



Aldiploma Module Five

Classic Wines

A Guide To Classic Wines Named By Region

So now you're a pro and know everything there is to know about grapes, whether they're white or red, we're going to move onto classic wines. The classics are classics for a reason and you will probably have seen a lot of them in store before! Now you've sampled a range of wines you'll have a bit of an idea as to what grapes, regions and wines you prefer – so why not take the below cheat sheet along with your weekly shopping, to help you identify your next favourite?

Introduction

In the Southern Hemisphere (referred to as the **'New World'** in the wine industry) wines are labelled according to the grape variety and, given that the grape variety is the most important factor when it comes to the taste of the wine, this makes selecting a wine that bit easier.

However, in the classic regions (referred to as the **'Old World'**) the wines are usually labelled according to the region that the grapes are grown in and there might be no mention on the label of the grape variety at all. Therefore, the best way to navigate your way around these classic wines is to learn what grape varieties are grown where, so that you have a far better chance of working out if you are likely to like the wine!

Here are some popular regions that are frequently found on wine labels, where the region the grapes are grown in, rather than the grape itself is shown:

White Wines

Chablis

- **Where** – Chablis is from the Burgundy region of France but from the cooler northern end
- **Grape variety & taste** – Chablis is 100% Chardonnay and reflects the cooler climate with restrained notes of honey, nuts and citrus acidity. Some wines may be oaked
- **Food & Wine** – Shellfish; especially oysters and prawns

Côtes-du-Rhône Blanc

- **Where** – A white wine from the Rhône region of France, so the grapes can be sourced from a wide area
- **Grape variety & taste** – There are a lot of different grapes grown in the Rhône and those allowed for white (blanc) Côtes du Rhône are Bourboulenc, Grenache blanc, Marsanne, Picpoul, Roussanne and Viognier. The wines tend to be medium-bodied with flavours of peach, apricot, herbs and flowers
- **Food & Wine** – Chicken, tagines and pork

Gavi di Gavi

- **Where** – From the Gavi region of Piedmont, northern Italy
- **Grape variety & taste** – The grape in Gavi is the Cortese grape and it is quite crisp and fresh with notes of flowers (usually violets), fennel and apricot but with a medium body
- **Food & Wine** – White fish, seafood and pesto and pasta

Mâcon-Villages

- **Where** – These wines are from the southern end of the Burgundy region of France, from the Mâconnais
- **Grape variety & taste** – The grape here is Chardonnay and the wines are light to medium-bodied with aromas of apple and stone fruits with mineral acidity. There might be additional buttery notes, as well as oatmeal and spice if oak has been used
- **Food & Wine** – Chicken, crab, meaty white fish and mushrooms

Sancerre

- **Where** – Sancerre is from the Loire region of France
- **Grape variety & taste** – White Sancerre is made from Sauvignon Blanc, whereas red Sancerre (and rosé) is made from Pinot Noir. White Sancerre is elegant and fresh with notes of grass, elderflower and a crisp acidity
- **Food & Wine** – Sancerre is spectacular with delicate white fish, shellfish, goats cheese and tomato

Soave

- **Where** – Soave is from the Veneto region of northeast Italy
- **Grape variety & taste** – The grape Garganega is the main grape grown throughout Soave and it produces light fresh whites with notes of nuts, especially almonds
- **Food & Wine** – Shellfish and also pasta with a white sauce such as carbonara

Vouvray

- **Where** – Vouvray is from the Loire region of France, in Touraine
- **Grape variety & taste** – Vouvray is made pretty much exclusively from the Chenin Blanc grape, which is crisp, has quite high acidity and is capable of ageing for a long time. Chenin is made in a range of styles and when dry can be full of crisp apple notes and some honey, but in off-dry styles there are notes of ginger and flowers too
- **Food & Wine** – Dry Chenin Blanc is a great food wine (because of the crisp acidity) and is great with pork because of the apple notes of the wine. For sweeter wines try fruit based puddings

Rosé Wines

Côtes de Provence

- **Where** – From the glamorous Provence region of south-east France
- **Grape variety & taste** – Côtes de Provence can make white, rosé and red wines but the majority of the wines are rosé. They are made from a blend of different varieties such as Grenache, Cinsault, Syrah and Mourvèdre. The wines are very pale pink, light and fresh with delicate notes of both red fruits and a hint of flowers
- **Food & Wine** – The wines can be enjoyed on their own in the sunshine or with salads, seafood, poached salmon or fish soup

