EUROPEAN UNION

MORE THAN FOOD

Newsletter Edition 5

ENJOY IT'S FROM EUROPE

Uncorking Europe:

A Journey Through Wine and Culture

Disclaimer:
This communication is intended only for those above 25 years of age. Consumption of alcohol is injurious to health.
Be safe: Don't drink and drive.

Dear Readers,

Did you know that over 10 million Indians drink wine regularly? With a market now estimated to be valued at $238 million, wine has clearly become more than just a drink for Indians —it's an experience. As awareness increases about the nuances of reds, whites, rosés, and more, so does the appreciation for the craft behind each bottle.

Europe, the birthplace of the world's wine industry, is celebrated for its authentic, high-quality, safe, and sustainable wines. More so, they have gained popularity in India as they pair beautifully with the Indian cuisine. These versatile beverages enhance both casual meals and gourmet dining, offering a perfect balance of flavours.

In this edition of the 'More Than Food' newsletter, we'll explore the fascinating traditions of European wine harvesting, the importance of geographical indications, the design of wine bottles, and much more. Get ready to dive into the world of wine, with us as there's no better place to start with than Europe, especially at this time of year.

Cheers!

Old World wines VS New World wines

The terms 'Old World' and 'New World' are often used in the context of wines to highlight distinct vinicultural traditions. 'Old World' refers to countries in Europe, the Mediterranean region, and the Middle East – birthplaces of winemaking, where centuries-old traditions and deeply ingrained expertise shape the wines. This legacy of craftsmanship results in wines that often emphasize terroir and heritage. The 'New World', on the other hand, refers to countries such the US, New Zealand, Argentina, Chile, Australia, and South Africa, where viniculture, although newer, has evolved with innovative techniques and a spirit of experimentation that brings a fresh perspective to winemaking. However, in recent years, even Old World producers have embraced advanced technologies and sustainable practices to enhance quality and respond to changing climate conditions.

Old World wines are usually named after the regions where they are produced; for e.g., Bordeaux PDO from France, Moravské PGI from Czech Republic, and Crémant de Wallonie PDO from Belgium. New World wines, meanwhile, are typically named after the main grape they're made from. Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay, for instance, are made from the respective grape varieties of the same name.

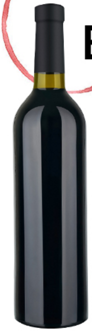
Differences in climate, soil, and other environmental factors make a difference to the taste of wines. Due to the cooler climate prevalent in the Old World countries, especially those in Europe, grapes don't ripen as much. This results in more light-bodied wines with high acidity and low alcohol content. However, these regions can vary widely, with some areas producing richer, fuller styles New World regions, with their relatively warmer climates, yield ripe grapes with higher sugar content, resulting in full-bodied, fruity wines with low acidity and high alcohol content. Yet, even within these regions, diverse microclimates and winemaking techniques can yield wines that defy the usual distinctions, offering a broad spectrum of styles and expressions.

Did you know?

As the wine, so the bottle.

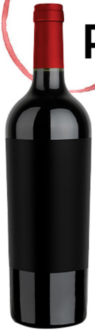
The thickness and the shape of a wine bottle is often determined by, and unique to, the type of wine it contains. Let's explore this connection in a bit more depth.

Bordeaux Bottle

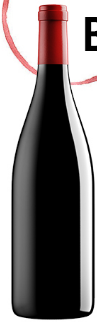


This is possibly the most iconic and widely recognized wine bottle shape. It has straight sides, a high shoulder, and a moderately long neck. This bottle shape is used for red wines like Cabernet Sauvignon, known for its full body, rich tannins, and bold dark fruit flavours, and Merlot, which typically offers a softer, more approachable profile with notes of plum, black cherry, and a smooth, velvety texture. Among white wines, this bottle shape is often used for Sauvignon Blanc, appreciated for its crisp acidity, refreshing citrus and green apple notes, and Semillon, which can range from dry to sweet, often with a fuller body and flavours of lemon, honey, and a waxy texture. The high shoulder helps in catching sediment when decanting older wines.

Port Bottle

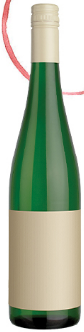


Port bottles are similar to Bordeaux bottles, but have a bulbous neck, which catches sediment when decanting aged Port wines. Port bottles are also used for other fortified wines such as Madeira PDO from Portugal (noted for its rich, complex flavours with a balance of sweetness and acidity) and Sherry PDO from Spain (which ranges from dry to sweet, often showcasing nutty and dried fruit notes).



