

SWITZERLAND

SPECIFICATIONS (What you have to know)	DISTRICTS, COMMUNES AND VINEYARDS Valais Vaud Geneva Ticino KEY LIGHT WINES None KEY FACTORS Grape varieties: Chasselas, Fendant, Müller Thurgau, Pinot Gris/Noir, Sylvaner (Johannisberg), Aligoté, Gamay Noir, Merlot Viticulture: hybrids, soil erosion, temperature variability Wine styles: Flétri, vin des glaciers Classification: grands crus, appellation contrôlée Climate: Temperature variability Soils: Soil erosion				
HISTORY	- Grape growing dating back to 3000-1800BC - 6th century: Burgundian monks founded monasteries and helped vine-growing to spread - 19th: industry in crisis due to growing imports from Germany and Italy and major devastation by Phylloxera - Since 70s: internal demand increase and improvement in the vineyards e.g. clonal selection has helped the industry recovery and rise in quality - 90-2000 : Large imports of EU wine in bulk to be blended with local wine				
CLIMATE & WEATHER	Continental climate. Rainfall 500-1,800mm				
SOILS & TOPOGRAPHY	Ideal latitude for wine production (45-47°) but very mountainous country i.e. too high for vine growing Majority of vineyards in the western French-speaking part i.e. Suisse romande Vineyards up to 1,100m above sea level and slopes as steep as 90° Various soils but limestone present in most regions along with glacial moraine, gravel & clay.				
GRAPE VARIETIES	A number of crossings e.g. Charmont (Chasselas x Chardonnay) developed for Switzerland <table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="384 1104 831 1133"> <u>Reds (62% of plantings)</u> </td><td data-bbox="868 1104 1315 1133"> <u>Whites (38% of plantings)</u> </td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="384 1162 831 1944"> 1. Pinot Noir Difficult grape to grow: thin-skinned, small berries prone to rot and mildew. Uninteresting if overcropped. Lower tannin & anthocyanins make it harder a very delicate grape to vinify Most widely planted red grape in Switzerland and most planted in Eastern German-speaking Switzerland 2. Gamay Potentially named after village of same name close to Puligny-Montrachet Early budding, flowering & ripening -> susceptible to spring frosts Mostly in Vaud & Geneva 3. Merlot Progeny of Cabernet Franc grape; Early flowering (> colour), prone to rot Dry summers in well drained soils can lead to under-ripeness Higher yielding in moderate climates Medium body & tannins, adds smoothness to blend Main grape in Ticino where it creates either light & fruity reds for rich, black berry fruit and toasty oak flavoured wines </td><td data-bbox="868 1162 1315 1944"> 1. Chasselas (45% of pltns 60% of production) Wines light & dry, range from neutral to aromatic Can express terroir if well vinified Called Fendant in Valais and Gutedelin German part 2. Silvaner Early ripening, productive but frost sensitive grape High natural acidity but lower vs. Riesling Fuller bodied vs. Chasselas 3. Muller-Thurgau Crossing Madeleine Royale x Riesling developed by Dr Muller from Thurgau in 1882 Earlier ripening vs. Riesling (safer), can be grown anywhere and produce high yields but softer wood vs. Riesling (winter damage) & susceptible to rot Lo yields -> elderflower aromas Hi yields -> damp cardboard aromas Most common in German Switzerland 4. Pinot Gris Believed to be a mutant clones of Pinot Noir Can have a grayish-blue coloured berries Grows best in cool climates and matures relatively early w high sugar levels Produces full bodied, perfumed whites in Valais </td></tr> </table>	<u>Reds (62% of plantings)</u>	<u>Whites (38% of plantings)</u>	1. Pinot Noir Difficult grape to grow: thin-skinned, small berries prone to rot and mildew. Uninteresting if overcropped. Lower tannin & anthocyanins make it harder a very delicate grape to vinify Most widely planted red grape in Switzerland and most planted in Eastern German-speaking Switzerland 2. Gamay Potentially named after village of same name close to Puligny-Montrachet Early budding, flowering & ripening -> susceptible to spring frosts Mostly in Vaud & Geneva 3. Merlot Progeny of Cabernet Franc grape; Early flowering (> colour), prone to rot Dry summers in well drained soils can lead to under-ripeness Higher yielding in moderate climates Medium body & tannins, adds smoothness to blend Main grape in Ticino where it creates either light & fruity reds for rich, black berry fruit and toasty oak flavoured wines	1. Chasselas (45% of pltns 60% of production) Wines light & dry, range from neutral to aromatic Can express terroir if well vinified Called Fendant in Valais and Gutedelin German part 2. Silvaner Early ripening, productive but frost sensitive grape High natural acidity but lower vs. Riesling Fuller bodied vs. Chasselas 3. Muller-Thurgau Crossing Madeleine Royale x Riesling developed by Dr Muller from Thurgau in 1882 Earlier ripening vs. Riesling (safer), can be grown anywhere and produce high yields but softer wood vs. Riesling (winter damage) & susceptible to rot Lo yields -> elderflower aromas Hi yields -> damp cardboard aromas Most common in German Switzerland 4. Pinot Gris Believed to be a mutant clones of Pinot Noir Can have a grayish-blue coloured berries Grows best in cool climates and matures relatively early w high sugar levels Produces full bodied, perfumed whites in Valais
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VITICULTURE	14 600 ha with high viticulture costs.				

