FRANCE WINE REGION
BORDEAUX

BOB FRASER
Introduction

- France as a country can claim to produce world-class wines in so many categories.
## France World Ranking

**Wine production by country 2007**[^52]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Production (tons)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>4,711,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>4,251,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>3,645,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>2,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>1,550,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>China (People's Republic)</td>
<td>1,450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1,050,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>961,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>891,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^52]: Sources: United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organization.
France Wine Consumption

- Only 3 percent of all wine consumed in France is imported.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Liters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>8.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>6.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>6.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andorra</td>
<td>5.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>5.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>5.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## France Exporting

### Top ten wine exporting countries in 2006[^55]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1000 tonnes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Italy*</td>
<td>1,793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>1,462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spain*</td>
<td>1,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Chile*</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>World**</td>
<td>8,353</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^55]: Source of data is the World Wine Trade Report. * denotes countries that are also major producing regions.
# France Export Market Share

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Market share (% of value in US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Noble Varietals

• In addition to producing great wines in every category, France is also the original home to most of the “noble varietals.”
  – Of the most important noble varietals, 8 are indigenous to France:
    • Chardonnay, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, and Chenin Blanc for whites
    • Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir, and Syrah for reds
Appellation

• Another French important initiative was in the creation of a system of laws to control viticultural practices and winemaking.

  – One of the goals of these laws is to protect the geographic names of the places of origin of specific wines.
  
  – This is important as French wines are named for the region where the grapes were grown.

  – This geographic designation of origin is called the appellation of the wine.
French Wine—A Historical Perspective

- The history of wine production in France is inextricably intertwined with the politics and sociological development of the country.
  - Grapes were established in the southern part of Gaul (now called France) by Greeks as early as 600 BC.
  - As the Romans colonized the country, the planting of grapes and the production of wine spread north.
Barbarians invaded Gaul and caused the collapse of the Roman Empire by AD 400.

During this time, it was the Christian monasteries that kept winemaking alive.

Sack of Rome by the Visigoths on 24 August 410
• Charlemagne brought stability to Gaul during his reign which began in AD 768.
  – He introduced the first laws on wine production.
In 1152 Eleanor of Aquitaine married Henri of Anjou. An important trade alliance was established when Henri ascended the English throne as King Henry II.

English entrepreneurs came to France, especially to Bordeaux, and played a crucial role in the building of the wine trade.
After the French Revolution (1789–1791) and the rise of Napoleon, the church and the aristocracy lost a great deal of their power.

- Land was taken by the government and given to the farmers.
- The production and exporting of French wines, especially Bordeaux, continued to increase until the root louse *phylloxera* invaded French vineyards in the late 1880s.
Phylloxera spread rapidly through French vineyards, and over the Pyrenees into the Iberian Peninsula, and eventually across the Alps into Northern Italian vineyards.

- The solution was to find phylloxera-resistant rootstocks on which the classic varietals could be grafted.
- Phylloxera-resistant rootstocks bred from native American vines are now throughout Europe.
Terroir

• The concept of terroir is critical to understanding the very foundation of French wines.
  – In the context of wines, the definition of terroir is the unique and distinctive character a specific wine will exhibit due to the fact that it was grown in a specific vineyard.
  – The term terroir encompasses the entire physical environment in which the grapes were grown.
Bordeaux

• Bordeaux is one of the world’s largest and most diverse wine-producing regions.
  – There are almost 304,000 acres under vine, and annual production is over 660 million bottles of wine.
  – Fully 22 percent of France’s total AOC production is from Bordeaux.
Bordeaux

– Bordeaux is a city and a wine region.
– The city of Bordeaux, eighth largest in France, is the capital of the département of Gironde, the largest of France’s 95 départements.
Bordeaux (continued)

• The region has large, self-sufficient estates in which the vineyards, the winemaking facilities, and often the owner’s house are all located together in close proximity.
  – The late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were the period in which many of the great estates developed as exports in wine increased.
Bordeaux Climate

- Bordeaux has a maritime climate due to the Atlantic Ocean nearby, which moderates the temperature by preventing extreme highs and lows.
- This helps the grapes ripen evenly, an effect that is less pronounced in vineyards further inland where the climate becomes slightly more continental.
The Soil and Climate of Bordeaux

