

THE SWISS WINE COUNTRY

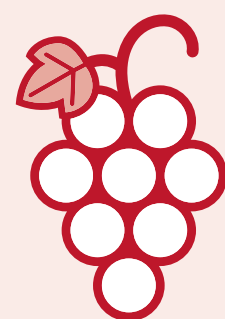
Switzerland is located in the heart of the Alps. This small country of 8 million inhabitants is surrounded by France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Austria and Italy. You probably know Switzerland for its watches, its chocolate and its alpine landscapes, but did you know that Switzerland produces some of the best wines? Switzerland's wine country is a collection of micro-climates, soil types, traditions, grape varieties and know-how, all of which vary from one municipality to another. To provide a framework for this diversity, Switzerland's 14,696 hectares of vineyards are divided into six regions. Four of these wine regions – Valais, Vaud, Geneva and Ticino – carry the names of the cantons where they are located. The Three Lakes Region covers the vineyards around the lakes of Neuchâtel, Morat and Bienn. The 16 wine-producing cantons in German-speaking Switzerland come together in one region which has three sections: west, central and east.

6 WINE REGIONS



VALAIS	VAUD	GERMAN-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND	GENEVA	TICINO	THREE LAKES
ALPINE TERROIR AND INDIGENOUS GRAPES	THE HOME OF CHASSELAS	PINOT NOIR AND MÜLLER-THURGAU	A VINEYARD FULL OF CHARM	THE LAND OF MERLOT BY EXCELLENCE	THREE EXPRESSIONS FOR THE SAME IDENTITY
VINEYARD AREA 4'732 HA	VINEYARD AREA 3'783 HA	VINEYARD AREA 2'619 HA	VINEYARD AREA 1'374 HA	VINEYARD AREA 1'159 HA	VINEYARD AREA 1'110 HA
RED/WHITE DISTRIBUTION 60% / 40%	RED/WHITE DISTRIBUTION 35% / 65%	RED/WHITE DISTRIBUTION 65% / 35%	RED/WHITE DISTRIBUTION 56% / 44%	RED/WHITE DISTRIBUTION 90% / 10%	RED/WHITE DISTRIBUTION 56% / 44%
MAIN RED GRAPE VARIETIES	MAIN RED GRAPE VARIETIES	MAIN RED GRAPE VARIETIES	MAIN RED GRAPE VARIETIES	MAIN RED GRAPE VARIETIES	MAIN RED GRAPE VARIETIES
PINOT NOIR 28% GAMAY 13% SYRAH 4%	PINOT NOIR 12% GAMAY 9% GAMARET 4%	PINOT NOIR 52% MERLOT 1% CABERNET JURA 1%	GAMAY 21% PINOT NOIR 12% GAMARET 9%	MERLOT 78% CABERNET FRANC 1% PINOT NOIR 1%	PINOT NOIR 41% GAMARET 2% GARANOIR 2%
MAIN WHITE GRAPE VARIETIES	MAIN WHITE GRAPE VARIETIES	MAIN WHITE GRAPE VARIETIES	MAIN WHITE GRAPE VARIETIES	MAIN WHITE GRAPE VARIETIES	MAIN WHITE GRAPE VARIETIES
CHASSELAS 17% JOHANNISBERG (STYLIANER) 6% PETITE ARVINE 5%	CHASSELAS 60% CHARDONNAY 1% PINOT GRIS 1%	MÜLLER-THURGAU 15% CHARDONNAY 3% SAUVIGNON BLANC 3%	CHASSELAS 20% CHARDONNAY 8% PINOT BLANC 3%	CHARDONNAY 4% SAUVIGNON BLANC 2% VIOGNIER 0.4%	CHASSELAS 23% PINOT GRIS 4% CHARDONNAY 4%
OTHER EMBLEMATIC GRAPE VARIETIES	OTHER EMBLEMATIC GRAPE VARIETIES	OTHER EMBLEMATIC GRAPE VARIETIES	OTHER EMBLEMATIC GRAPE VARIETIES	OTHER EMBLEMATIC GRAPE VARIETIES	OTHER EMBLEMATIC GRAPE VARIETIES
• CORNALIN • PAÏEN/HEIDA (SAVAGNIN BLANC) • HUMAGNE ROUGE • AMIGNE • REZE	• GARANOIR • SERVAGNIN DE MORGES • PLANT ROBERT • DORAL • CHARMONT	• RÄUSCHLING • COMPLETER	• SAUVIGNON BLANC • ALIGOTÉ • MONDEUSE NOIRE • KERNER • SCHEUREBE • CHARMONT	• BONDOLA	• TRANINER • FREIBURGER

YOU KNOW SWISS WATCHES AND CHOCOLATE, BUT DO YOU KNOW SWISS WINES?



