



ITALY

CHAPTER TEN

CHAPTER TEN

ITALY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, the candidate should be able to:

- Identify the general role and position of Italy in the global wine industry.
- Recall the physical location and general climate of Italy's major wine regions.
- Discuss the hierarchy of wine designations from vino to DOCG.
- Recall the grape varieties, wine styles, and important appellations in the Veneto, Piedmont, and Tuscany.
- Identify the major appellations and grapes of other regions in Italy.

Italy's winemaking tradition has been well established for three millennia. In modern times, Italy is recognized as one of the world's leading producers of wine, often vying with France from year to year for the top spot. It has also long been the top wine exporter and is among the biggest wine-consuming nations.

Italian wines cover the full spectrum of wine styles and include excellent examples of whites, reds, rosés, sweet wines, dry wines, still wines, sparkling wines, and fortified wines. Some of Italy's unique wines perpetuate traditional winemaking techniques rarely seen outside the country. There are some Italian wines that are in intense demand, fetch steep prices, and represent classic wine styles that have no direct imitators, as the distinctive Italian grape varieties from which they are made have yet to be widely planted outside of Italy. There is also a large volume of well-made, extremely food-friendly, reasonably priced wine for everyday consumption, much of

which finds its way to the United States.

GEOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

The climate is one of the main reasons that Italy is such a fruitful place for grape growing. Its position in southern Europe is well within the temperate zone where summer days are long and hot, there are clearly recognizable springs and falls, and winters are cold.

Italy's most notable topographic feature is its long Mediterranean coastline. Shaped like a boot, Italy is suspended from the middle of Europe into the Mediterranean Sea. The sea surrounds Italy everywhere except in the north, and few places in the country are more than 75 miles (121 km) from it. The Mediterranean acts as a moderating influence on the weather, reducing the summer heat by a few degrees and warding off the worst winter cold. Nevertheless, there is a considerable difference in climate between the cool northern and hot southern parts of the country.

Regions of Italy



Copyright: The Society of Wine Educators 2016

Figure 10–1: Regions of Italy

The Italian Peninsula is extremely mountainous, with very little flatland except in the Po River Valley in the north, and in Puglia—the

heel of the boot.

The rugged terrain, along with continual political discord, served to restrict travel in centuries past, which led to the remarkable profusion of different types of vines and winemaking techniques. The Apennines mountain chain runs the length of the peninsula, and has peaks that reach nearly 10,000 feet (3,048 m). The entire northern border of Italy is formed by the Alps, which rise above 15,000 feet (4,572 m) and form a solid wall to hold back most of the Arctic air masses that strike northern Europe in the winter. The mountains also provide high-altitude vineyard sites with wide diurnal temperature ranges.

Politically, the country is subdivided into 20 administrative regions: 18 on the mainland, plus the two large islands of Sicily and Sardinia located in the Mediterranean to the west of the peninsula. The northern tier is the most prosperous part of the country, containing the majority of Italy's industrial infrastructure; the cities of Milan, Turin, and Venice; and the rich agricultural lands of the Po River Basin. This area has a relatively cool climate, particularly in the Alpine foothills, and it features some of the most highly respected Italian wine regions, including Piedmont and Veneto.

Tuscany is another internationally renowned Italian wine region, famous not only for its wines but also for its cultural sites and beautiful scenery. Tuscany is situated on the more populated and touristic western coast along the Tyrrhenian Sea. Farther south, the cities of Rome and Naples are also located along the length of the Tyrrhenian coast. The eastern coast, on the Adriatic Sea, is more rural and agricultural and is a major source of wines made from indigenous Italian grapes. The islands, especially Sicily, are widely planted with vineyards.

ITALIAN GRAPE VARIETIES

The wines of Italy are largely reliant upon the country's assortment

of indigenous grape varieties, despite the fact that some international grapes have been well established in certain areas of the country for more than a century. Some of Italy's native grapes—such as Sangiovese and Barbera—can now be found throughout the world, while many others—such as Nebbiolo and Cortese—remain planted *almost* exclusively at home.

Sangiovese is the leading red grape of Italy, and while it is grown in many regions, it is known primarily for its use in the most famous wines of Tuscany. Other leading red grapes of Italy include Montepulciano, Barbera, Nero d'Avola, and Primitivo; Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon are well-represented as well.

Trebbiano Toscano (known elsewhere as Ugni Blanc) and Pinot Grigio (Pinot Gris) are the leading white grapes of the country. Both of these grapes are grown in several regions across the country. Other important white grapes include Glera, Catarratto, Garganega, Moscato (Muscat), and Chardonnay.

Many Italian varieties have been growing in isolated areas for so long that they have diverged into an array of clones or subvarieties with distinct characteristics. Thus, Italian wines made from a given grape variety may vary widely in quality and flavor profile due not only to the differences in terroir, but also to the variations among clones. Some varieties have mutated into red, white, and pink versions. Often, the major subvarieties have names based on locations—such as Trebbiano Toscano—or based on other notable characteristics—such as Sangiovese Grosso (large). There are more than 400 grape varieties allowed for use in the quality wines of Italy; including the subvarieties, the number comes closer to 2,000.

LEADING GRAPES OF ITALY	
Red Grapes	White Grapes
Sangiovese	Trebbiano Toscano
Montepulciano	Pinot Grigio
Merlot	Catarratto
Barbera	Chardonnay
Nero d'Avola	Glera
Cabernet Sauvignon	Garganega
Primitivo	Moscato Bianco
Negroamaro	

Figure 10–2: Leading Grapes of Italy

ITALIAN WINE LAWS

Italian efforts to protect the names and origins of wine date back to the early 1700s when the Grand Duchy of Tuscany delineated areas of production for Chianti. Modern Italian wine laws regulate many aspects of wine production, such as which grape varieties can be planted, crop yield, viticultural practices, and winemaking techniques. Although the modern Italian system was modeled after the French appellation contrôlée structure, it developed somewhat differently, resulting in four quality designations instead of three. They are as follows, in order of increasing quality:

- Vino (basic table wine)
- Indicazione geografica tipica (IGT)
- Denominazione di origine controllata (DOC)

- Denominazione di origine controllata e garantita (DOCG)

In principle, the lowest level is basic wine, previously called *vino da tavola*. As in the rest of Europe, the table wine designation was intended for simple wines that were subject to few rules and regulations or whose grapes were grown outside of recognized quality production areas. Initially, no vintage date, grape variety, or zone of production was allowed on the label, but, as elsewhere in the EU, that has now changed (see chapter 8). Wines in this category presently are referred to as either wine (*vino*) or varietal wines (*vini varietali*) and account for approximately 40% of Italy's production.

The *indicazione geografica tipica* (IGT) category was created in 1992, largely in response to winemakers who felt that the DOC/DOCG designations involved excessive restrictions. For example, many wanted to use a grape variety not approved in their area or to modify the percentages of the sanctioned grape varieties in a blend. They felt that by doing so they would produce a higher-quality wine than if they chose to follow the DOC restrictions, yet these often excellent wines would therefore not qualify for any classification level other than basic table wine. Some of these wines met with great commercial success and commanded high prices. Because the first wines of this type were from Tuscany, the term *Super Tuscan* was coined to refer to these outstanding, limited production wines.

In the EU scheme, IGT represents the category of table wine with geographical indication (PGI). These wines must rise to a higher standard of production than basic wines, but the winemakers have considerably more leeway in their choice of grapes and methods than do those producing wines in a higher classification category. IGT wines are allowed to carry a vintage date, the name of a grape variety (provided the wine has at least 85% of the named variety), and the name of the IGT region on the label. There are now close to 120 IGT zones, producing almost 30% of all Italian wine.

PDO wines are divided into two categories in Italy. The primary designation is *denominazione di origine controllata* (DOC). As with other PDO wines, DOC wines are subject to a lengthy set of specifications that are meant to protect the reputation of a place-name by maintaining high standards and by ensuring that the wine fits the typical style of the area.



Figure 10–3: Italian wine categories

The *denominazione di origine controllata e garantita* (DOCG) designates a higher level classification among quality (PDO) wines that are not only controlled but also guaranteed. DOCG wines that have been successfully evaluated bear a special, numbered government seal over the cork. Although the category was originally created in 1963, the first DOCGs were not awarded until 1980. Brunello di Montalcino, Barolo, and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano were among the first wines to be awarded DOCG status.

