

Pinot Grigio



Origin

One of the three classic Burgundy varieties. Pinot Grigio was selected from a mutation of Pinot Noir. The unstable, grayish-red color of the grapes is due to a periclinal chimera, with the skin of the berry containing types of tissue that are genetically different from each other and layered over each other. The ease of mutation is maintained in this way, and thus differences in color with blue or white bunches, including individual grapes, are to be observed.

Cistercian monks supposedly brought the variety in 1375 from Burgundy to Lake Balaton in Hungary, where it got its name Szürkebarát (“gray monk”) as an allusion to those who brought it. Going in another direction, the variety came to Alsace in 1568 and then into Breisgau in Germany. It may also be found as Roter Burgunder (“red Burgundy”) in the older specialized literature. The synonym in German Ruländer arose in the middle of the eighteenth century. A merchant from Speyer by the name of Ruland supposedly recognized the quality potential of the variety and substantially contributed to its spread. Pinot Grigio represents the last development in the dance of names. In Alto Adige, the grape variety has carried the name Ruländer since its introduction.

The first planting in Tyrol took place in 1848 at the initiative of Archduke Johann in Appiano-Monte. Up through the end of the nineteenth century, additional vineyards of it were established in Terlano, Appiano, Caldaro, Ora, Nalles, Marleno, Postal, and Scena. In this early phase, the cultivation took place together with the Pinot Blanc variety, with the wine then being sold as Burgunder (“Burgundy”) or Strahler (“radiant”).

Distribution

The variety spread above all else in Hungary, but also to a small extent in Champagne, Burgundy, and Germany. Because of the high fluctuations in yields, though, it gradually fell into disfavor, and by 1930, it hardly had any importance any more. Only after 1960 did the variety experience a Renaissance, at first primarily in Northern Italy. Under the name Pinot Grigio that is common there, it also made the leap to countries overseas. Today, it is represented in nearly all of the winegrowing countries in the world, with the worldwide area of cultivation at around 54,500 hectares (134,672 acres), whereby Italy, with 25,000 hectares (61,776 acres) is at the head of the list. The regional strongholds of Pinot Grigio are the Veneto (8,000 hectares/19,768 acres), Friuli (6,000 hectares/14,826 acres), Trentino (2,900 hectares/7,166 acres), and Sicily (2,500 hectares/6,177 acres). The second most important country for Pinot Grigio cultivation is the USA, with an estimated 8,500 hectares (21,004 acres). In Europe, significant cultivations are found in Germany (7,100 hectares/17,544 acres), France (2,920 hectares/7,215 acres, of which 90% is in Alsace) and Moldova (2,100 hectares/5,189 acres), followed by Hungary, Austria and Romania. But in other countries overseas, such as Australia (4,000 hectares/9,884 acres) and New Zealand (2,600 hectares/6,425 acres), the variety has also firmly established itself.

In Alto Adige, there are currently 705 hectares (1,742 acres) planted with Pinot Grigio. It has been the most planted white wine variety here for over three decades now. The majority of the Pinot Grigio vineyards are located in the southern Bassa Atesina, above all in Salorno, Magrè, and Cortina s.s.d.v.

However, the majority of the grapes are processed in the neighboring province of Trento (in Mezzocorona), but as a result,

these wines do not come to the market with the designation of origin as Alto Adige. The second most important subregion for the variety is Oltradige, with the winegrowing areas of Appiano and Caldaro. Planting has increased continuously, especially after the year 2000. By way of comparison, in 1966, Alto Adige had less than a third of today's area planted with Pinot Grigio at only 195 hectares (482 hectares).

Vines

The main feature of this Burgundy variety is the medium-sized bunches that are either cylindrical or else shouldered, with their nearly brown or grayish-red berries that may also be bluish-red when fully mature. In order to reduce the variety's susceptibility to rot, the former clones with tight berries have increasingly been replaced by clones that are more disposed to loose berries, which are also lower yielding. The variety flourishes under the most varied of conditions. In Alto Adige, it is predominantly planted in warm locations on the valley floor up to a maximum of 500 meters (1,600 feet) above sea level. Soils that are not too fertile yield wines that are better in quality.

Wine

Depending upon the elevation, different wines will result. Those from the valley floor are mild, rather broad, and with regard to the aromatic quality, they are reminiscent of ripe apples, pears, or quince. Added to this are tones of cantaloupe, but also hazel nuts and coconut. The wines from higher locations (Appiano-Monte or the Isarco Valley), on the other hand, demonstrate aromas of limes, fresh stone fruit, white peaches, and hay blossoms. Because of their more prominent acidity, they have a slimmer effect, but they are juicy when drunk. In spite of the size of its area of cultivation, the German name Ruländer appears comparatively infrequently as a varietal wine with the corresponding indication on the label. The reasons for this lie in the marketing abroad. On the other hand, the Pinot Grigio Alto Adige (Südtirol) from the Santa Margherita winery in the Veneto is among the best-known Italian wine brands in the USA at the higher price level. In Alto Adige itself, the traditional name Ruländer continues to be listed on the label. For several years, though, the name Pinot Grigio that is better recognized internationally has also increasingly been used. The actual type of wine – whether full-bodied and for the most part completely or at least partly vinified with wood, or else fresh and mineral-rich from higher elevations – has no influence upon the language that is chosen for the label.

Chardonnay



Origin

There continues to be speculation as to whether the origins of Chardonnay are to be sought in Dalmatia or even in Lebanon. But according to the current state of findings, neither of these is correct. The variety originated from an accidental hybridization of Burgundy grapes with Gouais Blanc. Since a village in Mâcon (Burgundy) also bore the name Chardonnay, the home of the variety is presumed to be there. It was first mentioned in 1685. For a long time, it was cultivated in a mixed planting with Pinot Blanc and also frequently mistaken with it. The quality potential of Chardonnay was recognized relatively late; the differentiation of characteristics only took place in 1872 in Lyons. The worldwide reputation of Burgundy white wines, with the top locations at the Côte de Beaune (Montrachet) as well as in Chablis, is based upon this grape variety. Today, with regard to the white wines from Burgundy, but also with respect to the sparkling wines from the Côte des Blancs, Chardonnay enjoys an untouched preferable position. In Alto Adige, the variety came into cultivation incognito, as it were, and in fact it was erroneously called "yellow Pinot Blanc".

It was presumably plant material from the more southerly regions which unconsciously came to be planted in Alto Adige. But it may be the case that the variety arrived here mixed with Pinot Blanc stocks. The earlier name of Morillon for Chardonnay continues to be used in Styria, Austria to this very day. Archduke Johann brought the plant material from Styria at the time for his estates in Tyrol.

Distribution

The variety only achieved great distribution outside of France after 1970. Today, with 210,000 hectares (520,000 acres) worldwide, it is the most planted white wine variety. The largest areas of cultivation are located in its country of origin France with 51,000 hectares (126,000 acres) and the USA with an estimated 43,000 hectares (106,000 acres). That is followed by Australia with 21,000 hectares (52,000 acres), the same as in Italy. The country is led by Sicily (5,500 hectares/13,600 acres) ahead of Lombardy (3,000 hectares/7,400 acres), Veneto (2,800 hectares/6,900 acres), and the neighboring province of Trento (2,714 hectares/6,706 acres), followed by Friuli (1,500 hectares/3,700 acres) and Puglia (1,000 hectares/2,500 acres). Significant areas of cultivation are also found in Chile (13,000 hectares/32,000 acres), South Africa (8,300 hectares/20,500 acres), Spain (6,800 hectares/16,800 acres), Argentina (6,600 hectares/16,300 acres), Moldova (6,000 hectares/14,800 acres), New Zealand (3,900 hectares/9,600 acres), and Bulgaria (3,700 hectares/9,100 acres).

In Alto Adige, the variety has officially been represented since 1985. At that time, those areas were registered in a survey in which the majority was planted with Chardonnay. Previously, those areas had been assigned to Pinot Blanc. The requirements for recording under the wine laws resulted from the inclusion of the variety in the DOC producer regulations in the autumn of 1984. Starting out from the original 154 hectares (381 acres), the importance of the variety rapidly increased. By 1990, there were already 336 hectares (830 acres) planted, and in 2000, that figure had grown to 464 hectares (1,147 acres). Today, the area under cultivation is around 668 hectares (1,651 acres).

Chardonnay is cultivated primarily on the valley floor of the Bassa Atesina, particularly in the communities of Salorno, Magrè, Termeno, Cortaccia, Cortina s.s.d.v., and Egna. Another production area is in Oltradige. But the winegrowers in Terlano and Andriano also appreciate the variety.

Vines

This variety flourishes under the most varied of conditions: the spectrum ranges from extremely warm locations to comparatively cool climatic zones (such as Champagne). The loose structure of the grapes of individual clones reduces the risk of rot. The medium-sized bunches of a yellow to golden-yellow color mature at a medium-early date. When fully mature, the berries appear to be sprinkled with a rust-red. Then the grapes have to be harvested immediately, though, because otherwise they will break apart. At higher elevations, the variety may drop its blossoms. For that reason, the Chardonnay vineyards in Alto Adige are limited to lower hilly areas or else to the valley floor. At the higher elevations, Pinot Blanc is preferred.

Wine

The range in variation of the clones makes it possible to bring different stylistic directions of wine into the bottle. The spectrum covers the gamut from wines that are reminiscent of Pinot Blanc (with tones of apples and pears) to the aroma-intense Muscat. In general, Chardonnay wines often show notes of pineapple, banana, and melon. When planted at higher elevations, a scent of herbs (chamomile and lemon balm) may often be ascertained. The color ranges from lemon-yellow to golden yellow. When aged in small wooden barrels, smoky aromas and tones of vanilla are also added. In order to not change the typical characteristics of Alto Adige Chardonnay, the aromatic Chardonnay clones are only used up to a total of five percent. It is above all else the fine yet multilayered aromatic quality, the full-bodied feel, and the long-lasting flavor in the mouth which distinguish the variety in these parts.

Just as with Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay is not found as often on local wine lists as it should be entitled in correspondence to its distribution. This is also due to the fact that Chardonnay grapes from the Bassa Atesina are traditionally often vinified by wineries in the neighboring province of Trentino. In addition, Chardonnay is a favorite blending variety, either within the framework of the fifteen percent with other white wine varieties (especially the Burgundy varieties) that is allowed under the local wine regulations or else for cuvee wines such as Terlano Bianco and Alto Adige Bianco. Furthermore, the demand for Chardonnay is also growing on the part of local sparkling wine producers.

