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# Chapter 39

## Australia



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## Climate and Grape Growing

- Climate: **Warm/hot**
- Moderating influences:
  - Proximity to Southern or Indian Ocean, or Murray River System
  - Altitude (Clare/Eden Valley)
- Issues:
  - Low rainfall (irrigation required)
  - Drought (even Murray River can run low)
  - Bush fires (vineyard destroyed/smoke taints the grape taste)

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## Grape Varieties and Wine Styles

### Black grapes

#### **Shiraz**

- (Hot/warm - Hunter/Barossa Valley) = **full-bodied/fruity/earthy/spice/leather (in bottle)**
- (Cooler - Geelong/Heathcote) = WM more restrained level of extraction = **peppery/leather**
- Gives softness/body to blends (blended with Cab Sauv/Merlot)

#### **Cabernet Sauvignon**

- **Darker/firmer tannins/high acid/ ripe black fruit/ toasty oak**
- Coonawarra/Margaret River

#### **Merlot**

- Provides body/fleshy fruit (blended with Cab Sauv)

#### **Pinot Noir**

- Cool-mod sites (Yarra Valley/Mornington Peninsula/Tasmania)
- **Med body/ med alcohol/ med-high acid/ cherry/ strawberry**

#### **Grenache**

- **Late ripening** = good for warm climate

*Petit Verdot/ Mataro (aka mouvedre)/ Sangiovese/ Tempranillo - also planted*

## White grapes

### Chardonnay

- Most planted white grape
- **(basic) fruit from various regions/ unoaked for peach (toast/vanilla - oak chips/staves) → balanced/fresh fruit (lees/MLF/oak usage)**
- Adelaide Hills/Mornington Peninsula/Yarra Valley

### Sauvignon Blanc

- Adelaide Hills - moderate climate - **passion fruit/high acid**

### Semillon

- Hunter Valley = **grapes harvested early** (low sugar/high acid). WM - no oxygen/inert vessels for ferm/storage. **Light alcohol/neutral flavour → honey/toast in bottle.**
- Western Australia - **herbaceous (like SB)**
- Barossa Valley - **fuller-bodied/softer/early-picked** and unoaked becoming popular

### Riesling

- **Lime/lemon/grapefruit/toast/honey/petrol (age) - high acid - dry or off-dry**
  - Eden and Clare Valley (SA) / Tasmania / Frankland River (WA) - more floral
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## South Eastern Australia Zone

‘Super Zone’ covers all GIs in South Australia - blending grapes from all regions

- Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia

High vol brands - grapes from irrigated, fertile areas:

- **Riverland (SA)/ Riverina (NS Wales)/ Murray-Darling (Vict)**
    - High yield, healthy grapes - can blend with fruit from other areas
  - **Riverina = botrytised sweet Semillon** - autumn mist/fog = noble rot
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## South Australia

Some wines labelled ‘South Australia’ for blending advantages

### Barossa Valley

- Climate: warm/dry
- Old bush vines = outstanding Shiraz (CS/Grenache)
- **Shiraz = full-bodied/soft tannin/ripe black fruit/sweet American oak (leather/spice - age)**
- **Semillon = fresh/unoaked**
- Barossa Zone (fruit from Eden Valley or Barossa)

### Eden Valley

- Climate: cool-mod (varies with altitude)
- **Riesling = lime/grapefruit/steeley - marmalade/toast** (10+ years aging)

- Shiraz/Chard/SB also grown

## Claire Valley

- Climate: warm
  - Moderated: cool afternoon breezes/cold nights
  - Altitude: 300-400m (up to 570m)
- **Riesling** = dry/citrus/lime/high acid/honey/toast
- **Shiraz** = fragrant/powerful/structured
- **Cabernet Sauvignon** = style depends on vineyards

## Adelaide Hills

- Climate: moderate
  - All vineyards planted 400m+
  - Rain in winter, good soil drainage = irrigation is necessity
- **SB/Chard** - high natural acid/citrus/peach
- **PN** - single or sparkling with Chard blend

## McLaren Vale

- Climate: warm
  - Moderated: ocean breeze from the ocean
- Old vine **Shiraz/Grenache** - complex

## Coonawarra

- Climate: moderate
  - Moderated: Cold antarctica currents
  - Cloud cover in summer
- 1.5km wide x 15km wide
- **Terra Rossa soil over limestone soil**
- 400km SE of Adelaide
- **Cabernet Sauvignon** = concentrated/structured/cassis/eucalyptus/menthol
- Shiraz/Merlot/Chard - also planted