As of December 2022, Italy had 76 DOCGs and just over 330 DOCs, and these numbers are sure to remain in flux for the foreseeable future.

TERMINOLOGY

Within the PDO category of Italian wines, the following terms may be seen on a wine label:

- *Classico* –This term indicates a central or historic subzone within a larger geographic region. Such a territory is often the original center of wine production in the area and is often considered to be superior to the surrounding areas.
- *Superiore* –This term indicates a wine that has a specific higher level of alcohol by volume than required of the corresponding *normale* wine. These wines are usually produced using a lower yield of grapes per acre or riper grapes.
- *Riserva* –This term is applied to wines that have been aged for a longer minimum period of time than regular wines. The total aging time varies according to the type and style of wine.

These terms are often themselves part of the name of the wine region, such as Chianti Classico DOCG and Soave Superiore DOCG.

Table 10–1: List of Italian DOCGs by Region

LIST OF ITALIAN DOCGs BY REGION*

Region	DOCG
Abruzzo (2)	Colline Teramane Montepulciano d'Abruzzo Tullum/Terre Tollesi
Basilicata (1)	Aglianico del Vulture Superiore
Campania (4)	Aglianico del Taburno Fiano di Avellino Greco di Tufo Taurasi
Emilia-Romagna (2)	Colli Bolognesi Classico Pignoletto Romagna Albana
Friuli-Venezia Giulia (4)	Colli Orientali del Friuli Picolit Lison (shared with Veneto) Ramandolo Rosazzo
Lazio (3)	Cannellino di Frascati Cesanese del Piglio (Piglio) Frascati Superiore
Lombardy (5)	Franciacorta Moscato di Scanzo (Scanzo) Oltrepò Pavese Metodo Classico Sforzato di Valtellina Valtellina Superiore
Marche (5)	Castelli di Jesi Verdicchio Riserva Cònero Offida Verdicchio di Matelica Riserva Vernaccia di Serrapetrona
Piedmont (18)	Alta Langa Asti – Moscato d'Asti Barbera d'Asti Barbera del Monferrato Superiore Barbaresco Barolo Brachetto d'Acqui (Acqui) Diano d'Alba (Dolcetto di Diano d'Alba) Dogliani Erbaluce di Caluso Gattinara Gavi (Cortese di Gavi) Ghemme Nizza Ovada (Dolcetto di Ovada Superiore) Roero Ruchè di Castagnole Monferrato Terre Alfieri

LIST OF ITALIAN DOCGs BY REGION*

Region	DOCG
Puglia (4)	Castel del Monte Bombino Nero Castel del Monte Nero di Troia Riserva Castel del Monte Rosso Riserva Primitivo di Manduria Dolce Naturale
Sardinia (1)	Vermentino di Gallura
Sicilia (1)	Cerasuolo di Vittoria
Tuscany (11)	Brunello di Montalcino Carmignano Chianti Chianti Classico Elba Aleatico Passito (Aleatico Passito dell'Elba) Montecucco Sangiovese Morellino di Scansano Suvereto Val di Cornia Rosso (Rosso della Val di Cornia) Vernaccia di San Gimignano Vino Nobile di Montepulciano
Umbria (2)	Montefalco Sagrantino Torgiano Rosso Riserva
Veneto (14)	Amarone della Valpolicella Asolo Prosecco (Colli Asolani) Bagnoli Friularo (Friularo di Bagnoli) Bardolino Superiore Colli di Conegliano Colli Euganei Fior d'Arancio Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Lison (shared with Friuli-Venezia Giulia) Montello Rosso (Montello) Piave Malanotte (Malanotte del Piave) Recioto della Valpolicella Recioto di Gambellara Recioto di Soave Soave Superiore

*As of December 2022

WINE REGIONS

VENETO

Veneto is among the foremost wine-producing regions of Italy, in terms of both quality and quantity. Veneto produces a large percentage of the country's total wine, as well as the largest quantity (by volume) of DOC/DOCG wines from among the 20 wine-producing regions.

Geography and Climate

Located in northeastern Italy, Veneto is bordered to the north by Austria and Trentino–Alto Adige, to the west by Lombardy, to the south by Emilia-Romagna, and to the east by the Adriatic Sea and Friuli–Venezia Giulia. It divides topographically into two distinct sections. The south and east are flat, formed by deposits of sediment from rivers that empty into the Adriatic. The Po, Italy's longest river, forms part of the region's southern border. Other important rivers include the Adige and the Piave.

The region's northern and western sections become abruptly mountainous, and it is here, in the band of Alpine foothills and valleys between the plains and the rugged mountains, that most of Veneto's renowned grapes are grown.

The climate in this region, so close to both the Alps and the Mediterranean, is quite varied. The broad river delta and flatlands can get quite hot and humid in the summer, while the mountain slopes remain cooler and breezier. In the winter, this is one of the colder parts of Italy, but the Alps keep the coldest continental air at bay. Lake Garda, on the western side of Veneto, moderates the temperatures in its vicinity.

LEADING GRAPE VARIETIES OF VENETO	
Red Grapes	White Grapes
Corvina	Pinot Grigio
Corvinone	Glera
Rondinella	Garganega
Molinara	Trebbiano Toscano
Oseleta	Trebbiano di Soave
Negrara	Pinot Bianco
Cabernet Sauvignon	Vespaiola
Merlot	Chardonnay

Figure 10–4: Leading Grape Varieties of Veneto

Grape Varieties

The red varieties most closely associated with Veneto are Corvina, Corvinone, and Rondinella, which have traditionally been blended together in several of the region’s best-known red wines. Corvina is generally considered to be the quality grape of the three and typically makes up the largest part of the blend. For a long time, it was believed that Corvinone was a clone of Corvina, but new evidence has revealed it to be a distinct (although closely related) variety. As such, regulations regarding its use have been in flux.

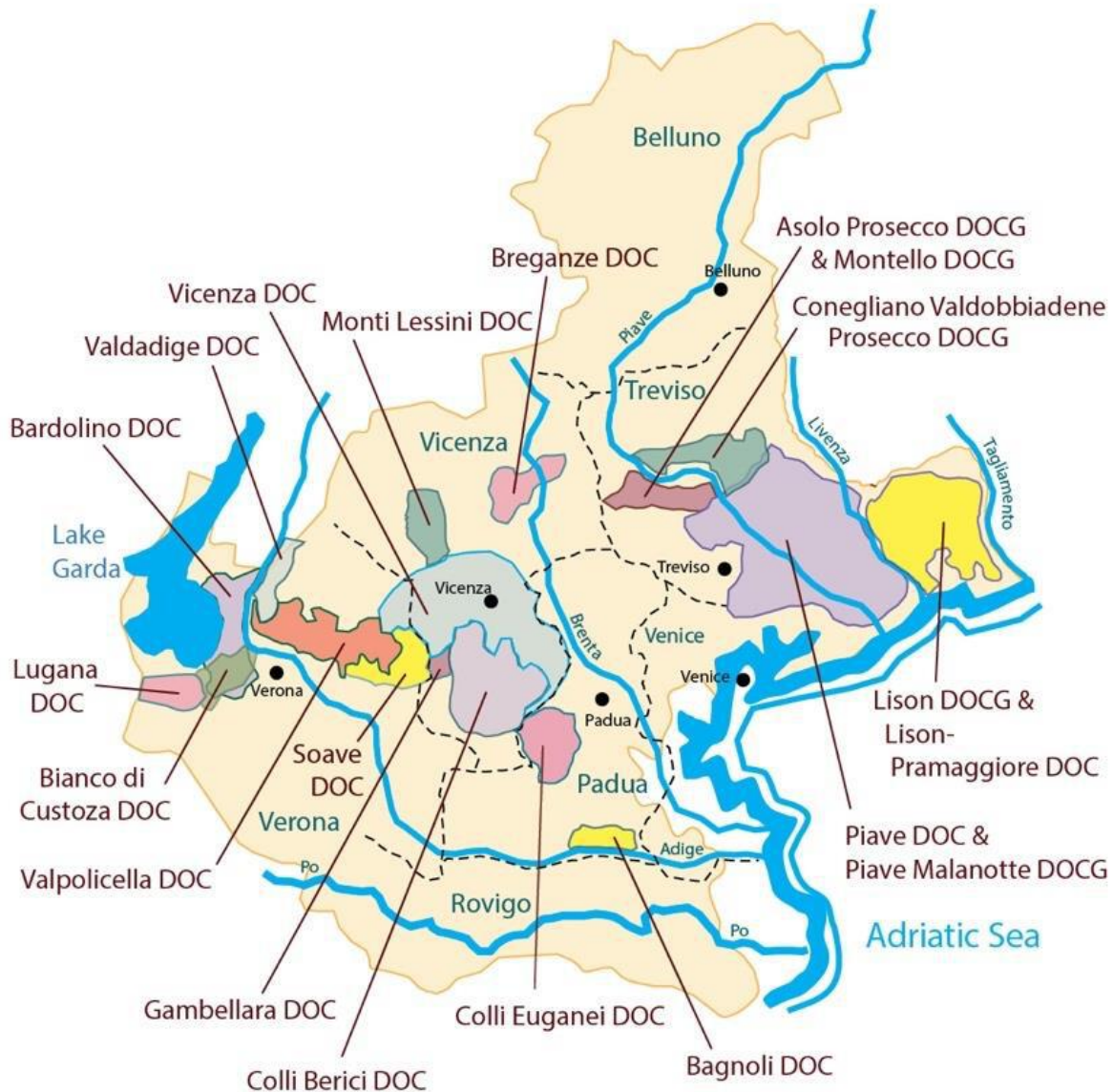
The primary white grape of Veneto is Garganega—well known for its use in Soave. Glera, another indigenous white variety, provides the basis for the region’s highly successful sparkling wines. International varieties—including Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Pinot Grigio (Pinot Gris), Pinot Bianco (Pinot Blanc), and Chardonnay—are also well represented in Veneto.

