

Australian wine varieties

Australians are the highest per capital consumers of table wines in the English-speaking world. Our diversified *terroir* - the unique aspects of a place that influences and shapes the wine made from it, such as climate, soil, landscape, rainfall sunlight, slope, etc – means we are able to produce a diverse range of wines. Gone are the days where there were only 2 or 3 choices of red and white wine – there is a dizzying assortment of wine varieties easily available today.



Here is a guide to the more easily found Australian wine varieties:

WHITE WINES

Chardonnay

Description (unwooded): Fresh and smooth with peach flavours; dry

Description (wooded): Rich, buttery and oaky; dry

Food matches: Salmon and smoked fish, poultry, creamy pasta dishes, brie

Sauvignon Blanc

Description: Zingy and zesty; dry

Food matches: Fresh food, especially seafood, asparagus, goat's cheese

Semillon

Description (young Semillon < 5 years): Crisp and acidic; dry

Description (aged Semillon > 5 years): Buttery, rich; dry

Food matches (young Semillon): Seafood, high acid foods

Food matches (aged Semillon): Smoked salmon, fuller cooked flavours

Riesling

Description: Fruity, fresh, floral; semi-sweet to off-dry

Food matches: Oysters, fresh zingy foods such as salads and Thai food

Verdelho

Description: Fruity; dry

Food matches: Spicy or salty food

Voignier

Description: Exotic aromas and flavours, rich and dry

Food matches: Big food flavours, such as chilli crab or garlic prawns

Pinot Gris / Pinot Grigio

Description: Medium weight, crisp; dry

Food matches: Seafood especially lobster and scallops, pate, Vietnamese

Gewurtztraminer

Description: Aromatic, floral; usually semi-sweet

Food matches: Asian food, washed rind cheese



RED WINES

Shiraz

Description: Full bodied, robust, plum and pepper flavours; dry
Food matches: Red meat, game, curries

Cabernet Sauvignon

Description: Medium to full bodied, structured and elegant; dry
Food matches: Lamb, beef, North African flavours

Pinot noir

Description: Light in colour and body, berry flavours; dry
Food matches: Duck, oily fish, mushrooms, game

Merlot

Description: Medium-bodies, soft and rich; dry
Food matches: Pork, oily fish, tapas

Grenache

Description: Soft and fruity, can be medium or full-bodied; slight sweetness
Food matches: Spicy foods, tapas, pizza, BBQ's

Zinfandel

Description: Full bodied and richly flavoured, spicy, peppery, fruity
Food matches: BBQ's and stews

Sangiovese

Description: Mid-weight, chocolate and cherry flavours
Food matches: Tomato-based pasta dishes, grilled meats, pizza

Rosé

Description: Light, fresh and summery; can be sweet or dry
Food matches: Bouillabaisse, light summery foods, smoked foods, Mexican & Thai food

OTHER WINES

Fortified Dessert Wines - Sherry, Port, Muscat, Tokay and Madeira

Description: Usually sweet, exception being dry sherry
Food matches: Port and Stilton, Tokay or Muscat with Chocolate

Unfortified Dessert Wines "Stickies"

Description: Rich and sweet, dried apricot flavours
Food matches: Botrytised styles – rich and sweet desserts, eg. sticky date pudding
Non-botrytised styles – fruit-based desserts or fresh fruit

Sparkling wines

Description: Effervescent, high acidity; can be sweet or dry
Food matches: Sushi, caviar, oysters and many seafoods