Gewürztraminer



Origin

From the perspective of Alto Adige's winegrowers, the question as to the origin of Gewürztraminer is a delicate topic. Speaking for the name being provided by the winegrowing village of Tramin ("Termeno" in Italian) is the fact that wine from Tramin already had a reputation in the Middle Ages that ranged far beyond the borders of the province. In an analogous manner to other varieties, this grape was consequently also named after the location from which the most sought-after wines were produced. This thesis is also confirmed by a corresponding remark in the municipal laws of Munich from 1346 where, with regard to the wines from Bolzano and Tramin, it was specified, "The wine is named after where it grows." Initially, the "Traminer" from Alto Adige was a white wine which was most likely made from the White Lagrein variety. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was a wine with a reddish color.

A further hypothesis from the research on the name goes back to the *Vitis aminea* that was known to the Romans, which was supposedly of Greek origin. German monks then supposedly contributed to this name being transformed to "der Aminer" and then "dr'Aminer" until finally arriving at Traminer, but there is no evidence of this in the literature. Prestigious researchers presume that the starting point of the variety was actually what is today Southwestern France in Roman times. In a monastery in Stuttgart, the term "Traminer vines" was already mentioned for the first time as early as 1483..

The initial variety must have been the white Traminer, which is still grown today in the Jura region of France under the name "Savagnin Blanc". A color mutation from this yielded the Red Traminer. And a mutation in the aroma then led to the

Gewürztraminer. This name was only mentioned in writing for the first time in 1827 in a document from Rheingau.

Traminer is one of the old original varieties of Europe, from which a multitude of European grape varieties came into existence as a result of hybridization, including Sauvignon Blanc, Sylvaner, Rotgipfler, Green Veltliner, and Chenin Blanc.

For Alto Adige, the first plantings of Red Traminer were carried out by Archduke Johann in Appiano in 1848. Shortly thereafter, selected locations in Bolzano, Merano, Bressanone, and Termeno were also planted with the vines.

Distribution

Today, the variety is planted worldwide on 16,000 hectares (39,537 acres). The country that leads in its cultivation is clearly France, with 3,400 hectares (8,402 acres), with Gewürztraminer being grown exclusively in Alsace, followed by Moldova (2,700 ha/6,672 acres). This is followed by Italy with over 1,400 hectares (3,459 acres), of which 45 percent are found in Alto Adige (631 hectares/1,559 acres), followed by the regions of Trentino (406 hectares/1003 acres), Friuli (300 hectares/741 acres), and Veneto. Other areas of cultivation are found in the USA (1,200 hectares/2,965 acres), Germany (1,100 hectares/2,718 acres), Ukraine (960 hectares/2,372 acres), Bulgaria and Australia (900 hectares/2,224 acres each), Hungary (800 hectares/1,977 acres), followed by the Czech Republic and Romania. New Zealand, Austria, Slovenia and Canada are holding 300 hectares/741 acres each. There is no differentiation in the statistics between Red Traminer and Gewürztraminer.

In Alto Adige, only Gewürztraminer is planted. It consists predominantly of separate clones from the Technical College for Fruticulture, Viticulture, and Horticulture in Laimburg. But French clones are also cultivated, especially new selections from Alsace.

The most important cultivation zones of the variety in Alto Adige are found in Termeno and Appiano. But winegrowers are also dedicated to Gewürztraminer in Caldaro, Cortaccia and Bolzano. In the Isarco Valley, there are 74 hectares (183 acres) producing. Back in 1965, there were only 50 hectares (124 acres) planted with Gewürztraminer in the entire province. But especially starting from 1990, the area of cultivation increased greatly, and by 1996 the figure had already grown to 169 hectares (418 acres), and then to 380 hectares (939 hectares) in 2005. Today, having achieved a distribution of 631 hectares (1,559 acres), Gewürztraminer is the second most important vine in Alto Adige. The good price level for these grapes but also for the wines made from them have supported this development which, however, now seems to have gradually reached its limits in terms of revenue possibilities.

Vines

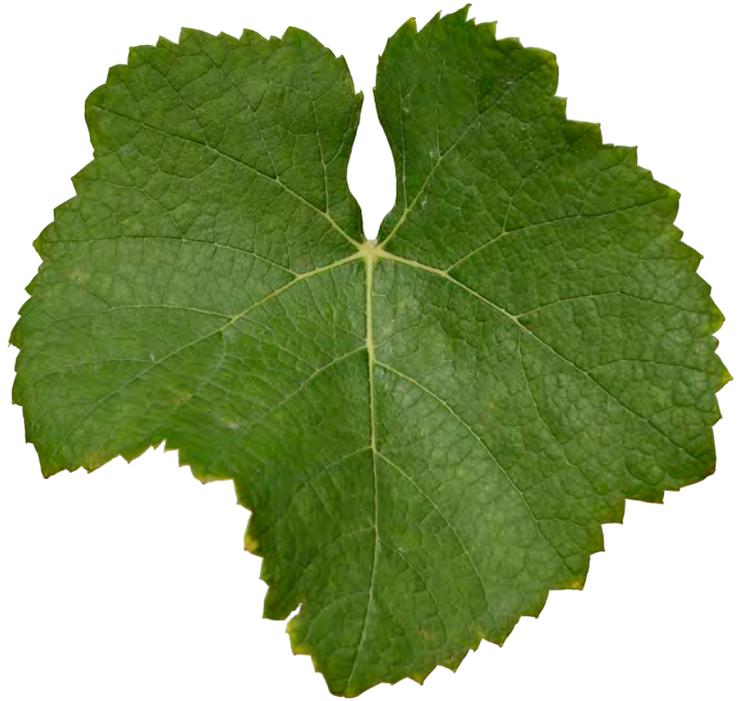
Gewürztraminer is difficult to grow. Physiological disturbances and a difficult blossoming phase, especially with cool weather, lead to considerable fluctuations in yield. The small bunch has small, densely structured berries of a gray to brownish-red color. The skin is firm. It generally reaches its necessary maturity in late September. It flourishes especially well on warm terraced slopes up to 600 meters (2,000 feet) above sea level. This variety is also very well suited for making late-harvest wines. The prominent aromatic quality is already recognized when chewing the grapes. The aromas develop especially intensely with grapes that mature at medium-level terraced slopes (for example, in Ronco and Sella near Termeno) as well as on calcareous, moderately heavy loamy soils.

Wine

In the main production area around Tramin, a type of Gewürztraminer is produced that tends to be lush, with a prominent aromatic quality. These wines often have a high alcohol content, keeping rather low in acidity with a complex structure. The wines from the Isarco Valley are rather lean and delicate, characterized by floral aromas.

The total spectrum of aromas from Alto Adige Gewürztraminer varies between rose petals, cloves, cinnamon, citrus fruits, apricots, lychees, acacia blossoms, and thyme. Gewürztraminers are the only so-called "sweet wines" in Alto Adige, having a residual sugar content of over four grams per liter (and generally 5-10 g/l). A variety of wineries also produce dessert wines from this variety.

Pinot Blanc



Origin

The precise point in time of its coming into existence is unknown, but it is presumed to be the fourteenth century. Pinot Blanc originated from a mutation of Pinot Noir, the original variety of the Burgundy grapes but also the starting point for many other European vines. Aside from the color of the grapes, the actual Burgundy varieties (Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, and Pinot Noir) are hardly distinguishable in ampelographic terms.

The variety has been mentioned in Alsace with the name “Clevner” since the middle of the sixteenth century. Two different variations of Pinot Blanc are differentiated there, namely Gros Pinot Blanc, where produces higher yields, and the small-bunched, genuine Pinot Blanc from Burgundy. Starting out from Alsace, Pinot Blanc spread into the nearby Rhineland Palatinate and also to Baden.

For a long time, Pinot Blanc vineyards were planted in a mixture with Chardonnay and the grape was not perceived as a separate variety. Chardonnay was regarded as a variant of Pinot Blanc. Even though Chardonnay has been described as a separate grape variety since 1872, the precise differentiation between the two varieties only took hold worldwide after 1970. And in Alto Adige, there were the so-called “green” and “yellow” Pinot Blancs in the vineyards up until 1985. Only after that point were the two varieties systematically differentiated and correctly designated not only in the statistics, but also in the vine nurseries. As a result of the centuries-old mixing, the history of the variety ought to be spoken of in a logically consistent manner as simply “white” Burgundy.

The first planting of Pinot Blanc in Alto Adige demonstrably took place in 1852 in Bressanone. Additional vineyards were then planted in Nalles, Appiano, Terlano, and Marleno. After his good experiences in Styria, Archduke Johann presumably brought the variety into his Tyrolean vineyards in Appiano-Monte and Scena around 1850 along with Pinot Grigio. The wine designation “Strahler”, which was originally a blend of Pinot Blanc and Pinot Grigio, but then also additionally contained Riesling and Sylvaner, originates from the fact that at the time, these varieties were cultivated in a new growth training system: a low trellis support. The expression “Stareben” was a description in the local dialect for a low, single post training system, and later the cultivation with a low Guyot trellis. White Burgundy wines were already found in the province as early as on the occasion of the fruit exhibitions with wine tastings in 1864, 1867, and 1872 as forerunners of the “Bolzano Wine Tasting Festival”, which became an annual event starting in 1896. The variety went on to also spread to Andriano, Caldaro, Termeno, Magrè, Salorno, and Bolzano. As early as a hundred years ago, the variety was consequently cultivated throughout the entire winegrowing region of Alto Adige.

Distribution

With a total cultivated area of 16,000 hectares (40,000 acres), the variety does not play a special role either throughout Europe or throughout the world in comparison to Pinot Grigio or Chardonnay. The lead is held by Germany with a planted area of 5,800 hectares (14,332 acres). Pinot Blanc is popular especially in Baden, Rheinhessen, and Rhineland Palatinate, and the areas of cultiva-

tion are even growing slightly. These are followed by Italy with 3,000 hectares (7,413 acres), whereby the Veneto with its 1,000 hectares (2,471 acres) takes the leading position, followed with a significant distance by Friuli (650 hectares/1,606 acres), Alto Adige (610 hectares/1,507 acres), Emilia-Romagna (450 hectares/1,112 acres), and Lombardy (170 hectares/420 acres). In neighbouring Trentino there are only 69 hectares (170 acres).