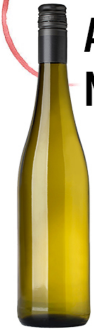
Burgundy Bottle

Characterized by gently sloping shoulders and a wide base, this bottle is used for wines from the Bourgogne PDO region of France for wines specifically made from the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grape varieties. The wide base provides a larger surface area for sediment to collect, which is particularly helpful for Pinot Noir, a red wine known for its delicate structure and subtle tannins that can often produce fine sediment over time.



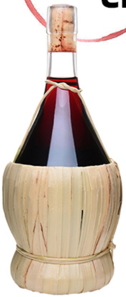
Rhône Bottle

Used for the bold, spicy Syrah and the fruity, versatile Grenache wines from the Rhône Valley such as Côtes du Rhône PDO from France, the Rhône bottle has a more tapered and elongated neck than the Burgundy bottle, giving it an elegant appearance.



Alsace/ Mosel Bottle

Also known as the German flute, the bottle is tall and slender and has a gently tapered neck. This shape is commonly used for refined, crisp, and floral Riesling and Gewürztraminer wines from the regions of Alsace PDO from France and Mosel PDO from Germany, and other aromatic white wines. The design enhances the elegance and aroma of these wines.



Chianti Bottle

Hailing from the Chianti PDO region in Italy, this bottle has round body and a bulged bottom that's covered with a close-fitting straw basket. The basket provides a flat base for the glass and extra protection during transportation and handling. The Chianti also goes by the name "Fiasco" – a reference to the design that makes it impossible for the bottle again to stand upright on its own.

Bocksbeutel

The Bocksbeutel has the shape of a

Champagne Bottle

flattened ellipsoid. It has a short neck and often features an embossed badge on one shoulder, representing the name of its domain. It is commonly used for the dry, fruity white wines hailing from Franken PDO and Baden PDO regions in Germany but is also used for some Portuguese wines – in particular rosés – and in rare cases for some Italian and Greek wines like Πελοπόννησος / Peloponnese PGI.

The Champagne bottle is designed specifically for sparkling wines. The thick glass and pronounced punt enable it to withstand the pressure created by the carbonation of the wine. This bottle shape is also used for Champagnes and other sparkling wines, making it perfect for a crisp Cava PDO from Spain and a light and aromatic Prosecco PDO from Italy.

Dispelling some wine-related misconceptions

Misconception 1 -

The older the vintage, the better the wine

While certain wines do improve with age, not all of them are designed to do so. Most white wines and lighter reds should be consumed within a few years of their packaging.

Misconception 2 -

“Reserve” or “Reserva” wines are always of superior quality

In some countries, “Reserva” wines signify compliance with specific aging requirements. However, in some countries, “Reserve” is not a legally regulated term and can be used at the winemaker's discretion. The term, therefore, does not guarantee superior quality.

Misconception 3 -

A bottle with a screw cap signifies a lower-quality wine compared to one with a cork

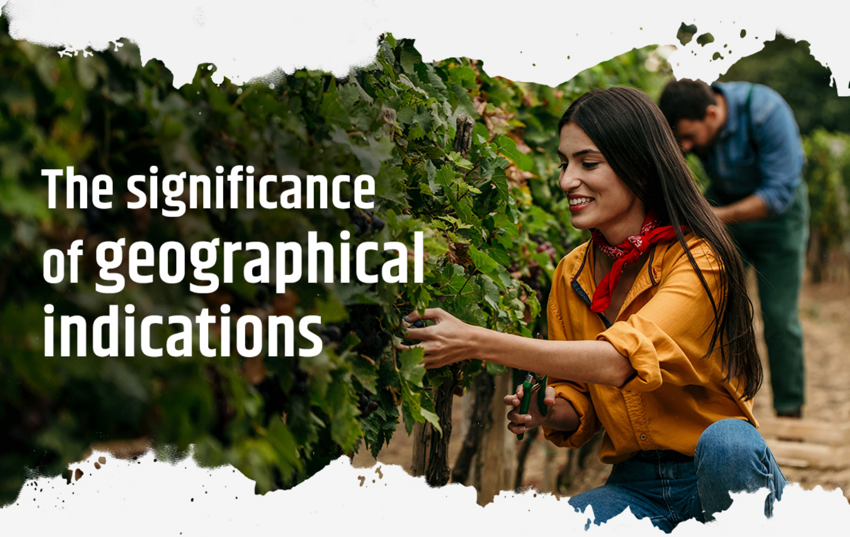
Over the years, many winemakers – even the high-quality ones – have taken to using screw caps for the practical advantages they offer over corks. This includes reducing the risk of cork taint and preserving the wine’s freshness better and for longer.