- Bordeaux is located on the west coast of France, on the Atlantic Ocean.
- Exactly halfway between the North Pole and the Equator, extending about 65 miles from north to south and 80 miles from east to west, Bordeaux is spared any temperature extremes.
Bordeaux AOC laws - Red

- In Bordeaux, the grape varietals allowed by AOC laws are as follows:
  - Red: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Petit Verdot, and Carmenère
Bordeaux AOC law- White

- White: Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, and Muscadelle
- For regional white wines, up to 30 percent of lesser grapes such as Colombard, Merlot Blanc, and Ugni Blanc is allowed.
Bordeaux

• In Bordeaux, red varietals take up 89 percent of total acreage, and Merlot is the most widely planted red varietal with 162,000 acres as opposed to 70,000 acres for Cabernet Sauvignon and 32,110 for the third most important grape, Cabernet Franc.
  – The other red varietals can contribute characteristics to the final blend: Carmenére adds deep color; Malbec adds additional body; Petit Verdot tends to be higher in acidity.
Bordeaux

• For the high-quality dry white grapes, Sauvignon Blanc is the most important. However, the most widely planted white grape is Semillon (18,387 versus 11,367 acres for Sauvignon Blanc). Muscadelle is third with 2,341 acres.
Soils in Bordeaux

- There are several types of soil in Bordeaux. Gravel is the classic type found in the Médoc and Graves, on the left bank of the Gironde River. The Cabernet Sauvignon planted in these soils ripens particularly well late in the season because it suffers a slight water deficit due to the well-draining gravel soils. Surrounding the gravel outcroppings is sandy land known as palus that is unsuitable for quality wine production.

On the other side of the Gironde is the Right Bank. Here, in St. Émilion, Pomerol, and surrounding areas, the two classic soils are limestone hills and rich clay. These are cool, moist types of soil well suited to growing Merlot, which dominates the blends in this area.
The Regions of Bordeaux

• The five regions of Bordeaux that produce champion wines are: the Haut-Médoc, Graves, Sauternes/Barsac, St. Émilion, and Pomerol.
  – There are several other Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée districts that produce admirable wines as well.
The Wine Regions of Bordeaux: The Médoc

• The landscape is not particularly spectacular. It is a bit flat, actually, and in the southern portions, there are signs of urban sprawl.
The Wine Regions of Bordeaux: The Haut-Médoc

• Most of the very best of Bordeaux’s wines come from famous estates in the lower two-thirds of the Médoc peninsula. This subregion is known as the Haut-Médoc.
  – Throughout the Haut-Médoc there is a good balance between water stored in the soil and the depth of roots.
The Haut-Médoc

- Factors of soil content and microclimate are diverse within the Haut-Médoc.
- Wines from the southern communes are softer, richer, and more accessible than the more tannic and restrained wines from further up the peninsula.
Margaux

- **Margaux** lays on a soil of white graves - a special kind of gravel brought from the mountains by the river. Margaux (also a female name in France) is the quintessence of the terroir and of the winemaker's work. That is probably the reason why the best châteaux produce also the best wines!

- In Margaux, Château Margaux produces the most delicate wine of the Médoc. They are 18 Grands Crus Classés (great growths) in Margaux.
Chateau Margaux

Bob Fraser- do not duplicate
Saint-Julien

- Just a little bit less powerful than Pauillac and rustic than Saint-Estèphe, **Saint-Julien** wines are very aromatized. They are harmonious and well balanced red wines. Saint-Julien is the right balance between Pauillac and Margaux.
- Saint-Julien has 11 Grands Crus Classés (great growths). The quality is so good in Saint-Julien, that second wines from those châteaux are very attractive.
Domaine Saint_Julien
Pauillac

• **Pauillac** is maybe the best appellation of Bordeaux with three premiers grands crus classés (1st great growth) out of 5. Pauillac has 18 grands crus classés in total!

