The Wines of France
Winemaking in France goes back to the beginning of viticulture. Celts were the first to harvest *Vitis vinifera*. Greeks began to plant near the Mediterranean along with olive and fig trees; stayed in warm areas.

150-100 BC The Romans started to push further, and planted in areas such as the Rhone. These wines started to get a high price tag, increase trade.

The need for wine for Roman inhabitants kept pushing wine making into Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne, Alsace, Loire.

Decline of Roman Empire brought a halt and division of North and South, south made most of the wine.
The greatest influence in winemaking were the Cistercian Monks who hid away in isolation and focused on harvesting grapes.

By the middle ages areas near rivers flourished (easy way of transporting).

1305 Pope Clement V moved the papacy to Avignon which brought infamy to Burgundy.

14th century during the hundred year war, English and Dutch took a prominent role in Bordeaux.

The Catholic Church had the most ownership of vineyards prior to the French Revolution.

After the revolution regions were divided and changed ownerships.

The age of Enlightenment 1800’s

Increase in technology beginning of wine as we know it today.

In Bordeaux the clarifying of wines.

Selecting specific grapes for specific regions.

Jean Antoine Chapatal “chapitalization” adding sugars to increase alcohol levels.
The new Class Bourgeoisie and the Parisian Market created an increase in production and demand for quality.

This led to the Napoleonic Classification of 1855 in Bordeaux.

By the end of the 19th century, French wine was tormented by disease, powdery mildew, and oidium.

This led to the use of sulfur to combat these diseases.

Then Phyloxera devastated many of the vines of France and they were forced to graft vines on American rootstocks.

Louis Pasteur was a French scientist that had the greatest influence on modern wine technology.

He discovered that yeast ate glycerine and created alcohol.

He discovered why wine spoiled and created ways to maintain freshness.

He improved alcohol, color, and weight.

He improved the Expanding railway system, which now allowed for a huge increase in production.

20th Century brought two world wars which devastated France.

1935 Restart and Restructure = AOC system

Vin de Table
Name of producer and the designation that it is from France.

Vin de Pays
Specific region within France.
Can use grape varieties or procedures other than those required by the AOC rules. Producers have to submit the wine for analysis and tasting, and the wines have to be made from certain varieties or blends.

QWPSR:
Vin Délimité de Qualité Superieure “waiting room” for potential.

Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée
Wine from a particular area with many other restrictions, including grape varieties and winemaking methods.
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Alsace is one of the coolest growing regions in France. It borders Germany and has a lot of German influence.

This is one of the only regions in which the grape is shown on the bottle, this started 500 yrs ago.

Region is created by Vosges Mountains and Rhine River. Steep slopes, natural cooling, good drainage.

Region is known for whites.

**Whites:** Riesling, Gerwurztraminer, Pinot Gris, Sylvaner, Pinot Blanc, Auxerois

*Pinot d'Alsace* = Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Noir & Auxerois

**Reds:** Pinot Noir

**Tiers**
- Single grape
- Reserves
- Single Vineyards
- Grand Cru Vineyards

**Rieslings** are dry and waxy, have very nice texture.

**Pinot Blanc** is an off spring of Pinot Noir. It is not as common as Pinot Gris in Alsace however it is one of the best whites in the region.

White stone fruit, melons, Petrol, and candle wax. Minerality, stonefruit, Crisp with oily texture.

**Gerwuztraminer** Aromatic, graham craker and gingerbread, baking spices, can be off-dry or sweet.

**Pinot Noirs** are bright red, very lean and light bodied, drink like a white.

Tall thin bottles similiar to Germany

Wines are fully fermented, so drier than Germany.

Producers call themselves Domaines.
THE GRAND CRUS

Bas-Rhin

* Altenberg de Bergbieten
* Altenberg de Wolxheim
* Bruderthal
* Engelberg
* Frankstein
* Kastelberg
* Kirchberg de Barr
* Moenchberg
* Muenchberg
* Praelatenberg
* Steinklotz
* Wiebelsberg
* Winzenberg
* Zotzenberg

Haut-Rhin

* Altenberg de Bergheim
* Brand
* Eichberg
* Florimont
* Froehn
* Furstentum
* Geisberg
* Gloeckelberg
* Goldert
* Hatschbourg
* Hengst
* Kaefferkopf
* Kanzlerberg
* Kessler
* Kirchberg de Ribeauvillé
* Kitterlé
* Mambourg
* Mandelberg
* Marckrain
* Ollwiller
* Osterberg
* Pfersigberg
* Pfingstberg
* Rangen
* Rosacker
* Saering
* Schlossberg
* Schoenenbourg
* Sommerberg
* Sonnenglanz
* Spiegel
* Sporen
* Steinert
* Steingrubler
* Vorbourg
* Wineck-Schlossberg
* Zinnkoepflé
The Loire