# Victoria

Cool areas - Ocean breezes around Melbourne/Port Philip Bay = PN/Chard

Great Dividing Ranges (altitude) - Macedon Ranges/Upper Goulburn - PN/Chard/Riesling/SB

Lower slopes = late-ripening black grapes (Shiraz/CS)

## Yarra Valley

- Climate: cool-mod maritime
  - Lots of altitudes/aspects
- **Pinot Noir** = rich fruit/ strawberry/ plum/ cherry/ ripe/ tannin soft oak
- Sparkling production area
- Chard/Shiraz/CS also grown

## Mornington Peninsula

- Climate: cool-mod maritime
- Vintage variation (cool/wet/windy at flowering + harvest)
- **Pinot Noir** = light → structured (pure fruit flavours)
- **Chard** = citrus/ pear/ apple/ high acid/ MLF (to soften)

## Geelong

- Sim climate to Mornington Peninsula
- **Chard** = complex/concentrated/full-bodied
- **PN** = earthy
- **Shiraz** = fresh/peppery
- Sparkling prod with Chard + PN

## Heathcote

- Centre of Victoria - inland
- Altitude
  - **Shiraz** = fresher/firmer structure
- Chard/CS/Temp/Sangio

## Goulburn Valley

- Climate: warm
  - Moderated: creeks/lakes around Goulburn River
- **Shiraz**
- **Marsanne** (speciality) = citrus → honey (bottle)

# New South Wales

Main region = hot Hunter Valley

Cooler = Mudgee/Orange/Cowra

Altitude = Chard/CS

## Hunter Valley

- Climate: hot + humid
  - Moderated: ocean breezes/cloud cover
  - Risks: Unsettled rain at harvest - canopy management to minimise rot
- **Semillon** = light body/low alcohol/high acid/neutral flavours → toast/nut/honey (in bottle)
- **Chard** = oaked + unoaked
- **Shiraz** = blackberry/cherry/soft tannin/med body/earthy

# Western Australia

SW tip

‘Western Australia’ - blended from various regions

Not part of the SE Aus ‘super zone’

## Margaret River

- Climate: warm maritime
  - High winter rainfall
- **Cabernet Sauvignon** (widely planted) = blended with Merlot
- **Chard** = stone fruit/ **high acid** (can be barrel aged/MLF for complexity)
- **Sauvignon Blanc** = blended with **Semillon** = **gooseberry/ tropical fruit/ high acid**

## Great Southern Region

- Sub regions: Mount Barker/ Frankland River
  - CS/Shiraz/Riesling
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## Tasmania

- Climate: cool maritime
    - Moderated: westerly winds off Southern Ocean
  - Originally sparkling → now still
  - **PN/Chard/SB/Pinot Gris** (**CS** in ripest areas)
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## Australia Wine Laws

**Zones** = large areas - either states or several states

**Regions** = vary in size, must have consistent/distinct qualities

**Subregions** = distinct/unique qualities (some covered by several zones - prods lots of options to make up blends)

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## Multiple Choice Practice Questions

1) Which of the following is a significant characteristic of wines produced from the Semillon grape in Hunter Valley, Australia?

- a) Light alcohol and neutral flavour
- b) High acidity and fresh citrus flavours
- c) High tannins and dark fruit flavours
- d) Full-bodied with tropical fruit flavours

2) Which of the following regions is renowned for its high-quality Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in Australia?

- a) Barossa Valley
- b) McLaren Vale
- c) Yarra Valley
- d) Coonawarra

3) What is the main grape variety used in the production of red wines in the Coonawarra region?

- a) Shiraz
- b) Merlot
- c) Pinot Noir
- d) Cabernet Sauvignon

4) Which of the following regions is known for producing premium Riesling in Australia?

- a) Barossa Valley
- b) Clare Valley
- c) Hunter Valley
- d) McLaren Vale

5) Which of the following describes the typical climate of the Barossa Valley in Australia?

- a) Cool and maritime
- b) Hot and dry
- c) Mediterranean with warm, dry summers
- d) Continental with cold winters

## Answers

**1. a) Light alcohol and neutral flavour**

**2. c) Yarra Valley**

**3. d) Cabernet Sauvignon**

**4. b) Clare Valley**

**5. b) Hot and dry**