	Wide variety of training systems w Cordon, Gobelet, Guyot and Tendone (in Ticino) used. No mechanisation possible. Irrigation sometimes necessary Key hazards: soil erosion, frosts, mildew
WINEMAKING	Keen to avoid high acidity via chosen varieties, use of MLF and extra ripening of the grapes. Chaptalisation common to reduce acidity and add softness except in Valais and the Rhine Reds tend to go through carbonic maceration Barrel maturation is getting popular Destemming Whites tend to be light and relatively neutral
WINE LAWS & CLASSIFICATION	AC system introduced in the early 90s but yield levels can be quite high and vary between cantons
KEY REGIONS & CHARACTERISTICS	1. Western region – 11,000ha – ¾ of all plantings - French-speaking corner made of Neuchatel, Geneva and Valais. Valais is the biggest w 1/3 of all plantings. - Mountainous regions w vineyards up 400-700m high and some vineyards w 85% steep slopes Key sub regions: > Valais (5,200ha – 40% of production) Located in the upper Rhone valley, east of Geneva and south-west; around the town of Sion Mainly south-facing terraced vineyards > hot+sunny Chasselas dominates = “fendant” Dôle: Pinot Noir + Gamay w Pinot Noir main component Johannisberg: Valais name for fuller-than-average dry white from Sylvaner grapes Vin des Glaciers: local specialty from Val d’Anniviers; maderised white made from Reze A lot of indigenous varieties e.g. Arnigne, Petite Arvine (famous from Fully) > Vaud (3,850ha – 27% of production) On the steep slopes of Lake Geneva 2nd largest canton in the country Chasselas = 70% of production > shows mineral characters and ageing potential Gamay grown for red and rosé production 2 grands Crus: Dézaley (Puidoux, fruity style) and Calamin (Epesses, mineral style) > Geneva (9% of production) Flat, mainly Chasselas + aligoté & Gamay > Others: Neuchatel 2. Eastern region - 2,600ha - German speaking part; south of Baden in Germany 80% of production is red wine made from Pinot Noir Muller Thurgau dominates the whites 3. Southern region - 1,000ha - Italian speaking part - Vineyards at low altitude can grow fully ripened Merlot (85% of production) while higher vineyards grow Pinot Noir Ticino (9% of production) 2 styles of Merlot e.g. light & fruit or new oak-aged can be of top international standards Hybrids and American vines still represent 7% of production here.
PRODUCTION & BUSINESS	1m hl w less than 1% exported Fairly high annual consumption w 380m btls consumed each / 49l/per/yr Imports banned until recently so producers have to face international competition Key producers: Louis Bovard – 250,000btls – Lavaux canton Produces white Dézaley with ageing capacity; counselled by Jean-Luc Colombo from Cornas. Gialdi SA – 400,000btls Relatively new wine company; excellent oak-aged Merlot including Sassi Grossi with partially air-dried grapes