Most Northern Growing Region in France
The Loire River flows from Central Mountains to town of Brittany. Longest river in France
All along the river exist some of the greatest wine growing regions in the world

Divided into 4 regions = 3rd Largest AOC in France

**Pays Nantias**
Muscadet (largest white wine region in France; Dutch were first to plant Melonde Bourgone.

**Anjou-Saumur**
Best sweet wines: Bonnezeaux, Coteaux du Layon & Quartes de Chaume
Savienerres made with Chenin Blanc
Anjou and Saumur-Champigny made with Cab Franc, good off-dry roses
Very good Sparkling wine made with Chenin Blanc

**Touraine**
Vouvray made with Chenin Blanc in different styles
Chinon made with Cab Franc
Bourgueil with Cab Franc, made to age

**Central Loire**
Home of Sauvignon Blanc
Sancerre & Pouilly Fume made with Sauvignon Blanc
Sancere reds made with Pinot Noir
The Loire

Vouvray

Made with **Chenin Blanc** = Pineau de Loire

Very versatile grape
Different styles: Sparkling, Sweet, demi-sec and dry

Soils are Flinty-Clay and limestone-Clay.

Aromas: Honey, Almonds, Peach and Stone fruits

Taste: will vary by style, crisp med to full bodied depending on ripeness levels. med acidity and mineral flavors

These wines are capable of aging 10 or more years

Some will age a Century

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Chinon

Made with **Cabernet Franc** known as Breton in Chinon

Sand and Gravel Soils near river produce light elegant wines
Clay and limestone soils along hillsides produce Full bodied wines made for aging

Aromas: Berry, Violets and red brick

Taste: usually lighter in body than what you would expect, Mineral driven, plum and tart berry.

Tannic when young

Start to open up at 5 years

Wines with ability to age 10 or more years
Burgundy has a long history in the church

Cistercian monks were first to divide up vineyards (clos Vougeot)

Burgundy is landlocked and most wines stayed within

14th century, considered finest wines, better than the wines of Rome

14th-15th century House of Valois and the Dukes Phillip the Bold removed Gamay and planted only Pinot Noir

18th century as roads improved Burgundy wines were huge in the Paris market

By the French Revolution, the church lost vineyards and they were divided up among the bourgeoisie

The Napoleonic inheritance laws left families with small holdings:

Creation of négociants

1861 classifications of Burgundy
After World War II; vineyards were ruined by Potassium from spraying chemical fertilizers. Poor nutrients, high yields led to poor wines.

1985 Burgundy farmers took a new approach, biodynamics and organics and today create high quality wines.

**Cote d’Or The Golden Slope**

“The morning sun” Vineyards run North to South

White Grapes:  
- Chardonnay (High Quality White)
- Aligote (Kir Cocktail)
- Sauvignon Blanc (St. Brix)

Red Grapes:  
- Pinot Noir (High Quality Reds)
- Gamay (Beaujolais)

Chablis known for Chardonnay

North is Cote d’Nuits known for reds
- Marsannay, Gevery-Chambertine, 
- Vougeot, Vosne Romanee, Nuits st George

South is Cote d’ Beaune known for whites
- Corton, Charlamange, Pommard, Volnay, 
- Sauvigny-les Beaune, Mersault, Puligny-Montrachet

Cote Chalonnaise = Rully, Mercury, Givry

Maconnais = Pouilly-Fuisse, St Veran

Beaujolais = Morgon, Broully, Fleurie

Climate has a large influence on quality. Burgundy is a continental climate with cold winters and at times hail storms. In poor vintages, wines can be poor.

Soils are limestone soils with fossils, was once under water

**Chardonnay** Pear & apple aromas, citrus, mineral. Can be racy. Barreled in French oak and rest on lees to add richness.

**Pinot Noir** Smoky, Cherry, Cranberry, Rose, Violets, Velvety and mineral.

**Controversies**

Robert Parker and 1993 Vintage

POX, premature oxidation
The Rhone river was the route for Greek and Roman traders to connect with Gaul and Northern Europe.

1st century AD Romans built city of Vienne and planted renowned vineyards. They built terraces along the river.