Veneto Wine Styles

Veneto produces a wide range of wine types and styles. In most years, as much as 75% is white wine, including Pinot Grigio, Soave, and Prosecco—the region's incredibly popular sparkling wine. Valpolicella and Bardolino are among the best-known red wines of Veneto.

The region is also noted for its dried-grape wines, both white and red, produced by the *appassimento* process. Ripe bunches of grapes are handpicked at harvest time, but instead of going to the press, they are set out to dry. Different wineries use different methods, but the grapes are traditionally placed carefully in special slatted boxes, laid on open shelves, or hung from ceiling rafters by hooks. The challenge is to keep the area well aerated to avoid humidity, which may promote mold growth. The grapes are left to dry until mid-January or longer, by which time they have lost as much as 60% of their water content through evaporation.

Wine Regions of Veneto



Copyright: The Society of Wine Educators 2016

Figure 10–5: Veneto wine regions

The dried grapes are then brought into the winery, and a long, cool fermentation is begun that extends into March, April, or even May. For most appassimento wines, the fermentation is arrested by chilling the wine after the alcohol level reaches approximately 12%,

which still leaves considerable residual sugar and produces a sweet wine called *recioto*. If the carbon dioxide produced via fermentation is retained in a pressure tank, the wine can also be made into a sparkling version. Another variation is to allow the wine to ferment completely dry, which results in a wine of 15% to 16% alcohol. Amarone della Valpolicella is the model for this technique. Another traditional production technique called *ripasso* reuses the sediment, or lees, of Amarone or recioto. Young wine is combined with the lees and goes through a short second fermentation, becoming a ripasso wine with more flavor, tannin, and alcohol.

Veneto Appellations

Veneto has 14 DOCGs, with Amarone della Valpolicella DOCG among its most distinguished. Amarone is one of the four styles of wine—along with Valpolicella DOC, Valpolicella Ripasso DOC, and Recioto della Valpolicella DOCG—produced within the boundaries of the Valpolicella DOC (located in the hills north of Verona). Due to its appassimento production method, Amarone requires a minimum of 2 years of aging and a minimum of 14% alcohol by volume, although most producers achieve alcohol levels of at least 15% abv.

The four styles of Valpolicella are all based on Corvina or Corvinone grapes, along with a small amount of Rondinella. Traditionally, Molinara was included in the blend but is now optional. Small percentages of other grapes varieties are allowed as well. Producers in the heart of the historic Valpolicella growing district have the right to the classico designation. The Bardolino area—home to Bardolino DOC and Bardolino Superiore DOCG—is located alongside Lake Garda, just to the west of Valpolicella. Bardolino produces red wines and rosé—known here as *chiarretto*—based on Corvina and Rondinella.

Among the still white wines of Veneto, Soave DOC is preeminent. Along with the Soave Superiore and Recioto di Soave DOCGs, Soave represents a large production volume in Italy. Its main ingredient is Garganega, which must comprise at least 70% of the wine and may be blended with Trebbiano di Soave (Verdicchio), Chardonnay, or

both. Soave also has a central classico zone.

The region's other archetypal wine is Prosecco DOC, based on the Glera grape variety (minimum 85%) and typically produced as a white sparkling wine. Updates in the wine laws now allow for the production of Prosecco Rosé DOC, which includes 10% to 15% Pinot Nero (Pinot Noir) fermented on the skins. The Prosecco DOC appellation covers a large area, including the northern and eastern portions of the province of Veneto as well as all of Friuli-Venezia Giulia. In addition, there are two relatively tiny DOCGs that produce Prosecco: Conegliano-Valdobbiadene Prosecco DOCG and Asolo Prosecco (Colli Asolani) DOCG, both located in the historical center of Prosecco production.

Wine Regions of the Tre Venezie



Figure 10–6: Tre Venezie (Trentino–Alto Adige, Friuli–Venezia Giulia, Veneto)

The Lugana DOC—shared between Veneto and Lombardy—is becoming quite well known as well. This appellation produces light, pleasant white wines based on the Turbiana grape variety (also known as Trebbiano di Lugana and closely related to, but not quite

identical to Verdicchio).

A few areas of Veneto produce several styles of wine under separate appellations (which often occupy the same geographic location). For instance, Piave DOC produces both dry and appassimento wines from a range of grapes. However, Piave Malanotte DOCG—which occupies the same location as the Piave DOC—is only approved for red wines based on the indigenous Raboso grape variety. Likewise, the Lison-Pramaggiore DOC (which extends into the Friuli-Venezia Giulia area) produces a range of red and white wines from both traditional and international varieties, while the Lison DOCG—located in the same geographic area—is approved only for white wines made using the Friulano grape variety.

International varieties are also important in Veneto and are used in both IGT and DOC wines. A new three-region DOC, the delle Venezie DOC, was created in 2017. The delle Venezie DOC encompasses the total area of the Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, and Trentino regions, and thus allows a good deal of multi-regional varietal wine—such as the area’s popular Pinot Grigio—to be labeled as a DOC wine. In addition, ten IGTs are available in Veneto, including the general Veneto IGT and the even larger Trevenezie IGT.

TRENTINO–ALTO ADIGE

Trentino-Alto Adige is the northernmost region in Italy. Most of its northern border abuts Austria, to which the upper part of this region, Alto Adige, used to belong. In Alto Adige, also known as Südtirol, German is the predominant language, and wine styles and labels reflect that cultural heritage. The southern half of the region, Trentino, has as its center the town of Trento and is primarily Italian-speaking. It is quite cold in the more mountainous regions and progressively milder closer to Lake Garda in the south. The rugged mountain terrain does not leave much land for agriculture, but vineyards are found throughout the main valley, often planted on terraces.

More than 80% of the region's wine output is of DOC status, and almost all of the rest qualifies as IGT. The primary DOCs—Alto Adige, Trentino, and the overarching Valdadige—allow a wide selection of grape varieties and styles. Most of the wine is varietally labeled. The principal white varieties cultivated in the region include Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Pinot Bianco, Müller-Thurgau, and Traminer (Gewürztraminer). The main reds include Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Lagrein, Merlot, Marzemino, Schiava, and Teroldego. Trento DOC (locally known as "Trentodoc") is the appellation for the region's highly respected traditional method sparkling wine.

Wine Regions of Friuli-Venezia Giulia



Copyright: The Society of Wine Educators 2016

Figure 10–7: Friuli–Venezia Giulia regions

FRIULI–VENEZIA GIULIA

In recent years, Friuli (the name is usually shortened) has made great strides in white wine production with both international and

indigenous varieties, but red grapes also do well here. International varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Pinot Nero (Pinot Noir), Pinot Grigio, Riesling, and Sauvignon Blanc are commercially important, but some ancient varieties such as the red Refosco and the whites Verduzzo, Friulano (a Sauvignon Blanc relative, until recently called Tocai Friulano), and Picolit are enjoying renewed popularity.