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SWISS WINE



enjoy with moderation

HISTORY

Located in the heart of Europe, the territory that corresponds to present-day Switzerland became part of the Roman Empire in 58 B.C. In many timelines, the beginnings of helvetic viticulture are dated to this date. Historical research shows, however, that certain Celtic tribes such as the Raurarchs (around Basel) or the Allobroges (near Geneva) mastered the art of winemaking before the Roman occupation. From the origins to the present day, this chronology presents some of the most important dates in Swiss viticulture.

TEXT – Alexandre Truffer

58 B.C.

Helvetia becomes Roman and grapevines appear in what is present-day Switzerland.

515

The King of Burgundy founds the Abbey of Saint-Maurice which still has vines 1,500 years after its foundation.

1141

The Bishop of Lausanne invites religious orders to clear the Lavaux and to plant vines.

1291

The communities of the alpine valleys of Uri, Schwyz and Nidwalden sign a pact of mutual support which is considered the founding document of the Swiss Confederation.

1313

A notarial deed mentions three names of grape varieties: Rèze, Humagne and Neyrun.

1419

A refugee in Saint-Prex, Marie de Bourgogne, offers Pinot Noir plants to winegrowers.

1654

The term Chasselas appears for the first time in a book.

1797

The Confrérie des Vignerons organises a party in Vevey to thank its winegrowers.

1811

In Neuchâtel, the Bouvier brothers embark on the production of sparkling wines.

1816

The Tambora volcano causes a «year without summer». In Lausanne, the harvest is carried out on 12 November.

1863

Powdery mildew, from America, arrives in Swiss vineyards.

1871

Phylloxera arrives in Geneva. Half of the Swiss vines will never be replanted.

1882

It is discovered that copper sulphate (Bordeaux mixture) combats the mildew which arrived in Europe in 1878.

1886

Mildew crosses the Swiss border and complicates the lives of Swiss winemakers.

1890

The agronomic research station of German-speaking Switzerland settles in Wädenswil.

1924

In his «Course for farmers», Rudolf Steiner lays the foundations of biodynamics.

1948

Creation of a school which, in Lausanne, then in Changins, provides higher education in viticulture, oenology and arboriculture.

1973

Foundation of FIBL, the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture, in the canton of Aargau.

1981

Creation of Bio Suisse whose products carry the «Bud» label.

1986

Developed by Agroscope, sexual confusion is used to combat parasitic butterflies that attack the vine, without insecticides.

1993

Creation of the Vitiswiss label, which charts the practices of integrated viticulture.

2007

The terraced vineyards of Lavaux are listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

2013

Agroscope in Pully creates a new-generation hybrid grape variety, Divico, which combines resistance and quality.

2014

The Suzukii fly, from Japan, causes significant damage just before the harvest.

2018

Born from the same parents as Divico, Divona is the first multi-resistant white grape variety.

2021

Creation of regulations covering production of «natural wine» in Switzerland.

SWITZERLAND: A WINE COUNTRY

SOURCE: Federal Office for Agriculture, Report on the Year of Wine, 2021

THE SWISS WINE COUNTRY IN NUMBERS...

14'696
HECTARES



2'500
WINEMAKERS

62
AOCs

15'000
VINEYARD OWNERS



252
REGISTERED GRAPE VARIETES



57%
RED



43%
WHITE

100 MIO
LITRES OF WINE PRODUCED PER YEAR

2 MAIN GRAPE VARIETES

PINOT NOIR (3950 HECTARES)
CHASSELAS (3650 HECTARES)



33 L
ANNUAL CONSUMPTION PER CAPITA

WINE AT EVERY ALTITUDE

Vines in Visperterminen, in the upper Valais, grow at an altitude of up to 1100 metres. The vineyards that are mostly planted with Savagnin Blanc, called Heida or Pâien here. On the other side of the Alps, in the Ticino, vine parcels planted in the Maggia delta grow at just 200 metres above sea level. Between these two extremes vines can be found at all altitudes, in general preferring slopes on the banks of rivers or overlooking the lakes. The most notable of these vineyards appears to plunge directly into the lake: Lavaux, in canton Vaud, which in 2007 was registered as a Unesco World Heritage Site.



