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# Chapter 23

## Austria



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## Climate and Grape Growing

Climate: **Cool continental**

- Short summers, harsh winters, less annual weather variation
- North areas: cooling northerly winds.
- Hungarian border: warming easterly winds

Wines grown in the Eastern end of the country

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## Grape Varieties and Wine Making

*White varieties*

### **Gruener Veltliner**

- Best = full-bodied/concentrated/high acid/citrus/stone fruit/white pepper (honey/toast with age)
- WM;
  - Stainless steel fermentation + maturation
    - Some WM use old oak casks or barriques (portion of wine) to mature.

### **Welschriesling**

- Dry = Fresh/simple/citrus/green apple/high acidity
- Sweet = Botrytis = can produce sweet wines

### **Riesling**

- Best areas: *Wachau, Kamptal, Kremstal*
- Dry/med-full body/ripe/peachy (can mature in bottle)

Others: Chardonnay, Muller-Thurgau, Sauvignon Blanc (high rep of Sauvignon Blanc from *Steiermark*)

*Black varieties*

### **Zweigelt** (Blaufrankisch x St Laurent)

- Most planted black grape

- Deeply coloured/soft tannins/bramble fruit

### **Blaufrankish**

- High rep
- Med tannins/high acid/peppery/sour cherry

### **St Laurent**

- Similar to Pinot Noir
- Can oak age
- Some producers blending with international varieties

## **Regions and Wines**

PDO wine regions = Niederösterreich (Lower Austria), Burgenland, Steiermark (Styria), Wien (Vienna)

### **Niederösterreich** (Lower Austria)

- Largest producer/exporter
- Vineyards on the bank of the **Dunube** (N towards Slovak) with 8 sub regions:
  - **Wachau**
    - High-quality dry wines - *Riesling* or *Gruner Veltliner*
    - Steep, S-facing terraced slopes - reflection from river = more concentrated flavours
    - Chosen not to be DAC
    - Kamptal DAC/Fremstal DAC N of here - similar style.
  - **Weinviertal DAC**
    - Largest vine-growing area/first DAC
    - Only *Gruner Veltliner*
      - 'Klassik' = light/fresh/fruity/no oak
      - 'Reserve' = higher min alcohol/oak maturation

### **Burgenland**

- By Hungarian border
- Top red + sweet. Some white (*Pinot Blanc*, *Welschriesling*, *Gruner Veltliner*, *Chardonnay*)
- Neusiedlersee = lake (shallow) - sweet wines - autumn mists/wetlands. Ideal for Botrytis = *Welschriesling* grape
- Reds = higher grounds/hills in south. *Zweigelt* = most planted. Neusiedlersee DAC for *Zweigelt*.
- *Pinot Noir*, *Merlot*, *Cabernet Sauvignon*, *Blaufrankisch*, *St Laurent* also grown.

3 DACs for *Blaufrankisch* - Mittelburgenland largest.

## **Austrian Wine Laws**

PGI = Landwein. No PGI = Wein.

## PDO Wines

4 Federal states + 16 smaller areas (PDO status) - either Qualitätswein or DAC.

## Qualitätswein

- 4 Federal states/7 smaller areas
- 35 grapes permitted - any style
- Also labelled Pradikat levels (sim to Germany) - 2 key additions:
  - 'Ausbruch' = between BA and TBA
  - 'Strohwein/Sclifwein' = grapes laid on bed of straw/reeds in winter to concentrate sugars

## Districtus Austrae Controllatus (DAC)

- 9 smaller regions = DAC status
  - Producers agree on variety(ies), style, regulations that best reflect area. Wines that conform can use DAC. Or if not, use federal state name.
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## **Multiple Choice Practice Questions**

1) Which of the following is NOT a PDO wine region of Austria?

- a) Niederosterreich
- b) Steiermark
- c) Mosel
- d) Wien (Vienna)

2) Zweigelt is a cross of which grapes?

- a) St Laurent x Pinot Noir
- b) Blaufrankisch x St Laurent
- c) Pinot Noir x Cabernet Sauvignon
- d) Blaufrankisch x Merlot

3) Which grape variety is the most widely planted and important for quality white wine production in Austria?

- a) Sauvignon Blanc
- b) Chardonnay
- c) Grüner Veltliner
- d) Riesling

4) Which Austrian wine region is renowned for only producing Grüner Veltliner wines?

- a) Weinviertal DAC
- b) Fremstal DAC
- c) Kamptal DAC
- d) Burgenland

5) Which Austrian region is famous for its production of sweet wines made from botrytized grapes, particularly Welschriesling?

- a) Fremstal DAC
- b) Neusiedlersee DAC
- c) Kamptal DAC
- d) Weinviertal DAC

### Answers

**1. c) Mosel**

**2. b) Blaufrankisch x St Laurent**

**3. c) Grüner Veltliner**

**4. a) Weinviertal DAC**

**5. b) Neusiedlersee DAC**