



# **Emerging International Varieties: A Comparative Blind Tasting Seminar**

**Presented by:**

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## Emerging International Varieties

“The single most exciting development in the wine world during the past 20 years is the rising availability of great wine grape varieties that were formerly limited to local consumption or constrained by antiquated production techniques. Now being propagated more carefully and treated to first rate production techniques, these emerging varieties offer strikingly delicious tastes of something that is novel—but often quite ancient as well.”

Jay Youmans MW

# Emerging Varieties Blind Tasting – White Wine

## Clue

Four single variety white wines, three European countries represented

## Your Mission

For each wine, try to determine:

- **Country**
- **Region of origin**
- **Grape variety**
- Take 5 minutes per wine, and after each one, we'll discuss and I will review the identity and review the wine, producer and variety

# Wine 1

## Your Thoughts?

- **Country?**
- **Region of origin?**
- **Grape variety?**
- **Additional Comments?**

# Wine One-Identity

## **Punta Crena Vermentino 2016, Riviera Ligure di Ponente, Liguria, Italy** (Kermit Lynch)

- Founded 1500 - Tommaso Ruffino represents the current family generation
- Village of Varigotti, Mediterranean coast
- Steep, terraced vineyards, 100-300 meters of above sea level
- 11 ha. vineyard, all within 1,200 meters of the sea, strong maritime influence on vines, sea breeze keeps grapes cool and dry; all organic viticultural practices
- Vineyard planted to 7 different indigenous varieties
- Small production, 4,200 total cases annually
- 1.5 ha. planted to Vermentino on red clay and gravel soil
- SS ferment, 4 mos. lees aging, no MLF, unfined, unfiltered

**Approx. Retail: \$28**



# VERMENTINO

- Widely grown in north western Italy, Sardinia and southern France
- DNA profiling shows it is identical to **Pigato**, **Favorita** and **Rolle**
- **France's Mediterranean coast** is most widely planted to Vermentino/Rolle: 11,660 acres (2011)
- Italy is second with 11,273 acres of Vermentino
- In Sardinia, Vermentino is the most planted white wine
- “Interest in indigenous white grape varieties has been a boon for growers along the Tuscan coast who had either the foresight or good fortune to plant Vermentino, for prices have been firm, with demand far outstripping supply.” **OCW**



**Vermentino in  
Gallura, Sardinia**



# Wine 2

## Your Thoughts?

- **Country?**
- **Region of origin?**
- **Grape variety?**
- **Additional Comments?**

# Wine Two-Identity

## **Bodegas Beronia Verdejo 2017, Rueda, Spain** (Gonzalez-Byass USA)

- Founded in 1973 by a group of business friends from Basque country
- They created their own gastronomic society (txoko)
- They decided to produce their own wine, specializing in Rioja
- 1982: Purchased by González Byass and began an expanding internationally
- Today, Beronia is one of the most internationally renowned Spanish wineries producing pure and traditional Rioja and Rueda wines
- **Verdejo**: one wine, from two harvests: early, producing a fresher wine with more herbaceous aromas-boxwood, grass and fennel; and a second, a few days later-riper grapes with stone fruit and other, more exotic fruits
- The wine is fermented in stainless steel and concrete tanks. The stainless steel gives the fresh fruit characteristics while the cement produces warmer and denser wines as a result of the greater lees contact

