

Müller-Thurgau



Origin

The cultivator and person providing the name, Hermann Müller, carried out the hybridization in 1882 in Geisenheim, Germany, although it wasn't until 1998 that the true parents were brought to light by means of genetic analysis: they consisted of Madeleine Royale and White Riesling. Starting in 1930, the first experimental vineyards were started in Germany. At the same time (1928 to 1932), six vineyards in Alto Adige gathered their first results with this new variety. But only after the Second World War did the wine attract more attention, above all in Germany. In Alto Adige, too, the variety experienced an upswing at that time, especially in the Isarco Valley, where Müller-Thurgau was recommended for cultivation after 1950. Synonyms such as Riesling-Sylvaner or Rivaner never came into use here.

Distribution

The variety has not managed to gain a foothold worldwide. Today, the area of cultivation throughout the world is still around 22,200 hectares (56,834 acres) with a slightly decreasing tendency. In Germany, after the variety showed a top level of nearly 25,000 hectares (62,000 acres) some thirty years ago, today there are only 11,700 hectares (28,911 acres) producing. This is followed by Hungary (1,700 hectares/4,201 acres), the Czech Republic (1,500 hectares/3,707 acres), Austria (1,800 hectares/4,448 acres), and Slovakia (1,500 hectares/3,707 acres). Italy has 1,400 hectares (3,459 acres), with 943 of them (2,330 acres) just in the province of Trento. In Alto Adige, the variety is currently cultivated on 151 hectares (373 acres), with a recently declining tendency. From

approximately 8 hectares (20 acres) around 1960, the area grew to a peak of 222 hectares (548 acres) a few years ago. The Isarco Valley is home to 42 percent of the area of cultivation, followed by Cortaccia and Caldaro.

Vines

This variety has large, relatively loose bunches with yellowish-green, thin-skinned berries. As a result of its early maturity and the susceptibility to rot, the cultivation has to be restricted to airy high elevations between 550 and 1,000 meters (1,800 and 3,300 feet) above sea level. Sugar levels higher than 18 degrees on the Klosterneuburg scale are not desirable, because starting from that value the aromatic quality loses its intensity.

Wine

Müller-Thurgau is regarded as the symbol of quaffably fresh, mild wines with a light aromatic quality, characterized by flowery tones (lilacs and geraniums), citrus fruit, and from time to time also black currants. The light tone of nutmeg occasionally enters in the background. The wines are ready to drink early and are not suitable for longer aging.