THE QUEST FOR WATER



Outside the Alpine regions most Swiss vineyards overlook a lake or a river. In Zurich you even find vineyards on the tiny island of Ufenau, which has belonged to the Einsiedeln convent for more than 1,000 years. In the mountain regions it's often necessary to look for water to irrigate land which is not very deep and with runoff. The semi-desert climate of the Valais has pushed its inhabitants to build a very dense irrigation network, the "bisses", to divert the water from the waterfalls and rushing streams to the cultivated land. Whether they are still used for agriculture or not, the bisses are also greatly appreciated as hiking trails.

THOUSANDS OF TERRACED VINEYARDS

In the Valais alone there are an estimated 3,000 kilometres, if you lined them up, of terraced vineyard stone walls. You could probably double the figure if you add to these the walls built by winemakers in Lavaux, Chablais in Vaud, Ticino and Graubünden, to name only the main areas. The most spectacular ones overlook the capital of Valais and are made of dry stone walls – no mortar, no cement, simply an ancient know-how to fight the combination of the passage of time, gravity and the elements. The walls are emblematic of the vineyards, but they also serve as a refuge for numerous representatives of the local fauna.



TOP WINES THANKS TO ROCKSLIDES



In 1584, a landslide buried the village of Yvorne, in canton Vaud's Chablais region, and the vineyards that surrounded it. Chasselas grapes that are notable for their mineral aromas have since grown on this terroir where the soil is composed of debris carried by the catastrophe, locally known as "ovaille", a regional term that means disaster. Landslides elsewhere, far older, created the right conditions for the development of very high quality vineyards. Among the more spectacular: the Bürgli vineyards in Glaris, those of Domat Ems in Graubünden, the Val Blenio in Ticino and those at the foot of the Jura mountains, in the Bernese part of the Three Lakes region.

SPECIFICITIES OF SWITZERLAND

In Switzerland, several grape varieties have traditional names that can sometimes be confusing.

VARIETIES	APPELLATIONS
CHASSELAS	FENDANT, GUEDEL
MÜLLER-THURGAU	RIESLING-SILVANER
SILVANER	JOHANNISBERG
PINOT GRIS	ERMITAGE
MARSANNE BLANCHE	MALVOISIE
SAVAGNIN BLANC	PÂIEN, HEIDA

BIO LABELS

BIO INSPECTA AND BIO TEST AGRO

Some wineries follow the directives of the Federal organic ordinance (1997), which more or less reflects 1991 European legislation and regulations covering organic farming. This legislation, which is less restrictive than the Bourgeon label, does not allow the use of the Bio Suisse label. Nevertheless, "Federal Bio" producers are allowed to mention organic and/or their Bio Inspecta or Bio Test Agro certification on their bottles.



BIO SUISSE

Bio Suisse created the Bourgeon label in 1981, which goes beyond international regulations and the Federal Ordinance on Organic Agriculture. The entire estate must be cultivated organically. To promote biodiversity, 7% of the land on the estate must be pasture, dry stone walls, hedges or trees. To protect the vines against diseases and pests, the Bourgeon winegrowers use plant and mineral preparations and promote populations of beneficial insects. The soils retain their character and fertility because they do not use synthetic pesticides or chemical fertilizers. In the cellars, the winegrowers are allowed three times less additives or treatments than their European organic colleagues. Only a few natural additives are explicitly allowed in the wine-making process. More than 540 Swiss wineries have this label.



Demeter is the label for wine from biodynamic cultivation certified according to the Demeter guidelines. Biodynamic cultivation strengthens the soil, plants, animals and people. In addition to organic production and the promotion of ecological diversity in the vineyard, biodynamic producers use biodynamic preparations that vitalize the life of the soil and strengthen the vines. There are very few corrective measures possible in the cellar. This is why the quality of the grapes and the meticulous work in the vineyard and in the cellar are of paramount importance. About sixty vineyards have the label.

Switzerland. Naturally.

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