**Approx. Retail: \$12**



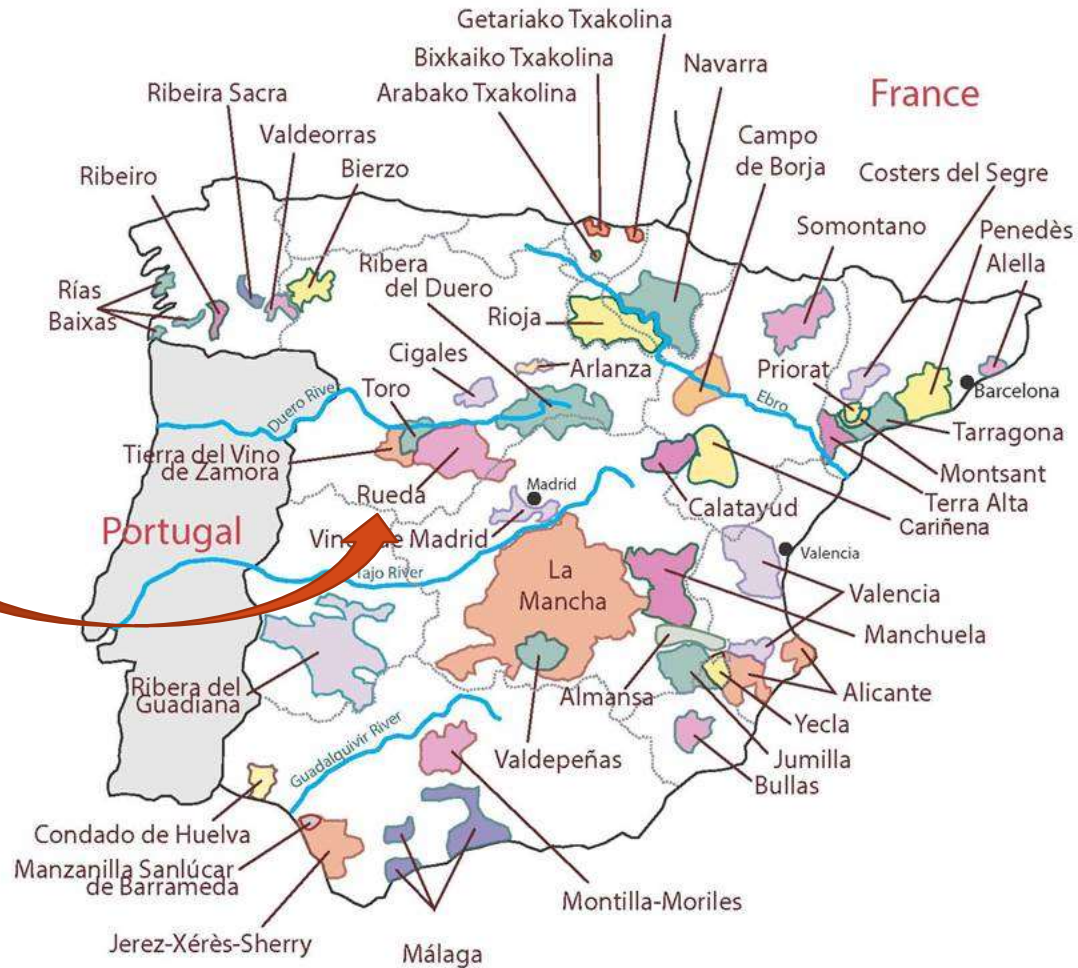
# VERDEJO

- Grown in Rueda for 1,000 years, coming from Africa circa 11<sup>th</sup> century
- Almost entirely indigenous to Spain, and popular
- Total plantings increased 300% from 2004 to 2011 to 44,460 acres
- **Rueda DO:** may be blended with up to 50% Sauvignon Blanc or Macabeo
- If labeled **Rueda Verdejo**, must be min. 85%-but often 100% single variety
- Over 1,500 vineyards growing Verdejo in Rueda today



# Major Wine Regions of Spain

**Rueda**



# Wine 3

## Your Thoughts?

- Country?
- Region of origin?
- Grape variety?
- Additional Comments?

# Wine Three-Identity

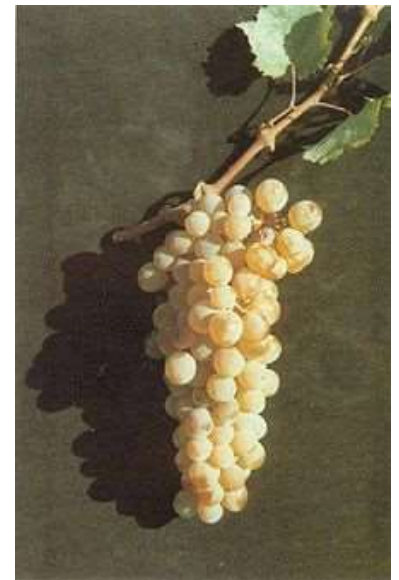
## **Idisma Drios Assyrtiko 2016, P.G.I. Drama** (R&R Selections)

