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Wines of Australia – 2



Grape Varieties. Major grape varieties are Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon, and Riesling. The country has no native grapes, and *Vitis vinifera* varieties were introduced from Europe and South Africa in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Some varieties have been bred by Australian viticulturalists, for example Cienna and Tarrango.

Although Syrah was originally called Shiraz in Australia and Syrah elsewhere, its dramatic commercial success has led many Syrah producers around the world to label their wine "Shiraz."

About 130 different grape varieties are used by commercial winemakers in Australia. Over recent years many winemakers have begun exploring so called "alternative varieties" other than those listed above. Many varieties from France, Italy and Spain, for example Petit Verdot, Pinot Grigio, Sangiovese, Tempranillo, and Viognier are becoming more common. Wines from many other varieties are being produced.

Australian winemaking results have been impressive and it has established benchmarks for a number of varietals, such as Chardonnay and Shiraz. Moreover, Australians have innovated in canopy management and other viticultural techniques and in wine-making, and they have a general attitude toward their work that sets them apart from producers in Europe. Australian wine-makers travel the wine world as highly skilled seasonal workers, relocating to the northern hemisphere during the off-season at home. They are an important resource in the globalization of wine and wine critic Matt Kramer notes that "the most powerful influence in wine today" comes from Australia.

Major Wine Regions. The information included on wine labels is strictly regulated. One aspect of this is that the label must not make any false or misleading statements about the source of the grapes. Many names (called geographic indications) are protected. These are divided into "South Eastern Australia," the state names, zones, regions, and sub-regions. The largest volume of wine is produced from grapes grown in the warm climate Murray-Darling Basin zones of Lower Murray, North Western Victoria, and Big Rivers. In general, the higher-value premium wines are made from smaller and cooler-climate regions. Some well-known regions are listed below:

South Australia wine regions: Adelaide Hills, Barossa Valley, Clare Valley, Coonawarra, Eden Valley, Langhorne Creek, McLaren Vale, Padthaway, Riverland, and Wrattontully.

Victoria wine regions: Alpine Valleys, Goulburn Valley, Grampians, Heathcote wine region, Henty, Mornington Peninsula, Pyrenees, Rutherglen, Yarra Valley, and King Valley.

New South Wales wine regions: Hunter Valley, Mudgee, Riverina, and New England.

Western Australia wine regions: Margaret River, Swan Valley, Great Southern

The South Australian wine industry is responsible for more than half the production of all Australian wine. In recent years, the Tasmanian wine industry has emerged as a producer of high quality wines. In particular, the Tamar Valley has developed a reputation for its Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, which are well suited to the cooler Tasmanian climate.

Queensland is also developing a wine industry with over 100 vineyards registered in the state. Some notable wines are produced in the high-altitude Granite Belt region in the state's extreme south, production is centered on the towns of Stanthorpe and Ballandean.

Source: Adapted from Wikipedia