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# Chapter 24

## Tokaj



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## Climate and Grape Growing

Climate: **Moderate**

- Best vineyards = hillside slopes/S-facing aspect
- Rivers: Bodrog/Tisza (and tributaries) - help conditions for Noble Rot
- NE Hungary - **foothills of Carpathian Mountains**

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## Grape Varieties

*White varieties (often blended)*

**Furmint**

- Most planted
- Concentrated/high acid. Apple (young) → nuts/honey (age)
- Dry or Sweet (Aszú) wines

**Hárslevelu**

- **Late ripening** - adds perfume to blend

**Sárga Mustotály**

- Adds aromatic qualities

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## Wine Styles

- Dry (75cl) or sweet (50cl)
- Different styles each vintage. Grapes - 3 different categories for harvest:
  - Aszú = rotten grapes individually picked
  - Non affected NR bunches collected separately
  - Szamorodni ('as it comes') = bunches partially affected by Noble Rot

Dry wines

Dry wines without Botrytis

- Often made from Furmint
- Made in years where low/no NR
- Simple unoaked → concentrated/age worthy (ferm/mat - new oak)

### Tokaji Szamorodni

- Szamorodni harvested grapes - can be dry (száraz) or sweet (édes)
  - Dry (száraz) = NR character. 1 year ageing in cask/2 years old before release. Cask not full - flor-like yeast forms. Sim to Fino Sherry.
  - Sweet (édes) = No yeast, full cask, less-oxidative

### Sweet wines

#### Aszú wines

- Tokaji Aszú,
  - WM;
    - Base wine = healthy grapes. Before, during or after ferm, Aszú berries are macerated in the base wine (for 12-60 hours). Berries uncrushed to avoid bitter flavours. Pressed + matured in oak.
    - Number of Aszú berries = sweetness (Puttonyos)
    - Deep amber/high acid/intense aroma/orange peel/apricot/honey (more intense as more sweet)

#### Tokaji Eszencia (Essence, or Nectar)

- V rare - made just with free-run juice of aszú berries. So sweet = years to ferment.
- Low alcohol (<5%) - 450g/L = legal min residual sugar
- High acid/very concentrated
- Can age for up to a century (+)

#### Modern style sweet wines ('Late harvest')

- Some NR - produced by fermenting Botrytised grapes (like Sauternes). Matures less time than Aszú wines. Labelled 'late harvest'.

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## Tokaji Sweet Wine Laws

*Traditional laws (up to + including 2012) vs proposed laws*

Traditional laws	2013 laws
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Min Tokaji Aszu residual sugar = 60 g/L <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3-6 puttonyos scale</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Min 24 months in oak</li> <li>● Released January 4th year after harvest</li> <li>● Sweetest = Tokaji Eszencia - min 180 g/L residual sugar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Min Tokaji Aszu residual sugar = 120 g/L (traditionally 5 puttonyos) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Under this = 'late harvest' or 'Tokaji Szamorodni' (depending on how its made)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Asu Eszencia = labelling term abolished</li> <li>● Tokaji Eszencia = allowed = wines made from free-run juice of Aszu berries</li> <li>● Shorter min ageing = 18 months in oak + released January 3rd year after harvest</li> </ul>

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## Multiple Choice Practice Questions

1) Which grape variety is the primary grape used in the production of Tokaji wines?

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

2) Which term measures the sweetness levels in Tokaji wines?

- a) RS
- b) Puttonyos
- c) Percentage
- d) Eszencia

3) Which of the following late harvest grapes adds perfume to a Tokaji blend?

- a) Riesling
- b) Sauvignon Blanc
- c) Furmint
- d) Hárslevelu

4) What is the climate of the Tokaj wine region?

- a) Moderate continental
- b) Warm continental
- c) Maritime
- d) Alpine

5) Which type of Tokaji wine is the rarest to produce?

- a) Tokaji Aszú
- b) Sárga Mustotály

- c) Tokaji Eszencia
- d) Tokaji Szamorodni

## Answers

**1. a) Furmint**

**2. b) Puttonyos**

**3. d) Hárslevelu**

**4. a) Moderate continental**

**5. c) Tokaji Eszencia**