The cultivation of Pinot Blanc is decreasing slightly in Italy in favor of Chardonnay. The variety has achieved a slightly increasing importance in Austria, where nearly 2,000 hectares (4,900 acres) are planted today. In France, its land of origin, the variety only appears to be appreciated any more in Alsace. Out of the 1,232 hectares (3,044 acres) that are planted with it throughout the country, 1,200 of them (2,965 acres) are located in that region. In Alsace, the wine designation "Pinot Blanc" also includes the variety Auxerrois, thus resulting in a total of 3,260 hectares (8,056 acres) in the statistics. Chardonnay has displaced Pinot Blanc from earlier areas of cultivation such as Champagne or Burgundy. In Europe, the variety still plays a subordinate role in the Czech Republic (900 hectares/2,224 acres), Russia (700 hectares/1,730 acres), Slovenia, Slovakia (800 hectares/1,977 acres), Moldova, and Ukraine. Overseas, there are hardly any areas worthy of mention: the USA, for example, currently has only 262 hectares (647 acres) under cultivation.

The first survey after World War II, which was carried out in 1965, showed an area of cultivation in Alto Adige of 445 hectares (1,100 acres). Thus Pinot Blanc was long regarded as the province's most important white wine variety. In subsequent years, a continuous increase occurred up to 624 hectares (1,542 acres). But after Chardonnay began to be measured separately for the first time in 1985, the level of Pinot Blanc in the statistics shrank to a modest 154 hectares (381 acres). In later years, the area of cultivation dropped even further. But the variety went on to once again find more popularity, and thus by 2024, some 610 hectares (1,507 acres) were planted with it. The most important communities where it is grown are Appiano, Caldaro, Terlano, Termeno and Renon, but today, the variety is represented in nearly all of the wine growing communities.

Vines

The medium-sized, mostly shouldered bunches have tight berries and are greenish-yellow up to their medium-early maturity. Because of their compact grape structure, the variety is especially suited to training on Guyot trellises. Pinot Blanc shows its characteristic properties especially well in well-ventilated, high-elevation locations up to 800 meters (2,600 feet). Even at these higher locations, the variety provides satisfactory yields. The wines show a sleek acidity structure. Alto Adige is thus especially well suited to the cultivation of this variety. Even though Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc get more attention on the international level, the latter is comparatively more appreciated in Alto Adige.

Wine

Pinot Blanc derives its vivaciousness from its lively play of acidity and shows itself as a wine characterized by juiciness and, at times, a mineral-rich quality. The spectrum of aromas ranges from those of apples, pears, and lemons to pineapples and rarely even apricots. Tones of hay blossoms, hazel nuts, and almonds contribute to the complexity. Thanks to the regulation of yields, the wines also demonstrate the desired fullness of body. Pinot Blanc is also used for the production of sparkling wine in Alto Adige and also in the rest of Italy, although to a decreasing degree.

Pinot Noir



Origin

Pinot Noir is the oldest cultivated grape variety in our latitude. Its age has been estimated as at least two thousand years. It originated from a cross between a wild form of *Vitis vinifera* subsp. *sylvestris* and a cultivated variety that may have reached Burgundy by means of the Greeks or Romans. Whether it is identical to the *Vitis allobrogica* that was famous with the Romans, which was mentioned in the first century AD, remains a presumption. The Allobroges were a Celtic tribe in Gaul that settled between the Rhône and the Isère. In Burgundy itself, the variety was called Noiriens ["black"]. In the year 884, the Burgundy grape was to reach Lake Constance with the name "Clävner". In the fourteenth century, the variety also became known under the name "Klebroth" in the Rheingau. Because of the long tradition of cultivation, an abundance of synonyms came into existence in the various areas. Since 1894, the variety has been known in French as Pinot Noir, which has carried over into English. In Alto Adige as well as in Austria, the German term "Blauburgunder" established itself, while Italian follows the French model with Pinot Nero. Out of the original grape variety, a multitude of new varieties (Pinot Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Pinot Noir Précoce, Pinot Meunier) and clones have been formed. Thus out of the cross of Gouais Blanc with Pinot, at least sixteen grape varieties have originated, including Chardonnay, Gamay, Aligoté, and Auxerrois. Lagrein and Gewürztraminer are also related to Pinot Noir. The first experiments with Pinot Noir in Alto Adige were carried out around 1835, and with other sources around Bolzano around 1840. Plantings then followed in Bressanone and especially around Ramez Castle in Merano (1863-64). In Egna and Appiano, as well, the variety was already being cultivated at that time, but up until

the First World War, the demand for Pinot Noir was rather low, most likely because of the weakness of its yields at that time. After the war, though, it produced red wines of appreciable quality.

Distribution

Throughout the world, the area of cultivation is presently increasing slightly. At 118,300 hectares (292,326 acres), this variety is in the top ten of worldwide variety rankings. The most important country for cultivation is France with nearly 32,300 hectares (79,074 acres), of which a third each are found in Burgundy and Champagne. In second place is the USA with 25,000 hectares (61,779 acres). Germany, where the variety is continuing to gain in importance, has 12,000 hectares (29,653 acres). New Zealand has the highest rates of growth and is now at 8,000 hectares (20,000 acres). It is followed by Moldova (7,000 hectares/17,000 acres), Australia (5,000 hectares/12,000 acres) and also Italy (5,000 hectares/12,000 acres), ahead of Switzerland (4,140 hectares/10,230 acres). In Italy, there is Lombardy with 3,300 hectares (8,200 acres) clearly the most important Pinot Noir area. The variety is cultivated there above all in the Oltrepò Pavese, although the wines that are made there are less well known. In Alto Adige, 600 hectares (1,483 acres) are planted with Pinot Noir, followed by Trentino (375 hectares/927 acres) and Friuli (170 hectares/420 acres). And in other regions of Italy (Piemonte, Val d'Aosta, Tuscany, and even Sicily), wine-growers venture with this variety that is far from easy. Cultivation in Alto Adige is concentrated in Oltradige, or in more precise terms, the winegrowing locations of Appiano and

Caldaro. On the west-facing slopes of the Bassa Atesina, especially in Montagna, Egna, Merano and Salorno and Val Venosta, the variety thrives well.

As early as 1960, there were around 150 hectares (371 acres) producing in the province. By 1990, the area of cultivation had increased slightly to 217 hectares (536 acres), but after that it grew significantly. Thus in 2000, there were already 263 hectares (650 acres) being cultivated, a figure that grew to today's 600 hectares (1,483 acres).

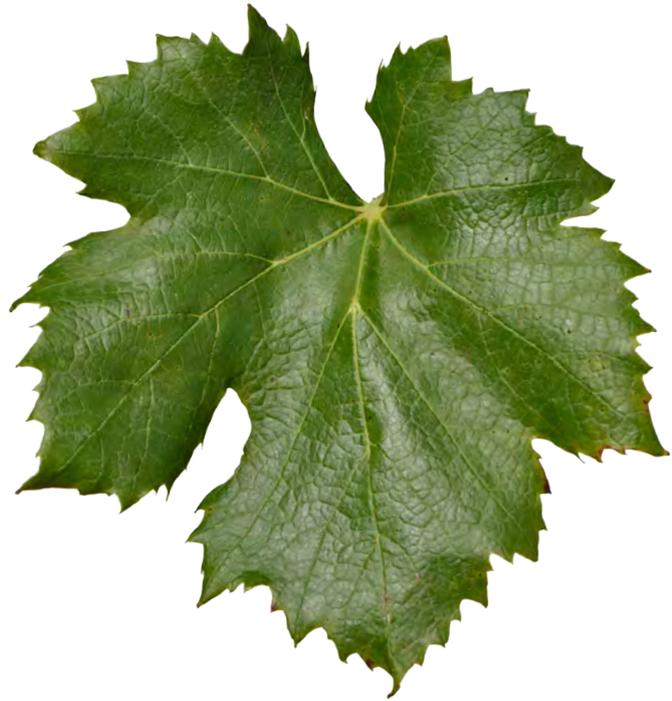
Vines

The dark to violet-blue bunches are small to medium-sized, cylindrical in shape, and have a medium-early maturity. Because of their rather thin-skinned grapes and the tight-berried structure of the bunches, they are susceptible to rot. Through planting in well-ventilated locations and the choice of clones with a looser berry structure, the attempt has been made to alleviate these cultivation problems. The growing of clones in Germany and France has especially achieved progress with this variety; for instance, a low to medium yield potential, a lower susceptibility to rot, and a more multilayered aroma spectrum. From the very start, producers of this grape have recognized that the variety is best suited to cultivation in medium-high hilly areas starting from 400 meters (1,300 feet) above sea level. If, however, it is planted higher than 800 meters (2,600 feet) above sea level, then the wines lack their necessary fullness. The demanding cultivation and vinification of this variety has put the brakes on a further expansion of the planted area, even though sufficient suitable locations would be available. The corresponding type of soil clearly shapes the character of Pinot Noir. Under warmer conditions, the soil may be somewhat heavier, while in cooler locations, it may be lighter. The amount of soil skeleton, especially that which is made of limestone, brings along advantages in the expression of the wine. In contrast to other red wine varieties, the grapes on the vines must not have too great of an exposure to the sun in order to maintain the desired fresh aromatic quality. The west-facing location of Mazzon, situated at around 400 meters (1,300 feet) in elevation above Egna, has especially distinguished itself as a contiguous cultivation area for Pinot Noir.

Wine

Pinot Noir wines are captivating as a result of their elegance. The variety is characterized by multilayered aromas of berries (raspberries, blackberries, and cherry jam, as well as lingonberries and bilberries), as well as tones of plums, violets, and cloves. The powerful ruby-red experiences slight brownish tones with an overripe harvest or after a longer aging of the wine. Vinification in wood has generally won out with the better-quality selections. Pinot Noir wines are bottled in Alto Adige with a maximum of three grams of residual sugar. Amongst expert circles, it is undisputed that the most favorable conditions for Pinot Noir in all of Italy are to be found in Alto Adige. Both in the neighboring province of Trento and in the Val d'Aosta, where similar climatic conditions prevail, noteworthy Pinot Noir wines are also produced. A small part of local production goes to the making of sparkling wine.