The appellations considered to be among the best for quality wines in Friuli are Friuli Colli Orientali DOC (and its associated DOCG for sweet white wines made from the Picolit grape, Colli Orientali del Friuli Picolit) and Collio Goriziano DOC (often called simply Collio). Both are in the eastern part of Friuli near the Slovenian border, and both have a long list of allowed grape varieties that are often bottled as single-variety wines. Collio also produces white blends labeled as Collio Bianco, as well as skin-fermented “orange” wines from the indigenous Ribolla Gialla grape, which are often made in an oxidized style.

Two other outstanding wines of the area are Ramandolo DOCG and Rosazzo DOCG. The Ramandolo DOCG produces sweet white wines from the Verduzzo variety, a unique white grape rarely seen outside of northeast Italy. The Rosazzo DOCG makes dry white wines with a minimum of 50% Friulano; other allowed grapes include Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Bianco, and Ribolla Gialla.

PIEDMONT (PIEMONTE)

Piedmont is known among wine connoisseurs as the home of the great red wines Barolo and Barbaresco, and also, among a wider audience, for its sparkling wines. It is the second largest producer of DOC and DOCG wines in Italy behind Veneto. Though Piedmont's total production volume is well behind that of Veneto, it has the highest proportion of PDO wine of any of Italy's regions.

Geography and Climate

Piedmont forms the northwest of Italy, bordered by France on the

west, Valle d'Aosta and Switzerland on the north, Lombardy on the east, and Liguria on the south. The region is sort of a half bowl with a relatively flat basin—the upper (western) part of the Po Valley—surrounded on three sides by the Alps and the Apennines. The flat alluvial expanses are too fertile for quality wine grapes, but the areas of low hills and ridges within the central basin are ideal, especially the Langhe and Monferrato hills south of the town of Asti.

The topography and soils of Piedmont are quite diverse. Partially cut off from the moderating influence of the Mediterranean by the mountains of Liguria, Piedmont's winters are cold with abundant snowfall. The summers are warm and dry, with frequent fog in autumn.

Grape Varieties

Piedmont's most famous grape is the tannic, high-acid Nebbiolo, which produces the region's blockbuster wines. However, the lighter but still high-acid, low-tannin Barbera is the most widely planted variety of the region. Other red varieties include Dolcetto, Freisa, Grignolino, and Brachetto. The leading white varieties are Moscato, Arneis, and Cortese. Piedmont has not rushed to plant international varieties, but because it has physical and historical connections to France, some French varieties—particularly Chardonnay and Pinot Noir—have been present here for over a century.

LEADING GRAPE VARIETIES OF PIEDMONT	
Red Grapes	White Grapes
Barbera	Moscato Bianco
Nebbiolo	Arneis
Dolcetto	Cortese
Brachetto	Erbaluce
Grignolino	
Bonarda	
Vespolina	
Freisa	
Ruchè	

Figure 10–8: Leading Grape Varieties of Piedmont

Piedmont Wine Styles

About two-thirds of Piedmont’s wine output is red. Piedmontese red wines come in a full range of intensity from powerful, concentrated, and full-bodied to light and easy-drinking reds. One common feature of the red wines is a notable acidity that helps to give the big wines their longevity and makes the lighter styles particularly refreshing. Given the relatively cool climate of Piedmont, it is not surprising that sparkling wines are well established. These include wines produced via the traditional method, tank method, and partial fermentation techniques that range from dry to sweet and from white to red. The still whites are typically medium bodied with delicate aromatics.

Piedmont Appellations

Piedmont has more high-level wine appellations than any other Italian region: 18 DOCGs and more than 40 DOCs. There are no IGTs in the region, however the Piedmont DOC covers the majority of the area and allows for a wide range of still and sparkling wines

produced from more than two dozen different grape varieties. A large area is also covered by the Langhe DOC, which surrounds and includes the vineyards of Barolo, Barbaresco, and Roero, as well as the areas surrounding the towns of Alba and Ovada.

Many of the main appellations of Piedmont are tied to single grape varieties, and the standout variety is Nebbiolo. It is the sole or primary ingredient in seven DOCGs and several DOCs. Chief among these are the Barolo and Barbaresco DOCGs, based around two historic hill towns of the same names, which produce the two highest-regarded wines of Piedmont from 100% Nebbiolo. Barolo is an intense, dry, robust, but velvety red wine, usually quite tannic and high in alcohol. It requires a minimum aging period of 38 months; riserva wines must be aged for 62 months. Barbaresco resembles Barolo but is considered slightly more elegant and less powerful—though critics and enthusiasts continually debate this. Its aging requirements are less strict than Barolo's, with a minimum of only 26 months, and 50 months for the riserva.

Piedmont is also the home of Asti—the wildly popular, intensely fruity and aromatic sparkling wine made from Moscato Bianco (Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains) grapes. Asti is produced in a range of styles. The best-known, Asti DOCG, is a spumante (fully sparkling) version typically produced using the Charmat/Martinotti method. Asti DOCG is traditionally a semi-sweet to sweet wine, however, dry versions—known as Asti Secco—are permitted as well. Asti may also be produced via the *metodo classico*; such versions must undergo second fermentation in the bottle and age on the lees for a minimum of 9 months.

The calmer Moscato d'Asti DOCG is a *frizzante* (lightly sparkling) version made using the partial fermentation method of sparkling wine production—often referred to as the Asti Method—in which a single fermentation in a pressurized tank is halted by refrigeration, leaving a substantial amount of residual sugar in the wine (see chapter 6).

Other Piedmont appellations include the following:

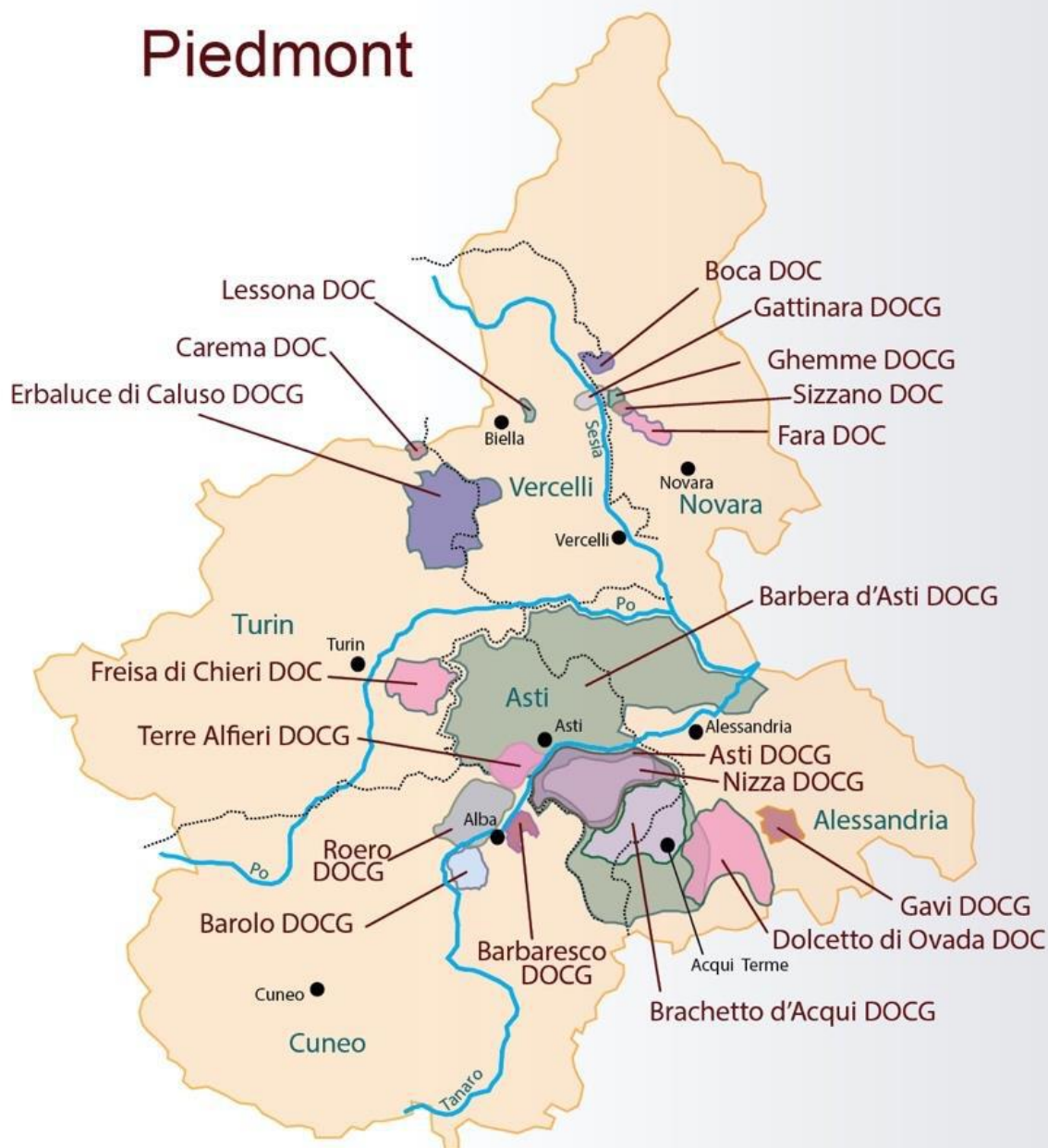
- Barbera d'Asti DOCG: A large region covering over 9,700 acres (3,900 ha) in the area surrounding the town of Asti, the Barbera d'Asti zone was approved in 2008 as a DOCG for red wines containing at least 90% Barbera.
- Nizza: As of December 2014, Nizza, a former subregion of the Barbera d'Asti DOCG, became a separate DOCG. The regulations for Nizza DOCG require 100% Barbera grapes and a minimum of 18 months of aging (30 months for riserva).
- Roero DOCG: Both a red and a white wine are entitled to use the Roero DOCG. The red version is a less concentrated, earlier-drinking Nebbiolo from the hills across the Tanaro River from Barbaresco. The white version, Roero Arneis, is a highly regarded wine from the fragrant Arneis grape variety.
- Gattinara and Ghemme DOCGs: These regions produce Nebbiolo-based blends in the northern part of Piedmont, where Nebbiolo goes by the name Spanna. Five neighboring DOCs also feature blends built around Spanna.
- Gavi DOCG: This DOCG, located in the southeast corner of Piedmont, produces crisp, floral white wine made from the Cortese grape. The DOCG is also known as Cortese di Gavi or Gavi del Comune di Gavi.
- Brachetto d'Acqui: Also known as Acqui, this DOCG produces a range of wines based on the (red) Brachetto grape. The most widely-distributed style is slightly sweet, sparkling, and redolent with red berry and floral aromas.
- Various grape-named appellations such as Barbera d'Alba DOC, Dolcetto d'Acqui DOC, and Grignolino d'Asti DOC, whose wines are typically made from 100% of the named variety.