- Idisma Drios is a series of wines made by Wine Art Estate, a winery located in Mikrochori, **Drama, Greece**, in the northeast of Greece
- Wine Art Estate was created by the civil engineer Yannis Papadopoulos and the architect Yannis Kalaitzidis in 1993 at small family vineyard
- The 65 acre vineyard is at a location known since ancient times for the cultivation of the vine, as indicated by the ruins of a Sanctuary of Dionysus.
- Assyrtiko and oak seem made for one another, and here we have a superb example of that relationship. Idisma Drios (sweetly oaked) reflects the rich sweetness imparted to the wine by its sojourn in oak barrels.
- After skin maceration, the must is fermented in new and once used French oak barrels and aged on the fine lees for 5 months

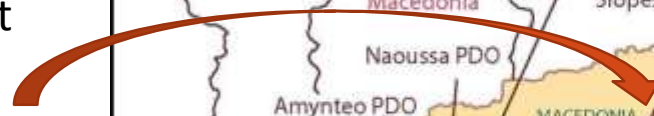
**Approx. Retail: \$18**

# ASSYRTIKO

- Likely native to the Cyclades island of Santorini but over the past 25 years, **Assyrtiko** has increasingly been planted on the **Greek** mainland, where it is trellised and yields are higher
- Vigorous, resistant to mildew and drought, compact clusters of large berries that retain high levels of tartaric acid even in Mediterranean heat; very late budding and late ripening
- 4,211 acres planted, 3<sup>rd</sup> most planted white variety after Savatiano and Roditis – comprises 70% of acreage on Santorini
- Both unoaked and oaked versions are popular
- “It is surely only a matter of time before this exciting variety goes traveling” ***Wine Grapes***



**PGI Drama zone**  
(est.1995)  
comprises the  
homonymous district  
at the northeastern  
end of  
Macedonia in  
northern Greece.



# Wine 4

## Your Thoughts?

- **Country?**
- **Region of origin?**
- **Grape variety?**
- **Additional Comments?**

# Wine Four-Identity

**Cantine Cellaro Lumà Grillo 2017,**

**Sambuca di Sicilia, Sicily** (Vin Divino dba Gonzalez-Byass USA)



- Cantine Cellaro is located in **Sambuca di Sicilia**, 40 miles southwest of Palermo. This region has been producing grapes for centuries. The vineyards run up to 600 meters above sea level.
- Cantine Cellaro has a special arrangement with the many growers in this region. The winemaking team carefully selects the best portions of each vineyard depending on clones, position in the vineyard and age of vines. They then direct the farming of these vineyard rows including reducing the yield per vine, to ensure the highest quality grapes.
- Our label features the snail (**Luma**) which lives in the vineyards and is evidence of the clean and natural farming which takes place.

**Approx. \$13 retail**



# GRILLO

- Written mention and DNA studies show Grillo is a fairly recent offspring of **Catarratto Bianco** and **Muscat of Alexandria (Zibibbo)**
- Grillo is genetically identical to Liguria's Rossese Bianco
- Vigorous, productive, cold resistant, mid-ripening, susceptible to powdery mildew
- Grown mainly on western Sicily, a component of Marsala, but increasingly used for varietal wine
- Grown elsewhere in Italy but vast majority (over 10,000 acres) in Sicily
- "Increasingly popular high-quality, full-bodied western Sicilian white"

## *Wine Grapes*



# Cantine Cellaro



# Emerging Varieties Blind Tasting – Red Wine

## Clue

Four single variety red wines, four countries represented

## Your Mission

For each wine, try to determine:

- **Country**
- **Region of origin**
- **Grape variety**
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# Wine 5

## Your Thoughts?

- Country?
- Region of origin?
- Grape variety?
- Additional Comments?