Lagrein



Origin

The first documented mention of Lagrein in Alto Adige was in the year 1318. Thus it is to be viewed as the oldest historically proven grape variety in Alto Adige that is still cultivated today. The name is presumably derived from the term “Lagarina”, which describes the southernmost part of the Adige Valley (Vallagarina in Italian). Remarkably enough, though, the spelling of the variety has not changed any further since the name was Germanized in the early twelfth century. Up to the seventeenth century, white Lagrein also enjoyed special esteem and distribution. As a result of this color differentiation, which is recorded in numerous historical documents, it has to be assumed that the Lagrein with red berries was cultivated at the same time as the white vines. Today, White Lagrein is limited to individual grapevines that have remained. Lagrein as a red wine variety really began to catch on starting in the seventeenth century, at the same time as the classic fermentation with skins and seeds advanced to become the standard of the making of red wine. Previously, the fermentation of only the juice had been practiced in Tyrol since the Middle Ages.

White Lagrein is not genetically related to “red” Lagrein. The red wine variety of Lagrein originated from a hybrid of Teroldego and a still unknown parent variety which, for its part, may be related to Kleinvernatsch (a variety of Schiava). Teroldego, which like Lagrein is only cultivated in a clearly delimited zone, originated in neighboring Trentino. It is similar to wines that are made from Lagrein not only morphologically, but also with regard to the sensory properties.

As a result of the variety's high level of yield, the cultivation of Lagrein was regarded very early on as lucrative. The high yield

quantities were favored by the possibilities for irrigation on the valley floor and around the city of Bolzano. But the chances for survival of grape varieties over the centuries, on the other hand, depended primarily upon their profitability, that is, upon a constantly high level of yield in connection with good robustness, for example against frost. Once aspects of the quality of the wine increasingly came to the foreground, individual varieties disappeared again, including white Lagrein. Its red brother in name, on the other hand, survived. Interest in the variety increased above all starting from the seventeenth century because it was regarded as the ideal blending partner along with Gschlafenen and Schiava for the production of lighter-colored Tyrolean wine.

Distribution

The distribution of Lagrein is essentially limited to Alto Adige, where 537 hectares (1,327 acres) are presently planted with the variety. Only in neighboring Trentino has the variety been able to gain a foothold after 1920. Even though it is cultivated there on 220 hectares (544 acres) today, the wines do not have the same level of recognition as those from Alto Adige. Within the framework of experimental plantings, Lagrein is also cultivated today in Argentina, the USA, Australia, and Germany (4 hectares/9,9 acres). Through-out the world, there are 850 hectares (2,100 acres) producing.

In 1960, the area under cultivation in Alto Adige was already at 585 hectares (1,446 acres), but after that it fell as low as 253 hectares (625 acres) in 1998, only to rebound to the 541 hec-

tares (1,337 acres) of today. Lagrein thrives especially well in the area surrounding the city of Bolzano. Since as a result of the expansion through the city, the potential for good locations has to a large extent been exhausted, and other locations can hardly achieve the fullness and smoothness of the wine from Bolzano, the area of cultivation may remain stable.

The main cultivation zone is in Bolzano. This is followed by Caldaro, Termeno, Appiano and Ora.

Vines

Lagrein is one of the late-maturing red wine varieties and has a marked vitality. In particular, the short-stemmed clones with the smaller bunches tend to have strong growth and mature earlier. The yield potential with the large bunch, long-stemmed clones is high. On the other hand, the small bunch clones with a medium yield output are sensitive when blossoming. The risk of blossom drop is correspondingly high. The oblong, conical bunches with the loose berries are for the most part shouldered and have medium-sized, dark blue berries with firm skins.

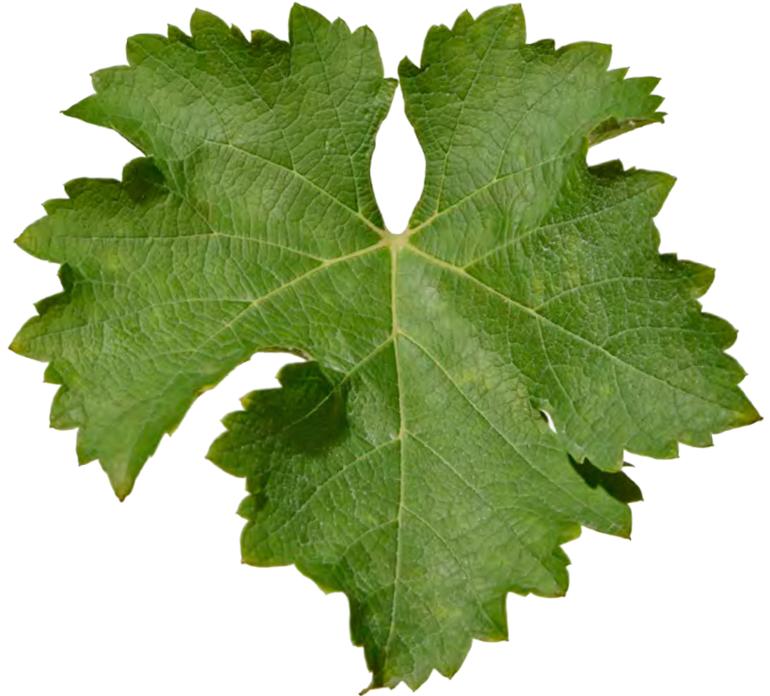
The preferable locations are found in gravelly valley areas such as the Bolzano basin, where the soils remain warm for a long time in the autumn. This is where the wines develop that tannic quality that is a precondition for soft typologies of wines with an elegant mellifluousness. On the slopes, cultivation is limitedly possible up to 300 meters (1,000 feet) above sea level.

Wine

Two different types of wine are traditionally on the market. The production of Kretzer, as the rosé wines are called in Alto Adige, absolutely represents the wine tradition of Lagrein. This type is reminiscent of the juice fermentation that was generally widespread before the seventeenth century. The briefly fermented crushed grapes are pressed away after one to two days. Lagrein Kretzer presents itself as a salmon-colored, full-bodied wine with a fresh acidity structure. For a long time, this was the predominant standard wine that was made from the Lagrein grape. The type of Lagrein that is fermented on the seeds and skins only came onto the market after 1960 and at the time was called "Lagrein dunkel" ("dark Lagrein"), a designation which today is no longer permissible under the local wine regulations. The variety increasingly captured international attention starting in 1985 with the use of aging in small oak casks for the best selections.

Lagrein brings forth deeply dark, garnet-red, juicy wines with significant acidity and an intense tannin structure. In the glass, young wines show purple edges. The aromatic quality is defined by cherries, violets, blackberries, bitter chocolate, and fresh dark bread, and wines that have been aged in small oak cases also demonstrate tones of dried fruit. In order to counteract the tendency toward a slightly bitter finish, a variety of cellar techniques have recently been applied. To make a superior Lagrein, vinification in wood is necessary.

Sauvignon Blanc



Origin

Although English has taken on the French name, in the German-speaking world neither the direct translation “Weißer Sauvignon” nor the synonym that is common in Styria, Slovenia, and Croatia of “Muskat-Sylvaner” ever really took hold. Instead, it is normally referred to there simply as Sauvignon. The variety came into existence through a chance cross between Traminer and Chenin Blanc, presumably in Southwestern France. In Bordeaux, a blend of it and Sémillon yields a renowned white wine. It has only been mentioned since the eighteenth century, but it must be substantially older, since the variety represents a parent of Cabernet Sauvignon. The first recommendation for planting in the Adige Valley took place in 1886 through the research center in San Michele. After a ten-year trial cultivation, it was reported that the variety can bring forth “highly fine” wines on the Adige. After that, it must have been planted in Terlano, but the only moderate yield slowed down its further spread.

Distribution

For a long period of time, the variety was cultivated predominantly in France. Exceptions were formed by Styria, Slovenia, and California, where Sauvignon Blanc likewise already had a certain significance early on. Starting from 1980, its worldwide bandwagon of success then began. Today, after a rapid spread throughout the world, with an area of cultivation of 123,000 hectares (303,940 acres) it is the third most important white wine variety overall. With 31,000 hectares (76,603 acres), France

does indeed still hold the leading position, but New Zealand has massively gained ground and already has over 21,000 hectares (51,892 acres). They are followed by Chile (15,000 hectares/37,000 acres), South Africa (10,000 hectares/25,000 acres), Moldova (9,000 hectares/22,000 acres), and the USA and Australia with 7,000 hectares (17,000 acres) each. Within Europe, there are also significant planted areas in Romania (6,000 hectares/15,000 acres), Ukraine (5,000 hectares/12,000 acres), and Spain (4,000 hectares/10,000 acres) ahead of Italy (3,500 hectares/9,000 acres). The order of Italian regions is Friuli (1,300 hectares/3,200 acres) ahead of Veneto (600 hectares/1,500 acres), Alto Adige (497 hectares/1,228 acres), Sicily (300 hectares/700 acres), and Trentino (127 hectares/314 acres). And in Alto Adige, the aromatic white wine variety only really gained a foothold after 1980. In 1990, only 27 hectares (66 acres) were planted with the variety, but by 1998, that figure was already up to 82 hectares (202 acres). Sauvignon Blanc experienced an even greater ascent over the past ten years, with the distribution climbing during that period from 160 hectares (395 acres) to the current state of 512 hectares (1,265 acres). Today, the main focus of Sauvignon Blanc cultivation is found in Appiano, Caldaro, Terlano, Cortaccia and Bolzano.

Vines

The size of the bunches differs depending upon the clone, but in general they are rather small, compact, and short-stemmed. The small to medium-sized berries are golden-yellow. With too vigorous growth or poor weather during blossoming, the variety

is inclined toward blossom drop. Maturity is medium-early. Initially, Sauvignon Blanc was planted in Alto Adige primarily at the foot of slopes that were too warm. In order to maintain the desired aromatic quality and acidity, it had to be harvested very early there. For that reason, the cultivation was gradually pushed up toward medium-high elevations of up to 600 meters (2,000 feet) above sea level. But the late lignification at elevations that are too high holds the risk of damage during the winter. If the grapes have too much exposure to the sun, then they lose their desired aromas. The variety can best display its qualities in west-facing locations, but east-facing ones are not to be ruled out. If Sauvignon Blanc grows on lime gravel soils, they provide it with the additional fruity to mineral-rich tones.

Wine

Nearly every winery in Alto Adige has come to occupy itself with this variety. A large selection of different clones is available. The initial use of selections from our own research center in Laimburg with prominent aromas that are characteristic of the variety favor the development. The stylistic direction of the wine has changed since the first planting boom. At that time, Sauvignon Blanc showed itself to be grassy and vegetal, with tones of stinging nettles, green bell peppers, and beans. Today, on the other hand, it is aromas of passion fruit, gooseberries, elder blossoms, and black currants that dominate. The stylistic direction that is sought after by various wine producers differs greatly. The location and the clone that is selected, but also the care of the vines all contribute to these differences. The straw-yellow wines are commonly drunk very young. That also corresponds to the typology of the wines with their rather lean body. Sauvignon Blanc wines are often supported by their acidity, which is why aromas of citrus are commonly to be recognized. A careful vinification in wood can lend the wines more complexity.