The Papacy was moved to Avignon. Pope John XXII built a castle in Chateauneuf-du-pape.

17th & 18th Century rapid progress in production.

1650 Cote du rhone was established to insure quality.

1737 all casks needed to be branded “C.D.R.”

Baron Le Roy 1937 crated AOC Cotes du Rhone.

**Northern Rhone**

*Granite Soils along steep slopes in the*

Cote Rotie: Syrah blended with Viognier.

Condrieu: Viognier (some of the best whites in the world).

Chateau-Grillet: Viognier.

Saint-Joseph: Syrah can be blended with 10% Marsanne or Rousanne.

Whites are Marsanne & Roussanne.

Crozes-Hermitage: Syrah with up to 15% Marsanne or Roussanne.

Whites only Marsanne & Roussanne.

Hermitage: Syrah up to 15% Marsanne or Roussanne.

Whites are Marsanne or Roussanne.

Cornas: Syrah only.

Saint-Peray: Sparkling and still wines of Marsanne and Roussanne.
The Rhone

“Mistral” winds divide the North and South
Mediterranean Climate:  Heavy Rains, High Temperatures, and a lot of sun

Southern Rhone

Limestone covered in alluvial

Chateauneuf-du-pape is most famous for Gallettes, round river rock.
Absorb the heat  to keep vines warm at night

Red Grapes:  Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre, Cinsault & Carignan
White Grapes:  Ugni Blanc, Rousanne, Bourboulenc, Picpoul, Claiette & Viognier

Classification:

Cotes du Rhone: entails 171 communes, says that wine is from the Rhone
Cotes du Rhone Villages: 95 communes, min. requirement for grape maturity.
  Does not have village name on label
Cotes du Rhone Villages with Village name: 19 communes
Cru: 15 AOC, Hermitage, Cote-Rotie, Chateauneuf-du-pape

Flavors

Syrah     Dark Berry, Blueberry, Violets, earth, leather
Grenache  Rose, red berry, cherry, spice
Mourvedre Dark fruit, Earth, mushroom, leather, herbs
Viognier  Floral, Peach, lower acidity
Marsanne  deep color, nutty, spice and pear
Rousanne  Aromatic, Herbal tea, Pear, baking spice
Romans made wine for soldiers in 43 AD

Romans brought vines from Rioja

During Middle ages English controlled Bordeaux.

The wine was Claret Light colored wines

13th century wines came from Graves, Cotes du Blaye and St. Emilion

The Medoc was a Swamp

Wines were made and barrelled for English Merchants

Hundred year war and Black Death put a halt to production

17th century Dutch traders drained the Medoc and encouraged plantings

1725 bordeaux spread and labels began to identify a region

The Prince of Vignes - Nicolas Alexandre, Marquis de Segur. Held ownership of with Pierre Rauzan Chateau Rauzan-Segla, Chateau Rauzan Gassies, Chateau Pichon Longueville Baron & Chateau Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande

1855 The Bordeaux Classification 1er Crus: Chateau Lafite, Chateau Latour, Chateau Margaux, Haut-Brion...Mouton Rothschild

Phylloxera ruined all of Bordeaux, changed varieties because they responded better to new rootstocks. Cabernet Sauvignon, Caberent Franc, Merlot, Semillon, Muscatelle
Left Bank: North of Bordeaux
Medoc, Pauillac, St. Estephe, Margaux, St, Julien
Cabernet Sauignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec & Petit Verdot

Best vineyards near the river. Forests block wind from the west. River is cooling, good drainage and no need for irrigation

Profiles: Plum, Cassis, Hay, earth Barnyard

Right Bank
Pomerol, St. Emillion, Bourg, Blaye, Sainte Foy,
Entre deux Mers
Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon

Profile: Softer, plum, berry, earth, mushroom

Graves
Pessac-Leognan, Sauternes, Barsac
Cabernet Sauvignon, Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc

Profile Reds: Gravel mineral, Cassis, hay, earth, blackberry
Profile Whites: Mineral, citrus, stone fruit
Profile sweet: Honey, acidity, apricot

Sauternes/Barsac CHATEAU d’YQUEM
Neighboring regions:
Monbazillac, Cérons, Loupiac and Cadillac

The best sweet wines in the world
Made with Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon & Muscadelle
Effected by Botrytis a fungus that occurs in foggy climate and shrivels up the grape
Known as “Noble Rot”
Removes water and leaves concentrated nectar

Acidity levels are still high so wines are not cloying

Does not occur in all vintages and only in certain parts of the world
High price tag for these wines.