines originate from one of 51 exceptional and clearly defined locations, named after the specific locality. Geographic and climatic conditions as well as strict production criteria create unique, delicate and complex wines, which more often than not boast great ageing potential. These distinctive and authentic wines fully express the characteristics of the terroir through their aromatic profile and structure. The grape varieties permitted in the crafting of Grands Crus wines are, without exception, Riesling, Muscat, Pinot Gris and Gewurztraminer.

AOC CRÉMANT D'ALSACE

These lively, delicate, sparkling wines from Alsace are crafted according to traditional methods and are made predominantly from Pinot Blanc, or Pinot Gris, Riesling, Chardonnay or Pinot Noir (Crémant Rosé). The wines currently dominate the Crémant wine category in France. Served as an aperitif or with food, they are versatile wines for any occasion.



OTHER STYLES of Alsace Wines



SERVING & CELLARING ALSACE WINES



VENDANGES TARDIVES (LATE HARVEST)

This indication is granted to exceptional wines created from grapes harvested when over-ripe. The development of *Botrytis cinerea* (noble rot) improves the concentration of aromas, sugar and acidity and gives these "moelleux" wines incomparable strength and complexity.

SELECTION DE GRAINS NOBLES ('NOBLE' BERRIES)

Concentrated by "noble rot", individual grapes are harvested in successive pickings. The concentration gives a subtlety to the character of the grape variety, resulting in powerful wines of great complexity and exceptional length on the palate, truly masterpieces of the viticultural art.

Alsace wines should be served chilled but not iced.

The ideal serving temperature is 8-10°C for Alsace and Alsace Grand Cru wines, and 5-7°C for Crémant d'Alsace.

The flavour, elegance and bouquet of Alsace wines can best be appreciated if they are served in a long-stemmed tulip glass, or a tall, slim crystal flute for Crémant d'Alsace.

Their aroma will be better appreciated if the glass is not filled to the brim. Alsace wines do not need years of ageing to reveal their full character: from six months to five years is usually sufficient.

However, in the finest vintages, Grands Crus, Vendanges Tardives and Sélection de Grains Nobles wines will benefit from more bottle-age, preferably in a cellar that is neither too dry nor too damp. Sometimes, certain wines show a slight prickling on the palate, having been bottled early to conserve their youthful freshness.

Alsace wines should always be stored on their sides, at an ambient temperature of 10-15°C. The presence of a light deposit of tartrate crystals in the bottle is a purely natural phenomenon, and is usually the sign of an extremely fine wine.



Vins
d'Alsace

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