Schiava



Origin

The origin of the Schiava (Vernatsch) varieties in Alto Adige continues to be uncertain. The search for its beginnings is made more difficult because of the different names in German and Italian. The Italian name “Schiava” is derived from the former growing method that was closer to the ground, which at the time of the Langobard rule in what is now Northern Italy was referred to as *vineis sclavis* [slave vine]. This was in contrast to the high *majores* growing method on trees. As a result of this, the thesis is false that “schiava” (“slave” in English) could refer to a Slavic origin. Different grape varieties throughout all of what is now Northern Italy bore this name, also including white varieties. With the exception of some scattered cases in Lombardy, these have all disappeared. As a varietal name, the designation Schiava appeared for the first time in the year 1195 in Brescia. During the time of the Langobards, the main production areas were presumably to the west of Lake Garda. Why it is that the variety took on the name Vernatsch in German, which stems from the broadly diffuse varietal indication Vernaccia in Italy, is not clear. Vernaccia was already a sought-after white wine as early as the Middle Ages and was originally produced in Liguria. It may be that the name was provided by the village of Vernazze in Cinque Terre. Today, the white varieties of Vernaccia di San Gimignano (in Tuscany) and Vernaccia di Oristano (in Sardinia) still exist, as does the red Vernaccia from Serrapetrona (in Le Marche). Also adding to the confusion surrounding the name “Vernatsch” is the so-called “Gschlafenen”. This consists of an ancient grape variety in Tyrol that was very widespread, including in Alto Adige, up to the twentieth century and yielded wines that are similar to Schiava. The name “Gschlafenen” unambiguously originates from the German word for “slave”, Sklave. In Trentino, though, this same variety was called Rossara, another name that is repeatedly found in the wine literature of Northern Italy.

The term “Vernaccia”, and consequently also “Vernatsch”, comes from the Latin root *verna* which stands for a slave that was born in the house of the master. This developed into *vernacula* (for a local variety) and subsequently vernaccia. It may therefore be the case that the term “slave” represents the connective element for the various names of the same variety in both German and Italian. Dessert wines with a low alcohol content that could not be stored for a long time were also called Vernatsch in Tyrol. As a result of the way it was produced, it also carried the name of Sacklwein (bag wine). The fact that a white must is used for this pretty much says everything.

In conjunction with Alto Adige, the name Vernatsch appears in 1490 in a wine bill from the Bavarian monastery of Tegernsee, which at the time possessed extensive wine cellars in Bolzano and also later in Oltradige. From the same monastery, there was an evaluation of varieties from 1492 in which Muscat, Lagrein, and “Vernetzer” are described as the best grape varieties in Tyrol. What is not known is whether the Lagrein and Vernatsch varieties of that time were red or white grapes, since it has been shown that during that period, the name was used for both kinds of wine. The independent variety of White Vernatsch (in German, Weißvernatsch; in Italian, Vernaccia bianca) was very widespread up to the nineteenth century in the Adige Valley to the south of Bolzano.

Reports from the nineteenth century confirm earlier indications according to which a radical change took place in wine production between the sixteenth and seventeenth century. The fermentation of the pressed juice that was customary in the Middle Ages was superseded by fermentations with the skins and seeds, the classic method for producing red wine. The consequence of this was that the red, large-berry varieties such as Schiava and Gschlafene were increasingly cultivated. A list of varieties from

a considerable winegrowing estate in Bolzano from 1643 listed not only the “black (dark-colored) Vernatsch”, but also an edlen Vernatsch (“noble Vernatsch”). Whether this consists of a white Vernatsch or a predecessor of today’s Großvernatsch, which also carries the synonym of Edelvernatsch, is not known. The Trollinger variety in Württemberg corresponds to the Großvernatsch. The name is probably a derivation from “Tirolinger” (“coming from Tyrol”). The designation was mentioned in a document for the first time in 1560 and must have been used originally in the Rhineland Palatinate.

Over the course of three centuries, up to the beginning of the twentieth century, the so-called “Tyrolean wine” was very famous in German-speaking Europe. The Schiava (Vernatsch) was only one part of this wine brand, because varieties such as Gschlafene, Edelschwarze, and Lagrein were also used. The predominance of Schiava began with the interim occupation of Tyrol by Bavaria in 1810. Because the demand for wine grew quickly, the high-yielding Schiava varieties were increasingly cultivated.

Distribution

Schiava vines continue to play a central role in Alto Adige winegrowing. Over the past thirty years, though, the cultivated area has shrunk continuously. Although in 1970, 68 percent of the grape growing areas were planted with Schiava, that is currently only 8 percent, namely 545 hectares (1,347 acres) of Schiava and only 12 hectares (30 acres) of Schiava Grigia (Grauvernatsch). Schiava achieved its greatest distribution during the postwar period, thanks above all to the high demand from Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. The differentiation into Großvernatsch, Kleinvernatsch, and Grauvernatsch has only existed since the nineteenth century. They presumably consist of independent varieties that provide a similar type of wine. The three varieties were originally also indigenous in three different subregions: Großvernatsch in the Burgraviate (near Merano), Kleinvernatsch in Oltradige and in Bolzano, and Grauvernatsch (Schiava Grigia) in the Santa Maddalena area. Today, Vernatsch wines are made almost exclusively from Großvernatsch. Pure plantings of Grauvernatsch or Kleinvernatsch are only found on a cultivated area of around 15 hectares (37 acres).

The DOC wine legislation allows the designation of origin Alto Adige along with the indication of the grape variety Schiava or Vernatsch. However it is more common to find on the labels of the bottles the traditional geographical indications of Santa Maddalena, Lago di Caldaro, and Merano (Colli) without providing the variety, even though these are pure Schiava wines. The traditional blending partner Lagrein is only used now in the smallest amounts. Even with Santa Maddalena, it is only blended in to a maximum of between four and ten percent. Around 90 percent of the Schiava vineyards are located in the delimited zones of Santa Maddalena, the Burgraviate (Meranese), and Lago di Caldaro. The most important growing locations are Bolzano, Caldaro, and Appiano, along with the communities around Merano. In the Bassa Atesina, Schiava is cultivated above all else in Termeno and Cortaccia. Outside of Alto Adige, Schiava is found primarily in the neighboring Trentino (210 hectares/

519 acres) and Lombardy (40 hectares/99 acres). Otherwise, the variety only plays a central role in the German cultivation zone of Württemberg (1950 hectares/4,819 acres), where it is called “Blauer Trollinger”.

Vines

The Großvernatsch of today has very large, pyramid-shaped bunches with likewise large, dark blue grapes. The color changes into grayish blue if the natural growth layer that covers the grape skin is maintained. The skin of the berry is soft, which is why that variety is also treated as a table grape in the Burgraviate. Since the yield potential is high, the vineyards are thinned or else the grapes are reduced by half. Thanks to the decrease in the area of cultivation, today Schiava is cultivated almost exclusively in the locations that are best suited for it, with warm microclimates and good ventilation. These are terraced slopes with deep soil located between 400 and 500 meters (1,300 and 1,600 feet) above sea level that cool down well at night. This promotes the aromatic expression and prevents too great of a reduction in the acidity levels. This variety tends to mature late. In order for the large bunches to be able to hang free, the traditional growing method on the pergola trellis is maintained for Schiava. This trellising system also offers protection against sunburn and mild hail. In addition, the pergola trellis also accommodates the hanging shoot growth of the variety. What is unusual for a red wine variety is that in the autumn, the leaves of the vines turn a bright yellow color.

Wine

Schiava grapes yield light, accessible wines with rather low tannins and acidity. Thanks to these properties, they have an elegant effect and are ready to drink when young. The bright, ruby-red wines have their own aromas that are reminiscent of sweet cherries, red currants, raspberries, and even strawberries and pomegranates. Added to this, there are often tones of almonds and violets.

THE DIFFERENCES IN LOCATION EXPRESS THEMSELVES IN THE WINE AS FOLLOWS:

<i>Caldaro (Lago di Caldaro)</i>	<i>Bright ruby-red. Rather restrained fruit with noble tones of violets and almonds. Mild and elegant on the palate.</i>
<i>St. Maddalena</i>	<i>Powerful ruby-red. The nose shows the characteristic berry-like aromas of Schiava. Thanks to the Lagrein content, it has a full-bodied effect on the palate with fully-present tannins. It needs a few months of time in the bottle in order to reach its ideal drinkability.</i>
<i>Meranese</i>	<i>Radiant ruby-red. Aromas of sour cherries and raspberries. Light on the palate but with tangible, robust, well-integrated tannins. It often also has slightly savory tones.</i>

Merlot



Origin

The variety originated in Bordeaux and is based upon a cross between Madeleine Noire de Charentes and Cabernet Franc. In Tyrol, Merlot was recommended in 1886 after ten years of cultivation at the research center of San Michele all'Adige. But only starting in 1920 did the variety achieve a certain importance at lower elevations (in contrast to Cabernet Sauvignon). The fact that the variety was uncomplicated to cultivate with high yields and good sugar levels contributed to its spread.

Distribution

Over the past decades, Merlot has developed into a worldwide variety, and today, with a total area of cultivation of 268,000 hectares (662,242 acres), it is in second place, just slightly behind Cabernet Sauvignon. The leading position is held by France with 115,000 hectares (284,171 acres), although the area only increased rapidly here after 1970. It is followed by the USA with 44,000 hectares (108,726 acres) and Italy with 29,000 hectares (71,661 acres). There are also considerable areas of cultivation in Spain (16,000 hectares/40,000 acres), Chile and Romania with 12,000 hectares (30,000 acres) each, Bulgaria and Australia with 10,000 hectares (25,000 acres) each, and China and South Africa with 7,000 hectares (17,000 acres) each. In Italy, Merlot is found in all regions. In that regard, the Veneto has dedicated itself in particular to this variety (10,000 hectares/24,710 acres), followed by Sicily (5,000 hectares/12,355 acres). The areas of cultivation in Tuscany and Friuli (3,000 hectares/7,413 acres each) are followed by Umbria, Puglia, Lazio and Lombardy (1,200-1,500 hectares/2,965-3,707 acres each) In Alto Adige after World War II, an increase to nearly 50 hectares (124 acres) was recorded. Between 1998

and 2008, a further climb took place, from 74 to 243 hectares (183 to 600 acres). Today, 198 hectares (489 acres) are planted with the variety. One third of the area of cultivation is located in the communities of Caldaro and Appiano.

