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# Chapter 15

# Burgundy



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## Climate and Grape Growing

Climate: **Cool continental (north - Chablis) → moderate continental (south)**

- Rain = can disrupt flowering (in early summer) and during harvest
  - Pinot noir - susceptible to grey rot - bad in a wet growing season
- Spring frosts - as late as May.
- Hailstorms - can destroy an entire crop

Vineyard location:

- Premier Cru/Grand cru = mid-slope (better soil drainage/shallow soil/S-SE facing slopes/less frost + wind)
- Basic village level = flat site/bottom of slope (soil is fertile/land is flat)

Soil types = significant change in a small area. Small geological faults + gradual erosion = precise soil types.

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## Grape Varieties and Wine Making

*Pinot Noir/Chardonnay/Aligoté/Gamay*

### Pinot Noir

- 1/3 total vineyard area
- Côte D'Or - most important region
- Red fruit (youth) → earth/game/mushroom (developed)
- High acid/low-med tannin (can vary)
- Winemaking
  - Whole bunches - increasingly popular
  - 16-18 months barrel ageing
  - Some proportion aged in new oak (better wines)

### Chardonnay

- 1/2 total vineyard area
- Varying character; high acid/steely (*Chablis*) → complex (*Côte D'Or*) → full body/ripe (*Mâcon*)
- Winemaking
  - Barrel ferm/MLF/barrel aging (6-9) months/lees during maturation
  - Debate on amount of new oak/toasting should be used

- Côte D'Or - very well balanced - can mature
- 15 years ago - some Burgundian Chardonnays not ageing right - oxidation - now established problem

## Other varieties

**Aligoté** - White grape

- Neutral wines/high acid
- Rare as only grows in sites where it can reach ripeness (reserved for PN/Chard)

**Gamay** - Easy-drinking red

- Ripe berry/low tannin
- Can be used in some regional appellations

## Chablis

- Village appellation - valley of River Serein - N. of Burgundy
- Frost - sprinklers/heaters used to protect vineyards
- Chardonnay only permitted grape
- **Basic Chablis/Petit Chablis** = north facing/flatter land - austere/green fruit/high acid
- **Chablis Premier Cru/Chablis Grand Cru** = hillside/S or SE facing aspect - riper/citrus/more body/high acid
  - Some aged in old oak (soft texture/subtle flavour)
  - Some retain fruit with stainless steel/concrete

## Côte D'Or

Massif Central - western limit of Cote D'Or - E/SE facing hillside vineyards

Cote de Nuits - Pinot Noir - full body/long lived

Cote de Beaune - Chardonnay (some fruiter PN)

All red grand crus (except 1) - Cote de Nuits

All white grand crus (except 1) - Cote de Beaune

**Cote de Nuits** (N→ S) - Villages and Grand Cru sites

1. Gevrey-Chambertin (*Chambertin/ Chambertin Clos de Bèze*)
2. Vougeot (*Clos de Vougeot*)
3. Vosnee-Romanée (*Romanée-Conti/ La Tâche/ La Romanée*)
4. Nuits-Saint-Georges

**Cote de Beaune** (N→ S) - Villages and Grand Cru sites

1. Aloxe-Corton (*Corton/ Corton-Charlemagne*)
2. Beaune
3. Pommard
4. Volnay
5. Mersault
6. Puligny-Montrachet

## 7. Chassagne-Montrachet

(All above (except Volnay/Pommard) produce white + red.)

Puligny + Chassagne share Montrachet grand cru

**Cote de Nuits Villages** = (red or white) - do not qualify for famous village appellations

**Cote de Beaune Villages** = (only red) - can come from one or a combo of villages within Cote de Beaune (some exceptions)

**Bourgogne Hautes Cotes de Nuits/ Bourgogne Hautes Cotes de Beaune** - west/higher altitude to main strip. Exposure = cooler climate. Wines - less body/concentration.

