ALL ABOUT
LANGUEDOC AOP WINES
Society of Wine Educators Conference

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Languedoc AOP Wines: Key Points

Wines to discover:

• **Authenticity** – blend of history, tradition and innovation
• **Diversity** – all styles and colors
• **Quality/Value** – great quality to price ratio
Languedoc AOP Wines: Key Points

Location and key influences

Sunshine, Winds, Little Rainfall and Geological Diversity

Pyrenees Mtns

‘Tramontane’ Wind

Cevennes Mtns

‘Marin’ Wind

Mediterranean Sea
Languedoc AOP Wines: Key Points - growth

154+% growth 2009-2013, volume and value
(*estimated total for 2014)
Double digit growth 2009 – 2012

LDC AOP Wine Imports to USA

Source: UbiFrance
LANGUEDOC AOP WINES: THE BASICS

• Largest wine region in France (Languedoc-Roussillon)
  – By area and volume of wine produced; 13.5 m hl produced = 148.5 million cases of wine
• South of France
  – Hugs Mediterranean coast, at the foothills of Pyrenees
  – Climate allows for a lot of organic production
• History of revolution and innovation
  – Area has always done things their own way, history of revolution (ex. Cathars)
  – Langue d’Oc = language of Oc (Occitania). Pre-dates modern French. Oc/Oui = yes!
  – Area of France that remains the most open to innovation in winemaking; many outsiders have bought land here
  – Many wine techniques have been “invented” in Languedoc
LANGUEDOC AOP WINES: THE BASICS

• Part of administrative region Languedoc-Roussillon
  – Languedoc 90% of the region (Roussillon = 10%)
  – Distinct from Roussillon in culture and other administrative details
  – Has its own organizations for winemaker and AOP concerns (CIVL vs CIVR)

• Key Grapes
  – Red: Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Carignan
  – White: Piquepoul, Grenache Blanc, Marsanne, Roussanne, Mauzac

• 5 Main Zones: Many microclimates and wine:
  – Mountain – in the north, more continental climate. Resembles Rhone
  – Coastal – strong Mediterranean influence, abundant sunshine, more lush wines
  – South – closest to Roussillon AOPs, more Carignan
  – Center – heart of the region
  – West – mix of continental and Atlantic influences, sparkling wines
Languedoc’s 5 Zones

- Center
- South
- Coastal
- West
- Mountain
Languedoc AOP Wines: The Details

Defining characteristics

- **Wine lake no longer**
  - Previously known for volume
  - Quality is now the focus

- **Affordable pricing**
  - Majority of Languedoc AOP wines are priced in $15-$20 range

- **Garrigue**
  - Mix of herbs that grow wild in the region: rosemary, thyme, sage, lavender, juniper
  - Aromas are often evidenced in the wines

- **Organic production**
  - 30% of France’s organic wine comes from Languedoc
Languedoc AOP Wines: The Details

What’s on the label?

- **Designations**
  - AOP = Appellation d’Origine Protégée (aka AOC, about 10% of region’s total production)
  - IGP – Indication Geographique Protégée
  - VdP – Vins de Pays (being phased out in favor of IGP)
- **Over 30 AOPs**
  - The CIVL (Conseil Interprofessionnel des Vins du Languedoc) represents the AOP sector and IGP – **but NOT IGP Pays d’Oc**
- **Segmentation of Languedoc AOP wines**
  - AOP Languedoc (since 2007): 30% of production. Regional appellation
  - Grands Vins du Languedoc: 60% of production, most AOPs fall in this “terroir driven” tier
  - Crus du Languedoc: 10% of production, only a few AOPs qualify for this top tier
These appellations are currently recognized as the Crus du Languedoc. All others, aside from AOP Languedoc, are Grands Vins du Languedoc

1. Corbières Boutenac
2. Faugères
3. La Clape
4. Minervois la Livinière
5. Saint Chinian Roquebrun
6. Saint Chinian Berlou
Languedoc Wines: Key AOPs – AOP Languedoc

  - What geographical area does this cover: Encompasses all AOP areas within Languedoc-Roussillon
  - What grapes can be included:
    - Must be a blend of at least 2 approved varieties
    - Reds/Rosés: Grenache Noir, (Lledoner Pelut), Syrah, Mourvedre, Cinsault, Carignan
    - Whites: Bourboulenc, Grenache Blanc, Roussanne, Marsanne, Vermentino, Clairette, Piquepoul
  - Other requirements:
    - All grapes must be grown in AOP delimited areas
    - Can only include approved varieties (this list is smaller than that for IGP wines)
Languedoc Wines: Key AOPs – Pic Saint Loup

