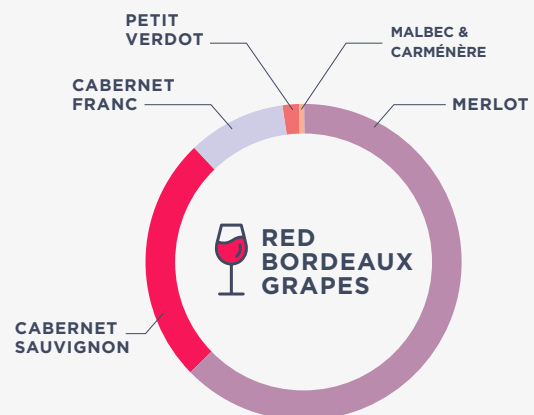
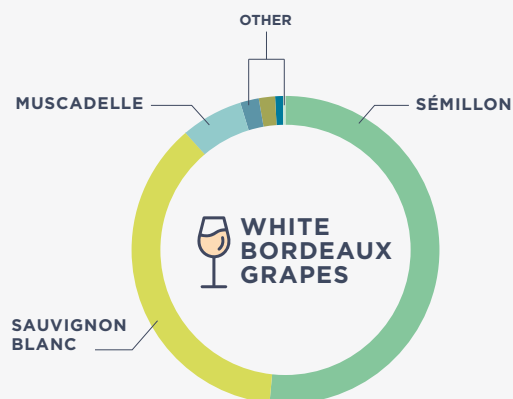
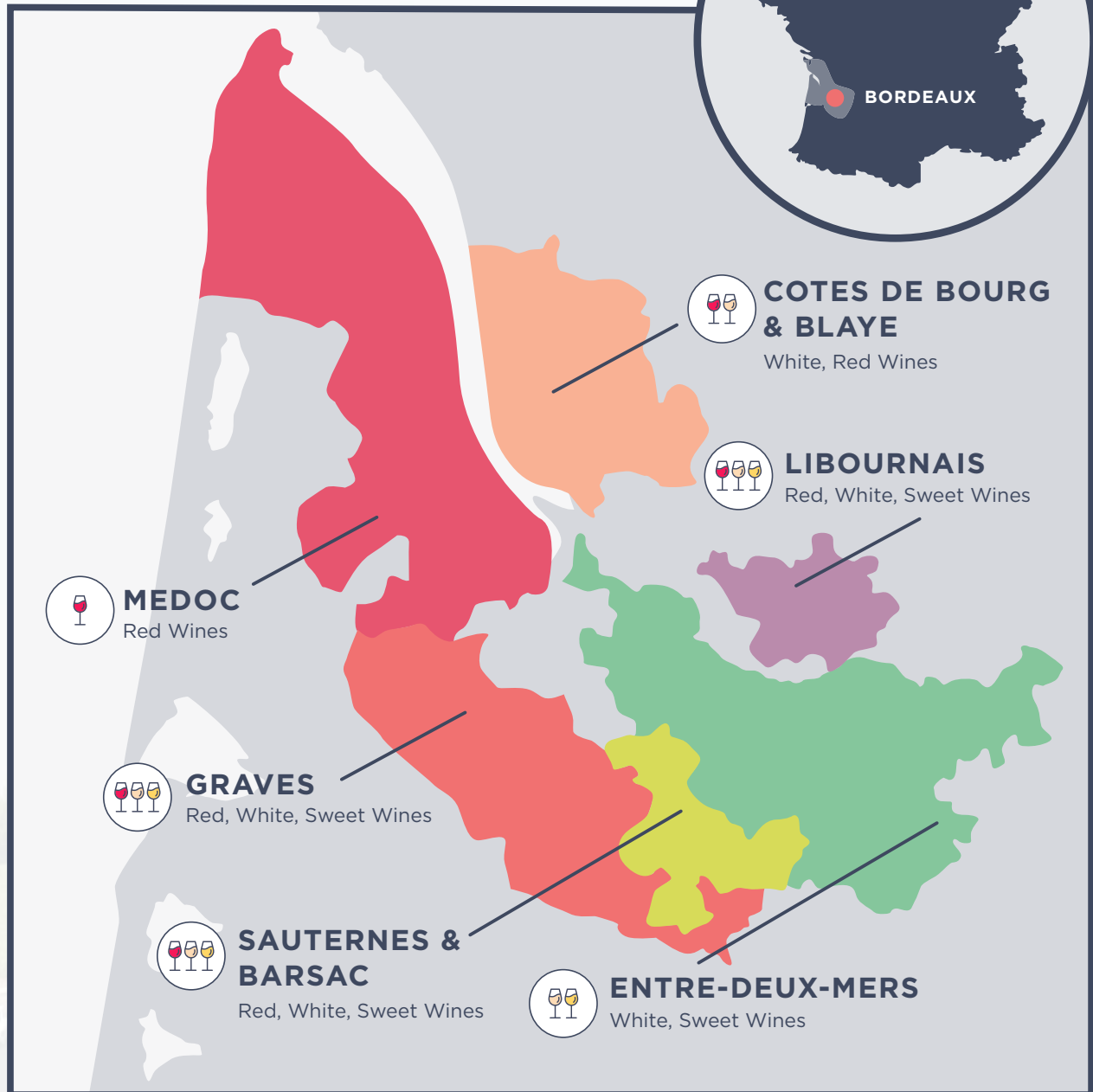


Discover BORDEAUX



REGIONAL FACTS

RED



66%	— MERLOT
22.5%	— CABERNET SAUVIGNON
9.5%	— CABERNET FRANC
2%	— OTHER RED VARIETIES

WHITE



47%	— SEMILLON
45%	— SAUVIGNON BLANC
5%	— MUSCADELLE
2%	— OTHER WHITE VARIETIES

Much like New Zealand, the weather in Bordeaux is never exactly the same from year to year. This results in higher levels of vintage variation and is one reason why most Bordeaux wines are blends. The overall wine style will remain the same, but if Cabernet Sauvignon doesn't do well one year, more Merlot may be added to the blend or vice versa. With six red and seven white grapes to choose from, this gives winemakers lots of flexibility!