One more important economic product of Piedmont is vermouth, an aromatized and fortified wine flavored with herbs, spices, aromatic woods, and other natural ingredients. Italian vermouth is normally red and sweet.

LOMBARDY (LOMBARDIA)

Lombardy is situated at the center of the semicircle of the Alps that forms Italy's northern border. It is particularly known for the sparkling wines of the Franciacorta DOCG. These *metodo classico* sparkling wines are primarily produced with Chardonnay, Pinot Bianco, and Pinot Nero grape varieties. As of the 2017 vintage, limited amounts of Erbamato (a white variety) may be used as well.

Piedmont



Copyright: The Society of Wine Educators 2022

Figure 10–9: Main Wine Regions of Piedmont

Nonvintage Franciacorta must be aged for a minimum of 18 months on the lees. Vintage-dated versions require 30 months of lees aging, while those labeled "Riserva" require 60 months. Satèn, a brut blanc de blancs with only 5 atmospheres of pressure, and rosé styles require 24 months on the lees. For all versions of Franciacorta, the

required time spent aging on the lees may not begin until February 1 of the year following the harvest.

Another important wine of Lombardy comes from the Valtellina, a long, narrow, east–west valley in the foothills of the Alps. This is one of the very few successful wines made outside Piedmont using the Nebbiolo grape, which is known locally as Chiavennasca. Valtellina Rosso DOC and Valtellina Superiore DOCG both require a minimum of 90% Chiavennasca. The same area also produces Sforzato di Valtellina DOCG, a dry, high-alcohol wine made with a minimum of 90% Chiavennasca grapes that are partially dried before fermentation. The resulting passito-style wine is rich, dry in character, and has a minimum alcohol content of 14%.

Subzones of the Valtellina Superiore DOCG include:

- Grumello
- Inferno
- Maroggia
- Sassella
- Valgella

TUSCANY (TOSCANA)

Tuscany is Italy's most famous wine region, due partly to its familiarity to tourists and partly to Chianti, one of Italy's largest-volume quality wines. Chianti and most of the other famed wines of Tuscany are based on Sangiovese, the region's signature grape variety.

Geography and Climate

Tuscany is situated on the west coast of the Italian Peninsula, north of Rome. Its primary cities are Florence, Pisa, and Siena, and its neighbors are Emilia-Romagna to the northeast and Umbria and Lazio to the southeast. The climate is typically Mediterranean, with greater extremes of temperature in the inland valleys, where the summers can get quite hot.

LEADING GRAPE VARIETIES OF TUSCANY	
Red Grapes	White Grapes
Sangiovese	Trebbiano Toscano
Canaiolo Nero	Malvasia Bianca Lunga
Colorino	Vernaccia
Cabernet Sauvignon	Chardonnay
Merlot	Sauvignon Blanc
Cabernet Franc	

Figure 10–10: Leading Grape Varieties of Tuscany

Grape Varieties

Sangiovese is the grape variety most identified with Tuscany. There are hundreds of different clones or subvarieties of Sangiovese. Some give more color; others, more aromatics; still others, more tannin. Most producers, therefore, grow an assortment of clones to give their wine optimal complexity. There has been a good deal of research into the subvarieties and clones of Sangiovese, and the Chianti Classico Consortium has recently identified seven key clones as being the best for use in the region.

In addition to Sangiovese, there are several indigenous red varieties that are used in small quantities as blending grapes. Canaiolo Nero—prized for its velvety texture—is the most significant, along with Colorino—appreciated for its deep pigment and tannins, which add color and structure to a blend. International red varieties—including Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Syrah, and Pinot Noir (among others)—appear in blends or as varietal wines.

The leading white grapes of Tuscany include Trebbiano Toscano, Malvasia Bianca Lunga, Vermentino, and Vernaccia. International varieties—including Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, and Viognier—are

being grown in increasing amounts as well.

Tuscany Wine Styles

Only one other Italian region (Calabria) is more intently focused on red wines than Tuscany. Almost 90% of the region's output is red (including a small proportion of rosato). The traditional reds, all containing a majority of Sangiovese, are generally light-colored, high in acid, moderate in tannin, and full of bright cherry and red berry aromas and flavors. The upper-end versions that are 100% Sangiovese are similar, but they have greater depth of flavor and complexity. Sangiovese blended with Cabernet Sauvignon or other international varieties demonstrates higher levels of tannin, deeper color, and black fruit character, usually without losing much acidity.

A traditional winemaking technique known as *governo* is allowed to be used in the wines of Chianti. This practice involves the use of grapes that have become overripe on the vine or dried after harvest that are added to a batch of fermenting wine just as it is finishing fermentation. This extends the fermentation and often initiates malolactic fermentation, resulting in a richer, rounder wine with softer acids and less volatility. The practice is somewhat rare and if used, must be indicated on the wine's label via the term *Governo all'uso Toscano*.

Of the relatively few white wines produced in Tuscany, most are simple wines made for local consumption. One exception is Vernaccia, a white wine with delicate pear and almond aromas produced in and around the hilltop town of San Gimignano.

Another specialty of Tuscany, though it is made all over Italy, is *vin santo*, a dessert wine made by a unique process. Grapes are harvested and hung in attic rafters to dry, as is done for the Veneto's recioto, concentrating their sugars and flavor. The grapes are then crushed and put into small barrels that contain a bit of the vin santo lees from a previous vintage, which initiates a new fermentation. The barrels are sealed tight, and the vin santo is kept in an attic for a minimum of three years, where it is exposed to the natural

temperature extremes over the course of the year. The better producers generally exceed the minimum aging period by two or three years.