- AOP Pic Saint Loup – “Closest to Rhone”
  - Zone: Mountain
  - Only approved for Red (90%) and Rosé (10%) wines. Whites can be AOP Languedoc
  - Rainfall is higher here than other areas, garrigue very noticeable and prevalent
  - Dominated by limestone soils and two particularly large escarpments
  - Key grapes:
    - Reds/Rosés: Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre (no more than 80% of any one variety)
  - Notable producers:
    - Chateau de Lascaux
    - Chateau La Roque
    - Chateau de Lancyre
    - Ermitage du Pic St Loup
    - Mas Foulaquier
    - Mas Bruguière
Languedoc Wines: Key AOPs – La Clape

- AOP La Clape – “Lush reds, unique whites”
  - Zone: Coastal
  - Cru as of 2015
  - Only approved for Red and White wines. Rosés can be AOP Languedoc. *Home to the most planting of Bourboulenc anywhere
  - One of the hottest and driest parts of France. Limestone and sand soils
  - Key grapes:
    - Reds: Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre (min 70%), Carignan and Cinsault
    - Whites: Bourboulenc* (min 40%), Clairette, Grenache Blanc, Marsanne, Roussanne, Piquepoul, Rolle
  - Notable producers:
    - Gerard Bertrand
    - Mas du Soleilla
    - Chateau des Karantes
Languedoc Wines: Key AOPs – Saint Chinian

• AOP Saint Chinian – “Naturally intense”
  – Zone: Center, Crus located within are AOP Saint Chinian Roquebrun and AOP Saint Chinian Berlou
  – Schist soil in the north, clay/limestone to the south. Mediterranean climate
  – Carignan features less than in either Corbières or Minervois
  – Key grapes:
    • Reds/Rosés: Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Lledoner Pelut (min 70%), Carignan, Cinsault
    • Whites: Grenache Blanc, Marsanne, Roussanne, Vermentino (90%)
  – Notable producers:
    • Caves de Roquebrun
    • Domaine Rimbert
    • Chateau Bousquette
    • Chateau Viranel
    • Laurent Miquel
Languedoc Wines: Key AOPs - Faugères

- AOP Faugères – “Mineral Reds”
  - Zone: Center
  - Cru as of 2015
  - Schist soils dominate the area, altitude is noticeable compared to nearby areas
  - Combination of wind and soils temper the warm climate’s influence on wines; lots of minerality
  - Key grapes:
    - Reds/Rosés: Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Carignan, Cinsault
    - Whites: Grenache Blanc, Roussanne, Marsanne, Vermentino
  - Notable producers:
    - Leon Barral
    - Abbaye Sylva Plana
    - Chateau la Liquière
Languedoc Wines: Key AOPs - Minervois

- AOP Minervois – “Marvelous Minervois”
  - Zone: Center, Cru located within is AOP Minervois la Livinière
  - Varied soils, though predominantly clay/limestone. All vineyards are south facing
  - More emphasis on Syrah compared to neighbor Corbières
  - Key grapes:
    - Reds/Rosés: Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre (min 60%), Carignan, Cinsault, Terret, Aspiran, Piquepoul (max 40%)
    - Whites: Marsanne, Roussanne, Macabeu, Bourboulenc, Clairette, Grenache Blanc, Vermentino, Muscat à Petits Grains
  - Notable producers:
    - Chateau d’Oupia
    - Chateau Maris
    - Chateau Sainte Eulalie
    - L’Ostal Blanc
Languedoc Wines: Key AOPs - Corbières

- AOP Corbières – “Heartland of Carignan”
  - Zone: South, Cru located within is AOP Corbières Boutenac
  - Approved for Reds (95%), Whites and Rosés
  - Largest appellation in Languedoc – in terms of area and volume of wine produced (4th largest in France)
  - Windy, hot. Emphasis on Carignan in reds
  - Key grapes:
    - Reds/Rosés: Carignan (max 50%), Grenache, Mourvèdre, Syrah, Lledoner Pelut, Cinsault (max 20% for reds, max 70% for rosés)
    - Whites: Grenache Blanc, Bourboulenc, Marsanne, Roussanne, Vermentino, Clairette, Terret, Muscat (max 10%)
  - Notable producers:
    - Ollieux Romanis
    - Domaine de Fontsainte
Other Notable AOPs
Languedoc Wines: Key AOPs – Terrasses du Larzac

