

ITALY OVERVIEW - WINE PRODUCING REGIONS

ITALY History of wine from 8 th C BCE. Exported throughout Roman Empire. 11 th C Florantine banking family Antinori & traders Frescobaldi invested in land and wine. Period of share cropping. Modern era 19 th C after unification of Italy in 1861 current areas established. International grapes early 20 th C after phylloxera. Volume production after WW. Quality improves end of 20 th C with modern winemaking starting in Friuli 1960s & Super Tuscans 1970s. Recent success Pinot Grigio & Prosecco. An abundance of local grape varieties.
CLIMATE & TOPOGRAPHY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Latitude 35- 47 °N. Long thin country varied climate.• Surrounded by seas on 3 sides – strong influence.• Apennine mountain spine down the middle – range of sites & microclimates.• Alps & Dolomites to the North.• Islands off shore.• Largely MEDITERRANEAN, some CONTENENTAL.
WINE LAW <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appellation system of: DOC: setting permitted varieties, yields, wine making (maturation). DOCG: tighter rules in prestige regions.• Terms for DOC/G: Classico – historic smaller area within appellation. Superiore: Higher ABV. Riserva: longer maturation period, part in oak.• IGT: Previously only Vina da Tavola. Larger geographical areas, more flex’ varieties, higher yields, different styles. E.g. IGT Toscana: white, red, rose, spark, sweet etc.
GRAPE VARIETIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very large number of indigenous grape varieties 375-500.• Some var’ regional, others throughout e.g. Sangiovese.• In order: Sangiovese, Pinot Grigio, Trebbiano, Glera, Montepulciano, Catarratto, Merlot, Ch, Primitivo, Barbera
WINE GROWING <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traditional pergola training for high vol’ in north.• Traditional mixed vines, crops & olive trees in Tuscany.• Traditional low density bush vines in south.• Now mostly converted to modern trellising with VSP.
WINE MAKING <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Influence on White from Germany protective, SS.• Influence on Red from France 80s & 90s new barrique aging. For local varieties trend back to trad’ larger Slavonian oak casks (oxidation) & less obv’s oak flavours.
BUSINESS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One of 2 largest wine producing nations.• Small average vineyard size – growers – co-ops, merchants, large companies. <i>Cantine Riunite, Zonin</i>.• Per cap’ consumption declining, shift to beer & spirits.• Domestic cons’ down – exports up to 40%.• Sparkling half of exports but still wines 65% of value – USA, Germ, UK Canada, Switzerland.