• The great châteaux of Pauillac are Château Lafite, Château Latour and Château Mouton-Rothschild.
Chateau Pontet-Canet
Chateau Pontet-Cadet: 300 acres of gravel over clay/limestone; Primarily Cabernet. Merlot… some Petite Verdot, Cab Franc… average life 35 years… 40,000 cases
Concrete tanks
Pichon Baron, Pauillac

Bob Fraser- do not duplicate
Saint-Estèphe

- **Saint-Estèphe** is a true "terroir" wine. The influence of the soil, gravels as usual and more clays than in Médoc, can be experienced when tasting a Saint-Estèphe wine. Although Pauillac is just close-by, Saint-Estèphe wines are different.
- Saint-Estèphe wines are very colored, earthy, firm, robust and tannic. They reach their maturity slower than other Médoc wines.
Vines in Saint-Estephe
The Wine Regions of Bordeaux: Graves

• Unlike the appellations Médoc and Haut-Médoc, which can be applied only to red wine, the appellation Graves is applicable to both reds and whites.
  – This large area runs about 34 miles along the southern edge of the Garonne River (one of the two tributaries to the Gironde).
  – Graves’ 8,255 acres of vineyards are 55 percent red wine grapes, 45 percent white wine grapes.
The Wine Regions of Bordeaux: Graves (continued)

• The dry whites of Graves can be among the most elegant, complex, and food-friendly wines based on the Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon grape.

• The best red wines of the Graves region are velvety smooth and full of ripe berry flavors. The leading estates plant anywhere from 25 to 40 percent Merlot and 50 to 65 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, with the balance being the three lesser varietals (Cabernet Franc, Malbec, and Petit Verdot).
The soil of the Graves region is different than in other parts of Bordeaux. The region gets its name from the gravelly, pebble-strewn soil.

– This top level of gravel allows for excellent drainage, as well as heat retention that helps the grapes to ripen fully. The gravel sits on base soils of sand and clay.

– The finest vineyards in Graves are in the communes of Pessac and Léognan, in the northern section that produces both excellent reds and whites.
In the southern part of Graves, almost 45 percent of the wine produced is white.

- The predominant white grape here is the Semillon, at some estates taking as much as 70 percent of the acreage.
The Wine Regions of Bordeaux: Sauternes

- The appellation of Sauternes is restricted to sweet white wines. The appellation actually encompasses five villages: Sauternes, Bommes, Fargues, Preignac, and Barsac.
  - The latter, Barsac, is an appellation in its own right, and can be sold either as Barsac or as Sauternes. The communes lie on the south bank of the Garonne River, in the southern part of Graves.

A Sauternes vineyard
The wines from Sauternes and Barsac, which by law must be botrytized, are widely regarded as some of the best dessert wines in the world.

- The appellations of Sauternes and Barsac contain less than 5,500 acres of vines. The grapes planted are Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc, and Muscadelle.
- The climate here is perfect for the botrytis fungus, as the air is very damp.
The Wine Regions of Bordeaux: The Right Bank

- The soils on the Right Bank are quite different from those in the Médoc, tending more towards clay and limestone. In this soil base, Merlot is the predominate grape.
- The expression Right Bank typically refers to wines from the Pomerol and St-Emilion areas.
The Wine Regions of Bordeaux: The Right Bank

• The second most widely planted varietal is Cabernet Franc.
• Cabernet Sauvignon, which excels in the gravelly soils of the Médoc, does not do well in the clay/limestone combination.
The Wine Regions of Bordeaux: St. Émilion

- Wine was made in the village of St. Émilion during Gallo-Roman times.
  - There are few grand châteaux around St. Émilion. Rather this is an area of small properties.
  - St. Émilion is one of the most compact and densely planted appellations in France with close to 13,000 acres of vineyards.
The Wine Regions of Bordeaux:
St. Émilion

- The vineyards are planted primarily to Merlot, which ripens earlier than Cabernet Sauvignon.
- The wines of St. Émilion are softer, more fruit-forward than wines of the Médoc.
The Wine Regions of Bordeaux: Pomerol

- Pomerol is a much smaller grape-growing region than its neighbor St. Émilion, having only 1,900 acres.
  - Fully three-quarters of the vineyards in Pomerol-Merlot.
  - The soils are a mixture of sand, clay, and gravel.
The Wine Regions of Bordeaux: Pomerol

- Even though the wines of Pomerol have never been officially rated, their reputation is excellent.

- The star of Pomerol is Château Pétrus, considered one of the best Merlot-based wines made anywhere.
Pétrus vineyards
That’s all folks!!!