Vin santo is typically a white wine, made primarily from Trebbiano Toscano and Malvasia Bianca Lunga grapes. However, a light red or amber-hued version known as *occhio di pernice* ("eye of the partridge") may be produced based on Sangiovese. Vin santo is typically sweet, although dry versions are produced as well. Vin santo is considered to be the ideal accompaniment to Italian cookies such as *cantucci* or *biscotti*.

The Super Tuscans

While not an "official" category of wines, the Super Tuscans are a well-known and highly regarded style of Tuscan wine. The term *Super Tuscan* originated in the 1970s as a result of the Chianti DOC regulations in place at the time, which required that Chianti be made from Sangiovese blended with several other indigenous grape varieties, including a small percentage of white grapes. Winemakers began to question the formula, believing that the required blend of grapes was limiting the quality potential of their wine. Some producers wanted to stop using white grapes in the blend; others felt that the wine should be 100% Sangiovese; and still others wanted to use international varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

Major Wine Regions of Tuscany

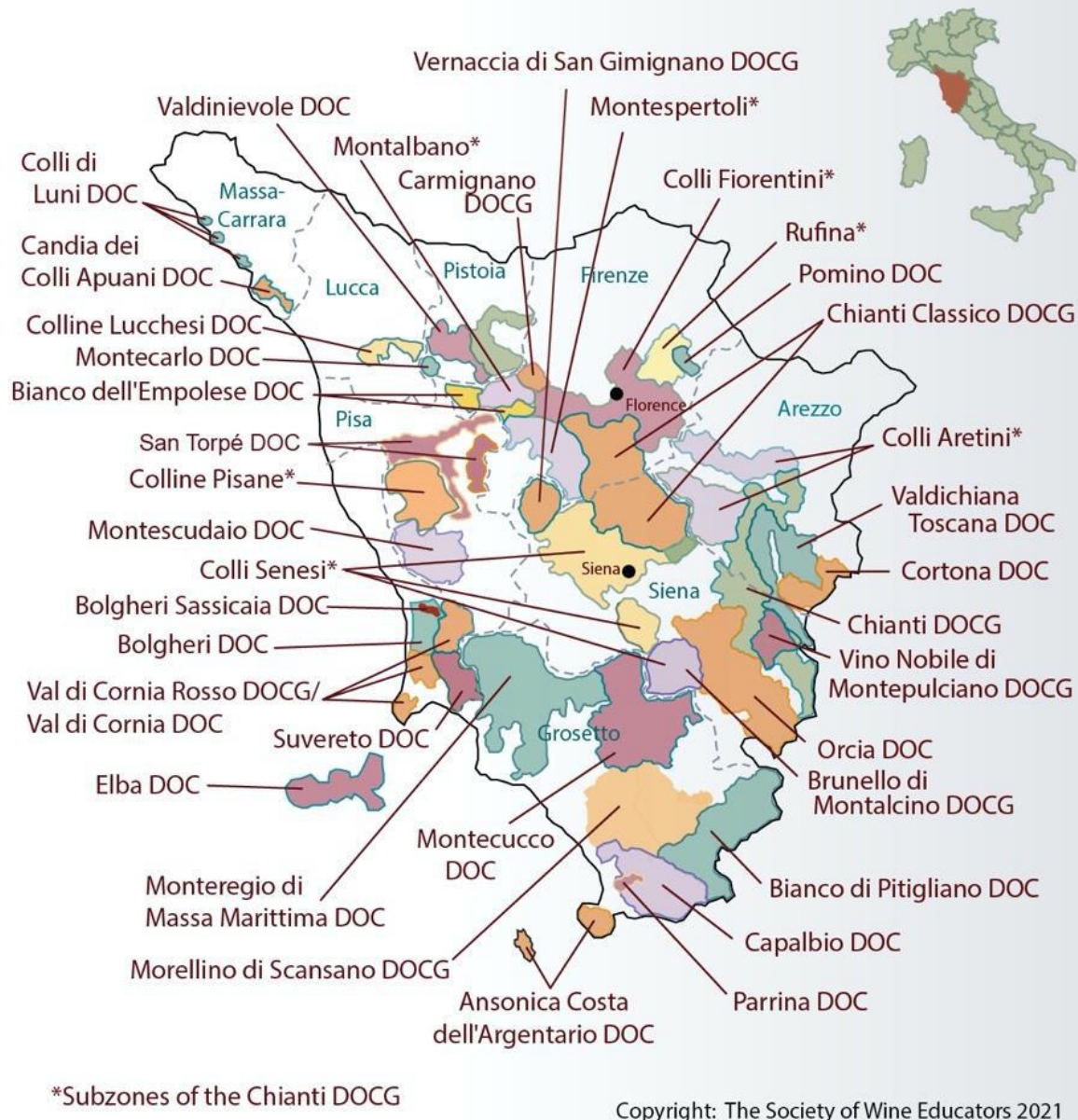


Figure 10–11: Tuscany regions

In the late 1960s, some of these winemakers began releasing wines produced outside the guidelines set for the Chianti DOC, using the (then in use) *vino da tavola* designation as opposed to a DOC. These wines eventually came to be known as Super Tuscans. The original Super Tuscan is generally agreed to be *Sassicaia*, Tenuta San Guido's

Cabernet Sauvignon–Cabernet Franc blend commercially released for the first time in 1968 after several decades of being made for family use only. Soon thereafter, Marchese Piero Antinori released a Sangiovese–Cabernet Sauvignon blend known as *Tignanello*, and another wine, *Solaia*, made with Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. (The base grapes and blends of these wines have evolved, and will continue to evolve, over time.) Other producers quickly followed suit, and soon the reputations and prices for these Super Tuscans were sky-high.

The rules of Chianti have since been modified to allow 100% Sangiovese wines, and Chianti Classico now allows up to 20% “other local red varieties,” which include Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Syrah. Other Chianti DOCG regions have changed their rules as well. In addition, several small DOCs have been established specifically for this style of wine, while other Super Tuscans use the IGT Toscana designation.

Tuscany Appellations

Although there are certainly other prominent appellations in the region today, Chianti is the one that put Tuscany on the viticultural map, and it remains Italy’s biggest wine in terms of name recognition. The original zone of Chianti wine, known today as the Chianti Classico region, lies in the hills and valleys between Florence and Siena. The Chianti appellation, initially demarcated in 1716, has been expanded over time to encompass a much larger area surrounding the classico zone and has also been subdivided into smaller zones.

Basic Chianti DOCG can be made anywhere in the Chianti zone, with the exception of the Chianti Classico zone. It must contain a minimum of 70% Sangiovese and can be 100% Sangiovese. Other permitted varieties are Canaiolo Nero, the white grapes Trebbiano Toscano and Malvasia, and “other suitable red varieties” (an intentionally vague provision in the law that opens the door for winemakers to use international varieties).

Within the Chianti DOCG region are seven defined subzones, not counting Chianti Classico, which, as of 1996, is a separate, independent appellation. The subzones of the Chianti DOCG are:

- Colli Aretini
- Colli Fiorentini
- Colli Senesi
- Colline Pisane
- Montalbano
- Montespertoli
- Rufina

Each of these subzones has its own set of standards, which may be stricter than those pertaining to the Chianti DOCG in parameters such as vineyard density, yield, minimum alcohol level, and aging. For instance, Colli Senesi requires a minimum of 75% Sangiovese, while the Chianti DOCG and the other six sub zones require a minimum of 70%.

