

@ THE WINERY

PINOT NOIR

This is the next red variety in our ongoing coverage of the main wine varieties.

Pinot Noir (pronounced *pee-no nwah*) is a French grape variety meaning 'black pine'. This comes from the shape of the bunches, which are pine-cone shaped.

Pinot grapes are grown around the world, mainly in cooler regions, but were originally associated with the Burgundy region in France, particularly the Côte-d'Or, where it has been cultivated since AD100. Yes, nearly 2000 years!

Pinot Noir produces some of the best wines in the world, but is quite difficult - both to grow and to make wine from.

The vines themselves are prone to downy mildew and virus problems and its thin skin makes it highly susceptible to bunch rot.

In the winery it is sensitive to fermentation methods and yeast strains, and is highly reflective of its *terroir*, with different regions producing very different wines

It has been said that 'God made Cabernet Sauvignon, whereas the devil made Pinot Noir'. It is however one of the most popular wines in the world and, while we are on quotes, here are a couple more -

'A seductive yet fickle mistress' (Peter Richardsson, *OenoStyle* magazine) and 'sex in a glass' (Madeline Triffon, master sommelier).

Pinot Noir is also used, along with Chardonnay, for Champagne of course, where only the juice is fermented, not with the skins. In Australia, Pinot is grown particularly in the cooler regions of Victoria, Tasmania and the Adelaide Hills, both for red wine and for white sparkling wines (*Methodo Champenoise* and the like).

But overall it accounts for only 1% of the total wine produced in Australia. By the way, Pinot Gris (called Pinot Grigio in Italy) is simply a white clone of Pinot Noir.

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The wine tends to be light to medium body with aromas of black cherry, raspberry, currants and violet. Traditional 'red Burgundy' is famous for its fleshy, farm-yard aromas, but changing fashions now produce a lighter, fruitier style. Pinot wines have low tannin levels (astringency) but high acidity. The wine's colour when young is often much lighter than that of other red wines.

FOOD PAIRINGS

Pinot Noir goes well with a wide range of foods - lighter meats such as chicken, duck and rabbit; seafood such as salmon and tuna; along with roast beef and lamb. It also matches well with most vegetarian dishes, especially mushroom, bean and rice dishes.

Warwick Adams

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