Botrytis is a fungus that attacks grapes and sucks the moisture out of the berries. It can either be a winemaker's worst nightmare or best friend. If conditions are too wet, it's called Grey Rot and causes the grapes to split and spoil. But if conditions are just right, it's considered Noble Rot and actually concentrates grape sugars and enhances their flavours. It's a common occurrence in the dessert wine regions of Bordeaux and contributes honeycomb and ginger flavours to those wines.



Bordeaux is known for full-bodied well-structured red wines with chewy tannins. Many wineries will age their wines in barrel for at least a year and also age them in bottle for a time before releasing them to the public. This helps soften the acidity and tannins and lets the fruit and oak flavours fully integrate. Because these wines can age for 10 -30 years, some people treat them like collectors' items. So, it's not unusual to find them on an auction block. If you're not that patient, that's alright. There's heaps of approachable wines out there that are ready to drink right now!



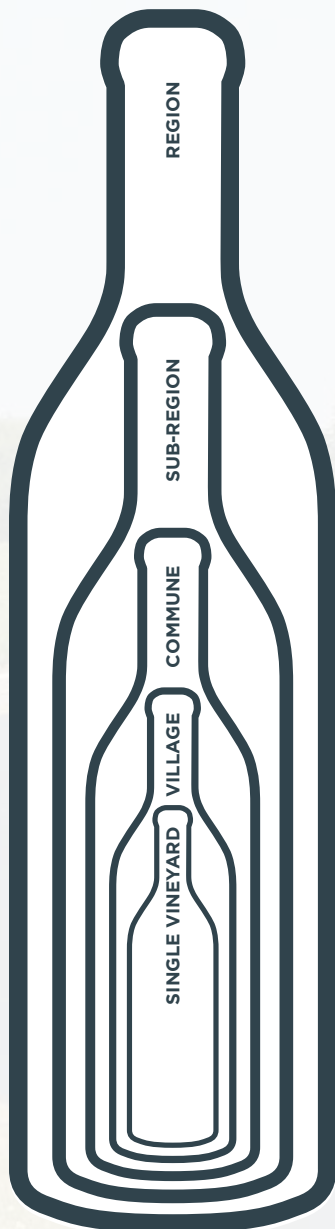
In the late-1800s, Bordeaux was hit by a double whammy of fungal diseases and phylloxera, a tiny insect with a big appetite for grape vines. They discovered remedies for these new scourges, but the industry didn't bounce back fully until after WWII. Since then, it's regained its sterling reputation on the world stage.



Over the years, the French have tried to determine which estates are Bordeaux's absolute best. There are several different classification systems, but the most prestigious is the 1855 Classification commissioned by Napoleon III in 1855 for the World's Fair. This ranked 60 wine producers into 5 categories. The "First Growths" were thought to be the best wines of the time and are still considered to be some of the region's top wines to this day. It may come as a surprise, but the classification has essentially remained unchanged since 1855. Not to be outdone, the region of Saint-Émilion created their own system in 1954. However, they revisit these rankings every 10 years, which has caused its own unique set of challenges.

BORDEAUX REGION LABEL TIPS

In France, producers will list the most specific region they can on the bottle. So, if a wine is from AOC Margaux, it won't say AOC Médoc or even AOC Bordeaux. It'd be like if you bought a bottle of Central Pinot and it just said Bannockburn without any reference to Central Otago whatsoever. This can make French wine labels challenging at first, but once you get a few regional names under your belt, they become a lot easier to navigate.



In Bordeaux, it is not uncommon for large estates to source fruit from vineyards they do not own or to send their wines off-site for bottling. Because of this, small - medium sized producers have long sought ways to differentiate themselves leading to the following AOC sub-classifications:

AOC Crus Artisans du Médoc: Small - medium sized estates where the wine is produced from estate vineyards with the winemaker actively involved in vineyard operations. They must also be estate bottled. Only properties in the Médoc can qualify.

AOC Crus Bourgeois du Médoc: Awarded based on the quality of wine produced, how consistently the estate can achieve that quality level, and the growing practices used. Only properties in the Médoc can qualify.

AOC/AOP Bordeaux Supérieur: Holds producers to more stringent quality requirements than those at the AOC/AOP level. The grapes will typically be from lower yielding older vines, and the wine must be aged for a minimum of 12 months in barrel.

Appellation d'origine contrôlée / Appellation d'origine protégée (AOC/AOP): indicates the Region a wine originated from. In an NZ Context, you'd could say AOP Marlborough. However, unlike New Zealand, these regions often have legally binding restrictions and requirements for which grapes can be grown and how they are grown, harvested, and turned into wine.

Indication géographique protégée (IGP): allows winemakers more flexibility in the grapes and methods they use to make wine. You'll find this on the label when a wine is made from grapes coming from one or more AOC/AOP regions or when a wine does not 100% adhere to strict regional requirements an AOC/AOP designation requires. In a New Zealand context, you'd say IGP South Island if you were blending wines Sauv from Marlborough with Pinot Gris from Central Otago. These wines tend to be great values.

Vin de Pays (VDP): literally translates as country wine and is a category currently being phased out and replaced with the IGP designation. That said, you may still find it on a label here and there. It gave winemakers the same flexibility of IGP. These wines also tend to be great values.