Red Wines

Barbaresco/Barolo

- **Where** – Both of these villages are in the northern Italian region of Piedmont
- **Grape variety & taste** – The grape here is Nebbiolo and the wines tend to be quite pale in colour, but high in acidity and tannin and can age for a long time. Classic aromas are cherry blossom and red fruits, with some cherries too
- **Food & Wine** – Red meat works very well with these wines, especially fattier types such as pork, charcuterie or beef. It also goes well with mushrooms, so beef Wellington would be a good match

Beaujolais

- **Where** – Beaujolais is another French wine region, south of Burgundy and the Mâconnais, but in the east of France
- **Grape variety & taste** – The grape here is Gamay and the wines can range enormously in style from Beaujolais Nouveau (which is very light, fresh and fruity with notes of bubblegum) to generic Beaujolais. Further up in quality is Beaujolais-Villages. Beaujolais is also delicious when chilled
- **Food & Wine** – Works with meatier fish dishes, such as salmon and tuna, but also charcuterie, chicken and duck

Châteauneuf-du-Pape

- **Where** – Châteauneuf-du-Pape is a French wine region in the southern part of the Rhône Valley
- **Grape variety & taste** – Although you can get both white and red Châteauneuf-du-Pape, the vast majority is red and 13 different grape varieties are allowed; Bourboulenc, Cinsault, Clairette, Counoise, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Muscardin, Picardan, Picpoul, Roussanne, Syrah, Terret Noir and Vaccarèse. The wines tend to be medium to full-bodied with baked red fruits, herbs and firm tannins which mean that the wines can age for some time
- **Food & Wine** – Red meat works really well with Châteauneuf-du-Pape, especially beef and herby sausages also work well

Chianti (Taste the Chianti Classico Riserva)

- **Where** – Chianti is found in the central Italian region of Tuscany
- **Grape variety & taste** – Sangiovese is the dominant grape in Chianti and may make up 70% of the blend, whereas for Chianti Classico (a step up in quality), Sangiovese must be a minimum of 80% of the blend. The wines can vary from being quite light in colour, to quite dark. They are also medium-bodied with high acidity and high tannins, with aromas of herbs and red cherries
- **Food & Wine** – Chianti is a very versatile wine but is particularly great with classic Italian food such as tomato-based pasta sauces and pizza

Côtes-du-Rhône Villages (Taste the Côtes-du-Rhône Villages)

- **Where** – Like Côtes-du-Rhône Blanc, the Côtes-du-Rhône Villages wines are from the Rhône Valley in France. Côtes-du-Rhône Villages wines are a step up from generic Côtes-du-Rhône
- **Grape variety & taste** – The red wines must be made up of at least 50% Grenache, followed by another 20% of Syrah and/or Mourvèdre. The wines are usually light to medium-bodied with juicy red fruits and more succulent black fruits and hints of soft spice
- **Food & Wine** – A good match with red meat, kebabs, fajitas and coq-au-vin

Crozes-Hermitage

- **Where** – Crozes-Hermitage wines are also from the Rhône in France, but from the northern area
- **Grape variety & taste** – Crozes-Hermitage is made from the Syrah grape. The wines tend to be medium-bodied, with notes of black fruits, violets and spice. Tannins are medium too
- **Food & Wine** – Great with grilled meats, venison, beef and burgers

Haut-Médoc

- **Where** – The Left Bank of the Bordeaux region of France
- **Grape variety & taste** – The wines are usually a blend with the majority being Cabernet Sauvignon but also Merlot and Petit Verdot. The wines usually have notes of blackcurrant, along with red fruits and some tobacco notes which develop with age. Tannins tend to be quite high and the acidity is medium
- **Food & Wine** – A great pairing with pretty much any meat

