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# Chapter 45

## Fortified Muscats



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Muscat (number of varieties) = **low-med acid/perfumed aromas of orange blossom/rose/grape**

Climate: **warm with some cooling influence** (to preserve aroma)

2 styles: (1) youthful and unaged + (2) fully developed after extended period of ageing

### Youthful, unaged Muscats

- Med-gold/floral/aromatic/sweet (rarely luscious)
- **Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise (S. Rhone)**
  - Grapes picked ripe + healthy (no drying or varietal flavours masked)
  - After crushing, juice usually in contact with skin (for aromatic richness/intensity)
  - Fermentation is cool - stopped by fortification with 96% abv grape spirit = sweet wine
  - Stored in inert vessels before bottling (no oxygen contact)

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### Fully-developed, aged Muscats

- Amber → brown/sweet → luscious
- **Rutherglen (Aus)** - luscious style
  - Grapes picked when ripe + healthy (some raisining prior to picking for complexity - but must beware excessive rain can ruin Muscat aroma).
  - Fermentation on skins. If luscious - fortification may take place when wine at 2% abv.
  - Oxidative ageing (can last for decades)
    - Old wood (new wood ruins grape aroma) + large oak vessels
    - Age, wines amber → brown. Develop oxidative aromas. Some old wines may have young wine blended for aromatic lift before bottling.

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### Multiple Choice Practice Questions

1) Which grape variety is primarily used in the production of fortified Muscats?

- a) Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains
- b) Touriga Nacional

- c) Palomino
- d) Pedro Ximénez

2) Which of the following best describes the typical flavor profile of a youthful fortified Muscat?

- a) Dried fruit, nuts, and caramel
- b) Fresh floral aromas, citrus, and grape
- c) Smoke, earth, and leather
- d) Green apple, pear, and minerality

3) Which of the following is a key factor in the style of Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise?

- a) Long aging in oak barrels to encourage oxidative ageing
- b) Made from Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains and typically retains fresh, floral, and grapey aromas
- c) High levels of tannins and deep colour
- d) It is always made from dried grapes

4) Which of the following is true about the ageing process of a Rutherglen Muscat?

- a) It is typically aged in large stainless steel tanks to preserve fresh fruit flavours
- b) It undergoes long aging in oak barrels, often in warm conditions, to encourage the development of rich, complex flavours
- c) It is bottled immediately after fortification to retain its primary fruit characteristics
- d) It is always aged in a Solera system

5) In which region is Rutherglen Muscat, known for its rich and sweet style, primarily produced?

- a) Jerez, Spain
- b) Douro Valley, Portugal
- c) Rutherglen, Australia
- d) Samos, Greece

## Answers

**1. a) Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains**

**2. b) Fresh floral aromas, citrus, and grape**

**3. b) Made from Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains and typically retains fresh, floral, and grapey aromas**

**4. b) It undergoes long aging in oak barrels, often in warm conditions, to encourage the development of rich, complex flavours**

**5. c) Rutherglen, Australia**