Misconception 4 -

Quality European wines are only produced in France, Spain, and Italy

The EU boasts a rich diversity of wines, from reds, whites, and rosés to sparkling, fortified, and dessert varieties. Regions like Cotnari PDO in Romania, known for its rich, sweet white wines with distinctive honeyed notes; Twente PDO in the Netherlands, producing fresh, vibrant whites with a crisp finish; and Karpatská perla PDO in Slovakia, celebrated for its lively, mineral-driven whites with a zesty acidity, exemplify the wide array of offerings across Member States. Each of these regions highlight the unique characteristics and traditions of their respective wine cultures.

The significance of geographical indications



You will often see some geographical indications on the labels of European wines. From the golden-green Croatian Graševina PDO white wine to Hungary's honey-scented Tokaji PDO, these terms signify that a particular quality, reputation, or other characteristic of the wine, is due to its geographical region. This system, created by the EU, guarantees the origin and the specific quality of each wine. Let us examine some of the labels and what they signify.

Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)

PDO is the highest quality level in the EU's wine classification system. A PDO wine is made from grapes grown in a specific geographical area and is often labelled with the region's name. It follows strict production methods and regulations and meets quality standards that reflect the unique characteristics and traditions of the region.

Almost every EU member country has its own quality classifications, corresponding to PDO. Here are some of the more significant ones.

France: AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) includes Bordeaux with its rich reds, Burgundy's exceptional Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, and Champagne's renowned sparkling wines.

Italy: DOC (Denominazione di Origine Controllata) and DOCG (Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita) feature Barolo's powerful reds, Chianti Classico's balanced reds, and Brunello di Montalcino's full-bodied reds.

Spain: DO (Denominación de Origen) and DOCa (Denominación de Origen Calificada), with Rioja's versatile reds and Priorat's bold, complex wines.

Portugal: IPR (Indicação de Proveniência Regulamentada) and DOC (Denominação de Origem Controlada), including Douro's rich reds and port, Alentejo's robust reds and aromatic whites, and Vinho Verde's fresh, crisp whites.

Germany: QbA (Qualitätswein bestimmter Anbaugebiete) and 'Prädikatswein' (formerly 'QmP'), with categories like Kabinett's delicate profile, Spätlese's richer flavours, Auslese's sweet characteristics, Beerenauslese's intense sweetness, Trockenbeerenauslese's complexity, and Eiswein's unique richness.

Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)

PGI wines, while still adhering to quality standards, have more lenient production regulations than PDO wines. They are made from grapes grown within a broader geographical area and may use a wider range of grape varieties and winemaking techniques.

Like in the case of the PDO label, most EU member countries have their own equivalent of the PGI label too. These include:

France: IGP (Indication Géographique Protégée) wines include Pays d'Oc, known for its diverse, approachable wines, and Côtes de Gascogne, celebrated for its crisp and fruity whites.

Italy: IGT (Indicazione Geografica Tipica) wines feature Toscana, offering a range of versatile reds and whites, and Veneto, known for its easy-drinking and accessible wines.

Spain: VdlT (Vino de la Tierra) wines include Castilla, with its broad selection of reds and whites, and Extremadura, recognized for its regional diversity and quality.

Portugal: VR (Vinho Regional) wines, such as Açores, known for its unique island-grown varieties and distinct flavours.

Germany: Landwein label wines include Landwein Rhein, offering approachable, regionally expressive wines, and Landwein Neckar, known for its local character and quality.

There are more than 1,700 European wines with PDO and PGI protections[1]. Understanding these quality indicators can help you with your wine selection and appreciation.

For business or leisure, look no further than the EU for your wines!

The EU accounts for 45% of world's wine-growing areas, 65% of wine production, 57% of global wine consumption and 70% of exports, making it the world leader in each of these categories[2]. Whether you are a hospitality professional, looking to create delightful experiences for customers; or a trader seeking the finest wines to import; or a food lover looking to elevate a dining experience to something special, look no further than the EU for your needs. Know more about us on the below platforms, and feel free to get in touch.

sources

1
https://more-than-food-india.campaign.europa.eu/document/download/b1d578dd-87fb-4e76-9a6f-920543ffb86b_en?filename=More%20than%20Food_Factsheet.pdf
https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/eambrosia/geographical-indications-register/

2
https://more-than-food-india.campaign.europa.eu/document/download/b1d578dd-87fb-4e76-9a6f-920543ffb86b_en?filename=More%20than%20Food_Factsheet.pdf

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