# Wine Five-Identity

## Setzer Zweigelt 2015, Weinviertel, Austria

(Michael Skurnik Wines)



- Setzer is located in Hohenwarth (“high observation point”) a winemaking town since 1360
- Setzer was founded in 1705 and is one of Austria’s oldest continuously run, family owned estates
- The 15 ha. Vineyard is at 400 meters above sea level, with sandy soil of limestone and gravel subsoil
- The vineyard is sustainably farmed, avoiding chemical pesticides and fertilizers
- Fermentation is in stainless steel tanks, and spontaneous via ambient yeast
- No new oak is used in the maturation process

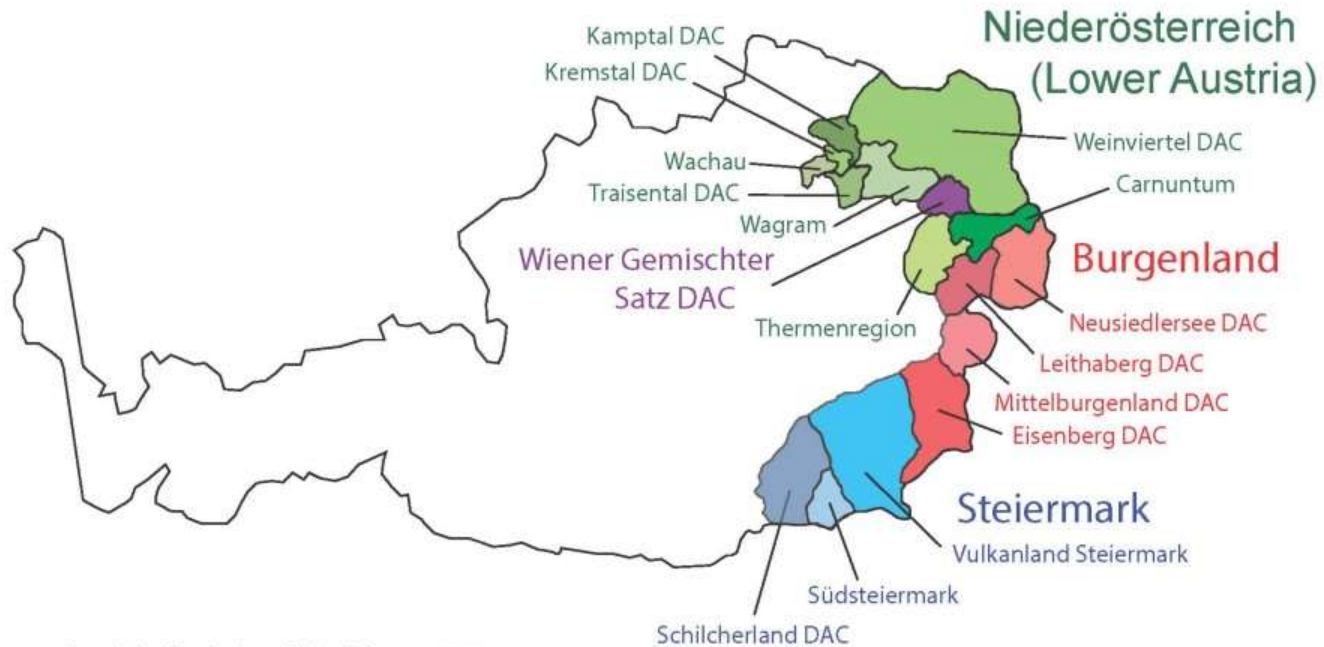
**Approx. \$30 retail**

# ZWEIGELT

- A crossing of Blaufränkisch and Saint-Laurent (1922 - Fritz Zweigelt)
- A grandchild of the prolific French varieties Gouais Blanc and Pinot
- Austria's most planted red wine variety (16,000 acres)
- Most common to Weinviertel and Burgenland
- Also grown in Czech Republic (2,125 acres) and Slovakia
- Synonyms: Rotburger, Zweigeltrebe
- Buds early, mid-ripening, high yielding, susceptible to powdery mildew



# Wine Regions of Austria



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# Wine 6

## Your Thoughts?

- Country?
- Region of origin?
- Grape variety?
- Additional Comments?