Vines

The medium-sized bunches are frequently shouldered, with loose berries and a cylindrical shape. The likewise medium-sized berries have a thin skin and a blackish-blue color. In Alto Adige, the locations to which the variety is best adapted are located at the foot of the slopes in the Adige Valley on soils with a moderately heavy skeleton. Starting at an elevation of 350 meters (1,150 feet) above sea level, the variety hardly produces any more wines with the desired body and smoothness. The area of Settequerce (Terlano) and the lower mountainsides of Magrè, Cortaccia, and Termeno are particularly predestined for Merlot.

Wine

Only fully ripened grapes yield powerful, dark red wines with soft tannins. The spectrum of aromas ranges between blackberries, black currants, plum compote, and different spices. Bell pepper is regarded as a sign of a lack of harmony in the glass. Vinification in wood is standard for the production of quality wines. And when blended with other dark wines (Cabernet or Lagrein), Merlot can provide the desired roundness and smoothness. The lack of a prominent fan base for this variety and its good blending properties lead to the fact that not very much single varietal Merlot wine is made in Alto Adige.

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.

Kerner



Origin

The variety came into existence in Weinsberg, Germany in 1929 as a cross between Trollinger and White Riesling. It was named after the poet and physician Justinus Kerner. Out of all of the new German varieties, Kerner is the most widespread in Germany after 1969. A high sugar level paired with high yield capabilities helped the variety break through here up to the 1990s. After 1995, though, the area of cultivation shrank dramatically by 4,200 hectares (10,400 acres) to the current state of 2,400 hectares (6,672 acres).

Distribution

Outside of its homeland, Kerner has found a loyal fan base above all in Alto Adige, where today 129 hectares (319 acres) are planted with the variety. Otherwise, it has found a certain degree of attention in the neighboring province of Trentino (25 hectares/ 62 acres) and curiously enough in Japan with 300 hectares (741 acres). The first experimental plantings were made in a variety of locations in Alto Adige as early as 1970. The variety's good winter hardiness led to it being planted in the Isarco Valley in areas threatened by frost starting from 1981. Back in 1990, there were still only 5 hectares (12 acres) planted with Kerner in the entire province. Only later was the variety planted to a greater degree at high elevations, including outside of the Isarco Valley which, however, with its portion of 131 hectares (324 acres), remains the most important area of production.

Vines

The increase in Alto Adige is to be traced back to the prominent aromatic quality which the variety develops here. The medium-sized, often shouldered but otherwise conical bunches have loose berries and are at first yellowish-green in color, before changing to a reddish-yellow when fully mature. The variety is especially distinguished by delivering a high level of sugar with, at the same time, a good acidity structure. The aroma spectrum ranges from tangerines, melons, and passion fruit to lemon balm and sage. Locations with a sunny exposure between 600 and 900 meters (2,000 and 3,000 feet) above sea level are especially favorable to the variety.

Wine

In order for the wines to not become too alcoholic but still maintain their intensity of aroma, the selection of the right time for the harvest takes on a decisive importance. The wines are generally vinted as dry (less than 4 g/l residual sugar).

Cabernet



Origin

The two varieties Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc are described here together since they are often not listed separately on labels. And the designation of origin under wine regulations for Alto Adige makes it possible to use only the designation “Cabernet”.

Cabernet Franc is the older of the two varieties, and in fact, Cabernet Sauvignon came into existence as a cross between Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc. In addition, Cabernet Franc crossed with Gros Cabernet also led to the Carménère variety. In Italy, it was only recognized rather late that the supposed Cabernet Franc plantings in the Veneto and in Friuli were in reality actually Carménère, which also originated from Southwestern France. In Alto Adige, too, the initial small plantings were also affected by this mix-up. Cabernet Franc was already known in the Bordeaux area for a long time and must have originated in the Spanish Basque region. Cabernet Sauvignon, on the other hand, first appeared in the Bordelais area starting from the fourteenth century. Both Cabernet varieties were spread in Alto Adige by the research center in San Michele, even though individual wine-growing pioneers had already been experimenting with both of the varieties since 1840. But large vineyards did not come into existence until around 1880 in Merano and Egna.

Distribution

While Cabernet Sauvignon has risen to the worldwide number one variety with 341,000 hectares (842,629 acres), Cabernet Franc has managed only 54,000 hectares (133,000 acres), while Carménère, which today is widespread only in Chile (11,000 hectares/27,000 acres), in China (7,000 hectares/17,000 acres), and on the decrease in Italy (estimated at 2,000 hectares/5,000 acres), for a total of around 22,000 hectares (54,000 acres) The leader is France (Cabernet Sauvignon 54,000 hectares/133,000 acres, Cabernet Franc 36,000 hectares/89,000 acres), followed by China with 60,000 hectares (148,000 acres) and then Chile (43,000 hectares/106,000 acres) and the USA (41,000 hectares/101,000 acres, almost exclusively Cabernet Sauvignon) ahead of Spain (20,000 hectares/49,000 acres), Argentina (15,000 hectares/37,000 acres), and South Africa (12,000 hectares/30,000 acres). Italy has an area of cultivation of 11,000 hectares (27,000 acres) and somewhat more than 2,000 hectares (5,000 acres) Cabernet Franc. This variety is represented in nearly all of the winegrowing regions of Italy. Cabernet Sauvignon shows a growing tendency in the regions of Veneto (3,100 hectares/7,700 acres), Sicily (3,000 hectares/7,400 acres), and Tuscany (2,800 hectares/6,900 acres). In Alto Adige, there are currently 111 hectares (274 acres) of Cabernet Sauvignon and 52 hectares (128 acres) of Cabernet Franc producing. The great increase in the 1990s, when the area of cultivation grew from 46 hectares (114 acres) to 202 hectares (499 acres, in 2002), was followed by a downturn. What was responsible for this was the great demands in cultivation and the not so easy marketing of the wines. The distribution of the Cabernet varieties ranges from Bolzano through Appiano to Caldaro and then to the south

trought Termeno and Cortaccia as far as Magrè. Only in the lower, extremely warm locations is a complete maturation of the grapes guaranteed every year through the second half of October. Cabernet Franc is somewhat less demanding in terms of location. For that reason, interest in this variety has once again grown slightly in recent years.

Vines

Cabernet Sauvignon has small to medium-sized loose bunches with small black berries. Cabernet Franc produces medium-sized, cylinder-shaped bunches with a loose grape structure with dark blue, rather small berries. The sugar values are slightly higher with Cabernet Franc. In addition, it is harvested around ten days earlier. And the acidity levels turn out to be somewhat lower in comparison to Cabernet Sauvignon.

Wine

With both varieties, the desired wine quality is achieved only with moderate growth. Cabernet wines are distinguished by muted color tones and a powerful structure. The aromatic quality of Cabernet Sauvignon is characterized by black currants, black pepper, cloves, and eucalyptus. Cabernet Franc, on the other hand, shows itself to be fruitier, with tones of raspberries, bilberries, green peppercorns, some bell pepper, and occasionally also with violets. Both varieties are only made with wood and are extremely conducive to aging. Cabernet Sauvignon is often initially characterized by astringency, so it especially reveals its supple character only after a long aging in the bottle by means of the esterification of the tannins. The blending of both of the Cabernet varieties with each other or with Merlot as well as small portions of new varieties (Petit Verdot, Syrah, or Tannat) is increasingly practiced.

Riesling



Origin

White Riesling originated from a cross between Gouais Blanc, a wild vine (*Vitis sylvestris*), and Traminer. It was mentioned in writing for the first time in 1435 in Rüsselsheim near Mainz and spread after 1500 to all of Germany. The first vines had already come to Alto Adige by 1840. The corresponding plant material originated from Rheingau. The first noteworthy vineyards came into existence around 1850 in Bressanone and Merano, and in 1860 in Bolzano. After the First World War, things regarding this variety were quiet again until after 1950 when, in the false belief that it was frost-resistant, it was planted on around 40 hectares (99 acres) in the southern Bassa Atesina. Today, it has also nearly disappeared from these locations as well. But around 2000, winegrowers in the Val Venosta and the Isarco Valley rediscovered Riesling once again. In Alto Adige, the variety also carries the name “Rhine Riesling”, presumably in order to distinguish it from “Italian Riesling” which, in any case, has in the meantime disappeared.

Distribution

Today, the variety is planted worldwide on nearly 64,000 hectares (158,147 acres). The unchallenged leading country for Riesling is Germany, with a current area of cultivation of 24,000 hectares (59,305 acres). The next places are held by Romania (6,200 hectares/15,321 acres), USA (4,600 hectares/11,367 acres), France (Alsace 4,000 hectares/9,884 acres), Australia 3,200 hectares/7,907 acres, South Africa (3,000 hectares/7,400 acres), Ukraine 2,500 hectares/6,178 acres, followed by Austria, and then Moldova (1,400 hectares/3,500 acres) and New Zealand (1,000 hectares/2,500 acres). In Italy, Riesling is only found in Lombardy, with

200 hectares (494 acres), followed by Alto Adige with 108 hectares (267 acres) and Trentino with 46 hectares (114 acres). The vineyards in Alto Adige are located in Oltradige, the Isarco Valley, the Val Venosta, and the area around Merano.

Vines

The bunches are small to medium-sized, for the most part shouldered and, with newer clones, with loose berries. The greenish-yellow berries have black dots. When grown at higher elevations (550 to 800 meters/1,800 to 2,600 feet above sea level), this late-maturing variety requires sunny and, at the same time, well-ventilated locations. At lower elevations, the aromas do not develop to their full potential. Soils with a great deal of shale lend the wines their mineral-rich tones. With the espalier training, attention must be paid that the grapes are not exposed to direct sunshine.

Wine

Riesling wines distinguish themselves through their fruity acidity. The aromatic qualities lie between citrus fruits (grapefruits and oranges) and stone fruit (peaches and apricots), and from time to time passion fruit can also be made out. Notes of geraniums and lilies of the valley are typical. The juicy wines will sooner or later demonstrate so-called “oily tones”. In contrast to other regions, Alto Adige Riesling is not defined by residual sugar. Also, no late-harvest wines have thus far been produced from it here. There are only occasional locations in Alto Adige that produce expressive Riesling wines.