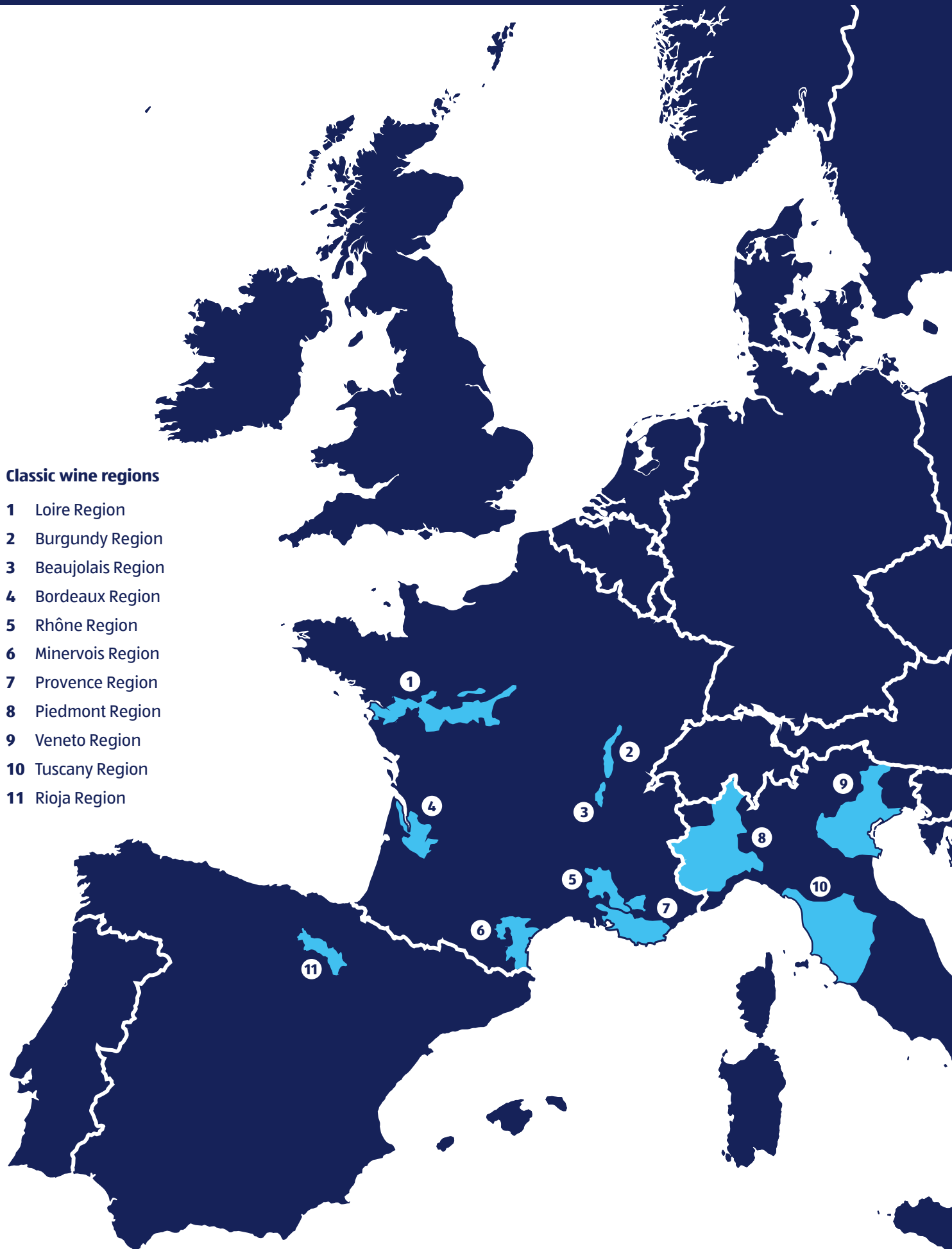
Minervois-La Livinière

- **Where** – The region of Minervois is in the west of the Languedoc, which itself is in the south of France
- **Grape variety & taste** – The main grapes are Syrah, Mourvèdre and Grenache and so the wines are generally black fruit scented with blackberries, brambles, spice, olive and pepper
- **Food & Wine** – Perfect with red meats, game, hard cheeses and fabulous for a BBQ

Rioja (Taste the Baron Amarillo Rioja Reserva)

- **Where** – Rioja is arguably the most famous wine region in Spain, situated to the north
- **Grape variety & taste** – The main grape here is Tempranillo, though most Rioja is a blend of more than one variety (usually Garnacha (Grenache), Mazuelo (Carignan) and Graciano). Rioja is often aged in American and/or French oak which accounts for the notes of spice and vanilla. If the wine is labelled Crianza and Reserva the wines must spend at least a year in oak (and then 1 and 2 years in bottle) and Gran Reserva must spend at least five years ageing, with a minimum of two years in barrel. The wines tend to be medium in colour, body and alcohol with ripe red berry fruits and notes of vanilla and spice
- **Food & Wine** – Ideal with lamb, pork, peppers and paella





Classic wine regions

- 1 Loire Region
- 2 Burgundy Region
- 3 Beaujolais Region
- 4 Bordeaux Region
- 5 Rhône Region
- 6 Minervois Region
- 7 Provence Region
- 8 Piedmont Region
- 9 Veneto Region
- 10 Tuscany Region
- 11 Rioja Region