Chianti Production Zones

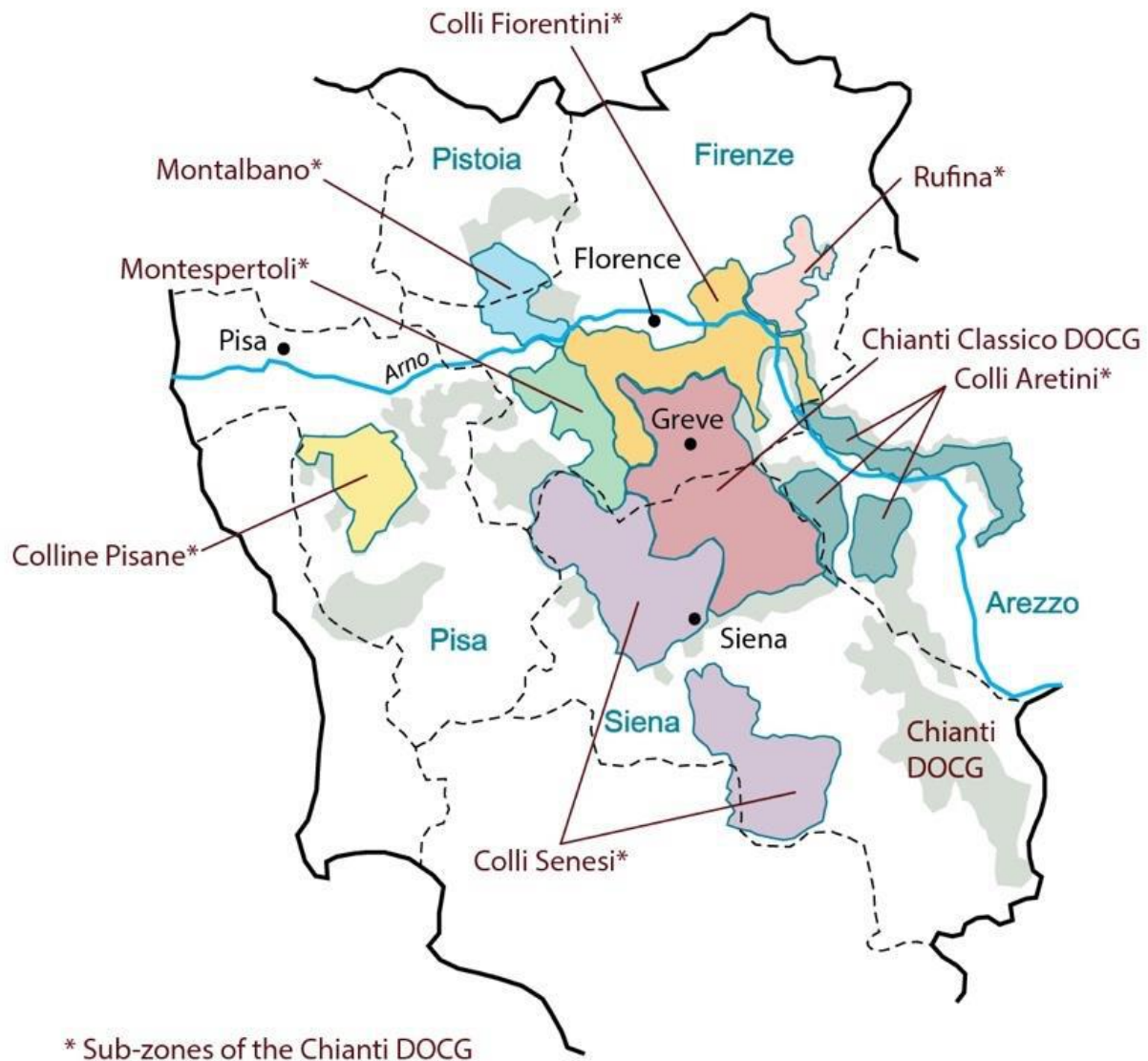


Figure 10–12: Chianti production zones

The Chianti Classico DOCG was the historic heart of Chianti dating back to the Middle Ages, but in recent times it separated itself from the Chianti DOCG to become a separate appellation with somewhat higher standards. The formula was modified such that Chianti Classico must contain at least 80%, but can be up to 100%, Sangiovese; and as of 2006, white grapes were excluded from the

blend. Chianti Classico must have a minimum of 12% alcohol and cannot be released for sale until a year after harvest; a Riserva requires two years of aging and an additional half degree of alcohol.

In 2014, the Chianti Classico Consortium added a new category to its wine pyramid—Chianti Classico Gran Selezione (Chianti Classico Grand Selection). This category is meant to be the top wine of the region, with wines produced exclusively from estate-grown grapes, and with longer aging requirements (30 months minimum) and stricter technical and sensory parameters.

Besides Chianti and Chianti Classico, Sangiovese and its subvarieties comprise the sole or predominant portion of several other wines, including the following:

- Brunello di Montalcino DOCG: Made with 100% Brunello, the local name of Sangiovese, in the idyllic hill town of Montalcino. Brunello is typically one of the most powerful expressions of Sangiovese. Brunello di Montalcino must be aged for a minimum of just over four years before release. More specifically, it must be aged for at least two years in wood and at least four months in the bottle (the remainder of the time is not specific as to the vessel) and it may not be sold before January 1 of the 5th year following the harvest. Montalcino growers also have the Rosso di Montalcino DOC available to them for lighter, shorter-aged wines made from the same grape variety.
- Vino Nobile di Montepulciano DOCG: A highly respected Sangiovese-based wine from Montepulciano, another hill village in the Tuscan area. Vino Nobile uses a blend similar to Chianti's, based on a minimum of 70% Prugnolo Gentile, another local synonym for Sangiovese. (Note that Vino Nobile di Montepulciano should not be confused with Montepulciano d'Abruzzo. Vino Nobile is a blend based on Sangiovese grown near the Tuscan town of Montepulciano, whereas Montepulciano d'Abruzzo is made from the Montepulciano *grape* in the Abruzzo region.) Similarly to Brunello, a Rosso di Montepulciano version

- requiring a shorter aging period also exists.
- Carmignano DOCG: Carmignano, a red wine based on a minimum of 50% Sangiovese, is unique in that it introduced the use of small amounts of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc over a century ago, long before the Super Tuscans. It currently requires 10% to 20% of either Cabernet—or both combined—in the blend.
 - Morellino di Scansano DOCG: A blend based on 85% or more Sangiovese, known as Morellino in this southernmost part of Tuscany.

The coastal area of Tuscany, known as the Maremma, is fast establishing itself as Tuscany's most exciting wine district. Unimpeded access to Mediterranean breezes keeps this area from getting as hot as the interior valleys, and the terroir is proving ideal for world-class vineyards. The Super Tuscan movement was born here near the town of Bolgheri with the introduction of the Cabernet-based Sassicaia, first commercially released in the late 1960s. The excellence of this and other wines from the area led to the creation of new official appellations for them, including the Bolgheri DOC (for red and white blends), the Bolgheri Sassicaia DOC (created in 2013 for red wines made from a minimum of 80% Cabernet Sauvignon), and the Maremma Toscana DOC, elevated from IGT status in 2011.



Figure 10–13: San Gimignano

Tuscany's best-known white wine, Vernaccia di San Gimignano DOCG, is produced from the Vernaccia grape grown around the town of San Gimignano on the fringes of the Chianti area. The indigenous Vernaccia grape is quite ancient, with historical evidence of its existence dating to the thirteenth century, and with literary mentions of it found in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Despite its illustrious past, the Vernaccia grape fell out of favor until after World War II. However, the grape and its wine were soon resurrected, with the Vernaccia di San Gimignano appellation earning denominazione di origine controllata (DOC) status in 1966 and a promotion to DOCG in 1993. Vernaccia di San Gimignano characteristically offers up notes of almond, mineral, and earth, which can evolve with bottle age.

There are four DOCs specifically for vin santo in Tuscany. They are:

- Vin Santo del Chianti DOC
- Vin Santo del Chianti Classico DOC
- Vin Santo di Montepulciano DOC

- Vin Santo di Carmignano DOC

Vin santo can also be produced under the DOCs of several other Tuscan areas, including Pomino and Elba.

EMILIA-ROMAGNA

Emilia-Romagna is a triangular-shaped region that stretches diagonally across the top of the Italian Peninsula almost from one side to the other. Much of it lies in the fertile Po Valley. It is among Italy's largest wine-producing areas. Emilia-Romagna is home to the Romagna Albana DOCG (known as Albana di Romagna prior to 2011), the first white Italian wine to earn the DOCG designation.

Lambrusco, one of the most famous wines of the region, is produced in three Lambrusco DOCs (Lambrusco Salamino di Santa Croce DOC, Lambrusco Grasparossa di Castelvetro DOC, and Lambrusco di Sorbara DOC), as well as in both the Reggiano and Modena DOCs. While often thought of as a slightly sweet, simple red wine, Lambrusco is a slightly frizzante wine produced in both dry and sweet, as well as red and rosé, versions. (Note: The Lambrusco Mantovano DOC produces Lambrusco outside of Emilia-Romagna, in the Lombardy region.)

With ample sunshine and moderate temperatures, the hills and mountains of Emilia-Romagna are well suited for the production of quality wines. While the region may seem obscure to students of wine, culinary enthusiasts know it well as the home of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, Prosciutto di Parma, and traditional balsamic vinegar from Modena.