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## The Côte Chalonnaise

- Higher altitude - harvest later/ripening less reliable
  - Hillside but not constantly east facing
  - Wines lighter - mature earlier (less prestigious)
  - Four village appellations:
    - **Rully** = more white than red/sparkling produced
    - **Mercurey** = highest rep reds
    - **Givry** = reds admired/smallest village
    - **Montagny** = only whites
  - Above all have premier cru vineyards (no grand cru)
    - Bourgogne Côte Chalonnaise (regional appellation) - Pinot Noir reds + Chardonnay whites
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## Mâconnais

Chardonnay (white)/Gamay (reds) - some Pinot Noir

### Mâcon

- Regional appellation - red or white
- White = apple/citrus/med acid/med-full body/some MLF
- Red = light/fruity/early-drinking

**Mâcon Villages** (can be followed by a village name)

- Great value for money (ie, Lugny)
- White - can come from one or more villages
- More ripe/body/character than Mâcon

### Pouilly-Fuissé + Saint Veran

- Ripe tropical/stone fruits
- Matured in barrel - adds texture/flavour

Planted E/SE-facing slopes of Roche de Solutré - natural suntrap - rich/ripe Chardonnay with toasty flavours

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# Hierarchy of Burgundy Appellations

## Regional Appellations

- ½ production of the region
- Wines from vineyards not superior or declassified - due to excessive yields - or producer preserves prestige of premium whites
- **Bourgogne Rouge/Blanc** - generic - anywhere in Burgundy - PN/Chard
- Slightly more restricted areas, regional = **Bourgogne Hautes Côtes de Nuits** / **Bourgogne Hautes Côtes de Beaune**/ **Bourgogne Côte Chalonnaise**/ **Mâcon** (red +white) / **Mâcon Villages** (white only)

## Commune Appellations ('village')

- ⅓ total production
- Just commune name on label
- Vineyard name that is not premier/grand cru sometimes

## Single Vineyard Appellation (Premier Cru + Grand Cru)

- Vineyard often owned by many, not one owner ('monopole')
- 600 premier cru - Chablis/Côte D'Or/Côte Chalonnaise
  - 1/10th of production
  - Must say 'Premier Cru' on label - and single vineyard if grapes from single vineyard
  - If grapes from different Premier Cru vineyards = will not say vineyard
- Grand Cru - 33 - Côte D'Or (+ 1 from Chablis)
  - 1% of total production
  - Only vineyard name appears on label
  - Term 'Grand Cru' must appear on label

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## Multiple Choice Practice Questions

1) Which grape variety is most commonly associated with red wines from Burgundy?

- a) Chardonnay
- b) Pinot Noir
- c) Malbec
- d) Cabernet Sauvignon

2) Which classification system is used for vineyards in Burgundy, ranking them based on their perceived quality?

- a) Grand Cru, Premier Cru, Village, Regional
- b) AOC, IGP, Vin de France

- c) Estate, Reserve, Single Vineyard
- d) Old Vine, New Vine, Family Vineyard

3) Which of the following is a famous Grand Cru vineyard in Burgundy's Cotes de Nuits?

- a) Château Margaux
- b) Opus One
- c) Corton
- d) Romanée-Conti

4) Which of the following is a famous Grand Cru vineyard in Burgundy's Cotes de Beaune?

- a) La Tâche
- b) Clos de Vougeot
- c) Corton-Charlemagne
- d) Givry

5) Which of the following climates describe the Chablis region?

- a) Warm Mediterranean
- b) Cool Continental
- c) Moderate Continental
- d) Tropical

6) In which area of Burgundy would you find Roche de Solutré?

- a) Chablis
- b) Côte D'Or
- c) Côte Chalonnaise
- d) Mâconnais

7) How many Grand Cru vineyards are there in Burgundy?

- a) 3
- b) 33
- c) 333
- d) 600

8) What is the name of the river that runs through Chablis?

- a) Serein
- b) Nile
- c) Loire
- d) Garonne

9) Which one of these regions in the Côte Chalonnaise produces sparkling wine?

- a) Rully
- b) Mercurey
- c) Loire
- d) Garonne

10) What is the flavour profile of a grand cru Chablis?

- a) Austere, high acid, green fruits
- b) Medium body, low acidity, red fruits

- c) High acid, ripe citrus fruits
- d) Low acid, stone fruits

## Answers

1. **b) Pinot Noir**
2. **a) Grand Cru, Premier Cru, Village, Regional**
3. **d) Romanée-Conti**
4. **c) Corton-Charlemagne**
5. **b) Cool Continental**
6. **d) Mâconnais**
7. **b) 33**
8. **a) Serein**
9. **a) Rully**
10. **c) High acid, ripe citrus fruits**