

# Winemaking not restricted to France, Germany

This is the fifth of a seven-part series on wine by Fine Arts staff member Larry Kubert.

by Larry Kubert

The world produces and consumes about seven and a half billion gallons of wine a year, and while France and Germany make some great wines, it would be ludicrous to assume they are the only countries capable of making fine wine.

As stated earlier, there are two wine producing regions in the United States: the Eastern, centered in New York state and utilizing the American grape vine, and the Californian, centered in California and using the traditional grape vines of Europe.

The Eastern wine region has vineyards in Ohio and Washington as well as in the South and Midwest. Although the Eastern area is producing some adequate wines, the main problem is that they have a "foxy" or very grapey taste.

While both regions have their proponents, it appears as if California will prove to be the homeground for a successful future for American wines. With a climate ideal for raising European grape vines, the wine industry has gotten progressively better.

There are two main divisions in California: Northern California, including the Sonoma and Napa Valleys, and Southern California, including Santa Clara County. The better Californian wines seem to come from the North.

American vineyards produce red, white and rose wines. On the whole, American wines are labeled with generic names, such as chablis, burgundy, etc. But of course the only true Chablis and Burgundy come from France.

The better American vineyards have since started to name the variety of grape used: Pinot noir, Gamay, Pinot Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon. Buying a wine labeled in such a manner, as opposed to one with a generic labeling, should result in

purchasing one of America's better wines.

A cheap wine, although not bad as an everyday table wine, is called "mountain" red or white burgundy or chablis. Usually this is a popular wine because of its low price, but certainly nothing to be excited about.

Italy and Portugal must be considered when discussing wine. Italy produces more wine than any other country in the world. Its wine ranges from sweet to dry and from rough to smooth. An unfortunate fact is that the best Italian wines usually remain in Italy.

Some of the more famous red wines are Barolo and Barbaresco (both rather heavy) and Bardolino and Valpolicella (both light and smooth). Probably Italy's most well-known wine is its chianti, which comes in a straw-covered bottle. The best chianti is called Chianti classico and is identified by a black cock on a gold background on the label.

There also are white Italian wines. The better-known are Lacrima Christi and Orvieto.

As a whole, Italian wines should be drunk while they are quite young. The problem which results, however, is that the vintage dates on the labels don't really mean much since the government has no regulation over the dates used.

Portuguese wines come in all forms: red, white and rose. But it is the rose most people associate with Portugal. Portuguese wine production is relatively primitive, with the grapes still pressed by human feet. The best roses are Mateus, made in both still and sparkling versions, and Faisca, called Lancers after exportation to the United States.

Other wine producing countries of the world deserving note are Australia, Chile, Spain and Yugoslavia.

Aussie wines rarely are seen in the United States. Again, exported wines are not nearly so good as wines the natives keep at home. The reds are powerful and satisfying. Fine red and



white wines can be found under the names of Magill, McLaren Vale and Barossa Valley, all growing locations.

With the exception of the native American vines, Chile's vines were the only ones to escape the destruction by the phylloxera in the 19th century.

Chile produces some very fine white wines made from the Riesling grape. Also, fine Bordeaux and Burgundy-types of wine are made from the Cabernet and Pinot noir grapes, respectively. There are four government-controlled classes of wine which are exported: courtant (aged for one year), special (aged for two years), reserve (aged for four years) and gran vino (aged for six years).

Spanish wines are extremely unpredictable. That country's best

wines undoubtedly come from the Rioja region. Producing reds (tinto), whites (blanco) and roses, specially aged wines from the Rioja area carry the word "Reserva" and the date. Spanish wines have a distinctive, earthy taste to them.

Yugoslavian wines finally are beginning to make their way to the United States. Inexpensive and basically light-bodied, they have a high alcohol content, often 14-15 per cent.

The white wines tend to be better than the reds. The best whites come from Slovenia and are identified by the town name of Ljutomer preceding the name of the grape—Riesling, Sylvaner or Traminer. The better Yugoslavian reds are full-bodied and come from Dalmatia.

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