LE MARCHE (MARCHES)

On the Adriatic coast, the Marches region (Le Marche) features five DOCGs and 15 DOCs. The area has become well-known for its white wines produced from the Verdicchio grape. Other white varieties grown in the region include Pecorino and Passerina. Montepulciano and Sangiovese are the leading red varieties. Marche's best-known

wines include the following:

- Castelli di Jesi Verdicchio Riserva DOCG and Verdicchio di Matelica Riserva DOCG: crisp but neutral white wines made with the Verdicchio grape.
- Cònero DOCG and Rosso Cònero DOC: red wines from the same small area, blending the Montepulciano grape with Sangiovese. Both wines must be made with a minimum of 85% Montepulciano, with a permitted addition of 15% Sangiovese. The DOCG wine has higher standards for aging and alcohol levels than the DOC wine.
- Rosso Piceno DOC: a red blend that includes 35% to 85% Montepulciano and 15% to 50% Sangiovese.

ABRUZZO

The Abruzzo region (just to the south of Marches) is also identified with the Montepulciano grape. One of the area's most popular wines—Montepulciano d'Abruzzo DOC—is made from a minimum of 85% Montepulciano, with Sangiovese permitted in the blend. A separate Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo DOC was created in 2010 for the cherry-colored, lighter style of this wine, which undergoes a much shorter maceration period, resulting in lower-tannin wine with bright fruit flavors. Abruzzo's two DOCGs—Colline Teramane Montepulciano d'Abruzzo DOCG and Tullum (Terre Tollesi) DOCG also specialize in red wines based on the Montepulciano grape variety. The region's leading white wine—Trebiano d'Abruzzo DOC—is based on the *Trebiano Abruzzese* grape variety.

UMBRIA

Umbria, a land-locked region located in the rugged Apennines between Marches and Tuscany, is perhaps best known for Orvieto DOC. Orvieto is a white wine based on Trebbiano Toscano (known locally as Procanico) and Grechetto grapes. Orvieto is typically dry (*secco*); however, it is also available in off-dry (*abboccato*), semi-sweet (*amabile*), and sweet (*dolce*) styles. Umbria is also home to

two DOCG wines, both red: Montefalco Sagrantino (100% Sagrantino), and Torgiano Rosso Riserva (minimum 70% Sangiovese).



Figure 10–14: Cathedral of Santa Margherita, Montefiascone

LAZIO

Situated on the west coast of the Italian Peninsula surrounding the city of Rome, Lazio (sometimes referred to as Latium) enjoyed a good reputation for its wines in ancient Roman times. Lazio produces a range of types and styles of wine; however, the most recognized examples are Frascati DOC, Frascati Superiore DOCG, and Est! Est!! Est!!! di Montefiascone DOC. (These are all white wines, and mostly [but not exclusively] dry). An obscure sweet wine of the region, Cannellino di Frascati DOCG, is a fascinating wine that traditionally tied its very late harvest dates to the festival of San Crispino. The white wines of Lazio are typically based on the Trebbiano Toscano, Trebbiano Giallo, Malvasia Bianca di Candia, and Malvasia del Lazio grape varieties (among others).

CAMPANIA

Campania—the region surrounding the city of Naples and Mount Vesuvius—is the most populated region of the southern peninsula. This area is familiar to tourists, and therefore its wines are relatively

well-known abroad. One of the best-known wines of Campania is Taurasi DOCG, a red wine with fine aging potential made from the bold, red Aglianico grape. Aglianico is found in many places around the southern peninsula, including the neighboring Basilicata region. The volcanic soil of Campania also produces several white wines of great character, notably Fiano di Avellino DOCG—an elegant white wine based on the Fiano grape—and Greco di Tufo DOCG (made predominantly from the Greco di Tufo variety, believed to be a clone of Greco Bianco).

CALABRIA

The most prominent appellation of Calabria, located on the boot's toe, is Cirò DOC. Its rosso uses the Gaglioppo grape, and its white, produced in very small quantities, is based on Greco Bianco. Riserva versions of Cirò Rosso have long aging potential. A copper-colored dessert wine made from partially dried grapes, Greco di Bianco DOC is produced here in the region surrounding the town of Bianco. Somewhat confusingly, the name of the town is Bianco, the name of the grape is Greco Bianco, and the name of the wine is Greco di Bianco.

PUGLIA

Puglia (also known as Apulia)—the heel of the boot—produces mainly red wines and is well-known for Salice Salentino DOC, a red wine based on Negroamaro. Negroamaro is a robust, dark-colored grape grown mainly in Puglia. Other important grapes in Puglia include Montepulciano, Sangiovese, Barbera, Aleatico, and Primitivo. A sweet, late-harvest wine, Primitivo di Manduria Dolce Naturale, became the region's first DOCG in 2011. Later that same year, three more DOCGs were awarded: Castel del Monte Nero di Troia Riserva DOCG, Castel del Monte Rosso Riserva DOCG, and Castel del Monte Bombino Nero DOCG.

SICILY (SICILIA)

Located off the southwest tip of the Italian Peninsula, Sicily is the

largest island in the Mediterranean Sea. Mount Etna—an active stratovolcano with a current height of 10,900 feet/3,325 meters—dominates the island’s skyline. With its reliable sunshine, warm temperatures, and mineral-rich volcanic soils, Sicily has been viticultural powerhouse for over 2,000 years. The island-wide Sicilia DOC and Terre Siciliane IGT allow for the production of a broad range of wine styles and accordingly, in most years, Sicily is one of the largest producers of Italian wine (by total volume).

The region’s only DOCG, Cerasuolo di Vittoria, produces a vividly colored red wine from a blend of Nero d’Avola (one of the island’s most important red grapes) and Frappato (a low tannin red variety known for its cherry-berry aromas and flavors). The Etna DOC—located on (and up) the eastern side of the mountain—produces crisp white wines from grapes such as Carricante and Catarratto as well as reds and rosatos based on Nerello Mascalese. Nerello Mascalese is a highly regarded red grape named after the Mascali plain—a region near Mount Etna where it is believed to have originated. Historically, Sicily was known as a producer of sweet wines and while in decline, this tradition continues in the wines of the Malvasia delle Lipari DOC, Moscato de Noto DOC, and Moscato di Pantelleria DOC (produced on the satellite island of Pantelleria).

Perhaps most famously, Sicily is home to the Marsala DOC, one of the world’s greatest fortified wines. Marsala is made in a range of styles according to levels of sweetness, color, and aging regimes. Grillo and Inzolia (both white varieties) are traditionally used in the production of Marsala; several other varieties—including Catarratto and Nerello Mascalese—are allowed as well.

Styles of Marsala

There are three types of Marsala: oro (golden), ambra (amber), and rubino (ruby/red). Each style can be made secco (dry, maximum 4% residual sugar), semisecco (semi-dry, 4% to 10% residual sugar), or dolce (sweet, more than 10% residual sugar). There are also variations based on the minimum length of aging: Marsala Fine (one year), Marsala Superiore (two years), and Marsala Superiore Riserva

(four years). Marsala Vergine and Marsala Solera are aged for a minimum of five years in a solera system like that used for the production of Sherry. The most highly esteemed version of Marsala, Vergine Stravecchio Riserva, is dry and requires a minimum of ten years' aging in cask.



Figure 10–15: Olive trees and vineyards in Sicily

SARDINIA (SARDEGNA)

Located to the west of the Italian peninsula and south of Corsica, the island of Sardinia has been home to various kingdoms and empires over the years. This is reflected in the wine industry of the island, which includes grapes of Spanish and French heritage alongside some unique Italian varieties such as Monica (red) and Nuragus (white).

One of the most famous wines of the region is produced in the island-wide Cannonau di Sardegna DOC. This is a red wine made from a minimum of 85% Cannonau (a minimum of 90% Cannonau is required for the riserva). *Cannonau* is the Sardinian name for Grenache or Garnacha; experts have long debated whether Spain introduced the variety to Sardinia or if it was the other way around.

The island's only DOCG—Vermentino di Gallura DOCG, produced in the island's northeastern corner—is an aromatic white wine produced using the Vermentino grape variety. While typically seen as a dry, still (non-sparkling) wine, Vermentino di Gallura may be produced in a variety of styles (dry, sweet, still, sparkling, and late harvest/passito).