Moscato Giallo



Origin

Muscat originates from an old family of varieties and was already known early on in the Mediterranean area by the Greeks, Phoenicians, and Romans (who called it *Vitis apiana*). This type of grape has a great variety of forms (around two hundred subvarieties). Experts in Italy ascribe the numerous Muscats with white grapes into three large groups: the Muscat of Alexandria (used in many cases for table grapes, raisins, and dessert wines such as Zibibbo in Sicily), White Muscat (with twenty-six types), and Yellow Muscat (with six types). In Italy, Yellow Muscat carries the name Moscato Giallo and is found in that form only in Alto Adige, Trentino, Padua, and the region of Friuli. The variety does not appear to be identical to the Yellow Muscat in Germany and Austria.

The cultivation of Muscat has been described in Tyrol starting from 1492. Moscato Giallo was mentioned in the nineteenth century, as was "Pfefferer" for the area of Bolzano and Merano, a grape that was also called White-Yellow Muscat. The exact point at which the name Moscato Giallo became established cannot be precisely dated.

Distribution

It is estimated that Muscat is cultivated worldwide on an area of around 100,000 hectares (247,000 acres). How much of this area is used for wine production, though, is not known. White Muscat is represented in Italy with 11,700 hectares (28,900 acres). Thus Italy may well have the largest cultivation area for wine production (added to which are another 1,800 hectares (4,400 acres) for the production of Zibibbo). The variety is planted as Moscato Giallo

in Trentino on 145 hectares (358 acres). Moscato Giallo grows in Alto Adige on 94 hectares (232 acres), the most part of it at Caldaro, in Appiano, and in Cortaccia. The variety has shown an increase, since in 1990 an area of cultivation of only 12 hectares (30 acres) was documented.

Vines

The large, loose, pyramid-shaped bunches often have berries of different sizes. The berries have a plain wax layer and are of a yellowish-green color. Moscato Giallo is distinguished by resistance to rot (no bursting of the berries), a relatively high yield potential, and a fine intensity of aroma. The variety can be planted in warm locations up to an average elevation of 500 meters (1,600 feet) above sea level. It is not suitable for the valley floor. Direct sunshine on the berries fosters the aromatic quality. The maturity is in the late range.

Wine

The wines from Muscat are sensorily defined by tones of nutmeg, sometimes accompanied by citrus aromas and the scent of orange blossoms. The wines have relatively high acidity levels but only a moderate structure. Moscato Giallo is frequently used for the production of dessert wines from dried grapes (straw wine or passito), either as a single varietal or as a component of cuvées. Otherwise, the wine type is dry. The advantageous characteristics of Moscato Giallo as an independent variety earn great esteem.

Sylvaner



Origin

With the translation of its official designation in German as “Green Silvaner”, it originated from a chance cross between Traminer and Österreichisch-Weiß, an old variety from the area around Vienna that is similar to Veltliner. In the seventeenth century, the variety presumably came from Austria to Germany. In 1659, it was mentioned for the first time in Franconia, which today is regarded as the center of Sylvaner. The variety arrived in Alto Adige in 1880. The first vineyards were planted in the Isarco Valley at the time at the recommendation of Edmund Mach, the director of the research center at San Michele all'Adige. Up to this day, the old spelling of “Sylvaner” rather than “Silvaner” has been maintained in Alto Adige.

Distribution

The variety has spread exclusively in Central Europe and is cultivated on around 6,700 hectares (16,556 acres). In Germany, it was the most important grape variety up until the 1950s, and today it is still planted there on 4,700 hectares (11,6154 acres), predominantly in Rheinhessen and Franconia. In France, it is cultivated primarily in Alsace (1,000 hectares/2,471 acres), while Switzerland has around 250 hectares (618 acres), primarily in Valais. They are followed by Slovakia (200 hectares/494 acres) the Czech Republic, Austria and Hungary (37 hectares/91 acres). In Alto Adige, Sylvaner is regarded as the leading variety in the comparatively cool cultivation area of the Isarco Valley and is grown only there (66 hectares/163 acres). The area of cultivation has declined slightly, since in 1994 there were still 106 hectares (262 acres) recorded.

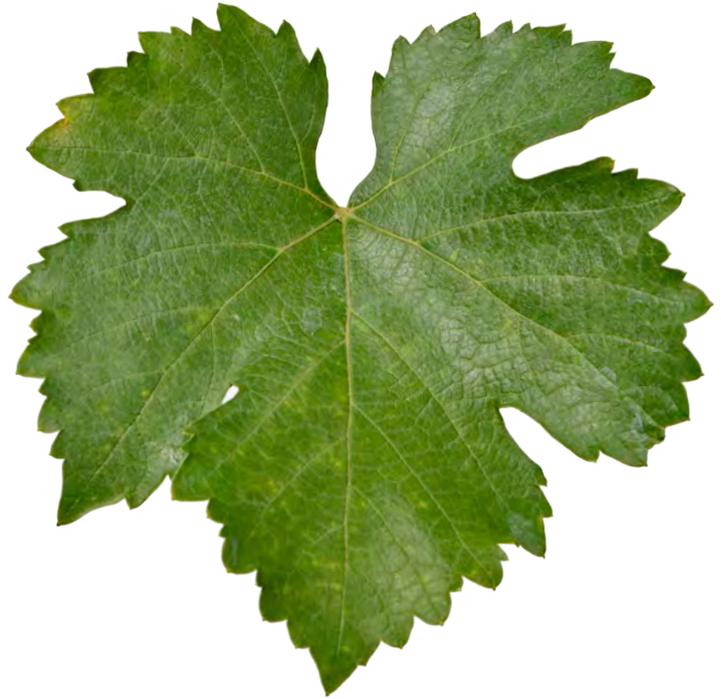
Vines

The medium-sized bunches are cylindrical to shouldered. Depending upon the vigorousness of the growth, the grape structure may be more compact or looser. The yellowish-green berries have a thin skin and a mucilaginous berry pulp. The variety flourishes best in sunny locations at an elevation of 500 to 700 meters (1,600 to 2,300 feet) above sea level. At lower locations, the acidity levels often drop too low.

Wine

Sylvaner wines have aromas of ripe apples, white peaches, mint, and meadow hay. The wines from the Isarco Valley distinguish themselves through a good fullness and acidity structure. They can also turn out to be mineral-rich.

Green Veltliner



Origin

This variety is closely connected with its land of origin, Austria. Green Veltliner is an old variety that originated from a cross between Traminer and another variety that still remains unknown today (allegedly Green Muscat from Burgenland). In Alto Adige, it has been known since 1880 in the Isarco Valley.

Distribution

Green Veltliner is cultivated throughout Europe on 19,000 hectares (46,950 acres). The central role in cultivation is played by Austria (14,400 hectares/35,583 acres), followed by the Czech Republic (2,200 hectares/5,400 acres), Hungary (2,000 hectares /4,942 acres), and Slovakia. In Italy, the variety is only represented in Alto Adige, with an area of cultivation of 27 hectares (67 acres), which are located exclusively in the Isarco Valley. Starting from the late 1990s, the variety displaced the so-called Early Red Veltliner, which had been cultivated in the postwar period on around 10 hectares (25 acres).

Vines

This variety has large, loose, shouldered bunches. The thick-skinned berries are relatively large and of a greenish-yellow color with brown spots. The preferred locations lie between 500 and 650 meters (1,650 and 2,150 feet) above sea level. Within that context, warm locations are advantageous because of the late maturity.

Wine

The characteristic aromas for this variety are green apples, grapefruit, dill, and peppery-spicy tones. In order to obtain wines with a medium structure, a strict regulation of the yield is necessary. Even if it is only the designation "Veltliner" that appears on the label of Alto Adige wines, this always consists of Green Veltliner.

Zweigelt



Origin

The correct name for the variety is actually “Blauer Zweigelt” (“Blue Zweigelt”). This was cultivated by Fritz Zweigelt in 1922 at the Austrian Research Center in Klosterneuburg from a hybrid of Blaufränkisch and St. Laurent. But the triumphal march of the variety actually began in 1970 in Burgenland and Lower Austria.

Distribution

Today, the variety is planted throughout Europe on 12,000 hectares (30,000 acres). Austria leads with 6,400 hectares (15,814 acres), followed by Hungary (2,700 hectares/6,672 acres), the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. In Alto Adige, Zweigelt was planted for the first time in 1977 near Bolzano and Termeno. This was then followed by cultivation at Novacella in the Isarco Valley. The variety subsequently superseded Portugieser in the Isarco Valley as the house wine in the numerous farmhouse inns. Alto Adige is the only winegrowing region in Italy in which Zweigelt is cultivated. The area of cultivation currently amounts to 23 hectares (57 acres). Of those, the most of them are located in the Isarco Valley and in the Val Venosta.

Vines

The bunches are large, shouldered, and, with strong growth, dense with berries. It consists of a robust variety with a firm skin. Zweigelt matures early, around seven to ten days before Pinot Noir, but it should be harvested as late as possible in order to avoid green tones in the wine. Zweigelt is presently the only red wine variety in Alto Adige that can also yield appealing wines at elevations of 500 to 800 meters (1,600 to 2,600 feet) above sea level. Because of the high yield potential, a regulation of quantity (for example through the cutting of bunches) is indispensable.

Wine

The wines are of a dark violet color and have a great emphasis on fruit, with aromas of sour cherries, berries, and tones of pepper. At peak maturity, it can be vinified in small wooden casks thanks to its stable acidity, and in that way it develops additionally powerful yet still soft tannins, as well as tones of cloves. Wines that are made in that way may be cellared for a long time. A large proportion of Alto Adige Zweigelt wines are still consumed in farmhouse inns. But in any case, this wine as a rule is only drinkable after the summer. There are still only a few wineries that fill bottles to be sold on the market.

Moscato Rosa



Origin

What is particular about this red-colored type of Muscat is that it has only female blossoms and consequently has to rely upon cross-fertilization. Older sources indicate its land of origin as Dalmatia. In Alto Adige, the variety spread only to individual vineyards by means of plant material that originated from the research station in San Michele all'Adige. The same thing occurred in Istria, where the winegrowing research station in Parenzo played an important role. The two research institutes carried out an active exchange at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The first Moscato Rosa wines were presented in 1886 at a wine exhibition in Bolzano. The San Michele research institute also presented a Moscato Rosa for the first time at the Bolzano Spring Wine Market in 1905.

