

THE U.S.A.

- The 5th largest wine-producing country.
- Quality is also commendable.
- Wine production started after the arrival of the European settlers in the 17th century.
- Grapevines introduced in California by Spanish missionaries in the mid-1600s.
- Original American vines were wild and unsuitable for making wines.
- The practice of grafting started in the 1870s after the phylloxera disaster.
- Since then, remarkable improvement in both quality and quantity.
- In 1918, production and consumption of alcoholic beverage was banned through an amendment of constitution.
- Wine vines were converted to table-grape varieties.
- One whole generation missed the taste of wine.
- The amendment was repealed in 1933.
- Wine industry started all over again.
- Vines were replaced.
- Equipments were replaced.
- Skilled labour had to be trained.
- Public awareness took decades.
- Californian wine industry is only about half a century old, whereas its European counterparts have a history of a few centuries.

- Some good wines were made in the late 1930s.
- Rapid progress after WW II.
- 1960s – countless new vineyards in California.
- 1970s – vinifera spread to other states.
- Microclimatic California – huge variety – attracted the world’s attention.
- Still a young industry – yet to produce its best.
- Major scientific developments.
- Temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks for fermentation:
 - white wines slowly at lower temperature (= more fruity and delicate).
 - red wines faster at higher temperature (= more pronounced aroma and robust).
- Microfiltration for clarification resulting in ‘cleaner’ wines.

WINE LAWS OF USA

- Vintners enjoy more freedom than their European counterparts:
 - where to grow, what to grow, what to graft, where to buy grapes from, what to blend with what, how long to age, which cask, how to clarify, etc.
- Growers produce according to customers’ choice. Unlike Europe, no restrictions by tradition.

A BROAD CLASSIFICATION

Generic wines

- Names of European types – Burgundy, Chianti, Sherry, Port, etc.

- Attempt to imitate European wines – slight resemblance but, nevertheless, of acceptable quality.
- Referred to as jug wines as these are often sold in large containers.

Varietal wines

- Sold by the name of the grape-variety.
- Minimum 75% has to be from a single grape.
- Examples: chardonnay, pinot noir, riesling, cabernet sauvignon, zinfandel, etc.

Brand-name wines

- Also referred to as proprietary wines.
- Generally the best wines of USA.
- The name refers to a particular vineyard and/or shipper who guarantees quality.
- Example: Robert Peppi, a Sauvignon Blanc from Napa Valley.

WINE LAWS OF USA

- Traditionally referred to by county names.
- Now more specific geographical areas – **AVA** (American Viticultural Area).
- Administered by the government through **BATF** (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms).
- Just '**California**' = 100% grapes from California.
- **AVA** (e.g. Sonoma county) = minimum 75% grapes from that AVA.

- **Varietal** name = minimum 75% from the named grape.
- **Estate bottled** = 100% grapes harvested and bottled by the winery.
- **Produced & Bottled by** = minimum 75% grapes harvested by the winery.
- **Made & Bottled by** = 10% to 75% grapes harvested by the winery.
- **Perfected & Bottled by / Cellared & Bottled by / Vinted & Bottled by** = the bottler need not make the wine at all.
- **Alcohol content** = 1.5% variation allowed on either side.
- Vintage date generally does not appear.
- However, if mentioned, 95% of the grapes have to be from the mentioned year.
- Rosé wines are referred to as **blush** wines.

The Northeast

- Centered in the state of New York.
- Spreads as far as Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and Oklahoma.
- Rugged climate.
- Sturdy and robust wines.

The Pacific Northwest

- States of Oregon, Washington and Idaho.
- Wine-making is relatively new.
- Climate is like that of northerly wine regions of Europe.
- Light, crisp and somewhat tart wines like those of Germany and Alsace.

California

- About 2/3rd of all wines consumed in USA is produced here.
- Microclimatic regions result in a wide variety of wines.
- The notable AVAs are:

Sonoma, Napa valley, Livermore, Santa Clara, Cucamonga, Lodi-Sacramento, Ontario, Fresno-San Joaquin valley, Escalon-Modesto and San Diego-Escondido.



IHM NOTES