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Wines of France – 4

Wine Regions of France. The recognized wine producing areas in France are regulated by the *Institut National des Appellations d'Origine* (INAO). Every appellation in France is defined by INAO, in regards to the individual regions particular wine "character." If a wine fails to meet the INAO's strict criteria it is declassified into a lower appellation or even into Vin de Pays or Vin de Table. With the amount of appellations in France too numerous to mention here, they are easily defined into one of the main wine producing regions listed below:

Alsace. Alsace is primarily a white-wine region, though some red, rosé, sparkling and sweet wines are also produced. It is situated in eastern France on the river Rhine and borders Germany, a country with which it shares many grape varieties as well as a long tradition of varietal labeling. Grapes grown in Alsace include Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Noir, and Muscat.

Bordeaux. Bordeaux is a large region on the Atlantic coast, which has a long history of exporting its wines overseas. This is primarily a red wine region, famous for the wines Chateau Lafite-Rothschild, Chateau Latour, Chateau Mouton-Rothschild, Chateau Margaux, and Chateau Haut-Brion from the Medoc sub-region; Chateau Cheval Blanc and Chateau Ausone in St Emilion; and Petrus and Chateau Le Pin in Pomerol. The red wines produced are usually blended, from Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and sometimes Cabernet Franc. Bordeaux also makes dry and sweet white wines, including some of the world's most famous sweet wines from the Sauternes appellation, such as Chateau d'Yquem.

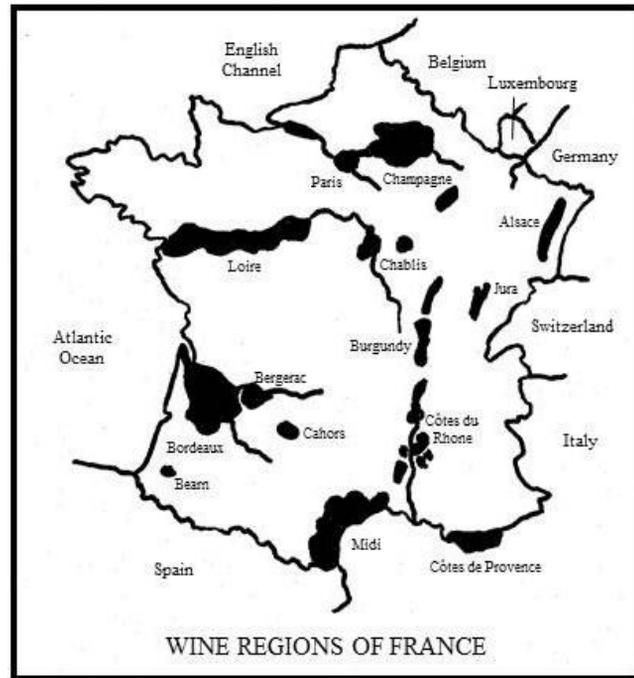
Burgundy. Burgundy or Bourgogne in eastern France is a region where red and white wines are equally important. Probably more *terroir*-conscious than any other region, Burgundy is divided into the largest number of appellations of any French region. The top wines from Burgundy's heartland in Côte d'Or command high prices. The Burgundy region is divided in four main parts: The Cote de Nuits (from Marsannay-La-Cote down to Nuits-Saint-Georges); The Cote de Beaune (from north of Beaune to Santenay); The Cote Chalonnaise; and The Maconnais

Two parts of Burgundy that are sometimes considered as separate regions are:

- **Beaujolais** in the south, close to the Rhône Valley region, where mostly red wines are made in a fruity style that is usually consumed young. "*Beaujolais Nouveau*" is the only one wine that can be legally consumed in the year of its production (Third week end of November)
- **Chablis**, halfway between Côte d'Or and Paris, where white wines are produced on chalky soil giving a more crisp and steely style than the rest of Burgundy.

There are two main grape varieties used in Burgundy – Chardonnay for white wines, and Pinot Noir for red. White wines are also sometimes made from Aligoté, and other grape varieties will also be found occasionally.

Champagne. Champagne close to Belgium and Luxembourg, is the coldest of France's major wine regions and home to its major sparkling wine. Champagne wines can be both white and rosé. A small amount of still wine is produced in Champagne (as AOC Coteaux Champenois) of which some can be red wine.



Source: Adapted from Wikipedia