

@ THE WINERY

CAN'T FIND A GOOD CHABLIS ?

Up until the 1980's most Australian wines were labelled by style, not grape variety, and the names matched up with European regions - 'Chablis', 'Burgundy' and 'Sauternes' (French regions), 'Moselle' (regions along the Moselle river), 'Hock' (from Hochheim, a German town) and so on.

Here are the main Australian wine styles of the mid 1900's, along with their modern varietal equivalents -

Hock and Chablis

Hock and Chablis were terms used for dry Rhine-style white wines. Hocks were very dry and light-bodied with a pale colour. An example was 'Quelltaler Hock', made from Riesling grapes, although Hocks were also made from Semillon and Crouchen.

Chablis is delicate, straw coloured and less tart, with a more fruity flavour and body, generally made from Chardonnay grapes.

White Burgundy

A medium to full-bodied, dry white also made mainly from Chardonnay, although blends of Pinot Gris or Chenin Blanc were also used.

Sancerre

A dry white made from Sauvignon Blanc (as is Fumé Blanc, an American term).

Moselle

The Moselle River flows through Germany, Luxemburg and France, and

wines from there are mainly blends of the Müller-Thurgau grape, with floral, fresh acid characters and low alcohol content.

On the other hand, Australian Moselles were quite different - soft fruity wines. The very popular 'Ben Ean Moselle' was a blend of Semillon and Verdelho.

Sauternes

These were semi-sweet (or really sweet) wines from Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc or Muscat grapes.

Claret

Claret is a British term that was adopted by Australia to describe any dry red wine. It was quite an arbitrary way of labelling wine as there was no common definition of what Australian 'Claret' should taste like or what varieties it should contain. It was generally some sort of Cabernet Sauvignon blend though.

Burgundy

Australian red Burgundy was softer and rounder than Claret, and made from either Shiraz, Pinot Noir or a blend of the two.

Hermitage

Shiraz used to be called Hermitage in Australia (although most other countries call it Syrah).

Beaujolais

A light red wine made (traditionally) from Gamay grapes.

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