Distribution

Throughout the world, the area of cultivation amounts to 80 hectares (198 acres). On the decrease in Italy, with 7 hectares (17 acres) in Alto Adige, 5 hectares (12 acres) in Trentino, and 4 hectares (10 acres) in Friuli. In Istria, 3 hectares (7 acres) are still counted today. In Alto Adige, the variety has increased from 6 hectares (15 acres) in 1990 to its present 7 hectares (17 acres) as a result of its aromatic characteristics. Half of the area of cultivation is found in Oltradige.

Vines

This variety is not very fruitful and consequently also irregular with its yields. Only between 2,000 and 5,000 kilos can be harvested per hectare (1,800 to 4,500 pounds per acre). That is also due to the small, seedless berries which are found on medium-sized bunches along with normally developed, larger berries. The grapes have a reddish-blue color covered with a wax layer. This variety matures earlier than Moscato Giallo and is for the most part harvested in early October. Because of the thin skins, though, it is at risk of rot. Moscato Rosa therefore requires well-ventilated but warm locations up to 400 meters (1,300 feet) above sea level. It produces the best results in light soils.

Wine

Moscato Rosa is suitable only for sweet dessert wines, since in the dry version, it demonstrates too little structure and too many bitter tones. The winegrowers normally leave the grapes hanging on the vines so long that they shrink somewhat. Added to this, the vineyards have to be protected with nets to keep the birds from eating the grapes. And the subsequent drying of the grapes in small baskets under the roofs of wineries is a widespread practice. The wines that are vinted as sweet distinguish themselves through aromas of rose petals, red currants, and spices. The fruity-aromatic wines do not have any pressing tones of nutmeg.

Portugieser

Origin

Blauer Portugieser, as it is known by its full name, originates from a cross between Blaue Zimmettraube and Green Sylvaner. It must have come from what is now Northeastern Slovenia, which under the Austro-Hungarian Empire was part of Lower Styria. It arrived from Bad Vöslau in Lower Austria. From there, the variety arrived in Germany in 1840 and shortly thereafter also managed to gain a foothold in the Isarco Valley after 1870.

Distribution

Portugieser grows only in Central Europe on an area of around 7,000 hectares (17,000 acres). First place is held by Germany (3,000 hectares/7,300 acres), followed by Austria and Hungary with 1,200 hectares (3,000 acres) each. This variety is also found in the Czech Republic (600 hectares/1,500 acres), Slovenia (200 hectares/500 acres), Slovakia, and Croatia. In Alto Adige, it is decreasing to just 5 hectares (12 acres), and exclusively in the Isarco Valley.

Vines

The bunches are medium-sized, pyramid-shaped, with rather loose berries and shouldered on both sides. The blackish-blue or light gray berries have a thin skin and are susceptible to rot. The variety is regarded as high-yielding and early maturing. Locations between 500 and 700 meters (1,600 and 2,300 feet) above sea level are especially suitable for the cultivation of Portugieser.

Wine

The slightly fruity, mild wine has a dark ruby-red color. The aroma spectrum ranges from red currants and raspberries to floral tones (violets). If the grapes are not thinned out enough, the wines turn out empty and are dominated by smoky tones. Since they develop quickly after being vinted, the wines are ready to drink early. Portugieser wines are served above all else in the farmhouse inns of the Isarco Valley, often blended with other red wine varieties. The white variety Blatterle also used to be a popular blending partner. Today, Portugieser is increasingly being superseded by the Zweigelt variety. With the “Klausner Leitacher” designation of origin which is bottled by one winery, the amount of Portugieser in the blend is still around 20%, along with Schiava (60%) and Pinot Noir (20%).

Blue Malvasia

Origin

This variety, which is apparently only cultivated in Alto Adige, has nothing in common with other Malvasia varieties. The origin has to be sought in the area of Northern Italy. Genetic studies show that it consists of a cross between Perera and Kleinvernatsch (a variety of Schiava). Perera is an old, local white variety from the district of Treviso. Blue Malvasia was rarely cultivated alone, but rather was mixed with Schiava and Lagrein in Bolzano and vicinity. There are no records that provide information about how long the variety has been growing in Alto Adige. The grape's relatively high sugar levels may have helped the variety get its name.

Distribution

Today, Blue Malvasia is only cultivated on less than one hectare (around two acres) by two wineries in the area around Bolzano. The future of the variety consequently does not appear to be ensured.

Vines

The medium-sized to large bunches are conical, branched, and vary in how they are packed from loosely to firmly on a comparatively long stem. The berries are reddish-blue. As a result of their sensitive blossoms, seedless grapes develop. This variety matures medium-early and requires warm locations. As a result of its susceptibility to rot, well-ventilated locations are preferable.

Wine

The light-colored, ruby-red wines show themselves to be mild but full-bodied. The low acidity and low tannin content allow the wines to show their elegance.

HISTORICAL LOCAL VARIETIES

Just like every winegrowing region, Alto Adige has a number of old and established varieties which today have all but disappeared and which are found in a few old vineyards or else have been intentionally maintained by fans of such old varieties. These historical local varieties include the following vines: Blatterle, Fraueler, Furner Hottler (red wine), Versoaln, and Weißterlaner. There are of course yet other additional local varieties which, however, no longer draw any further attention whatsoever: these include the red varieties Geschlafene, Edelschwarze, and Roter Heunisch and white varieties such as Weißvernatsch, Bratrebe, and Weißer Lagrein.

Blatterle

Origin

This variety is also described in the wine literature with different names such as Platterle or Blaterle. The designations may be an indication about the large leaf (“Blatt” in German) or the flatly (platt) pressed shape of the berries from this variety. The origin of the grape remains unknown. Strangely enough, the variety was never mentioned in old literature sources. Blatterle was distributed primarily in Bolzano and the Isarco Valley.

Distribution

Vines

The large bunch is loosely structured, somewhat uneven in terms of the shape of the berries, and with a long stem. The large, yellowish-green berries take on brown spots when overripe. The thin, soft skin makes the variety susceptible to rot. Blatterle matures early and is regarded as high-yielding.

Wine

The wines made from this variety are thin and without a particular aromatic quality. At higher elevations, though, it develops a satisfactory acidity. Blatterle is traditionally blended in the Isarco Valley with Portugieser for an early-maturing wine for farmhouse inns.

Fraueler

Origin

The origin of this grape remains unknown. In Tyrol, a “Frauenbeere” (woman’s grape) was already mentioned starting from the Middle Ages. Today, the variety only plays a certain role in the Val Venosta and the area around Merano.

Distribution

Vines

The bunches are medium-sized, very prominently shouldered, loosely structured, and with a long stem. The green berries take on brownish dots at maturity. This variety is high-yielding and provides only low sugar levels with, at the same time, high acidity values. The flavor profile is determined by malic acid.

Wine

FUNGUS-RESISTANT VARIETIES

Since the two fungal diseases powdery mildew and downy mildew were brought to Europe, new hybrids have been created with American vine varieties that have a tolerance to fungi. This first generation of fungus-resistant varieties has achieved only limited distribution, since the comparison with the quality of the wines from the common European vines did not hold up. A second generation of new hybrids that were developed primarily in the postwar period in Germany has been successful in compensating for these disadvantages in quality. In 2009, the Regent and Bronner varieties were allowed for cultivation in Alto Adige. These were followed in 2014 by Solaris, Muscaris, and Sauvignier Gris. In 2013, this was followed by Solaris, Muscaris, and Sauvignier Gris, and in 2015 by Cabernet Cortis and Johanniter. In Alto Adige, a total of 72 hectares (178 acres) of it has been planted, in comparison to 100 hectares (274 acres) already in Trentino. Regent: only 2,500 hectares (6,200 acres) left, of which 1,700 hectares (4,201 acres) are in Germany and 6 hectares (15 acres) are in Alto Adige. Bronner: in Alto Adige, 14 hectares (35 acres). Solaris: throughout Europe, around 200 hectares (500 acres), with Germany just 70 hectares (170 acres), Switzerland 20 hectares (50 acres), Trentino 31 hectares (77 acres), and Alto Adige 18 hectares (44 acres), Sauvignier gris in Alto Adige 22 hectares (54 acres).

Regent

Origin

This fungus-resistant red wine variety was created in 1967 at the Institute for Grapevine Breeding Geilweilerhof in Germany from a cross between Diana (Silvaner x Müller-Thurgau) and Chambourcin (a first generation French hybrid variety from around 1900). The variety has been cultivated in Germany since 1995.

Distribution

In Europe, the variety has in the meantime moved into an area of nearly 2,500 hectares (6,178 acres), 1,700 hectares (4,201 acres) of them located in Germany. In Alto Adige, 6 hectares (15 acres) are currently cultivated.

Vines

The resistance to fungus is medium to good. The maturity is in the medium-early range. The bunches are medium-sized, with the berries being somewhat loose. The grapes are small and blue, and their juice is a light red in color.

Wine

With proper vinification, the deep red wine has accentuated tannin and is suitable for aging in wooden barrels. The aroma is reminiscent of sour cherries and plums. In the past, the quality of the wine has not always met expectations.

Bronner

Origin

The white wine variety Bronner was hybridized in 1975 by the State Viticultural Institute in Freiburg (Baden, Germany). In Alto Adige, there are 12 hectares (30 acres) in cultivation today.

Distribution

Wine

The wines are sensorily similar to Pinot Blanc and show an acceptable body. The aromas are reminiscent of apples, grapefruit, and pineapple.

Vines

The resistance to fungus is good. This variety matures a few days after Pinot Noir. It is not suitable for high elevations. The bunches are rather large and shouldered.

Solaris

Origin

The white variety Solaris was hybridized in 1975 at the State Viticultural Institute in Freiburg. In Northern European countries, there are 100 hectares (around 250 acres) in cultivation today. In Alto Adige, there are 27 hectares (67 acres) of vineyards growing Solaris.

Distribution

Wine

The wines are fruity with aromas of pineapple and some nutmeg. The choice of the harvest time is of crucial importance. If harvested too late, the wines turn out with a slightly burnt taste and little aroma.

Vines

The fungus resistance of this variety is very good. Because of its very early maturity combined with good winter hardiness, Solaris is suitable for cultivation in very high elevations. But its yield is threatened by being eaten by birds and wasps. The medium-sized, conical bunches with loose grapes have greenish-yellow berries that turn golden-yellow at full maturity. As a result of its tendency toward high yields, Solaris vineyards have to be consistently thinned. The variety yields a high degree of sugar with at the same time good acidity levels.