# Wine Six-Identity



## **Hermann J. Wiemer Cabernet Franc “Magdalena Vineyard” 2016, Finger Lakes, New York**

- Hermann J. Wiemer: pioneer of viticulture/winemaking in the Finger Lakes
- Native of Bernkastel, Germany, emigrated to Finger Lakes in 1960s
- Wiemer founded his winery in 1979, today farming over 80 acres of prime vineyard overlooking Seneca Lake
- Vineyards are planted in small lots, matching variety to soil composition, farmed organically, promoting biodiversity
- This wine from a 2.5 acre plot in Magdalena Vineyard; warmer, northern end
- All fermentations are natural, via indigenous yeasts
- Wine fermented in 100 gallon lots, aged for 8 mos. in young Hungarian oak casks, bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

**Approx. \$37 retail**

# CABERNET FRANC

- Ideally suited to cool climates, Cabernet Franc is quickly gaining a reputation as a principal red wine variety in the FLX, where long, brisk autumns allow for slow ripening
- Although considered native to Bordeaux and Loire, DNA analysis shows parent-offspring connection with two Basque country varieties: Morenoa and Hondarribi Beltza
- Written records show that CF may have been introduced to the Loire far earlier than previously thought, as early as 1050
- CF is mid-ripening, vigorous, suited to clay/limestone and sandy soils; produces hard wood and small berries
- France's 6<sup>th</sup> most planted variety (91,300 acres), 30,600 acres in Bordeaux and 15,000 acres in Loire
- Others include Italy, Spain, Australia, RSA and China

**Magdalena Vineyard,  
Seneca Lake**



# Cabernet Franc – Basque Origin?

A likely theory has Cabernet Franc traveling the pilgrimage route back from Santiago de Compostela



# Wine 7

## Your Thoughts?

- Country?
- Region of origin?
- Grape variety?
- Additional Comments?

# Wine Seven-Identity

## **Domaine Boyar Mavrud “Royal Reserve” 2015, Thracian Valley, Bulgaria** (Bulgarian Master Vintners)



- Domaine Boyar was the first private wine-producing company after the fall of the communist regime in Bulgaria in 1989
- Founded 1991 in Sofia – now a leading exporter of quality Bulgarian wines
- The company's key markets are the UK, Benelux, USA, Canada and Asia
- The winery, Sinite Skali, is close to the natural landmark Blue Rocks, in the foothills of the Stara Planina mountains
- Sinite Skai is one of the most modern wineries in Eastern and Central Europe, with state-of-the-art winemaking technology
- The Thracian Plain region, the winery location, is renowned for red wines

**Approx. \$17 retail**

# MAVRUD

- Mavrud is small-berried, low yielding and late ripening
- Bulgaria's 3<sup>rd</sup> most planted variety (4,300 acres) after Pamid and Melnik
- Native to Asenovgrad in central southern Bulgaria
- One of Bulgaria's oldest varieties with 5 distinct clonal variants
- Mavrud is derived from the Greek word *mavro* (black)



# Wine 8

## Your Thoughts?

- Country?
- Region of origin?
- Grape variety?
- Additional Comments?

# Wine Eight-Identity



**Ceraso Aglianico 2016,**

**Azienda Agricola San Salvatore, Campania** (Vias Imports)

San Salvatore is a 22.5 hectare estate in **Campania**, in southern Italy. This is a mountainous region with mineral rich soils. Owner Giuseppe Pagano farms biodynamically, using no chemicals in favor of natural elements copper and sulfur, biodynamic preparations and natural fertilizers provided by water buffaloes. The estate also utilizes solar power to reduce their carbon footprint. In addition to Aglianico, the estate also grows Fiano, Greco Falanghina and Piediroso. 100% Aglianico grapes are gently pressed and fermentation takes place in stainless steel tanks with further aging in tank for 8 months, no oak.

**Approx. \$24 retail**



# AGLIANICO

- Most planted red wine variety (24,400 acres) in Campania and Basilicata, key areas Avellino and Benevento provinces in Campania
- DNA profiling shows no relation to any modern Greek variety, and is closely related to many local varieties
- Name likely created during Spanish occupation in 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries “La Glianica” (grape of the plain)
- Early budding, very late ripening, vigorous, prone to botrytis bunch rot
- Most notable style in Taurasi DOCG



**200+ year old Aglianico vine in Taurasi**

Questions/Comments?

THANK YOU!

Grape variety text credit: *Oxford Companion to Wine, Wine Grapes*