

Title:

Italian Wine Making

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Summary:

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Article Body:

Every year it is very common for Italian wine to be at the top of the pile when it comes to good ranking, not the least of which ranks it as the biggest producer, exporter and consumer of wine in the world. If you consider that Italy is only a few hundred miles smaller than the state of California then this fact here is far more interesting.

Even though Italy produces close to 8,000,000,000, bottles of wine every year, the vinters have kept to the same high quality standard of making wine that has a legacy of over 4,000 years. As a result of this Italy has some of the most unique and quality wines on the globe, as well as having the most grape varieties that are locally produced than any country in the world.

One of the bigger deliberations with Italy's unique wine style is the wide scope of assorted cultures that exist all the way through its 20 wine regions. Each of these cultures has a vigorous sense of pride that translates openly into wine production. At the height of it understanding Italian wine making is hard enough, but to those who's knowledge is rather limited, it is practically impossible.

Like any journey of consequence it's best to take it step by step. While Italian wine is both vastly complex and inconsistent, there are some concrete starting points.

First, let's take a look at the general qualities of Italian wine:

Italian wines have a tendency to be very acidic, this is mainly because wines that contain high levels of acidity are well suited with food. It is hardly then that the prominent food cultures in the Italian society have opted for wine that compliments their astounding commitment to cuisine! This means white wines are inclined to be brusque and red wines are more likely to be firm.

Submissive, earthy aromas - One of the paramount qualities of Italian wines is the touch of the land that one can smell and taste in every bottle. The nose might have hints of mushrooms, soil, minerals and grass. These merits are usually referred to as an earthiness that stops the wine from competing with food.

Medium Body - Though there are quite a few wines that are heavier (such as Barolo), the majority of wines are medium bodied in nature. Again, more appropriate to the wide selection of food dishes that achieve better when not weighed down by heaviness.

Distinctly Italian Grapes - While most of the grapes found in the world are grown in Italy, it also has many grape varieties that are only grown in the wine regions of the particular regions. Nebbiolo, is a good example, this is the grape that used to formulate Barolo and is only ever found in Piedmont and Lombardy regions.

Because of the climate in Italy is so perfect for cultivating grapes, much of the grape varieties have been evolving over the last several thousand years. It is because of this that trying to transplant vines to other regions proves immensely difficult.

Major Red Grapes

There are over 20 key varieties of red grapes growing in Italy, but we are going to start with what are debatably the most significant 3:

Sangiovese (san joe VAE sae) - Planted in many vineyards throughout the Italian country side, particularly in Tuscany and Umbria, this is the main grape in the making of Chianti and the ever popular Super-Tuscan wines. Medium in body, the wine will then posses high levels of tannins and strong acidity with flavours of herbs and cherries.

Nebbiolo(nehb be OH loh) - explicit to the Piedmont district, this varity of grape produces 2 of infamous Italian most wines: Barolo and Barbaresco. For anyone who is considering starting up there own wine cellar these 2 wines are

the must haves. The grape is intense with elevated levels of acidity and high tannin levels, calling forth flavours of strawberries, mushrooms and truffles.

Barbera (bar BAE rah) - This grape runs side by side with Sangiovese as the most popular grape variety in Italy. This particular grape is a good bit lighter than its partner, the tannin levels are a good bit lower while it still maintains its high acidity levels. The fruity flavours are inclined to be more distinct than in other grapes, it is for this reason that this wine is excellent when enjoyed in the summer.

Important Italian Whites

Pinot Grigio(pee noh GREE joe) - The Italian version of Pinot Gris, this grape in particular has been hailed all around the globe. Although the pinot grigio grape is not as flavourable as its French cousin, it boasts a high acidity with mineral flavours and peaches.

Trebbiano (trehb bee AH noh) - This grape is very familiar in Italy, it has also suffered from casual growing habits. This white grape variety is known for its production of lower class white wines, it is known for its proclivity for producing bland and highly crisp wines as well.

Tocai Friulano (toh KYE free oo LAH no) - For those pinot grigio lovers out there, you will like this grape variety. With the attributes of freshness and bitterness associated with Italian grapes, it can also bring rich and full textures that are more intricate than is usual for whites of this class. It grows for the most part in the Friuli province.

Verdicchio and Vernaccia - These grapes have some of the same body, crispness and acidity as Trebbiano, but with a bit more life. Richer flavours and aromas including hints of lemon and sea air are common. They are usually un-oaked.

A person could easily spend an entire lifetime studying these grapes and wine of the Italian countryside, especially when these wines are associated with certain foods in their respective areas.