- AOP Terrasses du Larzac – “High quality up and comer”
  - Zone: Mountain
  - Only approved for Red wines. Whites and Rosés can be AOP Languedoc
  - Marked by larger diurnal range, more continental climate
  - Varied soils. Producers regularly harvest at yields lower than permitted maximum = high quality, much critical acclaim
  - Key grapes:
    - Reds: Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre (min 60%), Carignan, Cinsault (max 30%)
  - Notable producers:
    - La Peira
    - Domaine du Pas de l’Escalette
    - Mas Julien
    - Mas de l’Écriture
Languedoc Wines: Key AOPs – Picpoul de Pinet

- AOP Picpoul de Pinet – “Picpoul, pick moules (mussels)!"
  - Zone: Coastal, Dominated by influence of nearby water, Bassin de Thau and Mediterranean
  - Only approved for White wines. Reds and Rosés can be AOP Languedoc, often IGP
  - Perfect partners for all seafood
  - Alluvial soils, warm temperate climate
  - Key grapes:
    - Whites: Piquepoul
  - Notable producers:
    - Les Costières de Pomerols
    - Domaine Félines Jourdan
    - Cave l’Ormarine
    - Chateau Saint Martin de la Garrigue
Languedoc Wines: Key AOPs - Fitou

• AOP Fitou – “Big, hearty reds from the South”
  – Zone: South
  – One of the oldest appellations in Languedoc, only approved for Red wines, others can be AOP Languedoc or IGP
  – Divided into 2 subzones:
    Maritime - Soils are clay/limestone near the water
    Haut - limestone/sandstone more inland
  – All Fitou must undergo a minimum aging period. Cannot be released until May following vintage and if oak aged, spend a minimum of 12 months in wood
  – Key grapes:
    • Reds: Carignan, Grenache (min 60%), Syrah, Mourvèdre
  – Notable producers:
    • Mont Tauch
Languedoc Wines: Key AOPs - Limoux

- AOP Limoux – “The original sparklers”
  - Zone: West
  - More continental climate (cool), soils are limestone with sandstone, quartz and clay
  - Sparkling wines are made in the traditional method, evidence dating to 1531 (pre-dates Champagne!)
  - Still whites and reds produced as well
  - Key grapes:
    - For AOP Blanquette: at least 90% Mauzac, up to 10% Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay
    - For AOP Crémant: min 40% Chardonnay, balance of Chenin Blanc, Mauzac and/or Pinot Noir
  - Notable producers:
    - Saint Hilaire
    - J. Laurens
    - Antech
    - Gerard Bertrand
    - Domaine Martinolles
Languedoc Wines: Key AOPs - Muscats

- AOP Muscats – “Sweet indulgences”
  - Zone: Central (AOP Muscat Saint Jean de Minervois) and Coastal (others)
  - 4 separate AOPs for production, one single grape permitted: Muscat à petits grains
  - Vins Doux Naturel, must is fortified with grape spirit
    - Finished wines: 11% residual sugar, 15-18% alcohol by volume
  - All grapes must be harvested by hand, no irrigation is allowed
- AOPs:
  - Muscat de Saint Jean de Minervois (smallest)
  - Muscat de Frontignan (largest and oldest)
  - Muscat de Lunel
  - Muscat de Mireval
- Notable producers:
  - Les Vignerons de la Mediterranée
Languedoc AOP Wines: Summary

Languedoc AOP Wines are prime for discovery:

• **Authenticity** – blend of history, tradition and innovation
• **Diversity** – all styles and colors
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Languedoc AOP Wines: Today’s Wines

1. Château de Flaugergues Les Comtes Blanc AOP Languedoc 2013
2. Château de la Negly La Brise Marine AOP La Clape 2014 (Cru)
3. Clos Bagatelle AOP Saint Chinian 2012 (Grand Vin)
4. Hecht & Bannier AOP Faugères 2011 (Cru)
5. Château Coupe Roses AOP Minervois 2011 (Grand Vin)
6. Château Maris Les Planels AOP Minervois la Livinière 2009 (Cru)
7. Domaine Faillenc Sainte Marie AOP Corbières 2013 (Grand Vin)
8. Ollieux Romanis Atal Sia AOP Corbières Boutenac 2011 (Cru)
Thank You!

For more information on Languedoc AOP Wines, please visit [www.languedocadventure.com](http://www.languedocadventure.com)

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